



Greetings!

During this season of reflection and celebration, join OMF in recognizing the accomplishments of 2015 and thanking all the Warriors in our community who made it possible.

October's [Eye Am Not Alone \(EANA\) Patient Retreat](#) was a swimming success, bringing together over a hundred patients, caregivers and physicians in the stimulating environs of the Cleveland Clinic. Beyond the vigorous medical discussions, the sense of community was palpable and underscored that, in this fight, no one is alone.

2015 saw a record number of [Warrior events](#), enabling OMF to award a record number of TAG travel grants. Our Warriors flooded the country with races numerous 5Ks to the New York Marathon and the American Cancer Society Relay. We even saw the Warrior program extend to pickleball, cocktail parties and a [Color Run](#).

On the research front, OMF strengthened its partnerships with AACR, committing to a third \$50,000 research grant; the Rare Cancer Research Foundation as we helped setup the [first immortalized OM cell lines at the ATCC](#); and with [Aura Biosciences](#), developer of a novel primary tumor treatment. In partnership with A Cure In Sight, OMF also directly funded programs at UCSF (Dr. Damato) and Jefferson University in Philadelphia (Dr. Sato).

But perhaps the greatest reason to celebrate is the friendship and kindness we spread as a community. Whether you are fighting ocular melanoma yourself or providing patient care as a friend, family member, or medical professional, we have felt the support and kindness in our interactions. It is relationships, after all, that make this life so precious and wonderful.

May your holiday celebrations be filled with love and laughter.

Patient Retreat Recap - The Cleveland Clinic

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UPCOMING EVENTS



Swing for Sight
April 30, 2016
Napa Valley, CA

[Learn more >](#)

BY THE NUMBERS

- 13 years since founding
- #1 on Google for OM
- \$175,513 raised in 2014
- 3,011 Facebook 'likes'
- 2,306 Forum members
- 13,900 Twitter followers
- 58,309 web visitors in 2015



Collaboration Amongst Medical Professionals, Patients and Caregivers

"EANA gives me hope," said an attendee at this year's Patient Retreat. During a packed fall weekend in Cleveland, over one hundred patients and caregivers absorbed research updates and critical care insights from over 30 different speakers. Acting as host and keynote speaker, Dr. Arun Singh of the Cleveland Clinic provided a research update (soon to be published) that will impact post-treatment OM monitoring.



Beyond the medical information, attendees heard from a range of patients and socialized over two gala dinners. Deeply personal stories from Vivian Root and Bill Grieb (pictured above) provided inspiration to all those in attendance.

If you missed the conference, all the educational sessions are available on OMF's YouTube channel at j.mp/EANA15.



Finally, we are pleased to announce next year's conference will be held in Fall 2016 at the Bascom Palmer Eye Institute in Miami, FL with Dr. William Harbour chairing the event. Stay tuned as we add updates on the OMF website.

EANA Pictures



Attendees included a 41 year survivor



Genetic testing panel with Impact Genetics and Castle Biosciences



Attendees sparking conversation in the 'Ask the Ophthalmologist' Q&A panel



OMF Staff overseeing the Warrior Store

Aura Clinical Trials

Aura Biosciences was thrilled to participate at this year's [Eye Am Not Alone Patient Retreat](#) at the world renowned Cleveland Clinic. This was the third year that CEO and Founder, Eli de los Pinos, participated in the conference and shared an update on Aura's progress advancing a potential clinical treatment of primary intraocular tumors.

"Patients are at the center of everything we do at Aura, as they have been from the beginning," said Eli. "We are honored to participate in the Eye Am Not Alone Patient Retreat, which provides such a fantastic opportunity to bring together the OM community to share knowledge and make important personal connections."

Clinical Trial for AU-011

Aura's therapy, AU-011, has the potential to be the first ever developed for the primary



treatment of OM. The goal is to create a safe and effective way of eliminating cancer cells early in the disease course with the selectivity of molecular surgery, preserving vision and transforming the treatment of Ocular Melanoma into an outpatient procedure. A video explaining how Aura's technology is applied to ocular melanoma can be accessed at the Aura website at aurabiosciences.com.

Aura is preparing to start a Phase 1/2 clinical trial in 2016 and recently held an Investigator's Meeting to discuss the protocol with several top OM specialists from around the country who will be participating in the study. The goal of the Phase 1/2 trial is to assess the safety and efficacy of different doses and dosing regimens of AU-011 for the treatment of small choroidal melanomas.

Aura has identified 10 sites in the US for the clinical trial. Aura is unable at this time to say the location of the sites, but is excited to be working with top physicians around the country. Once the Investigational New Drug (IND) application is cleared with the FDA, Aura will be launching a website for patients interested in participating in the clinical study to help connect patients with clinical trial sites. Aura will also continue to work with the OMF to provide updates through the Eye On A Cure newsletter and website. If you have additional questions, please email clinical@aurabiosciences.com.

The entire team at Aura is working hard and very excited to bring this important therapy closer to the clinic and patients.

OM Cell Line Bank

This past year, OMF partnered with the [Rare Cancer Research Foundation \(RCRF\)](#) to create a collection of well-characterized and universally available OM cell lines. Together, we have already secured six uveal melanoma cell lines from the Institut Curie in Paris for accessioning and deposit into [ATCC](#), the world's largest cell-line repository.



These initial uveal melanoma cell lines were established from either patient's tumors or patient-derived xenografts (PDXs). They represent the molecular landscape of the disease in terms of genetic alterations and mutations. All the cell lines display GNAQ or GNA11 activating mutations, and importantly three of them display BAP1 (BRCA1 associated protein-1) deficiency, a hallmark of aggressive disease with higher morbidity. Each is "immortal" and as such have the ability to replicate indefinitely. Immortal cell lines are a foundation of research infrastructure and as models are fundamental for the study of cellular pathways, essential for the understanding of the resistance/sensitivity patterns of existing chemotherapies and critical for the development of new anticancer drugs.

The six cell lines are currently being accessioned at ATCC and by late spring 2016 should be available to the global research community including researchers in academia and government, as well as private industry.

RCRF and OMF are concurrently seeking additional cell lines and working with other institutions to make what already exists more easily accessible through the ATCC bank. Looking ahead, the two organizations are creating an incentive structure and streamlined submission and verification process to drive further collaboration and availability of other cell lines and research tissues.

Warrior Fundraising & Awareness Spotlight

October 24, 2015

The mottos on the Color Run t-shirts say, "When life gives you color, run with it!"

There was plenty of color on this autumn day. Lancaster High student, Natalie, organized the wonderful event which the school's student government hopes to hold annually. The goal of this year's event was to spread awareness and raise funds for research.

The excitement and support reverberated through the beautiful morning. Clouds of orange, green, yellow, and blue dyed the white shirts and painted the streets. Participants enjoyed running through the color so much, many of them made extra laps to run through the color multiple times.

"The color represents hope!" said a volunteer. "We all go through hard things, but we can all come together and find beauty."



Interested in Putting On A Warrior Event in 2016?

The Warrior Fundraising Program is OMF's platform to empower members of the OM community to contribute their own time, talent and treasure. We work with YOU to put on an event or do something amazing - whether it's hosting a BBQ at your home, running a 10k or hosting an awareness event at your child's school. We can supply you with helpful instructions and best practices, plenty of giveaways (brochures, SEE A CURE sunglasses, t-shirts, etc.), and even additional volunteers and funds to make it a success! We can also work alongside you to ensure your event raises awareness of OM and funds for OMF research initiatives.

To learn more or to get your event planning started today, drop Holly, OMF's Warrior Program Director, a note at holly@ocularmelanoma.org.