Helix highlights

FOR FRIENDS OF THE GREENWOOD GENETIC CENTER

WINTER 2024

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50TH Anniversary

Greenwood Genetic Center

Mike Lyons, MD, named Ravenel Boykin Curry Chair in Translational Genomics and Therapeutics

GGC has named Michael Lyons, MD, Senior Clinical Geneticist and current Director of Clinical Services, as the new Ravenel Boykin Curry Chair in Translational Genomics and Therapeutics and GGC's first Chief Genomics Officer.

Dr. Lyons will lead the Precision Medicine Initiative at GGC to identify how research discoveries can improve the care of all patients. As the new endowed chair, Dr. Lyons will contribute to GGC's clinical, diagnostic, research, and educational initiatives by overseeing the Center's Genomic Discovery Program (GDP - see p.5) and providing leadership direction for clinical trials to improve and repurpose existing treatments. He will also seek to extend GGC's sphere of influence, collaborate with healthcare professionals to develop personalized treatments, and facilitate research initiatives that bridge the gap between basic science and clinical applications.

"We are committed to finding answers for patients with undiagnosed genetic conditions, expanding care options, and delivering personalized treatments," said Dr. Lyons, who oversees patient care across GGC's five offices in his current role. "Moving forward, my vision is to expand GGC's influence throughout the genetics community to serve more patients through improved genetic testing and therapeutic advances."

Dr. Lyons, who joined GGC in 2005, brings years of experience and passion to his new role as the Ravenel Boykin Curry Chair. A graduate of Tufts University School of Medicine, he is a distinguished clinical geneticist with experience in telehealth, dysmorphology, single gene disorders, genetics education, and treatment of genetic disorders. Lyons is board-certified by the American Board of Pediatrics and the American Board of Medical Genetics and Genomics.

"With a distinguished career of providing high-quality, compassionate patient care, Dr. Lyons is the perfect person to fill the Ravenel Boykin Curry Chair. He is dedicated to the patients and families he serves and has a strong commitment to finding accurate diagnoses and effective treatments that will improve their quality of life. We know the future is bright with Dr. Lyons stepping forward to fill this important role," said Dr. Steve Skinner, President and CEO of GGC.

Dr. Lyons will lead GGC's efforts in clinical, diagnostic, research, and educational initiatives to advance the field of medical genomics and therapeutics.

The Ravenel Boykin Curry Chair in Translational Genomics and Therapeutics was established in 2012 by Ravenel and Beth Curry through their Foundation in honor of Ravenel's father, Ravenel Boykin Curry, Jr., who was a cornerstone of the Greenwood Community, a founding member of the GGC Board of Directors, and an active participant in every phase of the Center's early development.

"Moving forward, my vision is to expand GGC's influence throughout the genetics community to serve more patients through improved genetic testing and therapeutic advances."

