MRF Melanoma Research Foundation



May holds special significance for our community. It is both Melanoma Awareness Month and National Cancer Research Month — a time to honor the progress we have made, recognize the work still ahead and recommit ourselves to a future free from melanoma.

This year is of particular significance as we celebrate the MRF's 30th anniversary.

30 YEARS OF INNOVATION
A Lifetime of Hope

For three decades, the Foundation has stood alongside patients, caregivers, clinicians, researchers, advocates and supporters united by one mission: to eradicate melanoma through research, education, advocacy and support. What began as a bold vision has grown into a powerful movement that has transformed the melanoma landscape and helped drive extraordinary scientific advances.

Thirty years ago, treatment options for advanced melanoma were limited, and survival outcomes were bleak. In fact, approved melanoma treatments resulted in only a 5% 10-year survival rate for melanoma patients living with metastatic disease and zero treatments for patients with rarer forms of melanoma. Today, thanks to sustained investment in research and the determination of the scientific and medical communities, patients living with metastatic melanoma have a 50% 10-year survival rate and melanoma has become one of the leading examples of innovation in cancer research. Breakthroughs in immunotherapy, targeted therapies, precision medicine and early detection have led to improved outcomes for countless patients.

To honor this anniversary year, we ask you to join us in raising $30,000 that will directly enable funding for our mission critical work. Help us achieve the next 30 years of innovation and move us closer to a cure. And if you give today, you can double your donation! Thanks to a generous pledge from MRF co-founder Jeff Ashby, every donation will be matched dollar-for-dollar up to $10,000 — doubling your impact!

Double Your Donation

The MRF has been proud to play a role in that progress by supporting groundbreaking research, amplifying the patient voice, fostering collaboration and advocating for policies that accelerate scientific discovery and improve access to care.

But our impact extends beyond treatment advances alone.

Over the years, we have increasingly recognized that prevention research must be a central component of our long-term strategy to reduce the burden of melanoma. While new therapies save lives, prevention and early detection remain among the most powerful tools we have to stop melanoma before it starts — or to identify it when it is most treatable.

That understanding has shaped a growing commitment to prevention-focused initiatives and research investments aimed at improving public health outcomes. From studying behavioral interventions and sun safety education to advancing our understanding of UV exposure risks, screening strategies and disparities in prevention awareness, these efforts reflect our belief that reducing melanoma incidence is just as important as improving melanoma treatment.

Prevention research is not simply an adjunct to our mission; it is an essential pillar of it.

As melanoma rates continue to rise in many populations — particularly among younger individuals — education, awareness and evidence-based prevention strategies have never been more critical. By investing in prevention science today, we are helping build a future where fewer families face a melanoma diagnosis tomorrow.

This anniversary year is also an opportunity to celebrate the extraordinary community that has fueled our work over the last 30 years. Every researcher pursuing the next breakthrough, every advocate sharing their story, every healthcare professional caring for patients and every donor and volunteer supporting our mission has helped make this progress possible.

Together, we will continue this progress — advancing lifesaving research, strengthening prevention efforts, supporting patients and families and working toward a world without melanoma.

As we mark Melanoma Awareness Month, National Cancer Research Month, and this important milestone anniversary, we extend our deepest gratitude to everyone who has been part of this journey. The innovation of the last 30 years gives us hope for the next 30 — and renewed determination to continue making an impact for every person affected by melanoma.

Double Your Donation

Kyleigh LiPira, MBA

CEO



We are thrilled to announce this year's Resident/Fellow Research Grant Awardees! Congratulations to the 12 outstanding researchers selected this year, each of whom is driving innovative research for the cutaneous and rare subtype melanomas. The awardees' research will help advance the science of melanoma treatment care.

Awardees will investigate topics ranging from vision loss after plaque radiotherapy for uveal melanoma, how circadian rhythms and immunotherapy outcomes are improved by light therapy, deepening our understanding of advanced melanoma, to trends in acral melanoma treatment and more.

