

## **History of CART**

### ***The Genesis of CART***

In October 1995, the Sumter, S. C. Rotary Club, led by Roger Ackerman and Dr. Jack Bevan, initiated the effort to prove that Rotarians voluntarily emptying their pockets of change for a good cause could produce significant levels of funds to support Alzheimer's disease research. The CART Fund (Coins for Alzheimer's Research Trust) was the name given to the project, which proved to be highly successful during an 8-month testing period.

In May 1996. The CART Fund was introduced at the Rotary District 7770 Conference and was enthusiastically received. The District leaders agreed to adopt CART as a project, if a committee made up of Sumter Rotarians could obtain the support of the individual clubs in the District. During the 1996-97 Rotary year, CART programs were presented in 62 of the 68 clubs in D-7770. The response was overwhelmingly in support of this grassroots project and the district officially adopted CART as a district-wide program in 1997.

### ***The Concept of CART Grows!***

The CART Fund was developed with the idea of accomplishing its goals without conducting fund raising projects and without interfering with other projects of Rotary clubs. In order to do this, CART leaders developed the concept of asking Rotarians to voluntarily empty their pockets of change or whatever amount they wanted to donate when they attend their weekly meetings. (It is estimated that on any given day in America, \$8.25 billion in loose change passes among our citizens.) This provides a very simple, painless and effective way to raise much-needed funds for Alzheimer's research.

However, as time has passed, numerous clubs have contributed a portion or even all of some of the proceeds of club fundraisers to CART. Many Rotarians contribute dollars as well as pocket change. Quite a number of clubs have members make challenge gifts on a monthly or quarterly basis. These can amount to \$100.00 to \$500.00 challenges. A Macon, Georgia Rotarian on two occasions made \$5000.00 challenges covering a 4-month period and the Macon Rotarians met the challenge each time!

Many individuals who are not members of Rotary have made significant contributions to CART. In fact, the single largest contribution to CART was made by a non-Rotarian from western North Carolina who contributed \$25,000.00 in honor of her two sisters who had lost

their battle with Alzheimer's disease. She said she chose CART because she liked the idea that 100% of her donation was going to research, and because she knew that Rotary was an outstanding organization. Memorials and honorariums have also been a source of funds for CART. Numerous individuals have named CART as the charity of choice for memorials honoring loved ones.

In early January 1999, the American Federation for Aging Research (AFAR) very generously agreed to provide their expertise in assisting with the grant process. Their valued assistance has continued primarily by recruiting some of the nation's top scientists in the field of Alzheimer's disease research to serve as a peer advisory group to review all grant applications.

Using funds raised to that point, in 1999 CART awarded its first grant to Emory University and Dr. Allan Levey, the leader of Emory's Alzheimer's disease research team.

In the 18 months that followed this initial grant, the other ten Districts in the Carolinas and Georgia committed to support CART. CART is currently actively promoted in each of these same Rotary Districts, District 6900, District 6910, District 6920, District 7670, District 7680, District 7690, District 7710, District 7720, District 7730, District 7750, and District 7770. As of 2009 these 11 Districts of the Carolinas and Georgia have provided most of the funds for CART; however individual Rotary clubs in Texas, Illinois, Mississippi, and New York make regular contributions.

The first Board of Directors meeting was held in November 2000. By-laws were adopted, and PDG Bill Clark of D-7750 was elected President of the Board.

### ***How CART works***

The President of CART may call special meetings of the Board, but most of the decisions are made at the annual meeting held each year in Columbia, SC on the Wednesday prior to Mother's Day. All other decisions are usually made using conference calls among the Executive Committee members. Each district that joins the CART program has two representatives on the board and two votes. The District CART Chair has one vote and the District Governor-nominee has one vote. All funds are deposited into one CART bank account.

In selecting the best possible recipients for each of our grants, the CART Fund has been fortunate to have the guidance of a 3-person advisory team of renowned Alzheimer's research scientists who have contributed their valuable time.

Following founder Roger Ackerman, who chaired the first Grants Committee, Dr. Jack Bass

served as Chairman of the CART Grants Committee for seven years, and since 2008, Dr. Jim Puryear has carried on this great tradition with distinction.

Currently serving as chairman of the Grants Advisory Team is Dr. John Trojanowski, department head of Neurology and Alzheimer's research at the University of Pennsylvania. Serving with Dr. Trojanowski are Dr. Allan Levey of Emory University and Dr. Karl Herrup of Rutgers University.

Dr. Sam Gandy served as Chairman of the CART Grants Advisory Team during the time that the first 6 grants were selected for funding by CART. Among the professional researchers serving at various times with Dr. Gandy were Drs. Virginia Lee, Edward Koo, David Holtzman, and George Martin. CART is deeply grateful to these dedicated scientists and volunteers for their guidance and encouragement.