- Dr. Mike Lyons

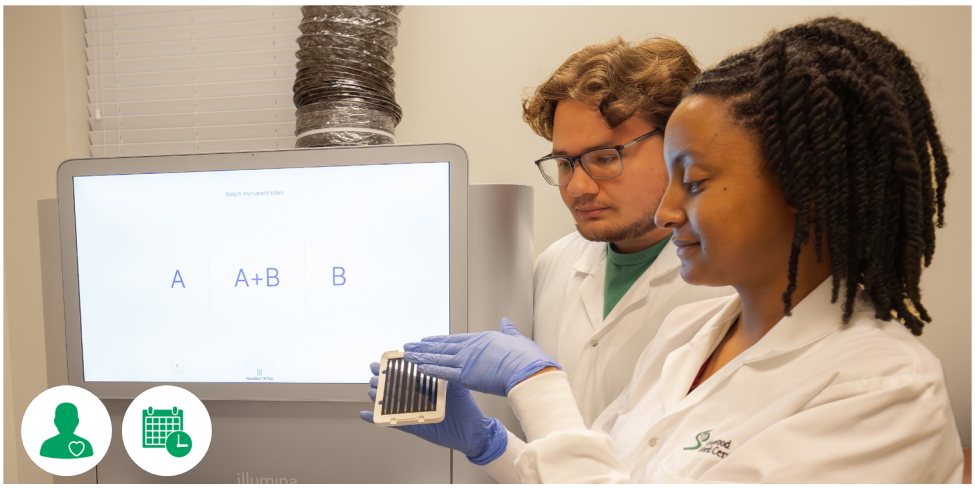
Project Palmetto

Expanding testing access for critically ill patients

GGC is leading a statewide initiative, Project Palmetto, to provide equitable access to rapid whole genome sequencing (rWGS) for high-acuity patients such as those in neonatal or pediatric intensive care units. While whole genome sequencing typically takes 8-12 weeks for a result, there are many patients who cannot wait that long for a diagnosis.

rWGS provides an answer in just 5-7 days allowing healthcare providers to make important treatment decisions in a more timely manner.

"For these critically ill infants and children, this rapid testing can provide a quick and accurate diagnosis leading to improved care and better patient outcomes," said Meg Keating, MS, CGC, a genetic counselor in GGC's Charleston office.



While rWGS is not a new offering at GGC, it has been under-utilized with many high-acuity centers lacking access to genetics personnel to guide genetic testing recommendations. The Project Palmetto protocol will provide participating institutions with clinical criteria and guidance on when to consider rWGS and whether expedited testing is likely to significantly impact a patient's care while they are hospitalized.

Keating added, "Project Palmetto will empower non-genetics providers to determine when rWGS is indicated, all while having direct access to GGC genetics professionals for support before, during, and after analysis for both the provider and the patient's family."

GGC CEO Embarks on New Leadership Role in MUSC Precision Health Initiative

As part of their strategic plan, ONE MUSC, the Medical University of South Carolina has developed an aspirational goal of becoming a top 20 academic health system in the nation leading South Carolina into the top 20 in the nation for health outcomes.

To help meet this goal, MUSC is driving innovation and health transformation to accelerate preeminence in five key areas of strength (cancer, digestive health, heart and vascular, neurosciences, and precision health)

GGC's President and CEO, Steve Skinner, MD, has been tapped to be the clinical lead on efforts in the area of precision health.

Skinner noted that these precision health efforts will require significant cross-institutional support and common infrastructure in areas such as clinical trials, big data/AI, and genomics.

He will also serve as Chair of MUSC's Integrated Center of Clinical Excellence (ICCE) in Genetics and Genomics. MUSC has 17 ICCE care models designed to improve the patient experience and achieve optimal patient outcomes.

"These new leadership roles are a significant step forward in our fruitful partnership with MUSC and will create more opportunities for GGC to be a model and vehicle for precision health," said Skinner. "This opportunity will also enhance the success and sustainability of GGC's internal precision medicine initiative, and expand our impact on patient care across South Carolina," said Skinner.

Skinner will be phasing in these new responsibilities over the coming months and will continue to lead GGC with a focus on strategic priorities and state agency and legislative relationships.

To delegate other day-to-day operational responsibilities, GGC has created a new position, Chief Administration Officer, and Mike Lyons, MD, Curry Chair in Translational Genomics and Therapeutics, will oversee the Center's scientific and educational divisions as Chief Genomics Officer.





Celebrating 50 years:

2024 was a year of honoring the past and focusing on the future

Throughout 2024, GGC has celebrated the rich history of the organization's first 50 years with a renewed focus on the next 50 years

To honor the past five decades, GGC developed a historical exhibit that was on display at the Greenwood Museum throughout the summer telling the story of the Center's development, growth, and many families who have been served. The summer also saw a new topiary, 'Gene the Double Helix' revealed for the South Carolina Festival of Flowers.

Family stories remained at the forefront with patient testimonial videos released each month on social media and via GGC's YouTube channel to highlight the importance of GGC's compassionate care to those who are impacted by genetic disorders.

Employees enjoyed several 50th-themed events including a family day at Riverbanks Zoo, volunteering with Greenwood Miracle League, and a futuristic-themed Employee Fun Day.

