



Fall / Winter 2008  
Volume 1 Issue 2

# THE HEINZ C. PRECHTER BIPOLAR RESEARCH FUND

## Bipolar Genes Project & Gene Repository

AT THE UNIVERSITY OF MICHIGAN DEPRESSION CENTER

### OUR MISSION

To support research into psychiatric genetics, Bipolar disorder, neuroimaging and neuroscience in order to find genetic solutions for individuals with Bipolar to help them live an excellent quality of life.

It provides direct support for the first independently funded Bipolar genetics repository in the nation. Repository investigators are hunting for the genetic component of the illness.

The fund established a longitudinal study on Bipolar disorder to help identify predictors of the course of the illness and how it will respond to treatment.

Additionally, the fund is working toward a personalized approach to mental health care, with the ultimate goal of creating a "customized" approach to treating an individual's Bipolar illness.

The fund promotes education of junior scientists so that there will be a new generation of clinical and laboratory-based investigators focusing on Bipolar illness.

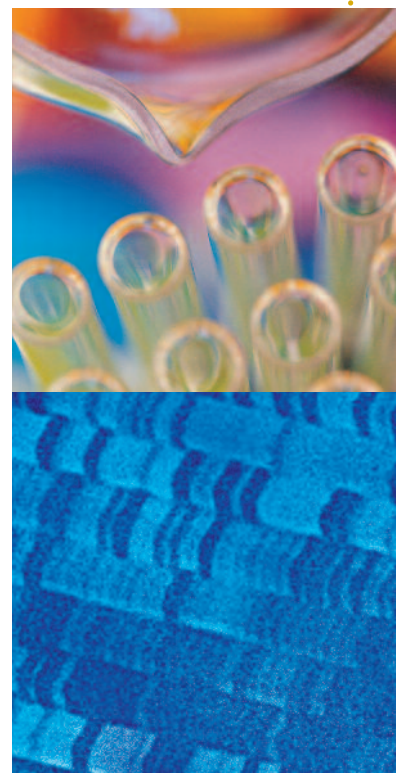
## Fund wins \$500,000 challenge grant; additional \$1 million challenge underway

**Generous donors** helped the University of Michigan Depression Center pour an additional \$1 million into advanced research on Bipolar disorder through a \$500,000 challenge grant made by an anonymous donor.

The challenge was met and exceeded thanks to a generous group of donors, including **Blue Cross Blue Shield of Michigan, Comerica Bank, Dick and Betsy DeVos, Leonard and Irma Fritz, General Motors Foundation, Bill and Val Hall, Mike and Marian Ilitch, Jampel Family Foundation, Richard and Jane Manoogian Foundation, Robert and Marion Rosenthal, Scott and Teresa Snow, Robert and Julie Taubman, Vlastic Foundation and Ambassador and Mrs. Ronald Weiser.**

All donations from the challenge are targeted exclusively to the Heinz C. Prechter Bipolar Research Fund. The monies will accelerate the pace of the Prechter Bipolar Genes Project, a unique worldwide initiative that is searching for the genetic underpinnings of Bipolar disorder.

The momentum doesn't stop now that the challenge grant has been satisfied. In fact, another challenge grant – totaling \$1 million from the World Heritage Foundation-Prechter Family Fund – continues until Dec. 1, 2009. To help make this challenge grant a reality, visit [www.prechterfund.org](http://www.prechterfund.org) for a secure online giving form or telephone 734.764.6161 to make your gift.



### Upcoming Event

## Saks fashion benefit set for spring 2009

Plans are in full swing for a high-profile Saks Fifth Avenue fashion show to benefit the Heinz C. Prechter Bipolar Research Fund. Scheduled for spring 2009, the show will be held at Saks at the Somerset Collection in Troy, Mich. The event promises to be an evening of high fashion, featuring the collection of an exclusive designer, and will include a reception and brief remarks about the breakthrough research being conducted by the fund. More information about the Saks fashion show will be available as the event draws near. To learn more about it, contact 734.675.2200.





