



American Heart Association and Children's Heart Foundation Announce Expansion of Collaborative Funding Project for Congenital Heart Defect Research

(Dallas, November 2, 2015) — To further their commitment for much-needed congenital heart defect (CHD) research, the American Heart Association (AHA) and The Children's Heart Foundation (CHF) announced today an expansion of their collaborative funding project, earmarking \$20 million solely devoted to CHD research over the course of five years.

Last year, the AHA and the CHF established a set of Congenital Heart Defect Research Awards to fund \$2.5 million in CHD research grants from 2014 through 2016. The additional \$20 million allocation will drive research through 2021.

"CHF is proud to extend our partnership with the AHA/ASA. Together, we hope to build a world free from congenital heart disease," stated William Foley, Executive Director of The Children's Heart Foundation. "Through this collaboration and the Congenital Heart Defect Research Awards, we strive to make a lasting impact in the lives of those with CHDs."

The AHA has received applications for the first year of grant awards, which will be jointly funded by the CHF. These applications have been reviewed by volunteer scientists and the first round of recipients will be announced soon. Scientists who are conducting research on congenital heart diseases to advance knowledge for prevention and treatment are encouraged to submit applications for the second year of funding. The next deadline for this is January 2016.

CHDs are among the most common birth defects and the leading killer of infants with birth defects in the U.S. Roughly 40,000 children are born in the U.S with a heart defect each year. Recent progress in diagnosis and treatment makes it possible to correct many defects, even those once thought irreparable. Collaborations like the one between the AHA and the CHF are vital to the continuation of these advancements.

"We are delighted to join forces with The Children's Heart Foundation to ensure that we are making the needs of this most vulnerable population paramount in the research community and encouraging even more scientists to find innovative ways to help people with congenital heart defects live longer, healthier lives," said American Heart Association CEO Nancy Brown. "Our continued relationship with The Children's Heart Foundation reflects our shared commitment to achieving new breakthroughs by advancing scientific knowledge."

The AHA/CHF collaboration is also raising awareness of the emotional and practical support available on the AHA's new [Support Network](#). This online community connects people living with heart disease and stroke and provides members the opportunity to share their stories and learn from the experiences of

others. Currently, there is an entire section of the Support Network dedicated to congenital heart defects information and conversations. It's a private space where people can join conversations, connect with patients and caregivers going through similar journeys and find resources specific to CHDs.

"My husband and I never expected to learn that our unborn son was missing a main chamber in his heart and that he'd need three open heart surgeries. Our son is alive today because of research done in the past, but his future is unknown," said Catherine Clinkscales, mother of CHD survivor, Cain. "Partnerships like the one between the American Heart Association and The Children's Heart Foundation provide much needed monetary support for congenital heart defect research. And this is what gives parents like me hope for our child's future. Beyond funding CHD research, the organizations provide awareness about the AHA/ASA Support Network, a valuable resource for those living with CHDs. Our doctors were wonderful and our family and friends were very supportive, but we didn't have access to other families who were going through the same thing. I am thankful to know there is support available when I need it the most."

For more information about the AHA and CHF research grant awards, please visit http://my.americanheart.org/professional/Research/FundingOpportunities/Funding-Opportunities_UCM_316909_SubHomePage.jsp. Additional information about the AHA and the CHF can be found at www.heart.org/congenitalheartdefects and at www.childrensheartfoundation.org. To access the Support Network congenital heart defect site, read Catherine's story in her Support Network blog post and for information on how to become a member, please visit <http://supportnetwork.heart.org/congenitalheartdefect>.

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About the American Heart Association and American Stroke Association

The American Heart Association and the American Stroke Association are devoted to saving people from heart disease and stroke – America's No. 1 and No. 5 killers. We team with millions of volunteers to fund innovative research, fight for stronger public health policies, and provide lifesaving tools and information to prevent and treat these diseases. The Dallas-based American Heart Association is the nation's oldest and largest voluntary organization dedicated to fighting heart disease and stroke. The American Stroke Association is a division of the American Heart Association. To learn more or to get involved, call 1-800-AHA-USA1, visit heart.org or call any of our offices around the country. Follow us on [Facebook](#) and [Twitter](#)

About The Children's Heart Foundation

Established by Betsy Peterson in 1996, The Children's Heart Foundation (CHF) is the country's leading national organization solely committed to congenital heart research funding. Since 1996, CHF has funded 62 research projects with more than \$7.4 million. CHF is a national 501(c)(3) tax-exempt charitable organization that does not receive any government funding. The goal of the foundation is to bring health, hope and happiness to children and families impacted by congenital heart defects, the most common birth defect in the United States. This objective is accomplished by funding the most promising research to advance the diagnosis, treatment and prevention of congenital heart defects. For more information, please visit: www.childrensheartfoundation.org. Follow us on [Facebook](#) and [Twitter](#).

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