



# THOMAS HARTMAN FOUNDATION FOR PARKINSON'S RESEARCH, INC.

## NEWSLETTER

### A News Bulletin From Father Tom

aa@hartmanfoundation.org (631)277-9655

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[www.hartmanfoundation.org](http://www.hartmanfoundation.org)



#### Testimonials

**Warren Newman:** Our Spirit Honoree and recipient of Deep Brain Stimulation Surgery.

- Credits this surgery for greatly reducing his symptoms and enabling him to continue to live an active life.
- Believes that it is imperative to exercise the mind and one of the ways he does this is by studying brain anatomy and physiology.

**Nathan Klein:** First person to get an experimental gene therapy treatment for Parkinson's disease infused into his brain.

- "Before the operation, I was a quivering mass of flesh. With my medications, I am like 80% or 90% better. I am at a point right now, that if you didn't know I had Parkinson's disease, you couldn't tell."
- Due to the success of the Phase I clinical trial, Phase II is currently underway which allows for higher dosages to both sides of the brain.

We believe that this strategy will lead to critical advances in the road toward improved treatment for our patients".

I am looking forward to our 6th Annual Cure for Sure Dinner honoring **John A. Danzi, Hartman Philanthropic Award** **Warren Newman, Hartman Spirit Award** on June 9th at the Crest Hollow Country Club and seeing all of you there. Please call 631-277-9655 or Email [aa@hartmanfoundation.org](mailto:aa@hartmanfoundation.org) for Sponsorships, Journals & Tickets.

Father Tom Hartman:  
Spiritual Director

John Danzi: Chairman  
Kathy Scarpinella: President

Andrew Feigin, M.D.: Medical Director

Ernest Canadeo: Director  
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David Feinblatt: Director  
Gordon Lenz Sr.: Director

Douglas Manditch: Director  
Peter Cavallaro: Secretary

Charles E. Becker: Treasurer  
Eileen M. Babich: Asst. Secretary

Dear Friends,

*We are thrilled to share the exciting news with you:*

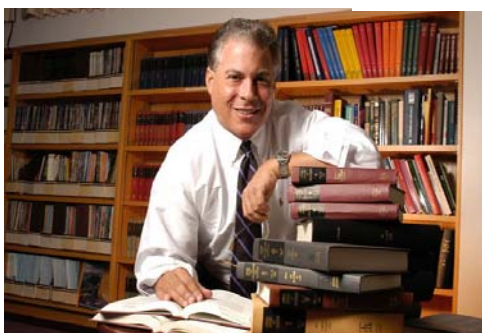
Thanks to your generous donations, progress is being made towards new therapies and treatments for Parkinson's disease.

Your dollars are helping to make the difference to improve the quality of life for all those suffering from the debilitating effects of Parkinson's disease. Their progress is because of your commitment to help put an end to Parkinson's disease.

My optimism and confidence grows stronger due to the expertise, capabilities and commitment of our highly qualified Scientific Researchers and recipients of a Thomas Hartman Foundation Grant.

**Our Mission.... To raise the funds to find the cure for Parkinson's disease.**

*"This disease can be cured with prayer, money and good science"*



*Dr. David Eidelberg, Executive Scientific Advisor to the Thomas Hartman Foundation for Parkinson's Research, Inc. Director, Center for Neurosciences The Feinstein Institute for Medical Research North Shore LIJ.*

Dr. David Eidelberg, our Executive Scientific Advisor is pleased to report to you the Scientific Research progress in Parkinson's disease that has been made possible thanks to your continuous support.

"The Thomas Hartman Foundation Scientific Advisory Grant Committee has taken a novel approach to streamlining our scientific program for maximum effectiveness. By working directly with a select group of established investigators, we have been able to define an exciting and very promising agenda to develop new insights into the molecular mechanisms underlying Parkinson's disease.

*Progress reports from our Scientific Grant Award Recipients. These Grant Awards and future awards are only possible with your continued generous support . We need your help so that Scientific Research will continue to make the breakthroughs needed to put an end to this debilitating disease.*



**D. James Surmeier, Ph.D.**

**Project title: A Novel Gene Therapy for Parkinson's Disease**

**P.I.: D. James Surmeier, Ph.D., Northwestern University**

I am pleased to report that we have made progress on three fronts.

- We have identified the chaperone protein that can be escorted to the correct place in the cells and we have engineered a new virus that will allow us to express both the chaperone and the channel protein together. We are hopeful that this new gene therapy will restore autonomous activity to globus pallidus neurons in a mouse model of Parkinson's disease - effectively re-engineering these key neural circuits to work properly, even in the absence of dopamine. If successful, it would point to a novel therapeutic strategy for late stage Parkinson's disease patients that would not rely upon an indwelling electrode. The description of the preclinical work upon which the gene therapy is based will be submitted for publication within the next 1-2 months.
- Our studies have led to a new understanding of how pacemaking is controlled in dopaminergic neurons. In particular, we have shown that the calcium channels responsible for vulnerability can be antagonized without compromising the normal functioning of dopaminergic neurons. A manuscript describing these studies is now in review at the *Journal of Neuroscience*.
- We will also determine whether L-type calcium channels leads to mitochondrial stress in LC neurons, like it does in SNc dopaminergic neurons, pointing to a common mechanism of degeneration - **and a common neuroprotective strategy**.