## The Need for Answers is Great.

**“Knowing is not enough...we must apply.  
Wishing is not enough...we must do.”**

*These words by German poet Johann Wolfgang von Goethe, although spoken centuries ago, could have been written today about our pursuit to unravel the genetic mysteries of Bipolar disorder.*

*The Heinz C. Prechter Bipolar Research Fund at the University of Michigan looks daily for answers to a disease that traps millions of Americans on a medical roller coaster of manic highs and depressed lows that can be debilitating or even fatal. The need for answers as to why Bipolar occurs and how we can treat it more effectively is urgent to those whose lives are forever changed by this illness and to society as a whole.*

*The fund is on its way to raising \$3 million through two challenge grants announced this year. With these monies, the fund will be able to fuel the search for the specific genes that make a person vulnerable to developing Bipolar disorder and that cause the disease to run in some families.*

*Working with the best and brightest in the scientific community, we will explore every promising avenue and test every hypothesis until we find the science and the answers that enable us to treat Bipolar disorder with the same urgency and dignity as physical illness. We will not rest until we find the answers.*

Waltraud E. Prechter

**“I feel that I have made a little bit of difference, and when it really comes down to it, that’s what we live for – to make a difference in this world.”**

Heinz C. Prechter 1941- 2001

## The Need for Your Support is Greater.

*I was formally diagnosed with Bipolar in the fall of 2001. My journey to this point landed me for a time as a Research Associate at the U-M Depression Center, and as a participant in the research being done in the Heinz C. Prechter Bipolar Genes Project. I was honored to be part of this initiative, and I have great hopes for the future.*

*My objective is to put a face behind this struggle and let all of you know that Bipolar is not something we can simply “solve.” Whether it is the recently diagnosed teenager recovering from a psychotic break or the veteran battling yet another episode – EVERY individual in the fund’s research gives us insight into the complex nature of this illness.*

*Thanks to all of you, we have this research in place. We need to continue to take the time to focus on both the genetic origin of Bipolar and the overall course of the illness. With the help of our research and your continued efforts, we will be able to provide holistic treatment based on a comprehensive understanding.*

*I want to thank my mom for her relentless energy and her compassionate spirit. We would not be here without her faith; without her fight; without her incredible commitment to this cause. We will make a difference!*

Stephanie Prechter

- P**rogressive
- R**esearch
- E**fficient
- C**ollaborative
- H**ealth and Hope
- T**imely and good data; Translational
- E**xemplary in the nation and the world
- R**esults



# Bipolar Genetics Repository: On the Vanguard of Bipolar Research

**One of the most important initiatives** of the Heinz C. Prechter Bipolar Research Fund is a national, one-of-a-kind project designed to help pinpoint genes that make people vulnerable to Bipolar disorder.

Called the Prechter Bipolar Genetics Repository and housed at the University of Michigan Depression Center, the initiative is searching for clues to the inherited traits of Bipolar illness. Although no single gene “causes” Bipolar disorder, it is known that the disease runs in families. Researchers at U-M, Cornell University, Johns Hopkins University and Stanford University are partnering together on this large-scale genetics project.

The repository will study over 1,000 DNA samples of Bipolar families and compare them to samples from those without the disease. By collecting and analyzing these DNA samples, researchers hope to find out what puts someone at risk of Bipolar disorder and how to improve diagnosis and treatment.

The Heinz C. Prechter Bipolar Research Fund has fostered a substantial collaborative effort with the

**University of Michigan,  
Cornell University,  
Johns Hopkins  
University &  
Stanford University.**

Together, these premier academic institutions are generating and sustaining a significant biological resource for future research.

## Research UPDATE: The Lithium Connection

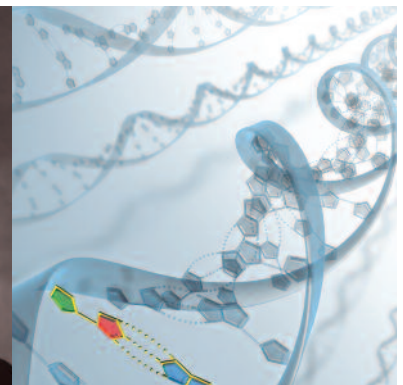
**There remains tremendous enthusiasm** and energy behind efforts aimed towards understanding the biology and genetics of Bipolar disorder: In a recent combined effort between researchers in the United Kingdom and the United States, two genes were identified that are highly likely to contribute a small, but significant risk towards Bipolar disorder:

These genes are in biological pathways that are known to be affected by lithium and are related to other lithium genes that Prechter scientists are studying in samples that have been collected under the aegis of the Prechter Bipolar Research Fund.

