

# Impact Statement 2020



**The answer to cancer is research**



## Impact Updates



**Mark A. Israel, MD**  
ICRF National  
Executive Director

Dear Friends,

By almost any standard, 2020 has been an extraordinarily difficult year. Yet, even as we write this, hope has emerged in the form of early, upbeat reports of two highly promising COVID-19 vaccines — with more on the way. Progress towards an effective vaccine is the byproduct of the same sort of innovation, diligence, drive, resourcefulness and must-do attitude that have been the hallmarks of ICRF's funded scientists for more than 45 years. We are proud to report that even as their brilliant cancer research continues, many of their labs have also made important contributions in the fight against this dreadful virus.

The pandemic has come and eventually will depart, but the cancer fight endures. Indeed, even at recent elevated levels, cancer in North America is likely to claim at least 50 percent more lives than COVID-19 in 2020.

This pandemic had the potential to be devastating for the Israel Cancer Research Fund this year. Every day our staff faced a life-threatening foe that could not be avoided nor faced with confidence. And yet we pressed forward in our dual mission of alleviating the suffering and misery caused by cancer, while supporting the State of Israel.

Despite enormous challenges, ICRF will fund a near-record level of new grants in 2020-2021. That is a remarkable achievement — and it could not have happened without your support. Thank you. Along the way, we have managed to hold multiple successful virtual events in the U.S. and Canada, debuted a brand new website, conducted (flawlessly) our first-ever virtual Scientific Review Panel, launched our popular “Brilliant Minds” webinar series and offered our supporters an informative and attractive e-newsletter.

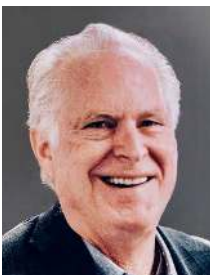
This report shares some of this year's success in supporting Israeli innovation, in keeping our donor base informed, and in advancing their desire to support breakthrough Israeli cancer research. We hope you will enjoy learning more about these efforts. You are our partners and we are ever grateful for your generous support.

We support individuals at all of the major research institutions in Israel, enabling us to invest directly in the very best scientists and ideas each year.

Despite enormous challenges, ICRF will fund a near-record level of new grants in 2020-2021. That is a remarkable achievement — and it could not have happened without your support.



**Bryna Goldberg**  
Chair,  
ICRF International



**Rob Densen**  
President,  
ICRF International

**Mark A. Israel, MD,**  
ICRF National  
Executive Director

**Bryna Goldberg**  
Chair,  
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**Rob Densen**  
President,  
ICRF International

## Making an Impact

Over  
**2,500**  
grants  
funded  
to date

Over  
**\$77.5 million**

in funding awarded to date for groundbreaking cancer research conducted at every leading institution across Israel.



**69**  
cancer  
research  
projects  
funded  
in 2020  
- 2021



- 3 Acceleration Grants
- 12 Research Professorship Grants
- 12 Research Career Development Awards
- 17 Project Grants
- 4 Postdoctoral Fellowship Grants
- 14 Collaborative Research Partnership Grants
- 7 Named Grants

*Among the areas of cancer research being supported are studies in Blood, Brain, Breast, Colorectal, Lung, Ovarian, Pancreatic, and Skin Cancers, as well as genetics and genomics, molecular biology, immunology and immunotherapy, and the tumor microenvironment.*

### Collaborative Research Partnership Grants



**ICRF-Conquer Cancer (The ASCO Foundation) Career Development Award Grant**  
\$200,000 over a 3-year period to support an Israeli early-career faculty investigator to establish an independent clinical cancer research program.



**Max Ritvo, Alan Slifka & Desiree Dato Fund for Fusion-Oncoprotein Cancers and Metastasis Grants – A Partnership Between ICRF, The Samuel Waxman Cancer Research Foundation, and The Alan B. Slifka Foundation**  
\$250,000 over a 2-year period to support collaborative science conducted by co-investigators based in the U.S. and Israel, with a focus on cancers driven by fusion oncoproteins in Ewing's Sarcoma or metastatic cancer.

