

# Transplant Talk

ISSUE 02  
2013

## Mostly Mozart in Mona Vale raises \$32,000 for Arrow!

On the 9th of March, Prue and Andy Kennard generously made available their home on Pittwater for "Mostly Mozart in Mona Vale", a dinner and concert to raise funds for Arrow in memory of Katherine Robertson.

The weather was kind, the food and wine excellent and the concert memorable. Prue and Andy had engaged Alan Maddox and Lynne Murray (MC and Soprano), Rachel Whealy and her fine Bravura Classical Players; and rising opera star Samuel Dundas charmed the ladies with his baritone arias (Samuel has since won the prestigious Lady Mary Fairfax Scholarship). Professor David Ma gave all present food for



thought with his outline of Arrow's aims, and many of those present took the opportunity to speak to him after his talk.

The 100+ guests enjoyed themselves immensely and a total of \$32,000 was raised – some intriguing silent auction items produced spirited bidding. Katherine's parents, Judith and Frank, and the Arrow Bone Marrow Transplant Foundation, are most grateful to the Kennards for their wonderful hospitality.

## Arrow purchases vital medical research equipment



Robyn Flood receives the \$13,000 grant from Allens

With the generous support of our donors, a Panasonic Multigas incubator (Low Oxygen incubator) and ThermoFisher Savant (SpeedVac) have been purchased for the medical research team at the Blood Stem Cell and Cancer Research Unit, St Vincent's Hospital, Sydney. Arrow supporters contributed \$15,000 to the acquisition of the Oxygen incubator, and a \$13,000 grant from Allens, a leading international law firm, enabled the purchase of a SpeedVac for the research team. Both pieces of equipment will ultimately help to improve bone marrow transplant outcomes for patients.

*Jim Dwyer, Chairman of the Allens Charity Committee, said, "Allens is proud to be supporting the Arrow Bone Marrow Transplant Foundation. We hope the SpeedVac machine will assist the valuable research work into diseases treatable by bone marrow and stem cell therapy."*

## The Allan Frenkel Foundation gives patient services a \$20,000 boost

While Allan Frenkel underwent treatment for Acute Lymphatic Leukaemia at just 18 years of age, his mother Marissa experienced a severe lack of useful support for teenagers with cancer, and decided to do something about it. The Allan Frenkel Foundation was established in 1997 and continues to raise funds for patient services. At this year's dinner, Arrow's Vice-President, Mark O'Hara, was presented with a donation of \$20,000 which will directly support Arrow's travel and emergency assistance programs. The fun filled night was attended by friends, family and supporters of the Allan Frenkel Foundation – and included a surprise visit by soccer legend Tim Cahill! We thank Marissa, Eduardo and their family and friends for their ongoing commitment to making a real difference to the lives of patients and their families.



Frenkel family with Tim Cahill

## donations in memoriam

We gratefully acknowledge donations received in memory of:

- Katherine Robertson
- Sylvia Hartog
- Sandra Mason
- Whitney Lane
- Dianne D'Alessandro
- David Cresswell

## 2013 events

**Hawkesbury Canoe Classic**  
26th -27th October, 2013  
[www.canoeclassic.asn.au](http://www.canoeclassic.asn.au)

**Light the Night charity benefit concert**  
Monday 28th October, 2013  
[www.lightthenight.com.au](http://www.lightthenight.com.au)

**Coke Memorial surfing event**  
26th and 27th October, 2013

**Calendar Girls**  
11th- 19th October  
Zenith Theatre, Chatswood

**Arrow AGM**  
Friday 8th November, 2013

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## Fundraising



## Walk 4 Whit does it again at the 2013 City2Surf

The Walk 4 Whit team raised a huge \$15,806 at the 2013 City2Surf in memory of Whitney Lane who passed away last year at only 19 years old. Twenty-five of the twenty-six heroes that raised funds for Arrow at this year's City2Surf were part of the Walk 4 Whit team which has raised \$30,293 in just two years.

Walk 4 Whit team leader, Ellena Winstanley, said, "Once again it was a real thrill to get behind the Arrow Foundation. Having doubled our team numbers this year the Walk 4 Whit team certainly stood out in force. It was a perfect day, great fun was enjoyed by all, and it is an honour to be able to support such a vitally important Foundation in the lives of many touched by unfortunate diseases. We look forward to expanding the Walk 4 Whit team again next year and continuing to walk in memory of our dear friend for Arrow."

## Nine'N Dine drives further funding for Arrow

The Nine'N Dine fundraiser organised by Arrow Directors, Kerry Moran and Colleen Presnell, can best be described as a hole in one, raising \$9000 for Arrow! It was a stunning day, course conditions were perfect and the BBQ dinner was enjoyed by all. Arrow board member and past patient, Julie Soon, shared her touching personal story, Professor Tony Dodds shed some light on what Arrow aims to achieve and David Nomchong kept the night, and the dollars, rolling as the MC and auctioneer for the evening.



