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ARTHRITIS FOUNDATION ANNOUNCES 2008 RESEARCH GRANT RECIPIENTS *Nearly \$800,000 Awarded to Fund Research at UCLA, USC, Cedars-Sinai Medical Center and Children's Hospital Los Angeles*

LOS ANGELES (September 3, 2008)— The Arthritis Foundation, Southern California Chapter, today announced that sixteen physicians, professors and post-doctoral fellows representing UCLA, USC, Cedars-Sinai Medical Center and Children's Hospital Los Angeles received grants totaling almost \$800,000 to support their research on arthritis and related diseases. The grants will fund research on various rheumatic and systemic autoimmune diseases such as lupus, arthritis, osteoporosis, osteoarthritis, accelerated atherosclerosis, and juvenile arthritis. They will also fund arthritis youth programs and pediatric fellowship programs at local hospitals.

“The Arthritis Foundation congratulates the sixteen distinguished research award recipients from UCLA, USC, Cedars-Sinai Medical Center and Children's Hospital Los Angeles,” said Manuel Loya, President and CEO of the Southern California Chapter. He added, “Their research will improve the lives of the nearly 5 million adults and children touched by arthritis or related diseases within our Chapter, and importantly, move us even closer to finding a cure.”

A total of eight awards were given to support the local arthritis research community. The **Meyer Arthritis Young Investigator Award** is awarded to those who are committed to pursuing research careers in the field of rheumatic diseases. The \$50,000 awards were presented to **Yankel Gabet, D.M.D., Ph.D.**, of USC Keck School of Medicine; **Xiangshu Wen, M.D., Ph.D.**, and **Maida Wong, M.D.**, of the UCLA David Geffen School of Medicine.

The \$60,000 **Tina C. Foundation Lupus Research Awards** were given to **Bevra Hahn, M.D.**, chief of the rheumatology and arthritis division at UCLA School of Medicine, **Antonio La Cava, M.D., Ph.D.**, adjunct associate professor at UCLA, and **William Stohl, M.D., Ph.D.**, professor and chief of rheumatology at USC Keck School of Medicine.

The **Innovative Research Grant** is awarded to research projects which involve an especially high degree of innovation or address unique and relevant research questions pertaining to rheumatic diseases. **Christina Charles-Schoeman, M.D., Ph.D.**, **Meika Fang, M.D.**, and **Mariko Ishimori, M.D.**, all of the UCLA School of Medicine, received grants of \$60,000.

The \$60,000 **Orthopedic Award** was presented to **Keith Markolf, Ph.D.**, of the UCLA School of Medicine, to support research involving anterior cruciate ligament (ACL) reconstruction.

The **Quality of Life Award** of \$30,000 was given to **Andrew Wong, M.D.**, of UCLA Olive-View Medical Center. The award will fund development of a theater, art and music program for youth with arthritis.

Bracha Shaham, M.D., of Children's Hospital Los Angeles, and **Deborah McCurdy, M.D.**, of Mattel Children's Hospital-UCLA, will each receive the \$30,000 **Clinical Rheumatology Pediatric Fellowship Training Award**. This award is given to support selection and appointment of trainees in pediatric rheumatology within their respective institutions.

The **Jane Wyman Trust** awardees are **Buer Song, M.D., Ph.D.**, of the UCLA School of Medicine, and **Alice Dan-In Chang-Hoftman, M.D.**, of Mattel Children's Hospital-UCLA. Song's research project will center on osteoarthritis, while Chang-Hoftman will focus on pediatric lupus. This grant, named after Academy Award-winning actress and humanitarian, Jane Wyman, will provide Song and Chang-Hoftman with \$50,000 each towards their research.

Sanjeev Baniwal, Ph.D., a post-doctoral fellow in the Institute for Genetic Medicine of the USC School of Medicine. will receive the \$50,000 **California Community Foundation Award**. His research efforts will focus on the role of estrogens in skeletal metabolism.

The Arthritis Foundation is the largest private, non-profit contributor to arthritis research in the world. Since its inception in 1948, it has invested more than \$380 million on research to support more than 2,200 scientists, physicians and health professionals involved in cutting-edge arthritis research. The Southern California Chapter of the Arthritis Foundation has funded almost \$5 million in research grants locally since 1997 in its efforts to advance the Foundation's mission to prevent, control and cure arthritis and related diseases through research, public health and advocacy programs. For more information, call 1.800.954-2873 (CURE), or visit www.arthritis.org.

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