The ALAN B. SLIFKA FOUNDATION



**ICRF-City of Hope Jacki & Bruce Barron Cancer Research Scholars' Program Grants**  
\$300,000 over a 2-year period to support collaborative science conducted by co-investigators, one at City of Hope in the U.S. and the other in Israel, in order to advance our understanding of cancer and develop life-saving therapies, novel diagnostic approaches or prevention strategies.



**ICRF-Cancer Research Institute Immunotherapy Promise Grants**  
\$150,000 over a 2-year period to support outstanding basic, pre-clinical, or translational research in cancer immunology and immunotherapy conducted by established, mid-level or senior Israeli scientists.

The Immunotherapy Promise™



**ICRF-Israel Ministry of Science and Technology Geshet Grant for Academic Excellence in the Field of Cancer Research**  
NIS 600,000 over a 3-year period to support outstanding Israeli cancer scientists living abroad who wish to return to Israel to develop an independent research program.

### Named Grants

**Brause Family Initiative for Quality of Life Grants**  
\$250,000 over a 3-year period to support established Israeli investigators studying cancer treatment related to pain, side effects, and emotional problems experienced by cancer patients in order to maintain the best possible quality of life, with an emphasis on non-opioid solutions.

**Len & Susan Mark Initiative for Ovarian and Uterine/MMMT Cancers Grants**  
\$180,000 over a 3-year period to support established Israeli investigators studying the biology, diagnosis, treatment, or prevention of Ovarian and/or Uterine/MMMT Cancers.

**Barbara S. Goodman Endowed Research Career Development Award for Pancreatic Cancer**  
\$135,000 over a 3-year period to support a young Israeli scientist embarking on an independent research career with a particular focus on the biology, diagnosis, treatment, supportive care, and/or prevention of Pancreatic Cancer.

## Selecting the Best Science



**Nancy Maizels, PhD**  
Chair of the ICRF International Scientific Council; Chair, ICRF Scientific Review Panel C; Professor of Immunology and Biochemistry Emerita, University of Washington School of Medicine, Seattle

The scientific peer review process is the heart and soul of ICRF's mission to fund the best and brightest cancer research conducted by scientists at leading institutions throughout Israel. I am honored to serve as the new Chair of the ICRF International Scientific Council (ISC), the group of volunteer scientists and physician-scientists who provide scientific leadership and oversight to ICRF, including the activities of the ICRF Scientific Review Panel.

Each year, the ICRF Scientific Review Panel, composed of leading U.S. and Canadian scientists from all fields of cancer research, rigorously reviews and ranks all proposals received and makes the recommendations to the ICRF Board after a lengthy peer-review process. All proposals are reviewed by this expert panel on a transparent and objective basis; and only the best, most qualified applications, receive awards.

I first became involved with ICRF in 2007, when I was invited to join a Scientific Review Panel. I've reviewed many papers and grant applications throughout my career, from the U.S. and other countries, but among the small pile of ICRF applications I was assigned, there were several that went far beyond anything I had seen before in the creativity and ingenuity applied to problem solving with relatively frugal budgets. I continued to participate in ICRF reviews whenever I was invited, and I was tremendously honored when ICRF invited me to first chair a review panel and then the ISC. A very high standard of scientific review distinguishes ICRF awards, and as Chair of the ISC and the Scientific Review Panel, I am intent that this will continue.

### Step One Israeli Cancer Researchers Submit Grant Applications

Proposals to support the best cancer-related research conducted by Israeli scientists in Israel are due in December. In line with the application process used by the NIH, applicants submit a comprehensive description of their proposed research project.



### Step Two Scientific Review Panels Conduct Evaluations

Applications are assigned primary and secondary reviewers. Reviewers submit evaluations for applications, based on:

- summary of the project
- importance of the research to the advancement of understanding or treating cancer
- originality of the research
- qualifications of the applicant
- facilities and budget available for the research



### Step Three Scientific Review Panels Make Recommendations

The Scientific Review Panel, composed of leading American and Canadian scientists with cancer research expertise, makes the recommendations to the ICRF Board after the lengthy peer-review process. The Scientific Review Panel meets annually in March to discuss the applications and assign an overall rating to each application. Three concurrent panels evaluate:

- Translational clinical oncology
- Basic cancer research
- Special initiatives in cancer science

Each panel has a chairperson and 15-25 scientists.



