The American Brain Foundation was founded to bring researchers and donors together to cure brain diseases and disorders. For almost 30 years, we have promoted and invested in research across the whole spectrum of brain disease, including ALS, Alzheimer’s disease and other dementias, multiple sclerosis, Parkinson’s disease, neuromuscular disease, epilepsy, and more.

OUR VISION

Life Without Brain Disease

Research focusing on the full spectrum of brain diseases and disorders is how we will get there. We believe that when we cure one disease, we will cure many.
2020 was a year of unprecedented challenges, especially for those living with brain disease, making the American Brain Foundation’s work supporting innovative research even more important. That’s why we focused on expanding opportunities for early-career clinician-scientists, developing research on healthcare disparities in neurology, and creating special research initiatives to have an impact on multiple brain diseases simultaneously. Establishing a research fund to explore the long-term neurological effects of COVID-19 was one of these initiatives.

There is hope for life without brain disease. When all parties come together with a singular focus, there’s no problem that can’t be solved, including the brain diseases that affect as many as two billion people worldwide. By working in partnership with the world’s largest association of neurologists, our founder the American Academy of Neurology, we have been awarding grants in every area of brain disease, investing more than $33 million in research and granting scholarships and funding to more than 262 researchers to date.

I truly believe that a discovery in one area of brain disease will have a profound ripple effect on our understanding and treatment of others. And I’m not alone. The American Brain Foundation is committed to studying the whole brain, because we know that when we find a cure for one brain disease, we will find cures for many.

David Dodick, MD, FAAN
Board Chair
In 2020, the American Brain Foundation granted $1.9 million for research and scientific awards in 12 different brain disease areas to 30 different researchers. This wouldn’t be possible without our incredible donors, especially during such tough and uncertain times. We value your commitment to finding improved treatments, prevention, and cures for brain diseases and disorders. You helped raise a total of $6.7 million for brain disease research in 2020, bringing the American Brain Foundation 8 percent over our annual fundraising goal and that much closer to finding the next cure for brain disease.

Raising awareness about brain disease is a core part of the Foundation’s work. During a time filled with uncertainty and new questions, we made it a priority to provide you with trustworthy and valuable information through avenues such as the “COVID-19 & the Brain” Facebook Live series and virtual salons, where top neurologists presented information on various research challenges and answered viewer questions live. We also launched a large-scale public awareness campaign to provide resources and information about brain diseases and disorders, emphasize the importance of brain health, and share inspiring stories from those most impacted by brain disease. Finally, we hosted our virtual gala, Commitment to Cures, to bring attention to and raise donations for brain disease research while recognizing the critical work of researchers and advocates in the field.

Thank you again for making scientific breakthroughs for brain research possible. Your contributions have allowed us to continue pursuing research for the whole brain so that one day, we won’t have to imagine life without brain disease. We’ll be able to live it.

Jane Ransom  
Executive Director
Brain diseases and disorders are interconnected. So when researchers make breakthroughs for one brain disease, the learnings will apply in understanding, preventing, or treating others. Therefore, a cure for one brain disease will lead to cures for many. That’s why we invest in research across the whole spectrum of brain diseases and disorders.

The Impact of Next Generation Research Grants

Our Next Generation Research Grants fund a broad range of innovative research projects by early-career investigators, encouraging passion for research and laying the groundwork for long-term research careers. We support the best and brightest researchers through our partnership with the American Academy of Neurology. In 2020, 30 scientists undertook innovative studies in 12 different disease areas. We have helped launch 262 research careers, and 86 percent of these researchers have gone on to secure funding from the NIH and other national entities.

Thanks to a Next Generation Research Grant, Dr. Hinson found a way to predict which traumatic brain injury patients would develop a dangerous syndrome that affects their heart rate, breathing, and more. This prediction allows doctors to better treat those patients. Her subsequent research has built on the discoveries and training from her Next Generation Research Grant, and she is now developing a model to predict additional outcomes for traumatic brain injury patients.

