



November 18, 2011

Dear Friend of the American Asthma Foundation:

Since joining the American Asthma Foundation (AAF) in April 2011 as Executive Director, I have been awed and amazed by the work we are able to do and the advances we are able to make in understanding this disease. This is no mean feat in a time when the population of people suffering from asthma continues to grow at an alarming rate and we don't know why. The AAF is well positioned in the broader field of asthma to bring real long-term benefits to the lives of the many who live with this chronic disease.

We are able to do all of this because of our generous supporters. So before the holidays begin and the year ends, I wanted to pause and reflect on how we've been able to advance our knowledge of asthma, and share with you our thanks for your support of and interest in the American Asthma Foundation as we unlock the mysteries of this complex disease.

First, we thank you for investing in our unconventional model of support. We have an unusual, some may say high-risk, approach to funding that focuses on searching for innovation in whatever field it can be found. Simply put, we are willing to support ideas that challenge conventional thinking, but may well not succeed. But even failure leads to learning, which may later be applied to other ways of looking at asthma or even other diseases.

Second, thanks to your support, we invest in the best and brightest scientists on both sides of the equation - to review grant applications as well as to apply for them. We have built a Scientific Review Board (SRB) unmatched in the breadth of its expertise and demonstrated excellence in basic science. This board guarantees that the awards we fund are of the highest caliber and have the potential to make a tremendous impact on the field.

Third, we have created a process that attracts and provides incentives for the best scientists to apply. Applicants who win one of our prestigious awards are rewarded both financially with multi-year grants and professionally through ongoing interaction with our Scientific Review Board and their peers so that they receive critical feedback and guidance as they pursue their ideas.

Fourth, due to our support, our researchers are making incredible strides. In a little over 10 years, we've supported over 25 advances and had 4 of these advances go into clinical trials. Further, we've encouraged and incentivized many top scholars from other fields to continue their focus on asthma well beyond our grants. Over 70% of awardees have continued to study asthma after the end of their AAF support and have leveraged over \$50M in additional grant support stemming from their AAF-sponsored work. In addition, more than 310 scientists have been drawn into the study of asthma as post docs or collaborators of AAF awardees and 31 AAF-sponsored trainees have gone on to study asthma with independent support.

In terms of our core program, this year we received 381 grant applications. Of these, we were able to award 11 grants. We were also able to extend two grants by one year, with the hope that the targets identified from research we funded in a prior cycle that might, with time and additional grant support, prove fruitful in identifying therapeutic targets that could be picked up by the biotech and pharmaceutical industry for development. Please read more about the specific work we're funding on our website (www.americanasthma.org or on links on our Facebook page.)

We have welcomed a new partner to support our mission: The American Lung Association, whose generosity is helping underwrite the research of Nobel Prize Winner Roger Tsien. We also thank leading supporters like AAF Board member Bill Bowes, a prominent philanthropist well versed in the world of medical research after starting Amgen and building a career in venture capital for the biotech industry. Additionally, we thank, and recognize, our supporters who have come to us through personal loss. In particular, we are grateful for those generous individuals and organizations who have memorialized a friend or family member by supporting the groundbreaking work we do.

Let me end this letter, and this year, by thanking you for your help, interest and support. Stay in touch with us via Facebook and our website (www.americanasthma.org), email us with comments, and share our work and mission with anyone you think has an interest in supporting our work in figuring out asthma once and for all

Best wishes for a healthy holiday season and a great start to 2012!

Very truly yours,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Betsy Biern". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Betsy Biern
Executive Director