### Step Four Board Allocates Resources

ICRF's International Board of Trustees allocates available resources and funding is continued only if the required progress reports are satisfactory.

## Spotlight on the Scientists



“The ICRF funding supporting our research on approaches to treating Breast Cancer metastasis will also allow me to continue to educate the next generation of young scientists, with special emphasis on promoting women and minorities in science.”

**Hava Gil-Henn, PhD**

*Bar-Ilan University,  
ICRF Project Grant Recipient*



“ICRF seeded my scientific trip. My research is a product of ICRF.”

**Aaron Ciechanover, MD, DSc**

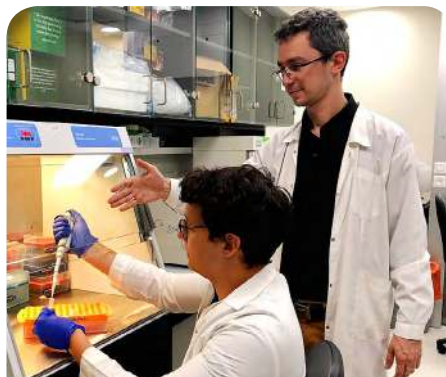
*Technion, Israel Institute of Technology  
ICRF Research Professorship Grantee and  
Nobel Laureate in Chemistry, together with  
Professors Avram Hershko and Irwin Rose, for  
the Discovery of the Ubiquitin System*



“Our collaboration with City of Hope expanded our research from basic science to preclinical research on drug development against Pancreatic Cancer.”

**Ziv Gil, MD, PhD**

*Rambam Health Care Campus and Technion,  
Israel Institute of Technology  
ICRF-City of Hope Jacki & Bruce Barron  
Cancer Research Scholars' Program Grantee*



“This grant will allow the Hadassah Breast Cancer research group and me to fulfill our ambitious goal to develop an early diagnostic blood test for the detection of early-stage Breast Cancer. Personally, the grant came at the perfect time to develop my career path as a translational researcher.”

**Albert Grinshpun, MD, MSc**

*Hadassah Medical Center  
Recipient of the First ICRF-Conquer Cancer  
(The ASCO Foundation) Career Development  
Award in 2020*



“This grant will boost our research capacity and provide us with the resources necessary to embark on high-risk/high-reward projects that may impact all types of cancers. I believe that if we want to conquer cancer, we must invest in basic cancer research.”

**Uri Ben-David, PhD**

*Tel Aviv University  
ICRF-Israel Ministry of Science and  
Technology Gesher Award Grantee*



“The first grant I received at the beginning of my work on medical genomics was from ICRF. It allowed me to set up my lab and helped me establish a scientific career in tandem with my medical work. For years, I have volunteered as a member of the ICRF International Scientific Council. My compensation is the contribution of ICRF to Israeli cancer researchers, especially to young researchers.”

**Gideon Rechavi, MD, PhD**

*Sheba Cancer Research Center  
Member, ICRF International Scientific Council,  
Past Grantee and 2020 Israel Prize Laureate*

Over **2,500** grants funded to date

## Spotlight on the Scientists (continued)



"I am extremely grateful to ICRF. The funding was crucial for us to advance our science on cancer and the tumor microbiome."

### **Naama Geva-Zatorsky, PhD**

*Technion-Israel Institute of Technology  
ICRF Acceleration Grant Recipient*



"Only through basic research at the molecular level will cancer be conquered. With unusual foresight, ICRF has made a big contribution to this goal, both by encouraging excellent Israeli scientists, and by promoting quality projects which serve to unlock the basic secrets of cancer."

### **Howard Cedar, MD, PhD**

*Hebrew University/Hadassah Medical School  
Recipient of the first ICRF Research Professorship Grant and longest continuously funded grantee recipient of many prestigious awards, including the Israel Prize and Horwitz Prize for his groundbreaking work on DNA Methylation*



"This ICRF-CRI grant was essential in enabling us to pursue this newly emerging avenue in cancer research."