While Hurricane Helene led to the postponement of a celebratory gala, GGC donors and friends came together in December for a joint 50th celebration and holiday party where GGC leadership payed homage to the Center's founding and history while sharing plans for the current Precision Medicine Initiative.

THE GGC STORY - VIDEO

See the GGC story from the perspective of the founders, former and current employees, and the families who have benefited from the work of the Greenwood Genetic Center over the past five decades.

1974-2000

THE EARLY YEARS:

A History of the Greenwood Genetic Center

GGC cofounders, Roger Stevenson, MD, and Hal Taylor, PhD, have coauthored a book on the early history of GGC.

The Early Years tells the story of the Greenwood Genetic Center - from Stevenson and Taylor's first meeting as fellows at Johns Hopkins through the origin, growth, and development of GGC into a world-renowned genetics organization.

They detail the challenges and opportunities that led them to the small Southern town of Greenwood and share poignant and often humorous anecdotes, including critical lessons learned from patients and their families spanning the years 1974-2000.

You can read an excerpt from ***The Early Years*** and order your copy at GGC.org/TheEarlyYears.

Care Reimagined

As GGC begins its second 50 years, the Center's Precision Medicine Initiative is the cornerstone of the future of genomic medicine.

The GGC Foundation's Care Reimagined campaign will fund the four critical pillars of this initiative - also called the 4 A's - Access, Analysis, Answers, and Action ***(see below).***

Through this campaign, we will break down barriers for children and adults who are uninsured or underinsured, enable GGC to diagnose patients who have had 'every test in the book' with no answer, and identify new treatments for patients based on understanding the impact of their specific genetic variant. Care Reimagined aims to transform the delivery of genetic services by integrating a patient's personal genomic data with their individual care providing everyone with a genetic disorder access to affordable, personalized, and precise healthcare.

To learn more about Care Reimagined and how you can support this vital GGC initiative, view the campaign video using the QR code below.

50 YEARS
care reimagined
GREENWOOD GENETIC CENTER

The Four Pillars of GGC's Precision Medicine Inititative

ACCESS - Improve access to genomic testing and services for South Carolinians through the GGC Cares Fund.

ANALYSIS - Generate and analyze genomic data through GGC's proving ground for new technologies and approaches to analyze data.

ANSWERS - Diagnose each patient in a timely manner and identify potential treatments through GGC's Genomic Discovery Program.

ACTION - Lead patients to a personalized treatment or therapy for their genetic condition.

Genomic Discovery Program

The GDP is a collaborative GGC effort to lead to ANSWERS and ultimately ACTION for families on the diagnostic journey

The Genomic Discovery Program (GDP) is a cross-divisional program of GGC's Precision Medicine Initiative designed to find timely answers for undiagnosed patients and specific treatments to improve their quality of life. This is a resource for clinicians to access after traditional first-tier genomic testing methods have been exhausted with no clear answer.

"The goals of the GDP are to provide enhanced care for families by offering access to novel genomic technologies and analytic methods, shorten the time to diagnosis for patients with rare diseases, and identify personalized treatments specific to the patient's medical needs, "said Fran Annese, LMSW, GGC's GDP Coordinator.

GDP involves clinicians, diagnostic laboratory faculty, and research scientists who meet regularly to review submitted cases and lead next steps for finding a diagnosis or treatment. The GDP teams collaborate in three tracks...

Discovery

The GDP reviews undiagnosed cases to determine the best path to pursue when traditional genetic and genomic testing has not found the answer. The team may suggest novel testing or new bioinformatic approaches to help lead to a diagnosis.

Resolution

When genetic test results are uncertain, a variant is found, but its significance is not clear, the GDP team can design and conduct experiments to help determine whether the finding is clinically significant which in many cases will lead to a diagnosis.

Treatment

Once a diagnosis is confirmed, the GDP works to connect patients with existing therapies and explore novel treatment options including external resources or single patient trials with drugs that may already have FDA approval.

