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Swifty Foundation Commits $1.75M Gift and Rallies Community Match to Advance Pediatric Brain Tumor Research

PHILADELPHIA - January 21, 2021 – The Children's Brain Tumor Network (CBTN) announced an award of $1.75 million from the Swifty Foundation to accelerate pediatric brain tumor research around the globe.

Co-Founders of the Swifty Foundation, Al and Patti Gustafson broadened their efforts by partnering with top surgeons at Children's Hospital of Philadelphia (CHOP) to secure an additional $1 million donation. The $2.75 million in overall philanthropic funding will support CBTN's essential research activities, including funding for CBTN's Research Core infrastructure, new research staff and working groups, and provide an overall lasting impact for many years to come.

"Given our foundation's size this will most likely be the largest gift we will ever make, and we do so for three reasons: We are investing in the inspired and pioneering leadership team of CBTN; we are investing to bring to reality a compelling vision of the necessary collaboration required between institutions and researchers to accelerate better treatments and outcomes for children diagnosed with brain cancer; and we are investing in order to attract other private and public sources of funding to enhance and diversify its revenue streams and strengthen the sustainability of the CBTN," said Al and Patti Gustafson.

The Swifty Foundation gift enabled CBTN to expand its operations staff through the creation of new roles, all working towards finding cures for pediatric brain cancer. At present, CBTN maintains over 45,000 biospecimens, paired with over 400TB of associated data, accessible through a collection of cloud-based analysis platforms that are interoperable across a broad spectrum of NIH data commons. The organization has also supported more than 600 global researchers in launching over 170 research projects, and has collaborated with a number of global research organizations -- including the Pacific Pediatric Neuro-Oncology Consortium (PNOC), for whom CBTN supports real-time clinical trial data integration.

Thanks to the funding provided by Swifty Foundation, CBTN is able to hire additional personnel to support a total of 15 positions. The newly-created role of Director of Partnerships serves as a bridge between CBTN operations and the greater patient support community to expand global research partnerships. The award also supported new research team members within clinical trial informatics. These experts have improved analysis for patient treatment plans and developed a scalable, secure and easy to use infrastructure cloud-based automation to more quickly deliver code to production and improve integration by developers.

A CBTN partner since 2016, the Swifty Foundation provided initial funding to support the establishment of a post-mortem tissue donation program, which has since grown into a multi-institutional initiative known as *Gift From a Child*. Their recent investment provides opportunities to expand the network of collaboration, specifically the development of disease working groups made up of clinical, research and patient community experts from across the CBTN, as well as its partner

consortium PNOC. These experts will accelerate diagnostics, leading to faster clinical trial development and enable creation of precision clinical trials and therapeutics for children diagnosed with a brain tumor.

Thanks to the Swifty gift providing key research staff, CBTN was able to secure participation in the National Cancer Institute (NCI)'s *Project Hope* initiative, where single-cell RNAseq data was generated on select CBTN biospecimens and further paired with a research project under the NCI's Clinical Proteomic Tumor Analysis Consortium (CPTAC), which performed proteomic analysis on 100 high-grade gliomas. These research initiatives have supported the generation of the most diverse, multimodal molecular datasets ever created on behalf of one of the deadliest of pediatric brain tumors.

Throughout 2020, Swifty Co-Founder Al Gustafson offered strategic consulting and business expertise to CBTN, which drove the framework development. Increased leadership and improved infrastructure will help CBTN scale and grow, improving preparation for future private and federal funding, expanded research capabilities, and more engagement within the community. Without this operational support, expanded research and collaboration would have been more difficult to achieve. Mr. Gustafson has also contributed his expertise in research advocacy, by providing a personal perspective as the parent of a son who passed away from medulloblastoma, to advise and assist the CBTN's Medulloblastoma Working Group.

The new funding also supported the development and unveiling of the CBTN's refreshed brand and online presence in October 2020, changing from the Children's Brain Tumor Tissue Consortium (CBTTC) to the Children's Brain Tumor Network. While the CBTN remains focused on advocating for new individualized treatments for children and young adults with brain tumors, this change in name reflects an expansion of the mission to focus on supporting precision-based clinical trial development and clinical decision support for patients enrolled in clinical trials.

The re-imagined [CTBN website](#) now serves as a comprehensive resource for partners to better understand, participate, and track progress in CBTN ongoing research efforts. An enhanced user experience allows users to learn about new research projects, find recent publications that detail cutting-edge scientific findings, and gain information on available tumor-specific data. To ensure ease of use for researchers, CBTN added a user-friendly tool for submitting project proposals, in addition to streamlining and accelerating access to data and specimens.

With the support of charitable partners like Swifty, CBTN continues to drive innovative discovery, pioneering new treatments and accelerating open science to improve health for all children and young adults diagnosed with a brain tumor. By accelerating the pace of translational research and the discovery of new treatments, this global community works together towards the shared goal of saving children and young adults from brain tumors.

About the Children's Brain Tumor Network (CBTN)
Launched as the Children's Brain Tumor Tissue Consortium (CBTTC) in 2011, the Children's Brain Tumor Network (CBTN), is a collaborative research effort to discover more effective treatments for childhood brain tumors.

The CBTN includes more than 25 member institutions located across Europe, Asia, Australia and the United States. Collectively, these member sites have enrolled more than 3,600 study participants and more than 45,000 biospecimen samples to create the world's most comprehensive repository of childhood brain tumors, available by request for laboratories across the globe. The CBTN's suite of informatics and analytics platforms enable researchers to collaborate together in real-time on behalf of all children diagnosed with a brain tumor.

To learn more about participation in the CBTN, please visit cbtn.org.

About the Center for Data Driven Discovery in Biomedicine (D³b)
The Center for Data Driven Discovery in Biomedicine (D³b) at Children's Hospital of Philadelphia (CHOP) is a translational biomedical research *Center of Emphasis* within the CHOP Research Institute. Additionally, the D³b Center acts as the Operations Center for the Children's Brain Tumor Network (CBTN).

D³b's multi-disciplinary expertise is accelerating bench-to-bedside research on behalf of children diagnosed with cancer and other rare conditions. D³b's seven collaborative units bring together experts in oncology and basic research, genomics, data science, bioinformatics, neurosurgery, and other research-related disciplines to discover breakthroughs for every child, every time, everywhere.

To learn more about the D³b Center, visit d3b.center.