



New York Genome Center Receives \$125 Million Gift

Simons Foundation and The Carson Family Charitable Trust Make Transformational Joint Gift to Support the Center's Growth and Research in Autism, ALS, Dementia and Cancer

NEW YORK, NY (May 23, 2019) – The New York Genome Center (NYGC) today announced a combined \$125 million gift from the Simons Foundation and The Carson Family Charitable Trust.

The joint gift, to be awarded over the next five years, supports the NYGC's efforts to build and maintain the genomic infrastructure required to work with its institutional founding members to establish transformative collaborative research programs in neurodegenerative and neuropsychiatric diseases and cancer.

"We are enormously grateful to our longtime donors for this remarkable gift and for their generous philanthropy to the Center since its founding," said Tom Maniatis, PhD, NYGC's Scientific Director and Chief Executive Officer. "This new gift will make it possible to accelerate research into our key disease focus areas, leveraging our strengths in whole genome sequencing, computational analyses, and development of new genomic tools."

A recognized leader in ALS research, the NYGC established the NYGC ALS Consortium, a global research collaborative with more than 30 members in five countries. The Consortium's sharing of ALS genomic data on an unprecedented scale led to a recent collaborative study that uncovered a new gene associated with ALS. NYGC scientists and their collaborators have utilized new technologies for multidimensional mapping of gene expression in ALS that provide new insights into the mechanisms that contribute to disease onset and progression. These breakthrough findings advance the understanding of disease mechanisms in all neurodegenerative diseases which share common pathways with ALS, including Alzheimer's disease, dementia, Parkinson's disease, and Huntington's disease.

The NYGC's Center for Common Disease Genomics has received more than \$40 million from the National Human Genome Research Institute of the National Institutes of Health over the last four years to support whole genome-based research into the underlying causes of autism and other complex diseases. Researchers at the NYGC have contributed to a collaborative large-scale whole genome sequencing program focused on understanding the genetic basis of autism. The NYGC is now extending its studies of whole genome DNA sequences of autism patients and their families into other neuropsychiatric diseases, such as schizophrenia and bipolar diseases, in which common genetic risk genes have been identified.

The NYGC has also been pushing forward on the development of whole genome sequencing methods for cancer diagnosis and innovative population-level cancer analytics that apply novel mathematical and statistical approaches to the understanding of the relationship between DNA sequence changes and disease. In addition, NYGC scientists are utilizing new genomics tools including CRISPR and single cell sequencing to advance cancer research.

The NYGC serves as the convening hub for the Genome Center Cancer Group (GCCG), a collaborative working group comprised of cancer researchers and clinicians from the NYGC's member institutions. The GCCG is led by nationally-recognized cancer experts Nobel Laureate Dr. Harold Varmus, NYGC and Weill Cornell Medicine, and Dr. Charles Sawyers, Memorial Sloan Kettering Cancer Center. The NYGC-centered consortium recently launched the Polyethnic-1000 collaborative cancer research initiative, an unparalleled program directed towards the study of cancer genomes from under-represented minority populations, in order to understand the role of genetic diversity in cancer and to address ethnic disparities in cancer research and diagnosis.

The NYGC has attracted leading scientists whose wide-ranging expertise — including single cell genomics, genome engineering, population genomics, statistical genetics, computational biology and bioengineering — brings a multidisciplinary and in-depth approach to the field of genomics. NYGC senior and core faculty members, who hold joint appointments at leading New York institutions, include a Nobel Laureate, Lasker Award winner and five members of the National Academy of Sciences. Since its inception, NYGC researchers have published more than 200 research studies in leading, high-impact scientific journals.

The Simons Foundation is chaired by Jim Simons, PhD, who serves on the NYGC's board. The Carson Family Charitable Trust is led by NYGC board co-chair Russell L. Carson. The joint gift includes a \$100 million contribution from the Simons Foundation and \$25 million from The Carson Family Charitable Trust.

“A gift to the NYGC is an investment in the future of scientific discovery,” said Dr. Simons. “The Center fosters the collaborative work essential to making discoveries that will strengthen research capabilities and propel genomic science forward.”

Mr. Carson said, “The NYGC plays a critical role as a collaborative hub, tapping into and harnessing the multidisciplinary, multi-institutional expertise of researchers from New York and across the country. We hope this gift will inspire others to contribute to the Center and invest in its work.”

Dr. Simons and Mr. Carson helped establish the NYGC in 2011 and have been instrumental to the continued growth of the organization as an independent research institution. Their support has helped establish the NYGC as a leader in the field of genomics.

“Through their commitment to the NYGC, our board members have enabled the development of a creative culture where innovative, collaborative research thrives,” noted Cheryl A. Moore, NYGC President and Chief Operating Officer. “Philanthropic donations, coupled with the funding our Center receives from member institutions, New York State, New York City, and the Partnership Fund for New York City, ensure that our scientists' groundbreaking work in genomic research can continue to advance scientific discoveries.”

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