GGC Launches First High-Throughput Drug Screen

Collaboration fuels exciting advancement in screening FDA-approved compounds to repurpose them for rare disease.

Director of Research, Rich Steet, PhD, loads a 96-well plate of test samples for analysis.

GGC is collaborating with Gene Spotlight, a nonprofit medical research and advocacy organization, to perform its first high-throughput drug screen for patients with a specific variant in the gene that causes Mucopolysaccharidosis, type 1 (MPS1) also known as Hurler syndrome, Scheie syndrome, or Hurler-Scheie syndrome.

MPS1 is a rare lysosomal storage disorder caused by the inability of the body's cells to produce enough of an enzyme called alpha-iduronidase that breaks down harmful substances. The toxic buildup of these substances leads to symptoms including coarsening facial features, hearing loss, skeletal and spinal deformities, cardiac issues, and developmental delays.

GGC researchers will screen approximately 1,800 compounds, most of which already have FDA approval for other purposes, to determine if they increase the activity of the alpha-iduronidase enzyme in cells with an MPS1 variant.

"Through ongoing work to better understand how specific genetic changes cause MPS1, we created cell-based tools that will be used to screen a library of FDA-approved drugs for their ability to increase alpha-iduronidase enzyme activity," said Rich Steet, PhD, Director of Research at GGC. "We are hopeful that of the compounds we screen, we will find a few hits to pursue further as a potential therapy."

The team identifies a hit as a drug that improves enzyme activity by 25% or more.

"For many of these lysosomal storage disorders, we can see significant clinical improvements with even a small increase in enzyme activity," added Steet. "If we can go from 1-2% activity to 10-15% activity, that could be life-changing for these patients and their families."

The project is being funded by Gene Spotlight, a leading medical research non-profit organization committed to sparking breakthroughs in treatments and cures for rare genetic disorders, including lysosomal storage disorders and other rare diseases. Currently, 95% of rare diseases have no approved treatment.

"By screening so many compounds that already have FDA approval, we can potentially identify an effective treatment that we could pull off the shelf and administer immediately," said Mike Lyons, MD, Curry Chair in Translational Genomics and Therapeutics at GGC. "We are excited for the potential that this and future drug screens can have to improve the quality of life for patients with rare diseases."

Guardian Research Network

Translating data into cures.

GGC Joins Guardian Research Network

GGC has joined the Guardian Research Network (GRN), a South Carolina-based national nonprofit consortium of healthcare organizations with a mission to accelerate the discovery of treatments and improve patient care, particularly for those with rare genetic disorders.

By joining forces with other GRN members, the combined impact of GGC's five decade of longitudinal data will be transformational in the ability to not only provide accurate diagnoses but also advance clinical trial participation and ultimately accelerate discovery and development of effective therapies for rare orphan diseases.

L-R: Mike Friez, PhD, Director of GGC's Diagnostic Labs; Sneha Mokashi, PhD, Staff Scientist; and Carder Jones, Bioinformatics Analyst, with the PacBio Revio instrument

Diagnostics Expand with New Technologies

Through the Diagnostic Lab's Innovation Center - the 'Analysis' effort of the Precision Medicine Initiative - GGC is expanding the use of novel technologies to make more diagnoses for more patients.

GGC's Innovation Center is a coordinated effort between the Center's diagnosticians and researchers to explore the use of novel technologies in making challenging diagnoses - in cases where more traditional genetic testing methods have failed to find an answer.

In 2024, GGC launched optical genome mapping (OGM) as a clinical test and also acquired a PacBio Revio system to explore the use of long-read sequencing.

Optical Genome Mapping

Optical genome mapping (OGM), uses Bionano's Saphyr instrument to identify structural variations in the genome at a higher resolution and in a more cost-effective and timely manner than traditional cytogenetic testing.

“OGM combines the capabilities of three clinically available tests, karyotyping, microarray, and fluorescence in-situ hybridization, and has 1000X higher resolution than traditional chromosome analysis,” said Barb DuPont, PhD, Senior Director of GGC’s Cytogenetics Laboratory. “We can effectively replace three tests with this single assay that is faster, less expensive, and will also identify genomic changes that we would never have been able to detect with any other test.”