We encourage you to take a moment to review this year's awardees abstracts. Thank you to each of our resident/fellow research grant funders and to the incredible grant reviewers who nominated and selected these 12 incredible projects.

Learn More



#GetNaked for Melanoma Awareness Month

This month, the MRF honored the melanoma community and elevated melanoma awareness and prevention through its Melanoma Awareness Month #GetNaked campaign. At the forefront of the campaign, we were joined by this year's #GetNaked spokesperson – Jason Chambers, Superyacht Captain, star of Bravo's *Below Deck Down Under* and melanoma

advocate. As someone who grew up in Australia and who spent most of his life on the water and the intense sun, Jason details that he heard about the warnings of UV radiation but believed those risks were abstract. Upon noticing a spot on his abdomen, Jason finally sought out a dermatologic skin check and received a melanoma diagnosis that changed his life and his purpose. Jason has dedicated his time since his diagnosis to educating all, especially men, about the importance of sun safety.

We also highlighted the incredible and touching stories of several patients, survivors and loved ones in social media and the MRF's blog such as stage IV metastatic melanoma survivor Keri Schloredt, caregiver Maryann Farrell's touching story of her late husband Steve, Cheryl Stratos' heartfelt passion for supporting the MRF as a stage IV survivor, Christine – a stage IIIb survivor who has turned her story into purpose through social media and so many more.

The campaign also included several educational offerings exploring topics such as early-detection, general sun safety, a deeper understanding of terms like SPF and UV radiation and more. We were honored to be joined by our prevention & awareness sponsors Neutrogena and EltaMD for dynamic fireside chats that explored these topics.

MRF advocates also supported #GetNaked and helped spread awareness, prevention and early detection by helping to encourage lawmakers to proclaim May as Melanoma Awareness Month in the following states: Arizona, Arkansas, Colorado, Connecticut, Florida, Georgia, Hawaii, Idaho, Illinois, Kentucky, Michigan, Nebraska, New Jersey, Ohio, Oklahoma, Oregon, South Carolina, Texas and Wisconsin. Congratulations, advocates and thank you for encouraging all to embrace sun safety this month and all year!

The MRF thanks its incredible prevention and awareness campaign sponsors for their support of the #GetNaked campaign including Aura, Bristol Myers Squibb, Castle Biosciences, Coolibar, EltaMD, Merck and Neutrogena. You can continue to support the MRF's prevention efforts by donating and shopping for a cause through one of our incredible cause marketing partners!

#GetNaked

Donor Spotlight: Honoring Reese's Legacy Through Hope, Research and Community



This spring, the Reese Ward Foundation hosted the Hope in Bloom Ball — an inspiring evening dedicated to advancing hope and funding critical cancer research. With more than 270 attendees and over $408,000 raised, the event was a powerful reflection of the impact that passionate advocates and supporters can make when united around a shared mission.

We are incredibly grateful to the Reese Ward Foundation for selecting the MRF as a benefactor of the Ball. Their continued support honors the life and legacy of Reese Ward while helping fuel progress for patients and families impacted by melanoma.

As shared by Reese's family:

"Our son, Reese Ward, was diagnosed with Metastatic Melanoma in 2020. Early in his treatment, a close family friend recommended the MRF as a source of guidance and support. From our very first interactions, we felt their compassion and unwavering dedication to melanoma research and to families facing this devastating disease.

As we traveled beside Reese through the physical and emotional challenges of treatment, we witnessed firsthand how desperately patients with metastatic melanoma need better and more effective options. The journey was heartbreaking and overwhelming, and it underscored the critical importance of continued research.

Although Reese ultimately lost his battle with cancer, our commitment to the MRF has only deepened. We continue to support their work in honor of Reese and all families affected by melanoma. It is our hope that through the MRF's tireless efforts, a cure will one day be found—so that other families and patients may be spared the profound pain, suffering and loss that we have endured."

— Kyle and Carol Ward, Logan Ward (Reese's sister)

Education Corner



Ask the Expert Webinar Series Continues to Educate and Empower the Melanoma Community

This past month, the MRF hosted two impactful Ask the Expert educational webinars designed to provide patients, caregivers and advocates with valuable information around melanoma prevention, risk assessment and care navigation.