Lithium is one of the most effective treatments for Bipolar disorder and according to Dr. Melvin McInnis, the lead scientist for the Prechter efforts, “Lithium is a key linking element – it unifies basic science investigators around the biological pathways and it unifies clinical investigators around patterns of clinical response to the medication.”

He continued, “The Prechter Bipolar Repository contains detailed information on treatment and outcomes and will be key in unraveling the details as to why some people respond to lithium and others do not, and how genes interact with lithium (or not) to influence the course of Bipolar disorder.”

**Melvin McInnis, M.D.,**  
an internationally known expert in the field of bipolar disorders and depression, heads up the Prechter Bipolar Genetics Repository at the University of Michigan Depression Center.





## Introducing Our Team

Fifteen years ago, Scott Langenecker graduated from the University of Wisconsin and began working with adults with special needs in vocational and residential settings. His fascination with the human brain and how it works soon led him to further studies, culminating in a graduate degree in clinical psychology from Marquette University and a fellowship in neuropsychology at the University of Michigan five years ago.

Since then, Dr. Langenecker has been an important member of the Prechter-supported bipolar team, exploring hypotheses about the role of genetics, brain function and environmental variables on Bipolar disorder. "My work here allows me to blend my interest in depression with my interest in neuroscience," he says. "The large-scale, longitudinal Prechter study and the detailed assessments that we do as part of it, allow us to look in depth at a number of risk factors, causes and effects of Bipolar illness. People know that we're committed to this work for many years into the future and that we are pursuing translational clinical goals through understanding genetics, neuropsychological functioning and a number of other factors."

Even before there are clearly understood causes and cures for bipolar disease, and even before the actions of many drugs on the brain are better understood, there is much that can be done in the shorter term, according to Dr. Langenecker. He has among his goals for his patients the prevention of manic episodes, the management of sleep, and the diminishment of the stigma attached to the disease. "When we reduce the stigma about Bipolar illness, we can talk about it and our friends, families and co-workers can be more in tune with us, helping us to manage the disease."



*The Heinz C. Prechter Bipolar Research Fund is fortunate to have the brightest minds in the scientific community on its research team, under the leadership of Melvin McInnis, M.D. Let us introduce you to a member of the team...*

### **Scott A. Langenecker, Ph.D.**

*Clinical Neuropsychologist  
Neuropsychology Section  
Department of Psychiatry  
University of Michigan*

## **WE NEED YOUR HELP**

**The Bipolar genetics repository is seeking individuals to participate in its research.** The repository needs additional DNA samples, both from people who have Bipolar disorder and those without the illness. Providing a DNA sample involves the research team taking a small sample of blood. Participants must be between the ages of 18 and 65 and have a diagnosis of Bipolar disorder, or as our control group: have no mental illness in their family. Participants are interviewed at the start of the study and annually thereafter:

"We have been incredibly gratified by the number of people who are willing to take part in our studies and to help us in the hunt for factors that underlie Bipolar disorder," said Melvin McInnis, M.D., director of the Prechter genetic studies.

To participate or to find out more about the project, call toll-free: **1.877.UM.GENES** (1.877.864.3637) or visit: [www.prechterfund.org](http://www.prechterfund.org).

## NEWS BRIEFS

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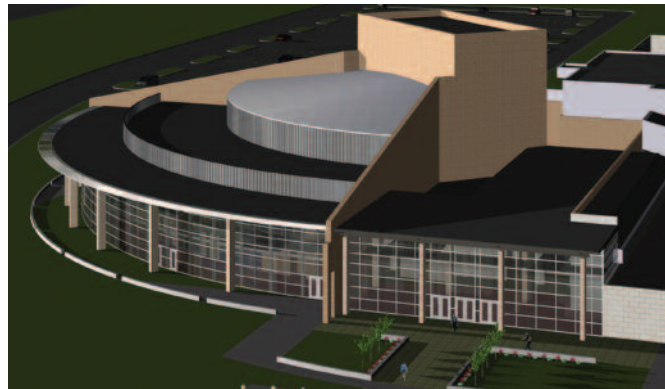
hey victimize people twice. First, because they have mental illness, and secondly because we don't have the research to lift this veil.”

