



Alzheimer’s and Cognition Center

UNIVERSITY OF COLORADO **ANSCHUTZ MEDICAL CAMPUS**

“Healthy Brain Aging Starts Here”

December 2020

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Students “Spark Change” for Alzheimer’s

In 2020, the students of Graland Country Day School raised money for the University of Colorado (CU) Alzheimer’s and Cognition Center through multiple student-led philanthropic projects.

The Graland Country Day School is a private school in Denver that has built a strong relationship with the CU Alzheimer’s and Cognition Center over the years. In 2014, they incorporated a new focus on dementia and Alzheimer’s disease as a component of their seventh grade curriculum.

This includes creating ‘Memory Boxes’ to honor a loved one’s life and volunteering and learning at a local memory care facility. Dr. Huntington Potter gives a presentation every year at the school as a part of this program. As a result, students at the

school are committed to learning more about Alzheimer’s disease and were inspired to help raise money for a cure.

The Graland Country Day School also has a student organization called “Spark Change,” which is run by students in the fourth grade class. This organization focuses on philanthropy and community service, and they raise money by collecting change from preschool through fourth grade students.

Every spring, they research organizations, interview a representative from each organization, and choose finalists to receive their donations. This year, the CU Alzheimer’s and Cognition Center was selected as one of their finalists!

Seventh grade students

at Graland Country Day School also contributed to the Center by donating money collected from their candy sales throughout the year. Combined, the two programs raised and donated almost \$2,500 for our Center.

The CU Alzheimer’s and Cognition Center is delighted and honored to be a recipient of these donations from the students. We are very grateful for the opportunity to build a relationship with the school and its students over the years and to help them learn more about Alzheimer’s disease and related dementias.



CU Alzheimer’s and Cognition Center COVID-19 Update

The University of Colorado is closely monitoring the spread of COVID-19 in Colorado and is providing campus-wide guidelines for us to follow. We update our research studies and clinical practices accordingly, as necessary. Due to the recent increase in positive COVID-19 cases this fall and the placement of Denver, Adams, Arapahoe, and many other counties at a COVID-19 Level Red status, necessary changes have been made to scale back in-person clinical and research activities in the CU Alzheimer’s and Cognition Center. This is a rapidly evolving situation, so for the most up to date information regarding these changes, please visit our website: <https://medschool.cuanschutz.edu/alzheimers>



HEALTHY BRAIN AGING - Starts Here -

Give to Research

If you are interested in making a donation to the CU Alzheimer's and Cognition Center, please contact Carrie Radant Flynn at 303-724-9146.



Interested in a Research Study?

Contact Neurology Research Partners at 303-724-4644 or fill out a research inquiry form at www.cumemoryresearch.org to learn more about our ongoing research studies!

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Spotlight: Esteban Lucero



Esteban Lucero, BS, is a graduate student in the Human Medical Genetics and Genomics Program (HMGGP) at the University of Colorado Anschutz Medical Campus where he is working towards his PhD. Esteban is originally from Las Crusas, New Mexico, and was the first in his family to graduate from college.

His interest in neuroscience and genetics research was sparked during his undergraduate education, which took place at New Mexico State University (NMSU), and led him to pursue graduate studies in the field.

Esteban's research is focused on a specific motor protein that could impact the effects of amyloid-beta on neurons. While conducting his dissertation research in Dr. Potter's lab, he has worked on mouse models and behavioral tests, electrophysiology, and human data sets to determine how the natural expression of that protein might affect cognitive deficits in Alzheimer's disease. He plans to complete his dissertation research and receive his PhD in early 2021.

His long-term research interests are focused on using human data sets to determine how genetic diversity impacts susceptibility and resilience to Alzheimer's disease. Esteban believes that the field needs to investigate the course of Alzheimer's disease more closely in the context of different environments and diverse ethnic backgrounds, since most currently available Alzheimer's disease data sets are derived primarily from people of European descent.

Being Hispanic and from an underrepresented minority group, Esteban is especially interested in how diversity plays a role in a person's risk for Alzheimer's disease and how it is treated. He believes that there will not be one cure-all for dementia, but instead that a person's genetic background and environmental exposures will play a key role in identifying the most effective treatment for each individual.

His hope is that once he completes his doctorate, he will conduct research that will provide a strong foundation for himself and others to discover new Alzheimer's treatments for underrepresented populations.

Esteban is also committed to increasing diversity not only within data sets, but also within the medical and scientific fields. When he first entered graduate school with the HMGGP program, he established a Chapter

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Symptoms of Lewy Body Dementia

Lewy body dementia (LBD) is the second most common type of dementia. The following are common symptoms of LBD (*this list is not a diagnosis, but if you or someone you know is experiencing any of these symptoms, please consult with a doctor*):

Cognitive Symptoms

- Forgetfulness
- Trouble with problem solving or analytical thinking
- Difficulty planning or keeping track of sequences (poor multi-tasking)
- Disorganized speech and conversation
- Difficulty with sense of direction or spatial relationships b/w objects

Sleep concerns

- Acting out dreams during sleep, falling out of bed

Fluctuations

- Fluctuating levels of concentration & attention
- Unexplained episodes of confusion
- Excessive daytime sleepiness

Parkinson's-like Symptoms

- Rigidity or stiffness
- Shuffling walk
- Tremor
- Slowness of movement

Behavior & Mood Changes

- Hallucinations (seeing things not really present)

List provided by the Lewy Body Dementia Association. Please visit their website, www.lbda.org to learn more about Lewy body dementia.

Featured Center Researcher

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of the Society for the Advancement of Chicanos and Native Americans in Science (SACNAS) on the CU Anschutz Campus, and served as its President.

While conducting his dissertation research in Dr. Potter's laboratory, Esteban applied for and received an NIH Blueprint Diversity Specialized Predoctoral to Postdoctoral Advancement in Neuroscience (D-SPAN) F99/K00 Award. This extremely competitive award provides funding to graduate students from diverse backgrounds who are underrepresented in the field of

neuroscience to continue their research training by supporting them during both their dissertation and post-doctoral research.

This funding will open many doors for Esteban as he begins his post-doctoral training in a new research laboratory, a step that is often limited by available financial resources. Most importantly, it will allow him to achieve his goal of securing a position as a faculty member at a research institution with an innovative research program focused on Alzheimer's disease in diverse populations.

Center Celebrations

This year, we welcomed many new additions to our team! Joining us are a new fellow, Tara Carlisle, MD, PhD, two new coordinators, Francesca Dino, BA, and Jessica Cline, BSN, and a new faculty member, Jessica Solomon Sanders, MD. We also congratulate Zachary Macchi, MD, who finished his fellowship in July and is now a faculty member for the Center.

We are excited to announce that the CU Alzheimer's and Cognition Center randomized their first participant in a clinical drug trial for Frontotemporal Dementia, sponsored by Alec-tor, Inc., in August. Our site was the first to randomize a participant into the INFRONT-3 trial in the United States! This was the third participant enrolled in the world. Congratulations to the site principal investigator, Peter Pressman, MD, and the research staff involved.

For information about the study, please contact:

NeurologyResearchPartners@cuan-schutz.edu or visit <https://clinicaltrials.gov/ct2/show/NCT04374136>

Congratulations to our Clinical Trial Manager John O'Shaughnessy, MS, who was accepted into the inaugural class of the IMPACT-AD program in September 2020, which trained up-and-coming Alzheimer's disease clinical trialists. To learn more about IMPACT-AD, visit www.impact-ad.org