

Let's Go!

**ACTIVE
AGAINST
ALS**



ANN ARBOR NEWSLETTER
SPRING 2016



Sam's Rivalry Ride Rolls On

Every fall the Rivalry Ride, which began as Sam Sugerman's mitzvah project in 2012, brings Wolverine and Spartan fans together to raise critical funds for ALS.

The Sugerman-Rosen family has a fall ritual. On the Saturday of the UM-MSU game, rain or shine, they hop on their bikes and ride the 68 miles between Ann Arbor and Lansing as part of the annual Rivalry Ride for ALS.

The first ride took place on October 20, 2012. Sam Sugerman, twelve years old at the time, proposed it as his mitzvah project in preparation for his Bar Mitzvah that December. The son of UM-MSU alumni, he liked the idea of bringing rivals together to raise funds for ALS research. The story took hold on websites and sports blogs and nearly 200 people donated in honor of Sam, many of whom knew him only from reading about his project.

On that daunting first ride, Sam rode with his two brothers and a good buddy. They had so much fun that Sam knew even before that first ride was over that he wanted the Rivalry Ride to be a big deal, every year.

Indeed, each year more riders join the group. This past fall, almost 20 riders made the trek from Spartan Stadium to the Big House. Since its inception four years ago, the Rivalry Ride has raised over \$24,000 for ALS research, which is impressive when you consider Sam's original goal was to raise \$3,000.

Rivalry Ride cyclists can ride all or part way, and this year supporters joined them for lunch and donuts at the Dexter Cider Mill. Drivers and helpers are also needed. Why not make plans to **join the next Rivalry Ride on Saturday, October 29**. Get inspired by young people like Sam who understand that being active – for a cause – can make a difference!

Research: Unraveling the mysteries of ALS

The primary mission of Active Against ALS is to fund research toward effective treatments and ultimately a cure for ALS. To this end, we created a scientific advisory board to help us select our grant recipients. As an organization, we also seek to understand the research goals of the scientists we fund. In mid-November, several of us toured the research laboratory of Active Against ALS funds recipient **Dr. Sami Barmada** in the Taubman Biomedical Sciences Building.

Using a 3-D model of the brain and spinal cord to describe different types of neurons, Dr. Barmada explained how ALS affects these neurons and why he believes that measuring neurodegeneration is critical to finding a cure.

Two of Dr. Barmada's team members showed us their wet lab and tissue culture facility. Nate Safren illustrated how they derive neurons from human stem cells to create a genetically accurate model for testing therapies.

Cont'd on pg. 2



Participants in the fourth annual Rivalry Ride assemble in East Lansing before embarking on the 68-mile ride to the Big House. Rivalry Ride founder Sam Sugerman (right) poses at the finish in Ann Arbor.



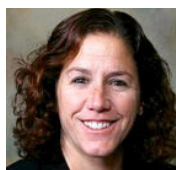
Welcome new board members



Anne Gilbert is currently a realtor with Howard Hanna in Ann Arbor. Anne volunteered on the Family Field Day Committee for a number of years, serving as chair in 2014, and currently serves on the Technology Committee. Anne worked in the pharmaceutical industry for over 18 years after earning her B.S.E. and M.S.E. from U-M School of Engineering.



Jenny Jalet has volunteered at many of our events, and was a member of the Channel for ALS relay team in 2012. She has a master's in administration from Central Michigan University and is a Performance Support Analyst for Information Technology Services at U-M.



Gayle Rosen is an attorney for U-M Student Legal Services. A member of our founding board, Gayle and her family have been volunteers at our events and are the organizers of the Rivalry Ride. Gayle has her B.A. from U-M and her J.D. from the Washington College of Law at American University.

Suzanne Ross steps off board and into new staff position

The **James A. and Faith Knight Foundation** has awarded Ann Arbor Active Against ALS a two-year grant of \$34,800 to support the costs of an administrator and bookkeeper. This grant will allow us to hire founding member/former board president **Suzanne Ross** as our first Program Administrator, and to retain our part-time bookkeeper, **Alicia Frenette**. Aside from Alicia, we have been a completely volunteer organization since 2008; having a paid administrator marks an exciting new chapter for us! This is the second grant we have received from the Knight Foundation, and we appreciate their support. To Suzanne, thank you for your thousands of volunteer hours; we are thrilled you are taking on this new role!



PACKARD CENTER HONORS ACTIVE AGAINST ALS

Active Against ALS has been named a 2016 recipient of the Partners in Collaboration Award from the **Robert Packard Center** for ALS Research at Johns Hopkins University. Two board members will accept the award on March 14 during the annual research symposium in Baltimore, Md.

