

## News from the Lab

### Antibodies Project

Debbie Fund's UCL research into treatments for cervical cancer continues to be very encouraging. Preliminary studies using the antibodies developed by the Debbie Fund team have been particularly exciting. In early test tube studies they appear to be downgrading the cancer cells by interfering with and stopping migration. These results have now been presented at International conferences and published. In addition to investigating the inhibitory effect of the antibodies themselves, we are also investigating (as planned) the use of the antibodies as a means of delivering a toxic payload direct to cancer cells, either by attaching radio isotopes (for targeted radio immunotherapy) or toxins to the antibodies.

### Genomics Project

This ground breaking work continues to progress. Debbie Fund researchers have recently published early findings about how the blueprint stored in our DNA becomes corrupted, leading to the development of cervical cancer. We are now trying to learn more about this process, and how this knowledge could help us to identify individuals at increased risk of developing cervical cancer.

In a complementary approach, working in collaboration with UCL's Prof Martin Widschwendter, we are looking at the epigenetics of cervical cancer- that is the chemical modifications in DNA, which precede changes in the DNA sequence itself- to identify epigenetic changes that occur very early in the development of cervical cancers.

## Thank you Moon Beaver



In February we were delighted to be invited to Moon Beaver Solicitors to be presented with a cheque for the incredible amount of £4,646.25, which they raised with their annual quiz. Led by Frances Coulson, the team behind the fundraising presented the cheque to Debbie Fund board member Katy Philips. Since Debbie Fund was set up, Moon Beaver have been highly generous and supportive, so it was a great opportunity to thank them in person for their efforts and inform them of the progress that the research we fund is making.

## Meet the Scientists Evening

The team working on the Debbie Fund project at the UCL Cancer Institute kindly opened up their lab to a group of Debbie Fund supporters for an evening briefing on the progress of the research. It was fascinating to hear how the team are setting about the research, and the tremendous progress they had made by that stage in identifying antibodies which target cervical cancer cells and in developing methods for lab scale manufacture of the antibodies. All those who attended were very impressed by the ingenuity, dedication and enthusiasm of the team led by Prof Kerry Chester. We hope to offer similar evenings later this year or in the Spring, to which all supporters will again be invited.



Debbie Fund Researcher Dr Enrique Miranda Rota



@DebbieFund

Debbie Fund joined **Twitter** a year ago, and we've had a very enjoyable 1st year. Twitter is a great way for us to engage with people who care about the cause, who are interested in medical research and who have new and exciting fundraising ideas. It's a more regular way for us to update people about what we're up to, and it also offers opportunities to connect with similar charities across the world. If you're on Twitter, follow us **@DebbieFund** to keep up to date with our news and to help spread the word!

## Working with Jo's Trust and Cancer 52

Debbie Fund and Jo's Trust have been meeting from time to time this year to find ways of working together and helping each other with our aims. Jo's Trust are doing a lot of great work on raising awareness of the symptoms of cervical cancer by women and GPs, and we have joined forces via Cancer 52 (the umbrella organisation for charities of the less common cancers such as cervical) in a workshop on the Be Clear on Cancer Campaign by Public Health England, to think about how the campaign could be extended to less common cancers. We have also been actively retweeting for each other on social media.

## Cervical Cancer Awareness Week

January saw Cervical Cancer Awareness week across Europe. To provide an insight into the research Debbie Fund has been funding since it was first set up, we made a short film featuring board member Dr Mary McCormack and the team that works in the lab: Professor Kerry Chester, Dr Enrique Miranda Rota and Dr Tim Fenton. Over the course of half a day's filming in the lab with film student Emma Roberts, we discovered that scientific equipment and audiovisual equipment aren't the best of friends. However we overcame these technical issues and produced a film that both documents the incredible progress of our research, and also creates a link between the research being done in the lab and the huge impact it could have on women in the future. See the film at [www.debbiefund.org](http://www.debbiefund.org)



We are delighted to welcome **Shirley Collings** onto the Debbie Fund advisory board. Shirley has a particular focus liaising with Jo's Trust about cervical cancer screening, and raising both GPs and women's awareness of symptoms. Tragically, Shirley's daughter Helen, pictured left with her mother, died from cervical cancer in 2008, less than a year after her wedding, following a series of missed diagnoses. Read her story on the website, [www.debbiefund.org](http://www.debbiefund.org)

## Debbie Fund Fifth Anniversary Event 3rd March 2015

We will be holding an event on Tuesday 3rd March 2015, at 6.30pm, both to celebrate the progress the Debbie Fund research programme has made and to raise funds to enable us to continue with this research, which holds so much promise for the treatment of cervical and other cancers.

## Getting the WI involved

Following an approach by advisory board member Shirley Collings the WI nationally is now holding a discussion about late diagnosis of cervical cancer in the older women and an article on this issue is scheduled for publication in their national magazine next year.

## London Marathon 2014

In April this year Debbie Fund was represented in the London Marathon by four runners, Annie Coulson, Luke Trickett, Danny Hornsby and David Kerrigan. All ran brilliantly and were very happy with their times, the fastest at 3 hours 32 minutes and the final Debbie Fund runner, beaten by Big Bird and Paddington Bear but nevertheless still clocking 5 hours 25 minutes. We are hugely grateful for the total of £12,579 they raised.



## Introducing the Debbie Phillips Rose

On a sunny day in June, Debbie's parents Norman and Pauline Fisher, along with her daughter Katy, made a trip to Harkness roses to pick a new species of flower to name after Debbie. Rewinding to the Debbie Fund Ball, Geoff and Fiona Squires bid on and won the right to name one of the famous Harkness roses, a prize that had been generously donated. They very kindly decided to give the right to name this rose to Debbie's parents, and so they found themselves a couple of years later looking at a sea of beautiful new roses accompanied by Peter Harkness himself. They chose a rose based on Debbie's taste and personality, a balance of the flower's look and scent. The Debbie Phillips rose will be available from Autumn 2015.



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*Just follow the link, <http://www.giveasyoulive.com>*