On May 19, we presented **"From Awareness to Action: Preventing Skin Cancer Through Daily Habits,"** featuring Vivian Bucay, MD, FAAD and melanoma survivor Dawn Stringer, Mrs. Texas International 2026. During this informative session, attendees learned more about skin cancer prevention, recognizing early warning signs and proactive prevention strategies including regular skin checks and consistent sunscreen use. Click here to watch the full recording.

On May 26, we hosted **"Understanding Melanoma Risk: How Prognostic Testing Can Help Guide Your Care."** Dermatology clinician Andrew Baker shared expert insights on melanoma diagnosis, risk assessment and emerging approaches in care, while patient advocate Leah Alexis Adams discussed her personal melanoma journey and how prognostic testing has helped guide conversations and decisions throughout her care experience. Together, the session helped empower attendees to better understand melanoma risk and become more informed participants in their care. Full recording coming soon!

Looking ahead, we invite you to join us on July 30 for our upcoming Ask the Expert webinar, **"The Evolving Role of ctDNA in Melanoma Treatment and Surveillance."** This educational program will feature melanoma expert Dr. Vincent Ma and melanoma patient advocate Michael Wilson as they explore how circulating tumor DNA (ctDNA) testing is being used to monitor treatment response, detect recurrence and help guide clinical decision-making in melanoma care. Attendees will also hear about measurable residual disease (MRD), emerging ctDNA research and real-world patient experiences navigating melanoma surveillance and recurrence.

Register Now!

Highlights from the Fred Hutch, Ohio State University and Yale University Patient & Caregiver Symposia Series



This month, the MRF was honored to bring the melanoma community together for 3 inspiring and impactful educational symposia held in conjunction with the **Fred Hutch Cancer Center (May 2), The Ohio State University Comprehensive Cancer Center (May 9) and Yale Cancer Center (May 12).** Our Together Against Melanoma: Patient & Caregiver Symposia Series connects patients, caregivers and medical experts for meaningful conversations around melanoma diagnosis, treatment advances, supportive care and survivorship.

At the Northwest Melanoma Symposium: Science to Survivorship with Fred Hutch Cancer Center, attendees learned about the relationship between melanoma and the immune system, the latest treatment and surgical advancements and supportive care topics including sleep and exercise.

During our symposium with The Ohio State University Comprehensive Cancer Center, participants explored the latest updates in cutaneous melanoma diagnosis, treatment approaches and supportive care resources designed to help patients and caregivers navigate their melanoma journey.

At Yale Cancer Center and Smilow Cancer Hospital, attendees heard from leading experts about advances in melanoma care, treatment options and supportive resources available to the melanoma community.

Recordings from the symposia will be added to the MRF YouTube channel as they become available, so stay tuned for upcoming uploads if you were unable to attend live.

The MRF Drives Impact Throughout the Community





(Left to Right: Sara Campbell, MRF; Roberto Sada, Kenvue; Congressman John Joyce (PA-13); and Kim Wezik, MRF)

Each May, the MRF joins our partners at the **American Academy of Dermatology (AAD)'s annual Skin Cancer Screening on the Hill.** Members of Congress and their staff are invited to receive a free skin cancer screening provided by dermatologists and chat with patient advocacy organizations on issues related to skin cancer prevention and treatment. This event allows the MRF the opportunity to engage lawmakers and congressional staff on the importance of comprehensive policy for the melanoma community.

Thank you to Congressman John Joyce (PA-13) for joining us this year and highlighting the importance of skin cancer prevention and early detection. We are grateful for the Congressman's leadership on the SAFE Sunscreen Standards Act and look forward to continuing working alongside members of Congress in the collective fight against skin cancer.