(Cont'd from pg. 1)

Research: Unraveling the mysteries of ALS

Under a microscope he showed us material from several stages of the process that ultimately yields a collection of neurons for experimentation. Meanwhile, Elizabeth Tank painstakingly extracted individual neurons with a pipette to prepare them for the next stage of development.

In the last part of our tour we met "Flo," one of the world's only programmable, automated, fluorescence microscopes. With systems to keep her operating at precise conditions, Flo uses powerful computers to quickly identify which neurons, out of thousands, ultimately survive.



Seeing Dr. Barmada's lab at work to derive and track the survival of thousands of human neurons, it was obvious why ALS research is so expensive - it is an extremely complex puzzle requiring sophisticated technology and specialized scientists. We feel privileged to support this work and we left the lab more committed than ever to raising funds for a cure.

Click [here](#) to read a full report of our lab visit and view more photos.



Thank You

TO EVERYONE WHO HAS DONATED, VOLUNTEERED, OR SPONSORED AN EVENT OR PLANNED AN EVENT OF YOUR OWN. WE HAVE NOW RAISED MORE THAN **\$400,000** FOR ALS RESEARCH!



3RD ANNUAL BEERFEST

Thank you for making the 3rd Annual Beerfest a blast! We defied a rainy October night to enjoy live music, delicious neighborhood craft brews, a chili cook-off, and fresh grilled brats in support of a great cause. Thanks also to the skilled local brewers, our grill master Rob Martin, and all of the chili-makers.



HEBREW DAY SCHOOL - STUDENTS MAKING A DIFFERENCE

In November, the 5th grade Student Council from **Hebrew Day School** in Ann Arbor selected Active Against ALS as the focus of their annual philanthropic efforts. They delved into research to learn about ALS and explored our website to better understand our organization. The group already raised over \$2,000 with a Thanksgiving appeal "Giving at Thanksgiving." Three Student Council members serve as representatives to the younger grades, and have learned how to explain ALS and our organization to 1st-4th graders. We were thrilled to visit the school recently to meet these inspiring young philanthropists and their teacher, Carol Gannon, and delighted they attended our annual meeting in February. We value the involvement of these young people as they learn and experience how they can make a difference. Thank you for choosing Active Against ALS!



GIVING TUESDAY AND YEAR-END DONATIONS

We are grateful for the generous responses to our first Giving Tuesday Appeal on December 1, and our annual End of Year Appeal. These donations total over \$4,000 that will go directly towards ALS research.



BANK OF ANN ARBOR AND BLUE CARE NETWORK

Thank you to our long-time supporters, **Bank of Ann Arbor** and **Blue Care Network**. Both organizations are **Silver Level Sponsors** of the 2016 April Fool's Day Twinkie Run! We appreciate their recognition of the important work we do in the Ann Arbor community.



Blue Care Network
of Michigan

A nonprofit corporation and independent license
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Events at a Glance

APPLIED FITNESS SOLUTIONS

Saturday, March 12

7TH ANNUAL APRIL FOOL'S TWINKIE RUN

Friday, April 1

8TH ANNUAL BOX CAR DERBY

Sunday, April 10

WATER TABLE AT THE DEXTER-A² RUN

Sunday, June 5

RACQUET CLUB OF ANN ARBOR SWIMATHON

Tuesday, July 19

6TH ANNUAL ELECTRIC BOLT

Sunday, July 31

Ann Arbor ACTIVE AGAINST ALS

RAISING FUNDS. RAISING HOPE.

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Applied Fitness Solutions

Saturday, March 12

Get in shape and support ALS.
One-hour circuit class – all levels.
Arrive 2:00/Class starts at 2:30.
4710 S. State Road. Space is
limited. Sign up [here](#).

Box Car Derby

Sunday, April 10/1-4 p.m.

New Venue! East Keech Ave.
(by U-M Stadium). With Phi
Delta Theta brothers – bigger
hill, faster ride. Ages 5 and up.
New car design for high school
and college-aged racers. More
info/register [here](#).

April Fool's Twinkie Run

Friday, April 1

Join us for another wacky 5K
with grilled Twinkies and choco-
late afterwards. 6:15 p.m. race
start; Gallup Park, Ann Arbor.
More info/register [here](#).

Let's Da-si-da!

After seven years of hosting
Family Field Day at Burns Park,
we have decided to kick up our
heels at a Square Dancing Fling
in Spring 2017. Watch for details
on our website, Face-
book page, and in
our fall newsletter!



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