Nikhil Sahajpal, PhD, (cover photo) Laboratory Genetics and Genomics fellow at GGC, has led the OGM research and validation project since 2022. His efforts culminated in the decision to offer the test clinically in 2024.

“Optical genome mapping allows us to analyze long pieces of DNA and reconstruct the chromosomes, similar to putting together a puzzle,” said Sahajpal, who will be completing his fellowship in December and will join GGC as a Assistant Laboratory Director.

He added that while chromosome analysis and genome sequencing technologies have their strengths, "OGM overcomes some of their limitations and allows us to identify structural genetic changes that have been significantly understudied because of the lack of technology.”

"Long-read sequencing is a promising and progressive opportunity with many of its best qualities yet to be unlocked in the clinical space.

Many researchers, myself included, believe that it will provide a much needed magnifying glass on many historically difficult to sequence parts of the genome; ultimately allowing us to identify and document additional regions of interest previously unlikely or impossible to scope."

- Carder Jones
GGC Bioinformatics Analyst

Long-Read Sequencing

In 2021, GGC launched a test called WES-XL, which allows for the sequencing of a patient's entire genome. That technology has been a game changer in making a diagnosis for many families; however, it has its limitations. WES-XL works by sequencing short segments of DNA (short-read sequencing).

Thanks to funding from the Fullerton Foundation, GGC has recently acquired a long-read sequencer, the PacBio Revio, that allows for sequencing of longer fragments of DNA, providing more detailed and accurate genetic information than the current short-read sequencing technology allows.

With this technology, GGC aims to be among the first institutions in the country to have long-read sequencing available in a clinical setting.

"The addition of OGM to our test menu and the acquisition of the long-read sequencer will further revolutionize our diagnostic capabilities, allowing for even more comprehensive and higher resolution genomic analysis," said Mike Friez, PhD, Director of GGC's Diagnostic Laboratories. "These technologies are already being employed by our Genomic Discovery Program (see p. 5) and will directly benefit patients who have remained undiagnosed despite exhaustive testing."

Inspiring the Next Generation of Geneticists

GGC's Division of Education continues to provide innovative, hands-on experiences for students from middle school through college to improve their understanding of genetics and explore career opportunities.

Outreach Education

During the 2023-24 school year, GGC's outreach education team served ***10,127*** students in middle and high school through the Gene Machine mobile science lab, the Helix Express van, and visits to GGC's Greenwood campus.

Summer Camps

In the summer of 2024, GGC held two 'Junior Genetics Scholars' camps for area students. Middle school students explored 'Genetics in Pop Culture' while the high school campers delved into the 'Wide World of Ecological Genetics.'

Photo above: Middle school campers work on a forensics activity

College Internships

Each summer, GGC sponsors six paid college internships and additional volunteer opportunities to engage in projects and explore careers across GGC. This summer's interns came from Clemson University, Presbyterian College, Wofford College, Coastal Carolina University, and Virginia Tech supporting projects in research, diagnostic testing, clinical care, and data management.

GGC and MUSC Cohost Mobile Lab Coalition Conference

In July, GGC's Division of Education welcomed outreach education teams from around the country to the Mobile Laboratory Coalition's (MLC) Annual Conference. The event was held in Charleston, SC and cohosted by the Medical University of South Carolina (MUSC). GGC joined the MLC in 2010 when the Center acquired the Gene Machine mobile science lab and has been active in the organization.

The four-day conference included a welcome reception at the South Carolina Aquarium, a Mobile Lab Rodeo for attendees to see other vehicles and learn more about programming, and numerous sessions and workshops exploring community outreach and engagement, adapting and growing outreach programs, and best practices in STEM education.

"We were pleased to join other outreach programs from highly regarded institutions including the Salk Institute and the Max Planck Florida Institute for Neuroscience for this educational and networking opportunity," shared Leta Tribble, PhD, GGC's Director of Education (pictured above welcoming attendees to the conference).