## Support the 2013 Hawkesbury Canoe Classic



The Hawkesbury Canoe Classic (HCC) is Arrow's biggest fundraiser raising \$200,000 in 2012 and over \$3.1 million dollars over the past 19 years. The funds raised are used to support the Arrow/HCC Senior Research Scientist grant as well as providing PhD student scholarships and further funding for research into a cure for leukaemia – so please show your support by getting involved as a volunteer on Saturday 26th October. You can also help by sponsoring Arrow's Vice-President, Mark O'Hara, as he takes on the 111km overnight challenge for the 11th consecutive year in memory of his good mate, Greg Neate, who battled AML and twice paddled the HCC. Find out more at: [www.canoeclassic.asn.au](http://www.canoeclassic.asn.au)

Make a donation today! Visit [www.arrow.org.au](http://www.arrow.org.au) or complete the form overleaf.

## Latest research Telehealth project receives \$60,000 grant from Arrow

Written by Professor David Ma.

The internet is set to provide an innovative and efficient way of providing health services which aim to improve the lives of Haematopoietic Stem Cell Transplant (HSCT) patients. Arrow provided a grant of \$60,000 to fund a cutting-edge telehealth project at St Vincent's Hospital, Sydney.

Many Australians who undergo a transplant each year are cured of their disease; however, they remain at risk of developing health-related problems. A recent study at the St Vincent's Hospital transplant unit identified a number of transplant related complications including: fatigue, insomnia, psycho-social malfunction and reduced physical fitness. The Arrow funded study aims to deliver home-based exercise, stress management and immunisation surveillance programmes to patients who are over six months post-transplant.

HSCT are performed in a few highly specialised centres in capital cities. Access to healthcare services can be particularly difficult for patients living in rural and remote areas. This is where low cost, multi-media technology can serve to reduce the burden of frequent clinic visits by providing patients with online access to healthcare professionals from virtually any location.

The grant from Arrow has supported the employment of two part-time staff essential to commence this research project this year. If successful, this pioneering work can be expanded to include other healthcare interventions to meet the needs of post-transplant patients in all transplant centres in Australia. We expect that this type of telehealth programme can be employed to improve the physical and mental health of patients after organ transplant or suffering from diseases such as renal failure or diabetes.

## Trisomy 21 Research Report

Written by Professor David Ma.

Acute leukaemia is the number one cause of cancer in children. Sadly, one in five babies born with Down Syndrome (DS, Trisomy 21) develop abnormal blood cells at birth, which can evolve into acute leukaemia in 20% of these infants. This occurrence rate is 500 times higher than the age-matched general population. Current treatment has significant side effects and is stressful for the child and their family. Although the extra copy of chromosome 21 in Down Syndrome is linked with the increased risk of getting leukaemia, genetic defects on other chromosomes would likely play a role in the development of leukaemia. Indeed mutations of key genes that regulate blood stem cell growth and development, like GATA1 and TP53, are frequently identified in Down Syndrome leukaemia children. Precisely how these genetic defects work with each other to cause acute leukaemia remains unclear.

Our research uses a novel approach to recreate leukaemia from Down Syndrome stem cells in the laboratory. Using a cutting edge molecular biology method invented a few years ago by Japanese

researchers, we have been able to convert Down Syndrome skin cells into a renewable source of embryonic-like stem cells known as induced pluripotent stem cells (iPSCs). In our further experiments, we were able to direct these iPSCs to form blood stem cells (CD34+) and then mature blood cells. Interestingly, we found Down Syndrome iPSCs produced significantly more blood cells compared to control cells. These exciting findings suggest that our iPSC culture system can reproduce the abnormal development of blood cells expected in these infants and could be used to investigate the cancer causing genes leading to Down Syndrome leukaemia.

Our next step is to use gene editing technology on our iPSCs to test which one of the suspected cancer causing genes will transform the blood cells to become cancerous. In doing so, we will be able to trace, step by step, the molecular circuitry/pathways involved in the development of blood cancer and hopefully identify candidate targets for new drug discovery.



## A movie night in memory of Sylvia Hartog

In the last edition of Transplant Talk, Philip Hartog shared a personal story about his late wife, Sylvia, and her battle with Myelofibrosis, a disorder of the bone marrow. Almost \$23,500 has since been donated to Arrow in Sylvia's memory, with \$10,000 of that amount raised through a movie night which was organised by Angela Schafer in Sylvia's memory. We are sincerely grateful to Angela and the many friends and family that filled the Randwick Ritz cinema to maximum capacity to pay tribute to Sylvia.



