

A celebration of generosity By Kate Villars

“I can’t think of a better place to get passionate about than Dartmouth-Hitchcock. . . . It’s the greatest health-care facility that we have in this state,” said John Xiggoros as he accepted Dartmouth-Hitchcock’s 2011 Outstanding Community Ambassador award.

Speaking in September at a gathering of DMS and DH donors, Xiggoros was preaching to the choir: the annual donor appreciation reception acknowledges community members who are committed to advancing research, medical education, and patient care through their philanthropic support.

The award honored Xiggoros for his commitment to supporting the Children’s Hospital at Dartmouth (CHaD) and its young patients. It also coincided with a milestone in his many years of dedicated fund-raising for Kristen’s Gift, an endowment that he and his wife, Patty, established in memory of their daughter, who died of a rare form of lymphoma in 1997. The fund supports special projects and programs in CHaD’s pediatric oncology unit. Just days before the September 22 donor reception, Chris and Alyson Carpenter gave \$200,000 to Kristen’s Gift. The largest contribution to the endowment to date, their donation put the fund over the \$1-million mark.

Kate Villars is associate director of development communications for DMS-DH.

ALL: JON GILBERT FOX



Bruce Stanton, Ph.D. (pictured), and Kathy Sabadosa, M.P.H., spoke at the donor event about translational research and quality improvement for patients with cystic fibrosis.



John Xiggoros (seated, right) was the recipient of this year’s Outstanding Community Ambassador award; seated, left, is his wife, Patty Xiggoros. Behind them are, from the left, their son, Jason Xiggoros, and daughter-in-law, Michelle Xiggoros; and Cynthia and John Ickes, the parents of Alyson Carpenter, who, with her husband, Chris Carpenter, gave a recent gift that put a fund established by the Xiggoroses over the \$1-million mark.



Among the many others who mingled and conversed at the annual donor appreciation event were (from the left in each photo) 1 Michelle and Erik Cinquemani; 2 Alden Hall, M.D., Joel Perry, and Jeffrey Steinkamp; 3 David Bradley, Steve Ensign, June Hemberger, and Jean Brown; and 4 Jim Weinstein, D.O., Dick Couch, and Al Griggs.

Zeal without knowledge is fire without light.

—Thomas Henry Huxley, 19th-century English biologist

Looking for impact By Kate Villars

“This is the dream of every scientist,” says Alfonso Romero-Sandoval, M.D., Ph.D., of his selection as a Rita Allen Foundation Pain Scholar. Romero-Sandoval is referring not only to the distinction of this highly competitive three-year grant, but also to the wide latitude it offers promising, early-career investigators in pursuing innovative ideas.

“The Rita Allen Foundation really knows how science works,” says Romero-Sandoval. An assistant professor of anesthesiology and of pharmacology and toxicology, he studies chronic pain. “If you find that the results of the research project you proposed uncover a more interesting hypothesis,” he says, “you have the liberty to pursue it. This is unusual.”

The Rita Allen Foundation “recognizes faculty in the early stage of their careers for distinguished achievements in pain research, and for their expect-

ed future contributions to this important area of translational research,” explains Ethan Dmitrovsky, M.D., chair of pharmacology and toxicology. “We were all delighted to learn that Dr. Romero-Sandoval was selected as a recipient of this prestigious award.”

Born and raised in Guatemala, Romero-Sandoval earned an M.D. in his home

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country before going into research. “I think I’m one of very few doctors in Guatemala who has decided not to do clinical work,” he says. “I thought I could eventually have a bigger impact on human health with a research career than working as a physician.”

That decision took him to Spain, where he earned his doctorate in neuroscience under Juan Herrero, Ph.D., at Universidad de Alcalá, studying the mechanisms of new analgesic drugs. “For me it was just like science fiction coming true—having in my hands all this stuff I had read about in my medical school books and getting really interesting results,” says Romero-Sandoval.

At the urging of his mentor, he went on to a fellowship in the U.S., working with James Eisenach, M.D., at Wake Forest University, where he delved into questions about

the role of the immune response to peripheral nerve injury in inducing pain. In 2006, Romero-Sandoval joined the DMS lab of Joyce DeLeo, Ph.D., where he began studying the role of the central nervous system in chronic pain. Now heading his own lab at DMS, he is continuing the same line of investigation. This work “addresses an important problem,” says Thomas Dodds, M.D., chair of anesthesiology. “His lab is generating exciting data for the potential treatment of chronic neuropathic pain disorders. This award is an important validation of his work to date.”

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It’s this potential for impact that the Rita Allen Foundation seeks to recognize. Its Scholars in Pain program, a collaboration with the American Pain Society, is part of a broader Scholars Program that embraces analgesics, neuroscience, cancer, and immunology; among the over 90 past Rita Allen Scholars are many prominent researchers who have made important medical advances. The Foundation is betting that Romero-Sandoval will do so as well.

Creating opportunity

Dr. Robert Liberman, DMS ’60, made a recent gift supporting scholarships at DMS. A Distinguished Professor of Psychiatry at UCLA, he is widely recognized as a leader in the field of psychiatric rehabilitation. “We create opportunities by seeing what is possible, turning the possible into an attainable goal, and persisting and reaching to snatch it,” wrote Liberman at the time of his 45th DMS reunion. His gift will help today’s students do just that.



Employees give generously

Employees of Dartmouth Medical School and Dartmouth-Hitchcock gave generously to the 2011 Employee Giving Campaign, with almost 1,300 employee donors making gifts totaling \$650,000. Since the first Employee Giving Campaign in 2007, nearly 3,000 current and former employees have contributed over \$5.5 million to DMS and DH.



MARK WASHBURN

Romero-Sandoval researches pain.