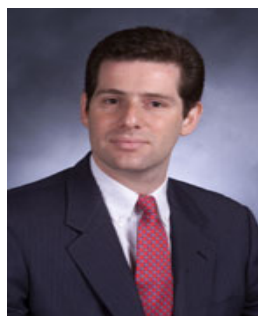


**Andrew Feigin, M.D.**

**Project title: The Molecular Basis for Cognitive Impairment in Parkinson's Disease: A PET Study**

**P.I.: Andrew Feigin, M.D., Feinstein Institute for Medical Research of the North Shore - LIJ Health System**

The Hartman Foundation has funded our project entitled "The Molecular Basis for Cognitive Impairment in Parkinson's Disease." This project is allowing us to better understand the brain changes that underlie cognitive impairment in Parkinson's disease (PD), and will lead to better approaches to the treatment of this important and disabling feature of PD. The project is utilizing state-of-the-art imaging methods to explain brain function in living Parkinson disease patients. This research study and other groundbreaking projects would not be possible without the generous support of the Hartman Foundation. Continued funding for the current studies and for future proposals is critical for improving care and quality of life for patients with Parkinson's disease.



**Michael Kaplitt, M.D., Ph.D.**

**Project title: Mitochondrial Unfolded Protein Response and Parkinson's Disease.**

**P.I.: Michael Kaplitt, M.D., Ph.D., Weill Cornell Medical College of Cornell University**

In that one possible cause of cell death in Parkinson's disease is abnormal functioning of mitochondria, which produce energy for cells we have identified a novel pathway which may protect mitochondria from the consequences of damaged (misfolded or aggregated) proteins in the midbrain of patients with Parkinson's disease. This has not been well studied previously within the mitochondria. We have obtained new insights into the nature of mitochondrial dysfunction and its harmful cellular consequences. Our results offer a possible link between specific mitochondrial dysfunctions and cellular abnormalities that are highly relevant to Parkinson's disease. Our results provides a framework for PINK (mutations cause an autosomal recessive form of Parkinson's disease) mediated pathogenesis upon which future studies can be designed and pursued.



**Serge P. Przedborski, M.D., Ph.D.**

**Project Title: Oxidative Stress/ Survival Dopaminergic Neurons**

**P.I.: Serge Przedborski, MD., Ph.D. Columbia University Department of Neurology Movement Disorders Division**

Currently, two important harmful mechanisms have been increasingly recognized as being involved in Parkinson's disease. These are inflammation within the brain and mitochondrial functional defects inside the brain cells that are dying in Parkinson's disease. Thanks to the Thomas Hartman Foundation, we have been able to begin investigations towards linking these two noxious processes using engineered cellular models of Parkinson's disease. Indeed, we are testing to determine to which extent we can detect mitochondrial functional alterations, such as those described in Parkinson's disease by recapitulating in a culture dish inflammatory conditions like those encountered in the brain of Parkinson's patients. Our preliminary data is indeed showing that inflammation mediated injury affects many aspects of the mitochondrial functions within brain cells. We are now in the process of deciphering the molecular characteristics of the machinery that links inflammation and mitochondrial defects with the ultimate goal of devising experimental therapeutic strategies that could mitigate this process.



**Rachel Saunders-Pullman, M.D., MPH**

**Project title: Parkinson's Research in Genetics, Hormonal Neuroprotection and Biomarkers**

**P. I.: Rachel Saunders-Pullman, M.D.,MPH, Beth Israel Medical Center**

Facilitated by Hartman funding, Saunders-Pullman and her colleagues at Einstein and Beth Israel and the University of Chicago studied over 70,000 women who were part of the Women's Health Initiative Study. They found that longer exposure to endogenous (the body's own) hormones decreased the risk of Parkinson's, but that supplemental estrogen/progesterone therapy does not. This suggests that these hormones may be neuroprotective in decreasing the risk of PD, but the doses used in the study were not beneficial, and that other formulations might be considered. This work was selected as a Platform Presentation at the American Academy of Neurology in Seattle, and was selected by the Academy for early news release. It has been picked up by Reuters, US News and world report, and USA Today, among other popular press.



**Nicholas K. Tonks, Ph.D., FRS**

**Project title: JNK Stimulatory Phosphatase I and the Control of MAP Kinase**

**P.I.: Nicholas K. Tonks, Ph.D., Cold Spring Harbor Laboratory**

The aim of this approach has the potential to identify critical elements of the signaling pathway associated with neurodegeneration (cell death) in Parkinson's disease. Exploring the signaling function of JSP1 and it's role in dopa minergic cell death utilizing MPTP induced neurotoxicity (brain lesions) in mouse models which replicate the features and symptoms of Parkinson's disease. This greater understanding of the signal transduction in the JNK Pathway (JSP1) will be the potential for new therapies for Parkinson's disease.

We are so excited about the progress and in roads made by our Scientific Research Grant Awardees toward the development of new therapies and the potential cure for Parkinson's disease. The excellent quality of the research projects from renowned institutions that have been submitted to us for review for funding this year have the potential to truly advance science and improve the quality of life for so many who suffer with this debilitating disease. We are close, but not there yet. Again, we need your help and support.

Please call or email the Thomas Hartman Foundation at (631)277-9655 or [aa@hartmanfoundation.org](mailto:aa@hartmanfoundation.org) for information, tickets, sponsorships and journal ads for our:

6<sup>TH</sup> ANNUAL CURE FOR SURE DINNER  
HONORING JOHN A. DANZI, HARTMAN PHILANTHROPIC AWARD  
HONORING WARREN NEWMAN, HARTMAN SPIRIT AWARD  
TUESDAY, JUNE 9, 2009  
CREST HOLLOW COUNTRY CLUB  
WOODBURY, NEW YORK

We want to take this opportunity to thank you for your continuous, generous support in our quest to find the cure for Parkinson's disease.

Our Warmest Regards,

*Fr. Tom*

Fr. Tom Hartman  
Spiritual Director

*John Danzi* *Kathy Scarpinella*

John Danzi  
Chairman

Kathy Scarpinella  
President