Alyssa Labdon, Activities and Trainee Development Lead for GGC's Division of Education, said the highlight for her was sharing her experience with the MLC Instructor Swap program. Labdon traded jobs with another instructor last spring and spent a week in Boston with BioBus New England.

Labdon added, "The MLC conference provided a unique opportunity to interact with industry peers and gain insights into the diverse ways other mobile labs operate and innovate. It allowed us to exchange curriculum ideas with a wide variety of programs and will hopefully encourage us to diversify and expand our offerings."

Genetic Counselor Licensure in SC

Licensure for genetic counselors increases practitioner credibility, protects patients, and sustains the profession.

The ceremonial signing of the bill was celebrated on Sept. 25, 2024. L-R: Swain Whitfield (consultant); Amy Wardyn, MS, CGC (USC); Kellie Walden, MS, CGC (GGC); Rep. John McCravy, Allison Bellomo, MS, CGC (Prisma Health), Janice Edwards, MS, CGC (USC); SC Gov. Henry McMaster; Libby Malphrus, MS, CGC (MUSC); Sen. Billy Garrett; Amy Dobson, MS, CGC (GGC); Steve Skinner, MD (GGC); Katy Drazba, MS, CGC (GGC), and Whitney Dobek, MS, CGC (USC)

GGC, the Medical University of South Carolina (MUSC), Prisma Health, and the USC School of Medicine collaborated to pass a bill requiring licensing for genetic counselors in South Carolina to increase practitioner credibility, provide peace of mind and safety for patients, and enhance sustainability for the genetic counseling profession.

President and CEO of GGC Dr. Steve Skinner said, "Genetic counselors are critical members of the genetics health care team and provide an invaluable service to patients and families. GGC, MUSC, Prisma Health, and the USC School of Medicine have proudly worked to support this profession and advocate for the passage of genetic counselor licensure in South Carolina. This is a huge step forward in recognizing the important work that genetic counselors do every day."

South Carolina is the 36th state to enact licensing for genetic counselors.

Licensure provides protections for patients and caregivers alike by ensuring that genetic counselors practicing in South Carolina are properly trained to offer high-quality care. Additionally, patients of genetic counselors in states with licensure have an easier time receiving insurance coverage for the service.

Prisma Health, a private nonprofit health company and the largest health care organization in South Carolina, employs genetic counselors in both the Upstate and the Midlands. Allison Bellomo, MS, CGC, a former GGC genetic counselor who is based at the Prisma Health Cancer Institute in Greenville, has led efforts to gain support for this new law. Passionate about serving patients in her field, Bellomo has worked for genetic counselor licensure for over a decade and was involved in each step of the process from the bill's inception through numerous meetings, committee hearings, and votes until the bill was signed by Gov. Henry McMaster in May.

"This law ensures that South Carolinians who need genetic counseling services are receiving them from a provider who is properly accredited and trained to offer complete and accurate information," said Bellomo. "This will help provide peace of mind and safety for our patients. The new measure also validates the significance and complexities of our profession. I'm proud to have been part of the team to help make this a reality."

This law also establishes the South Carolina Board of Genetic Counselors. Four of the five board members are licensed genetic counselors including Bellomo and Kim Foil, MS, CGC, the director of SC's new genetic counseling training program at MUSC. The board is responsible for reviewing licensure applications, renewing licenses, and following-through on disciplinary investigations.

Foil, a strong advocate for licensure in the state said, "Genetic counselors are highly skilled and well trained to provide complex information on which patients often make significant medical and family decisions. Licensure will help ensure that patients have access to trusted professionals who can help them navigate these often confusing and challenging circumstances.

"In addition to offering protections for the citizens of South Carolina who need genetic counseling services, licensure also elevates this important field among the medical community," said Janice Edwards, MS, CGC, founder and former director of the state's first genetic counseling training program at USC School of Medicine. "This status will help us to retain and recruit the best and brightest genetic counselors to practice in South Carolina."

The ceremonial signing of the bill was celebrated at the Governor's office on September 25.