### ***CART Grants***

- The initial grant of \$100,000.00 was made in April 1999 by D-7770 to Emory University and Dr. Allan Levey, the leader of its Alzheimer's research team. Of the 8 research centers invited to apply for this initial grant, applications were received from Harvard University, the University of Pennsylvania, Johns Hopkins University, Duke University, Emory University, the Medical University of South Carolina, and the Mayo Clinic.
- After the first CART grant for \$100,000 was made to Emory University in 1999, the second CART grant was awarded in May 2001. A \$250,000 grant is made to CASE Western Reserve University's Alzheimer's Research Department covering a two-year grant.
- The third grant was awarded in April 2002: Johns Hopkins School of Medicine receives CART's third grant in the amount of \$250,000.
- In April 2003, CART's fourth grant in the amount of \$250,000 was awarded to the University of Pennsylvania School of Medicine.
- CART Treasurer Roger Ackerman announced that the Fund exceeded \$1 million in receipts in July 2003.
- The University of Connecticut Health Center was announced as the recipient of CART's fifth grant, which was in the amount of \$250,000.
- The sixth grant of the CART Fund is presented to Dr. Gary Small and his research team from University of California at Los Angeles in May 2005. The grant was for \$250,000.

- In May 2006, The University of Texas - Medical Branch was awarded the seventh grant of the CART Fund.
- May 2007 saw the Mayo Clinic in Jacksonville FL receive the eighth grant from CART for \$250,000
- In May 2008, thanks to generous support from Rotarians and others, it was possible to award two grants (#9 and #10) for the first time. The Cleveland Clinic and Sanjay W. Pimplikar, Ph.D received a \$250,000 grant and The University of Alabama-Birmingham Medical Center and J. David Sweatt, Ph.D. received a \$200,000 grant.
- The practice of awarding two grants each year continued in May 2009, when the University of Kentucky's Harry LeVine.III, Ph.D, was awarded CART's eleventh grant for \$250,000 and the Mayo Clinic, Jacksonville, Fl and Malcom Leissring, Ph.D were awarded the twelfth for \$200,000.

### ***Quotes from some of CART's grant recipients:***

Upon receiving CART's fourth grant at the University of Pennsylvania, Dr. John Trojanowski commented: "Funding from sources like Rotarians allow us to jump-start scientific research on the many targets that we think are molecular pathways to curing Alzheimer's. It is remarkable that just a few citizens can band together to recognize a need and with deliberation and foresight, deliver major awards on the level of a large foundation or government agency."

Dr. Gary Landreth of Case Western Reserve University received a grant in 2001 to support work on a then-novel class of drugs. Dr. Landreth stated, "The CART funds were absolutely critical to our success, as they allowed us to pursue experiments investigating the mechanism of drug action for which we had no other means of support." He further advised that this research has led to three phases of testing involving expenditures in excess of \$200 million dollars. (another example of how CART "seed funds" may lead to major research grants from the National Institute of Health and other groups).

Drs. Allan Levey and Jim Lau of Emory University: Dr. Lau, commenting on the discovery of the SORL 1 gene and its connection to CART. "The connection is simple. Our work (funded by CART) led to the first association of the SORL 1 protein (also called LR 11) with AD. That sparked interest and led directly to the study of SOTL 1 and other related genes by a very large consortium of genetics researchers."

Dr. Gary Small of UCLA: "our group remains deeply appreciative for the funding we received from your program several years ago. The CART Grants Program clearly

helped us to move the field forward through its funding of our project, which led to improved understanding of our amyloid plaque and tau tangle PET technology in mild cognitive impairment."

Dr. Sanjay Simplicar of Cleveland Clinic: "We have shown that a part of amyloid precursor protein, called AICD, causes tau to aggregate and we all know that tau aggregation is bad. Thus my findings that AICD could be the real culprit in AD have gained more credibility. Thus, the CART funding is supporting novel and cutting edge research."

Dr. David Sweatt of the University of Alabama at Birmingham: "CART funding will be critical for my laboratory to be able to aggressively pursue a new drug development opportunity that we have, that hopefully will lead to a new type of treatment for Alzheimer's disease."

Dr. Todd Golde, Mayo Clinic, Jacksonville: "Through funding provided by the CART award we will evaluate how several different types of compounds that modulate production of the amyloid beta protein work to modulate amyloid beta protein deposition in the brain of an Alzheimer's disease mouse model." In a follow up two years after the CART grant was made, Dr. Golde commented: "... CART funding was vital in our getting an NIH grant renewed that has been awarded to both Eddie Koo and myself and is for \$2.5 million dollars over 5 years."

Dr. Harry Levine, the University of Kentucky: "Thank you so much for allowing me to be part of the CART Fund annual meeting and to give those who worked so hard soliciting the funds that I will be using for research a taste of what we are trying to do. I was very much impressed with the dedication of the group and how much you have been able to accomplish, both in raising funds and awareness. I think that bringing in the grantees like this is a great way to build a personal bond between the organization and the researchers. It helps researchers remember the people who are working with us in this struggle to defeat an insidious disease. Sometimes research gets pretty lonely and it's a reconnection like this that reminds me exactly why I work on Alzheimer's disease... I will be in touch and hope that I will have exciting results to report soon."