

# Hockey Mom Foundation

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## **HOCKEY MOM FOUNDATION MAKES \$5,000 DONATION TO ROSWELL PARK CANCER INSTITUTE TO SUPPORT DEVELOPMENT OF BRAIN CANCER VACCINE**

**Buffalo, NY—Oct. 20, 2015**—A charitable foundation established earlier this year and inspired by a group of Buffalo hockey moms has made its first donation to support the development of a brain cancer vaccine at Roswell Park Cancer Institute.

Representatives of the newly formed Hockey Mom Foundation presented a \$5,000 check to Roswell Park on Oct. 19, 2015, in memory of one of the Buffalo hockey moms who died from brain cancer. Every year, more than 20,000 adults are diagnosed with brain cancer, and about 15,320 people die from the disease.

Motivated to change that grim outcome, Robert Fenstermaker, MD, Chief of Neurosurgery at Roswell Park, and Michael Ciesielski, PhD, have developed a first-of-its-kind brain cancer vaccine, SurVaxM, to treat glioblastoma. The vaccine works by triggering an immune response against a protein called survivin. Present in the vast majority of cancers, survivin helps cancer cells survive during stressful conditions. Having shown great promise in a recent phase I clinical trial, SurVaxM is now being evaluated in a larger, phase II clinical trial for glioblastomas.

“Vaccines are typically thought of as tools to prevent diseases, like polio and mumps,” said Dr. Fenstermaker. “But they can be used as therapies to treat cancer as well, and they can improve patients’ quality of life, because they tend to have fewer serious side effects.”

“SurVaxM is on the forefront of the next generation of cancer therapy. By harnessing the body’s own immune system to fight cancer using immunotherapy, we believe we can give hope to patients diagnosed with malignant gliomas and other cancers,” said Dr. Ciesielski.

"This really means a lot to me personally since I lost my wife Judy three years ago to brain cancer. Dr. Fenstermaker was one of her doctors, and it is a great memorial to her as one of the original members of a group of Buffalo hockey moms known as “The Gators” that the Hockey Mom Foundation is making this donation to Roswell Park Cancer Institute to support the development of this new vaccine," said Les Rechan, Sr., who was among those who attended the donation ceremony.

Roswell Park Cancer Institute was selected as the first recipient of a Hockey Mom Foundation donation after research was conducted by another of the original Buffalo hockey mom Gators, Liz Carone. She serves as the Officer of Giving for the Hockey Mom Foundation.

“Supporting cutting-edge medical research into cures for diseases like brain cancer is a way that the Hockey Mom Foundation can help everyone in the community as we support our hockey moms and their families who have been affected by catastrophic illness,” said John Duke, President of the Hockey Mom Foundation.

### **Hockey Mom Foundation**

The Hockey Mom Foundation is an all-volunteer organization that exists to honor Hockey Moms everywhere by raising funds to make one-time foundational donations towards non-profit causes focused on issues such as helping hockey players reach their educational goals, furthering cancer research including for brain, ovarian and breast cancer, and assisting with the care of cancer patients.

The Hockey Mom foundation is inspired by a group of Hockey Moms in Buffalo, NY, nicknamed "**The Gators.**" They inspired scores of hockey players to excel both on and off the ice from the early 1970's well into the new century. Their legacy, along with all Hockey Moms' across the globe, will be felt for generations.