Holly Hinson, MD, MCR, FAAN
Past Grant Recipient
ALZHEIMER’S, LEWY BODY, AND OTHER DEMENTIAS
With support from our partners the Alzheimer’s Association and The Mary E. Groff Charitable Trust

Lenora Higginbotham, MD
Emory University

William Mantyh, MD
University of California, San Francisco

Lawren VandeVrede, MD, PhD
University of California, San Francisco

AMYOTROPHIC LATERAL SCLEROSIS (ALS)
With support from our partner the ALS Association

Suma Babu, MD, MPH, MBBS
Massachusetts General Hospital

Mehdi Ghasemi, MD
University of Massachusetts

Collin Kreple, MD, PhD
Washington University in St. Louis

Jennifer Marsella, MD
University of Rochester

COGNITIVE AGING AND AGE-RELATED MEMORY LOSS
Funded by the McKnight Brain Research Foundation through the American Brain Foundation

Bryan Baxter, PhD
Massachusetts General Hospital

Christian Camargo, MD
University of Miami

Sarah Getz, PhD
University of Miami

Sanaz Sedaghat, PhD
Northwestern University

EPILEPSY
With support from our partners the American Epilepsy Society and the Epilepsy Foundation

Lisseth Burbano, MD
Florey Institute of Neuroscience and Mental Health

Colin Ellis, MD
University of Pennsylvania

HEADACHE AND MIGRAINE
With support from our partner the International Headache Society

Faisal Amin, MD, PhD
Rigshospitalet

MULTIPLE SCLEROSIS
With support from our partners Biogen, Consortium of Multiple Sclerosis Centers, and National Multiple Sclerosis Society

Omar Al-Louzi, MD
Massachusetts General Hospital

Emily Harrington, MD, PhD
Johns Hopkins University

Ulrike Kaunzner, MD
New York Presbyterian Hospital

Farinaz Safavi, MD, PhD
National Institutes of Health

MYASTHENIA GRAVIS
With support from our partner the Myasthenia Gravis Foundation of America

Shruti Raja, MD
Duke University Medical Center

NEUROMUSCULAR DISEASE
With support from our partner the Muscle Study Group

Paloma Gonzalez-Perez, MD, PhD
Massachusetts General Hospital

Reza Seyedsadjadi, MD
Massachusetts General Hospital

PARKINSON’S DISEASE
With support from our partners the Parkinson’s Foundation and AbbVie

David Coughlin, MD
University of California, San Diego

James Curtis, PhD
Columbia University

Anna Goodheart, MD
Massachusetts General Hospital

STROKE AND INTERVENTIONAL NEUROLOGY
With support from our partners the American Heart Association and the Society of Vascular and Interventional Neurology

Kevin Keenan, MD
University of California, San Francisco

Juneyoung Lee, MD
The University of Texas Health Science Center at Houston

Sunil Sheth, MD
The University of Texas Health Science Center at Houston

Junhua Yang, PhD
Johns Hopkins University

TOURETTE SYNDROME
With support from our partner the Tourette Association of America

Jennifer Vermilion, MD
University of Rochester

Alonso Zea Vera, MD
Cincinnati Children’s Hospital Medical Center
Changes in memory can happen in normal, healthy aging but can be debilitating in people with brain disease. Dr. Bryan Baxter, a postdoctoral research fellow at Massachusetts General Hospital, was awarded a 2020 Next Generation Research Grant to study memory loss and interventions to improve memory during sleep.

“We’re trying to understand how activity in different networks relates to each other and develop tools to understand that and apply that in the future. Other people can take these tools and apply them to other diseases as well.”

Is there a specific enzyme that could be the secret to unlocking more effective multiple sclerosis treatments? Dr. Farinaz Safavi, a Neuroimmunology Fellow at the National Institutes of Health, thinks so and received a 2020 Next Generation Research Grant from the Foundation to explore how a specific enzyme induces inflammation to better target treatments for MS and other diseases.