### **Asya Rolls, PhD**

*Technion, Israel Institute of Technology  
ICRF-Cancer Research Institute  
Immunotherapy Promise Grantee*



"This is a marriage between two excellent research groups and a great opportunity to support both the advancement of treatments for children with cancer in Israel and research at City of Hope."

### **Shai Izraeli, MD**

*Schneider Children's Medical Center  
ICRF-City of Hope Jacki & Bruce Barron  
Cancer Research Scholars' Program Grantee*



"Thanks to this generous ICRF grant, my research group will be able to carry out work that will, hopefully, lead to a novel and ground-breaking strategy for treating solid tumors with immunotherapy. It will also help my own career development as a newly independent researcher."

### **Michael Berger, PhD**

*Hebrew University/Hadassah Medical School  
ICRF Project Grant Recipient and Recipient of the Peter Stambrook Award in Cancer Medicine*



"Bringing together our groups' knowledge, expertise, and resources generated a truly synergistic collaboration that helped us drive our science much faster than we could have accomplished alone. In addition to our recent publication, as a direct result of our collaborative effort, we are now pursuing two advanced projects that will impact the response to Lung Cancer therapy in first-line treatment in the future."

### **Ravid Straussman, MD, PhD**

*Weizmann Institute of Science  
ICRF-City of Hope Jacki & Bruce Barron  
Cancer Research Scholars' Program Grantee*

## The Intersection of COVID-19 and Cancer



**Yafit Gilboa, PhD** (left), and **Mor Nahum, PhD**, of the Hebrew University of Jerusalem, are ICRF grantees under The Brause Family Initiative for Quality of Life. Their work is aimed at developing and testing a treatment for cancer survivors experiencing cancer-related cognitive impairment that will be delivered remotely using online software. In response to the pandemic, their work now includes screening for geriatric depression using a smart mobile app, and measuring the resilience of health professionals in the Israel Defense Forces over time.



ICRF Project Grant awardee, **Ronen Alon, PhD**, of the Weizmann Institute of Science, is studying metastasis, or how tumor cells spread to distant organs within the body. In response to the pandemic, his lab is now also working to develop a mouse model of influenza with similar complications to those of COVID-19, and will use this model to test ways to block specific types of immune cells from excessively infiltrating the lungs and causing severe breathing problems.



ICRF Jacki & Bruce Barron Scholar, **Ariel Munitz, PhD**, of Tel Aviv University, and his collaborator at City of Hope, are studying how a particular type of white blood cell plays a role in Breast Cancer metastasis to the lungs. In response to the pandemic, he spearheaded the establishment of an emergency COVID-19 testing lab on the university campus that was built in 3 days. The Munitz lab has also developed a COVID-19 antibody test that produces results in an hour and is currently being used by the Israel Defense Forces.

**69 cancer research projects** funded in 2020-2021

### ICRF Presents: Brilliant Minds Webinar Series

ICRF Presents: Brilliant Minds is a special, interactive monthly webinar series featuring ICRF-funded scientists and other brilliant minds in cancer research, alongside patient perspectives and stories of hope. Launched in April, the inaugural series featured several groundbreaking ICRF grantees working at leading institutions throughout Israel and covered a range of cutting-edge topics in cancer research, including checkpoint inhibitors, novel nanovaccines for cancer, and the interaction between the brain and tumor immunity.

Please visit our website at [www.icrfonline.org/brilliant-minds-webinar-series/](http://www.icrfonline.org/brilliant-minds-webinar-series/).



## Stories of Hope

“Cancer is relentless, never shelters in place. More than ever, we need to support the basic science and translational research that yields the promising therapies that will keep our pipelines full and provide hope and a chance to endure for millions of cancer patients.”

— **Linnea Olson**

*15-Year Lung Cancer Survivor,  
Patient Advocate and Activist,  
ICRF Trustee,  
Founding Member,  
Women’s Advisory Council*



“This story is not about me. It is about giving strength to cancer patients and understanding that it is our responsibility to support cancer research in order to secure our future, the future of our children and of generations to come.”

— **Tamir Gilat**

*9-Year Kidney and Pancreatic Cancer Survivor,  
Former Israeli Soccer Player,  
Entrepreneur,  
ICRF - Israel Chairman*



“I am an overcomer.”