Moving forward, genetic counselors will continue to monitor and advocate for legislation which supports patient safety and positive outcomes through robust genetic counseling.

Genetic counseling is the process of helping people understand and adapt to the medical, psychological, and familial implications of genetic contributions to disease. This process involves interpreting family and medical histories to assess the chance of disease occurrence or recurrence, educating families about inheritance, testing, management, prevention, resources, and research, and providing support to promote informed choices.

Self Family Foundation Supports Care Reimagined Campaign

The Care Reimagined campaign supports the Greenwood Genetic Center's blueprint for the next 50 years of advancing genetic healthcare.

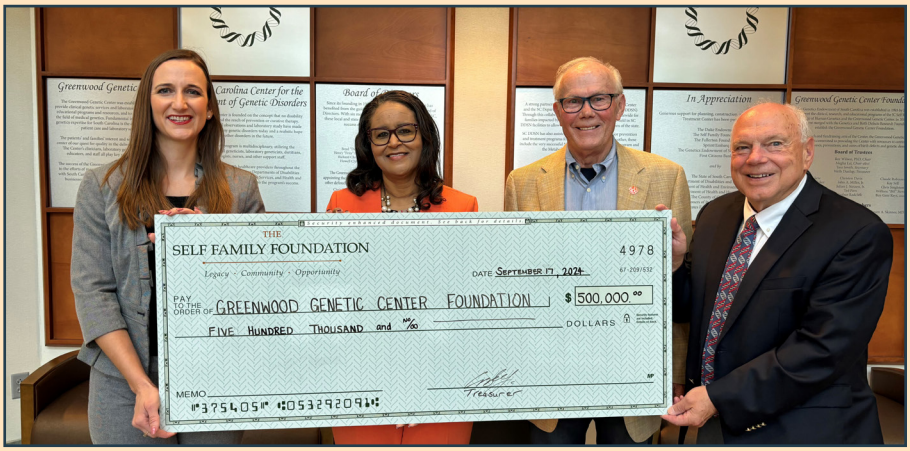


Photo (L-R): Cady Nell Keener, Executive Director of the GGC Foundation; Mamie Nicholson, President of the Self Family Foundation; Ray Wilson, PhD, Chair, GGC Foundation Board of Trustees; and Steve Skinner, MD, President and CEO of GGC.

The Self Family Foundation awarded a $500,000 grant to support the Greenwood Genetic Center's (GGC) Care Reimagined campaign.

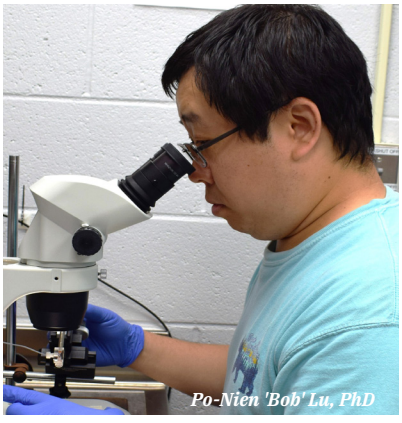
Care Reimagined supports the Center's Precision Medicine Initiative, which is defined through the Four "A"s: Access, Analysis, Answers, and Action. These four pillars represent the patient's journey at the Greenwood Genetic Center, guiding the entire process of personalized care. Access connects the patient with the necessary services while analysis enhances GGC's ability to detect genetic variations with greater accuracy – providing answers and ultimately action in the form of treatments and therapies to improve their quality of life.

The Self family has supported the mission of the Greenwood Genetic Center since its inception providing some of the funding that established GGC in 1974. The latest grant from the Self Family Foundation recognizes GGC's 50-year commitment to providing care for families impacted by rare, genetic diseases.

"We are incredibly grateful for the Self family's longtime support of the Greenwood Genetic Center. This grant puts us one step closer to improving the lives of countless families impacted by genetic diseases," said Dr. Steve Skinner, President and CEO of the Greenwood Genetic Center.