“In order to better understand and treat different diseases, we need to know more detail about the process and about the mechanism underlying every step.”
AMERICAN BRAIN FOUNDATION AWARDS

ADVOCACY AWARDS

PUBLIC LEADERSHIP IN NEUROLOGY AWARD

Emilia Clarke
Emilia Clarke suffered two brain hemorrhages while working on the hit television show "Game of Thrones." She was recognized for her advocacy and philanthropy for neuro-rehabilitation services.

COMMITMENT TO CURES AWARD

Sidney Crosby
Sidney Crosby was recognized for building awareness around sports concussion after suffering a concussion during a hockey game in 2011, which resulted in his being sidelined for ten months.

AMBASSADOR AWARD

Jim Cramer
Jim Cramer was recognized for his work raising public awareness of migraine, a disorder of the brain affecting tens of millions of people.

BOARD CHAIR AWARD

Catherine M. Rydell, CAE
Catherine Rydell dedicated the last 21 years of her career to advancing the profession of neurology and brain disease research. Her role in growing the American Brain Foundation and the American Academy of Neurology is unprecedented.
SCIENTIFIC AWARDS

SCIENTIFIC BREAKTHROUGH AWARD

The Scientific Breakthrough Award is given to an individual or group whose research has led to meaningful advances for the care of patients living with neurological disease.

Drs. Michael Hill, Andrew Demchuk, and Mayank Goyal of the Calgary Stroke Team coordinated the large, multi-center ESCAPE trial, which demonstrates the superiority of mechanical thrombectomy therapy to reduce disability and death in ischemic stroke patients compared to the traditional method.

From left: Andrew M. Demchuk, MD, Mayank Goyal, MD, and Michael D. Hill, MD

LIFETIME AND HUMANITARIAN AWARDS

TED M. BURNS HUMANISM IN NEUROLOGY AWARD

The Ted Burns Award acknowledges the influence of the most benevolent and innovative in the field. The award aims to celebrate neurologists whose work embodies humanism—in patient care, education, advocacy, and everyday encounters.

Professor Jon Stone, MBChB, FRCP

Professor Jon Stone, MBChB, FRCP, is an outstanding educator, researcher, and clinician. His advocacy and humanism toward patients with Functional Neurological Disorder (FND) have been transformative for the field. He is truly unique in this niche that bridges a humanistic approach with clinical care and research.

ASSOCIATION OF INDIAN NEUROLOGISTS IN AMERICA LIFETIME ACHIEVEMENT AWARD

Sponsored by the American Brain Foundation through the AINA Fund

Prakash Kotagal, MD

MRIDHA SPIRIT OF NEUROLOGY HUMANITARIAN AWARD

An AAN award funded by the American Brain Foundation through the philanthropy of Dr. and Mrs. Debasish Mridha

Karen Parko, MD
POTAMKIN PRIZE FOR RESEARCH IN PICK’S, ALZHEIMER’S, AND RELATED DISEASES

Funded by the American Brain Foundation through the philanthropy of the Potamkin Family

J. Paul Taylor, MD, PhD
St. Jude Children’s Research Hospital

The Potamkin Prize is the highest honor in Alzheimer’s research that recognizes premier scientific research in Alzheimer’s disease and related dementias. Dr. Taylor was recognized for his groundbreaking studies linking the molecular mechanisms of several neurodegenerative diseases together, ranging from astute clinical observation all the way to molecular mechanisms of disease and new therapeutic avenues.

SHEILA ESSEY AWARD: AN AWARD FOR ALS RESEARCH

Funded by the American Brain Foundation through the philanthropy of the Essey Family

Guy Rouleau, MD, PhD
McGill University

The Sheila Essey Award recognizes an individual who has made significant research contributions in the search for the cause of, prevention of, and cure for ALS. Dr. Rouleau was recognized for his tremendous contributions as an academic, clinician, and leader. His laboratory has been involved in the discoveries and understanding of almost every major ALS gene, and his group’s identification of the role of the hGle1 gene in ALS was the first time the nuclear pore was implicated in ALS.