Our team had the opportunity to visit **Iovance Biotherapeutics** to meet with melanoma patients who benefited from the revolutionary tumor-infiltrating lymphocyte (TIL) therapy and visit the facilities where TIL cells are manufactured. It was an incredible experience to meet patients who were once metastatic and are now thriving with no evidence of disease! We remain committed to sharing educational and research updates with our community and informing patients and their caregivers about the treatments that are revolutionizing the standards of care. You can learn more about TIL treatment through our Education Institute and our TIL Animated Patient Video.



Caroline Glavin, Education Manager – Rare Melanoma Subtypes, brought the K-5 sun safety eLearning program SunAWARE® to the **Fox Chase "Together Facing Melanoma and Skin Cancer"** event in Philadelphia, PA. The MRF tabled at the event and highlighted the importance of sun safety and incorporating sun safe behaviors at an early age. SunAWARE® was developed for children in grades K-5 to promote healthy habits that help prevent melanoma, skin cancer and sun-related skin damage.

Miles for Melanoma 2026 Season Kicks Off with Over $305,000 Raised



The Miles for Melanoma season is off to an amazing start during Melanoma Awareness Month with Washington, DC (May 9) and New England, MA (May 16). Thanks to the incredible dedication of our community, we've already raised more than $305,346 to help advance critical melanoma research, education and advocacy efforts.

The momentum continues this summer as we head to Denver, CO (June 13), Chicago, IL (July 19), Cleveland, OH (August 2) and Philadelphia, PA (August 22)! Whether you walk, run, volunteer or fundraise, every participant plays an important role in helping move the mission forward. Register today, start building your team and earn exciting fundraising incentives along the way. We can't wait to see you at an upcoming event!

Register Today!

Celebrate 30 Years of Impact at Our Milestone Gala Events



Join us for a truly milestone year as the MRF celebrates 30 years of advancing hope, innovation and progress for the melanoma community. This special anniversary year also marks two major gala milestones — our **15th Annual Denver Gala on Thursday, September 24** and our **25th Annual New York Gala on Thursday, October 15**.

These unforgettable evenings will bring together advocates, researchers, industry leaders, patients and supporters united in the fight against melanoma. Guests will enjoy an elegant cocktail reception, open bar, gourmet dinner and an inspiring awards program recognizing extraordinary changemakers helping move the mission forward.

As we celebrate the impact of the past 30 years and look toward the future of melanoma research, education and advocacy, we hope you'll join us for these meaningful and memorable events. Tickets and sponsorship opportunities are still available, reserve your spot today!

Purchase a Ticket or Sponsorship

Upcoming Events

June 13: Denver Miles for Melanoma 5K

July 19: Chicago Miles for Melanoma 5K

July 30: Ask the Expert: The Evolving Role of ctDNA in Melanoma Treatment and Surveillance

August 2: Cleveland Miles for Melanoma 5K

August 22: Philadelphia Miles for Melanoma 5K

September 24: 15th Annual Denver Gala

October 15: 25th Annual New York Gala

In the News

FDA's second rejection of Replimune's melanoma treatment stirs worry among oncologists, patients - *The Cancer Letter*

American Academy of Dermatology flag generational gaps in sun safety - *Personal Care Insight*

"Below Deck" Star Captain Jason Chambers Goes Shirtless for a Good Cause - *Entertainment Now*

Stay Out of the Sun Run Raises more than $35K for skin cancer research - *KTTC*

Coolibar and Skin Cancer Survivor and Advocate, Dayanara Torres, Redefine Life in the Sun for Skin Cancer Awareness Month - *TMC Net*

Strange Spots in Mom of 4's Eye Turned Out to be Rare Cancer with 18-Month Prognosis, She Decided to Live "Intentionally" - *People*

MRF Melanoma Research Foundation

melanoma.org

1420 K Street NW, 7th Floor Washington, DC 20005 | Tel: (202) 347-9675
Melanoma Research Foundation © 2026 All rights reserved.

Unsubscribe | Donate | Visit our website

POWERED BY blackbaud

Powered by Blackbaud
nonprofit software

If you need assistance when submitting a donation, please call (800) 673-1290, Option 2

© Copyright 2018 Melanoma Research Foundation (MRF) | Terms of Use | Privacy Policy