



March 31, 2017

Dear Members,

In 2016 your board saw another busy year with successful activities in multiple locations in Canada, including a first ever walk in Winnipeg. Your generous support, in so many ways, supports our goals of improving patient *care* and disease *control*, while continuing to push research towards the *cause* and *cure* of all forms of vasculitis. With your continued help we are making a difference in the lives of vasculitis patients.

Early in 2016 we updated our list of all genetic studies being conducting by Dr. Siminovitch. The intention was to simplify what studies are underway, and indicate who could participate. There continues to be six active genetic studies and we have had a good response to this info, **especially within the Behcet's** community. The complete genetic study info can be found at: <http://www.vasculitis.ca/?p=578#comments>

Our 2016 AGM also marked two milestones in our genetics studies, firstly, we celebrated the fifteenth anniversary of our first DNA collections, and secondly, we entered phase 2 of this research to study the protein/genetic interplay in GPA/MPA. **Phase 2 requires following a group GPA/MPA patients on regular intervals, over time, and to monitor these changes.** To mark these milestones VFC was presented the Upper Canada Medal from Josh Lai of the Toronto General & Western Hospital Foundation. Also at our 2016 AGM we were honoured to have in attendance Margaret Gerry, wife of the late Peter Gerry, VFC co-founder and **visionary of Dr. Siminovitch's genetics research.** Dr. Siminovitch gave us another research update with an explanation of Phase 2. Late in 2016 we granted Dr. Siminovitch an additional 15K to support her research.

As in the past, we hosted or participated in a number of successful events like our 18<sup>th</sup> annual picnic and walk in Cambridge, the 3<sup>rd</sup> annual BriStrength walk in Orillia as well as our first walk in Winnipeg. All events were well attended, and raised important funds for research, a fun time was had by all participants! Our combined 2016 revenue, and donations, equaled about \$35,000.00, or about 7K more than in 2015!

The fall 2016 lectures (including lab draws), **at Hamilton's St. Joseph's Hospital** were informative and well attended with excellent presentations by **Dr.'s:** Khalidi, Pagnoux, Grayson, Siminovitch, Walsh and Rodriguez. Our guest speaker Dr. Peter Grayson from the NIH in the **U.S. presented a "forward looking" presentation on both small and large vessel vasculitis with the theme of "One Size Does Not Fit All"** reflecting the ever more individualized nature of treatments for vasculitis patients. These lectures were followed by an extensive Q&A panel. Video of the morning session will eventually make it to our website.

In 2016 we made a considerable effort to investigate new "event" software to simplify the running and accounting for our walks etc. We have a dedicated volunteer to undertake this critical project and we hope to implement new, improved, and much needed, time saving, software in 2017.

Finally, after multiple years of dedicated VFC service Garth James will be stepping down as Secretary after our 2017 AGM, and we are still looking for his replacement!. Garth's **"steady hand"** will be missed by all of us. Of course, to be more effective we need more volunteers, I urge you to consider playing a role, Garth has offered to help transition a new secretary, so please consider volunteering for this important role.

I encourage all of you to get involved in some way in the activities of your organization. I look forward to seeing all of you throughout 2017, and wish you and yours the best of health.

Warm regards,

Jon Stewart  
President, Vasculitis Foundation Canada

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