— **Johanna (JoJo) Harris**

*6-Year Breast Cancer Survivor,  
Mother of Four,  
ICRF Chicago Supporter*



“Thanks to ICRF supporters like you, people like me are alive today. With the help of miraculous cancer therapies based on ICRF research, I recently celebrated passing 5 years since starting my quest to overcome Multiple Myeloma. As a doctor, and hematologist myself, this is absolutely amazing! Not too long ago, this was unimaginable.”

— **Gerald Soff, MD**

*5-Year Multiple Myeloma Survivor,  
Chief, Hematology Service, Memorial Sloan Kettering Cancer Center,  
ICRF New York Board Member*



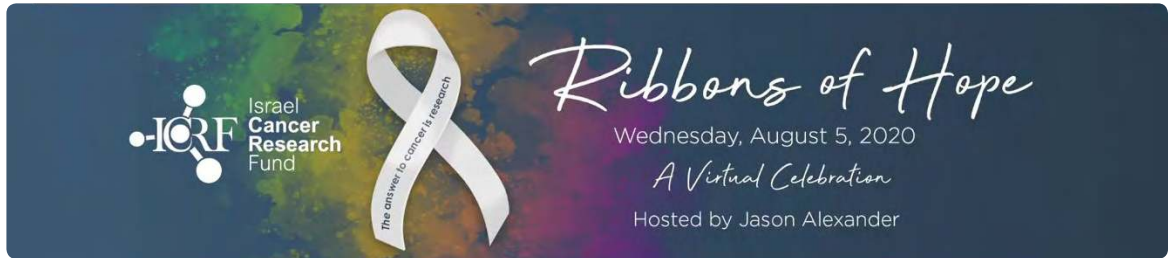
“They gave me a death sentence. There is no question about it, I wouldn’t be here if it weren’t for Gleevec®, a groundbreaking drug based on the research carried out by Professor Eli Canaani at the Weizmann Institute of Science. I’m grateful for that.”

— **Sam Fields**

*17-Year Chronic Myeloid Leukemia Cancer Survivor,  
Former Hockey Player,  
ICRF Chicago Board Member*



## 2020 ICRF Ribbons of Hope Virtual Celebration



Israel Cancer Research Fund's first-ever nationwide Ribbons of Hope virtual celebration held in August was an unforgettable evening of comedy, song, hope and inspiration.

The star-studded evening was emceed by beloved actor and comedian Jason Alexander, who was honored with the ICRF Tower of Hope Humanitarian Award and surprise unveiling of the new "Alexander Family Grant for Women's Cancers." Other guests of honor included long-time NBC broadcaster Tom Brokaw, Israeli Nobel Prize laureate Professor Aaron Ciechanover, songwriter Benj Pasek, and actors Bonnie Hunt and Eugene Levy, among others.

Over 1,400 guests registered to join ICRF for this special celebration. Participants also had the opportunity to launch their own "virtual tables" to fundraise in honor or in memory of a loved one as well as to bid in a silent auction. The evening raised \$1.4 million for groundbreaking cancer research in Israel – critical funds in this challenging time of uncertainty for ICRF.

"This gala was a unique opportunity to tell the story of Israel's truly world-class research to a national audience in an entertaining, informative and engaging fashion," said ICRF President Rob Densen. "We want to inspire hope for cancer patients and their families worldwide and, for the benefit of all humankind, generate critical dollars in support of Israel's brilliant cancer research."

To view, visit: [www.icrfonline.org/gala2020](http://www.icrfonline.org/gala2020).

Jason Alexander



"They say laughter is the best medicine. But you know who says that? Comedians. The best medicine is actually the product of brilliant cancer researchers working diligently and tirelessly in labs in Israel and across the world. That's why I am so honored to contribute in some small way to this important cause."