**Wally Prechter**  
*Hour Detroit*

“No Secrets” is the title of a candid interview with Waltraud (“Wally”) Prechter in the October 2008 issue of *Hour Detroit*, a premier metropolitan magazine. Wally details her family’s personal struggles with Bipolar disorder and her resolve to find answers to the illness through the creation of the Heinz C. Prechter Bipolar Research Fund. “If you look at the research in regard to Bipolar disorder, it is 20 years or more behind compared to where we are with cancer and all the other illnesses,” she noted in stressing the need for increased research to unlock the mysteries of Bipolar. “I do believe that we have forgotten about mental illness.” To access the full story, visit: <http://hourdetroit.com/Hour-Detroit/October-2008/No-Secrets/>

**HOUR**  
DETROIT

**Wayne County Community College** reports that the Heinz C. Prechter Educational and Performing Arts Center in Taylor, Mich., is scheduled for completion in spring 2009. A special event is planned



for the grand opening of the state-of-the-art performing arts center, which will feature full-stage production capability. For additional information on the center, contact Deborah Duyck at 313.496.2777.

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as of September 2008

**If you want to join in the effort** to raise awareness and needed funding for Bipolar illness, Bipolar awareness wristbands are available from the fund for a donation of \$50 per bag (for a quantity of 10 wristbands). The black and white wristbands contain the words, “Prechter Bipolar Research Fund.” Proceeds from the sale of the wristbands go directly toward research aimed at conquering the disease. For more information, visit: [www.prechterfund.org](http://www.prechterfund.org).

**81 MILLION**  
**BIPOLAR CHALLENGE**  
[www.prechterfund.org](http://www.prechterfund.org)

## LECTURE SERIES

# Highlights new treatment options

Dr. Terence Ketter of Stanford University shared with audience members at the Heinz C. Prechter Bipolar Research Fund Lecture a look at how new options for treating Bipolar are actually helping reveal differences between newly recognized subtypes of the disorder.

By better understanding the different varieties of Bipolar disorder, and the most effective treatment combinations for each one, it may be possible to help patients more quickly and efficiently tame their symptoms and lead a productive life.

As chief of the Bipolar Disorder Clinic at the Stanford University Medical Center and a professor of psychiatry and behavioral sciences at the Stanford School of Medicine, Dr. Ketter performs research on the origins, symptoms and treatment of Bipolar disorder.

Using brain imaging, new medications and other tools, Dr. Ketter has helped increase understanding of the disorder. Two groups of medicines that appear especially promising, he says, are anticonvulsant drugs and new antipsychotic medicines.

Launched last year, the lecture series features distinguished researchers from the four universities participating in the Prechter Bipolar Genetics Repository. The lectures are held annually, are open to the public and provided free of charge.

*The lecture series was made possible by the generous support of:*

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## People on the Move

**Mary Clark, LMSW**, joined the Prechter Bipolar Research Program and the University of Michigan Depression Center this summer. She came to U-M in 2006, serving as the first social worker assigned to the Consultation Liaison Psychiatry Service, providing acute psychiatric interventions for medically hospitalized patients. Previously, she provided outpatient psychotherapies, emergency and inpatient psychiatry interventions in West Michigan.

**Richard McEachin, Ph.D.**, former Project Manager for the Prechter Bipolar Research Program, has taken a National Institutes of Health Fellowship focusing on co-morbid Bipolar disorder with substance abuse.

**Gloria Harrington, MSW**, has been named the new Project Manager for the Prechter group. She has extensive administrative experience, in addition to her credentials in social work. She joined the University of Michigan Depression Center in 2007 as the Executive Assistant to the Executive Director. Previously, she was the Program Administrator of the Sol Drachler Program in Jewish Communal Leadership at the University of Michigan School of Social Work.

**Masoud Kamali, M.D.**, joined the Prechter research team this fall as a Clinical Lecturer and Research Fellow. He was previously with Bournwood Hospital in Brookline, Mass., where he served as an inpatient attending physician. In addition to his clinical duties treating acutely ill patients, Dr. Kamali supervised residents and medical students from Boston University during their inpatient psychiatry rotations. Dr. Kamali served his residency in psychiatry at St. Luke's-Roosevelt Hospital in Manhattan.

## Your support is needed

More financial support is needed for this breakthrough research on Bipolar disorder to be successful. To donate and to learn more about the fund and the repository project, visit:

[www.prechterfund.org](http://www.prechterfund.org)



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