Established in 1942 by Greenwood Mills founder James C. Self, the Self Family Foundation supports multiple organizations across Greenwood County. Areas of interest include health care and education, community wellness, intellectual and social development of youth, cultural opportunities, and early childhood development.
Bubba Self said the Self Family Foundation's ongoing financial support for GGC echoes the belief his grandfather, Jim Self, held in the potential of genetics when he initially supported the GGC.

"I believe my grandfather would be very proud of the impact that the center has had and the number of lives it has touched over its first 50 years and will touch over the next half-century," he added.


Po-Nien 'Bob' Lu, PhD

Employee Achievements

We are pleased to recognize the following employees for their excellence, and recent achievements...

- ***Po-Nien "Bob" Lu, PhD*** was promoted to Staff Scientist.
- ***Emily Black, MD*** was promoted to Director of the Metabolic Treatment Program.
- ***Haley Busbee*** was promoted to Division of Education Outreach Manager.
- ***Anna Crockett*** was promoted to HR Generalist.
- ***Kevin Farren*** was promoted to Chief Information Officer.
- ***Talitha Kay*** achieved Society for Human Resource Management-Certified Professional status.
- ***Alyssa Labdon*** was promoted to Education Activities and Trainee Development Lead.
- ***Mike Lyons, MD*** was promoted to Senior Clinical Geneticist.
- ***Kevin Thomas*** achieved certification by the American Society for Clinical Pathology.

Race the Helix - Greenwood

The 14th annual Race the Helix- Greenwood was held on September 21 with over 250 registered participants and countless volunteers and spectators.

This year's event, which also celebrated the Center's 50th anniversary, was presented by Bionano, Mutual of America and Frank & Cathy Witney, and raised nearly $31,000 for the GGC Foundation's GGC Cares Fund.

Race the Helix's origins lay in one family's desire to thank GGC for the compassionate care they received in a time of need.

"Because of the amazing things GGC has done for us, and the impact their compassion has had on our family, we started Race the Helix to support their mission," shared Stephen Shenal, father of Ryleigh who has been cared for at GGC since birth. "Through Race the Helix, we hope to raise awareness for GGC, rare genetic disorders, and families on the same path as ours. The impact they have had on our family and others across the globe every day is immeasurable. We can't imagine walking this journey without their guidance and support."

Left: Race the Helix welcomed participants from Ainsley's Angels, an organization promoting inclusion for all in endurance events. Above: GGC President and CEO, Dr. Steve Skinner, visits with Ryleigh Shenal during the event.

Grateful Family Program

The GGC Foundation has launched the Grateful Family Program as a way for those who have experienced GGC's compassionate care and expertise firsthand to express their gratitude. By paying it forward, families can ensure that the next patient to walk through our doors has an opportunity to receive the same high-quality care and the answers they deserve.

Meet program chair and GGC mom, Helen Campbell, using the QR code below or visit ggc.org/grateful-family to learn more.

"There are a lot of unknowns when your partner has a chronic genetic condition which can be incredibly overwhelming and scary at times. Fortunately, the medical care provided by Greenwood Genetic Center is not something I have to worry about. Not only is his team committed to keeping up with the latest research and treatment for the most effective outcomes, I know that they truly care about my husband and his well-being."

- Caitlin Thames

Share Your GGC Story

If you or a family member had a "Giving Greater Care" experience at GGC, sharing your story, like Caitlin did, can help bring awareness to the Center and encourage other families who may be dealing with similar circumstances.

Honor Your GGC Caregiver

Make a gift to the GGC Foundation in honor of a member of the GGC team who made a difference in your life or went above and beyond for your family.

Start a Facebook Fundraiser

Starting a Facebook fundraiser is a wonderful way to share your family's story and increase awareness of GGC's mission while also contributing to the important work of the Center.

Greenwood
Genetic Center
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The Greenwood Genetic Center is a nonprofit organized to provide clinical genetic services, diagnostic laboratory testing, educational programs and materials, and research in the field of medical genetics.

Greenwood
Genetic Center
Where Compassion Inspires Progress

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