— Jason Alexander  
2020 ICRF Ribbons of Hope Host and Honoree



Eugene Levy



Tom Brokaw



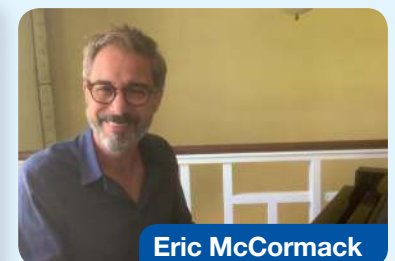
Bonnie Hunt



Bryan Cranston

"I'm very happy to be a part of this important occasion and to celebrate the genius of Prof. Ciechanover and the global importance of Israel in the sciences. We are going through a very, very difficult time in this world and will be looking once again to Israel and its genius to help us through it."

— Tom Brokaw, Multiple Myeloma survivor, treated with Velcade®, a breakthrough drug based on the groundbreaking ICRF-funded research of Professors Aaron Ciechanover and Avram Hershko

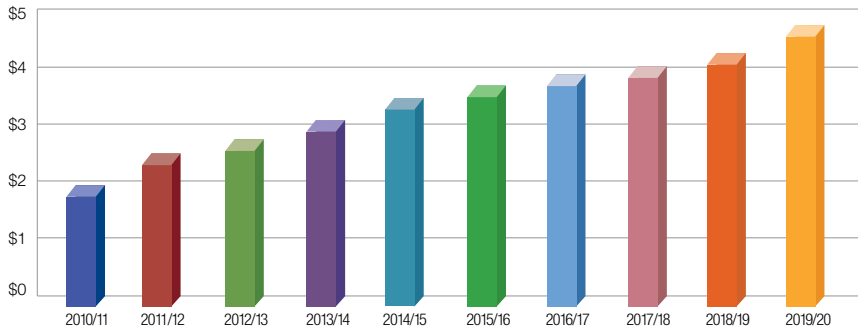


Eric McCormack

# Financials

## Annual Research Funding

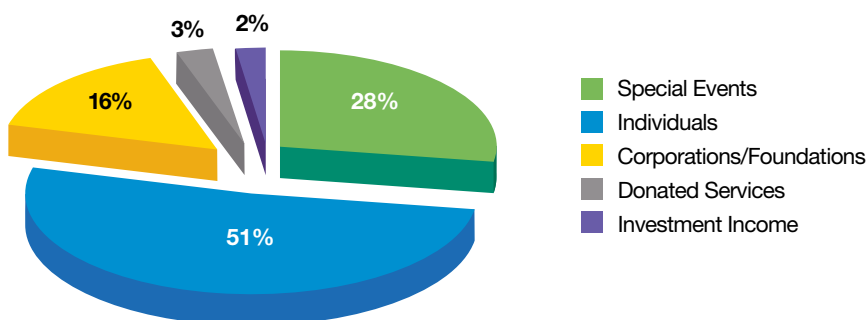
Millions of Dollars



## ICRF Funding Totals Per Institution 1990/1991 — 2019/2020

Institution	Total
Ariel University	\$205,000
Assaf Harofeh Medical Center	\$150,000
Bar-Ilan University	\$3,610,667
Ben-Gurion University	\$2,085,500
Carmel Hospital	\$319,000
Chaim Sheba Medical Center	\$3,137,500
Hadassah University Hospital	\$2,601,500
Hebrew University	\$15,285,132
Kaplan Hospital	\$85,500
MIGAL - Galilee Technology Center	\$370,000
National Institute of Oceanography	\$105,000
Rabin Medical Center, Beilinson and Golda Campuses	\$378,500
Rambam Medical Center	\$1,081,000
Schneider Children's Medical Center	\$200,000
Shaare Zedek Medical Center	\$882,000
Technion, Israel Institute of Technology	\$8,293,500
Tel Aviv Sourasky Medical Center	\$530,000
Tel Aviv University	\$9,340,000
University of Haifa	\$105,000
Volcani Institute	\$30,000
Weizmann Institute of Science	\$11,055,900
Western Galilee Medical Center	\$105,000
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$59,955,699</b>

## Sources of Income



### Your contribution can help save lives!

Make a meaningful impact on cancer research by funding an ICRF grant in your name or in honor of a loved one. A designated grant can be made at every giving level and you will receive information from the researcher.

### Named Scientific Grant Opportunities:

#### Professorship Grants

(\$550,000 over a 5-year period)

Awarded to senior scientists who have made outstanding contributions to cancer research.

#### Project Grants

(\$198,000 over a 3-year period)

Awarded to established investigators working on a specific cancer research project

#### Clinical Research Career

##### Development Awards

(\$148,500 over a 3-year period)

Awarded to promising oncologists to conduct clinical research projects early in their career.

#### Research Career

##### Development Awards

(\$148,500 over a 3-year period)

Awarded to promising investigators to conduct laboratory research projects early in their career.

#### Postdoctoral Fellowships

(\$99,000 over a 3-year period)

Awarded to new MDs and PhDs to apprentice with senior investigators.

### Special Grants:

#### Acceleration Grants

(\$154,000 over a 3-year period)

Awarded to investigators proposing highly innovative approaches advancing cancer biology and therapeutics.

#### Collaborative Funding Awards

(\$495,000 over a 3-year period)

Awarded to Israeli scientists working collaboratively with scientists at a North American institution.

#### Special Funding Initiatives

(Minimum of \$550,000 over a 3-year period)

Awarded to investigators conducting cancer research in response to a donor-initiated proposal approved by ICRF's International Scientific Council.

## A Legacy of Generosity

### Planned Giving

With a planned gift to the Israel Cancer Research Fund, you can leave a philanthropic legacy that will help those touched by cancer — now and for years to come. Whether you would like to put your donation to work today or in the future, there are a variety of opportunities for making a legacy commitment. Please visit [www.icrfonline.org/planned-giving/](http://www.icrfonline.org/planned-giving/) to learn how you can create a lasting impact on the future of cancer research.

### ICRF Donor Recognition Park in Tel Aviv

ICRF Donor Recognition Park, a 4.5 acre oasis of greenery and tranquility in recognition of ICRF's generous benefactors. Visit [www.icrfonline.org/icrf-park](http://www.icrfonline.org/icrf-park) to explore the park and learn more.



“I’ve spent the last 35 years funding and raising funds for cancer research — both here and in Israel. It is from that vantage point that I can say with assurance that ICRF’s funded scientists are among the very best in the world. I am so excited to see what the future holds — and I want to be a part of it.”  
– **Rob Densen**  
*President,  
ICRF International*

For more information about planned giving or ICRF Park naming opportunities, please contact:  
**Caitlin Shmidheiser**  
212-969-9800, ext. 227  
[caitlin.shmidheiser@icrfonline.org](mailto:caitlin.shmidheiser@icrfonline.org)

### In Memoriam



**Leah Susskind**

Leah Susskind will be remembered as one of ICRF's most ardent supporters and devoted leaders. She served on the Board of Trustees from the mid-1980s to 2011 in key leadership roles, including Chairperson. She founded the ICRF chapter in Israel and served initially as Chair and later as President, an office she held until her death. She graciously hosted ICRF missions at her home in Jerusalem to commemorate our 40th anniversary in 2015 and again in 2018.

Among ICRF's most generous donors, Leah was passionate about Israel's brilliant cancer scientists and advocated on their behalf unabashedly.



**Dr. Peter Stambrook**

Dr. Peter Stambrook was a key organizer and leader of the Scientific Review Panel and past Chair of the International Scientific Council for nearly 20 years. Respected and beloved by all who knew him, Dr. Stambrook was deeply involved in the process of selecting grant recipients and advising declined applicants on how to improve their applications for a future submission.

Dr. Mark Israel, ICRF's National Executive Director, hailed Stambrook as “the helmsman who held our scientific programs on a steady course. His sense of fairness, integrity, kindness, consummate professionalism, and relentless focus on our mission were a north star for this organization and will continue to guide us in all our endeavors.”



**Dubi Fishel**

ICRF Chicago lost a dear friend and board member Dubi Fishel, who bravely waged a battle against metastatic Pancreatic Cancer for more than 3 years. His positive attitude and fierce determination were an inspiration to all who had the privilege of knowing him. He was tireless in his commitment to raise awareness and donations for ICRF.



Visit our website and donate online: [www.icrfonline.org](http://www.icrfonline.org)

Follow us on social media: [@ICRFONLINE](https://twitter.com/ICRFONLINE)

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Mark A. Israel, MD

\* Deceased

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