ADDITIONAL AAN SCIENTIFIC AWARDS

American Academy of Neurology Awards funded by the American Brain Foundation

Bruce S. Schoenberg International Award in Neuroepidemiology

Dreifuss-Penny Epilepsy Award

Founders Award

Harold Wolff-John Graham: An Award for Headache/Facial Pain Research

Irwin Schatz Award for Autonomic Disorders

John Stolk Award in Movement Disorders for Young Investigators

Neuro-oncology Investigator Award

Neuro-oncology Scientific Award

Norman Geschwind Prize in Behavioral Neurology

Michael S. Pessin Stroke Leadership Prize

Mitchell B. Max Award for Neuropathic Pain

Movement Disorders Research Award

Neuroendocrine Research Award

Sleep Science Award

S. Weir Mitchell Award

Wayne A. Hening Sleep Medicine Investigator Award
Funds Established in 2020

COVID-19 & THE BRAIN FUND
This fund will advance research in understanding how COVID affects the brain and nervous system and the neurologic effects of COVID-19 on communities of color and on policy initiatives to ensure equitable treatment.

TRAUMATIC BRAIN INJURY (TBI) FUND
The TBI Fund will help raise public awareness about TBI and fund much-needed research to help prevent or reduce damage in the days following a traumatic brain injury.

GROWING OUR COMMUNITY

Over the past year, we have focused on reaching more people and raising awareness for brain disease by producing valuable and trustworthy resources, including recaps of groundbreaking research in the world of neurology, stories from those impacted by brain disease, and information and facts about brain diseases and disorders. A few new resources featured on our website include:

- **Brain Health Round-Ups** — Monthly articles summarizing the latest in brain disease research from the neurological community
- **What to Know About...** — Articles that provide need-to-know information on specific brain diseases, including Tourette syndrome, Parkinson’s, multiple sclerosis, and more
- **Personal Stories** — In-depth and inspiring stories from those impacted by brain disease
- **Meet the Researchers** — Full-length features on American Brain Foundation grant recipients and how their research is breaking boundaries in the world of brain disease

Subscribe to our newsletter to stay up to date and find more brain disease info on our website: AmericanBrainFoundation.org
In 2020, we saw incredible growth in the amount of people we connected with. Our website traffic more than doubled, and we saw a 124% increase in social followers and a 158% increase in engagement across all platforms. Thanks to the engagement of our dedicated followers and supporters, we are reaching more people than ever with the information and research they’re looking for. If you haven’t already, join us in raising awareness about brain disease by following us on social media.

In 2020, we were presented with a challenge: to effectively transition what was traditionally an in-person gala, Commitment to Cures, into a virtual event that would successfully build awareness, demonstrate appreciation, and raise funds for brain disease research. We had a lot to accomplish, but taking the event virtual proved to have its own benefits, including celebrating with a larger audience from across the U.S. and around the world. The result? Over 4,000 people viewed the event and we raised over $235,000 for brain disease research, exceeding our donation goal.
Sharing the Impact of Brain Disease

In 2020, we launched the “Share Your Story” initiative and heard from countless people about how brain disease has impacted their lives. Sharing these personal stories not only puts a face on brain disease and gives people a platform to tell their stories but also helps those impacted by brain disease know that they are not alone.

A FATHER AND SON TAKE ON DEMENTIA

One of these stories is that of the Keene Family. Ken Keene Sr. was a “super dad” and could fix just about anything, but just a few months after his 64th birthday, he was diagnosed with frontotemporal lobe dementia, also called Pick’s disease. This rare dementia causes speech problems and personality changes along with loss of cognitive function. Ken Sr. went from building things with his hands to forgetting how to use familiar tools.

His eldest son, Ken Keene Jr., says, “Dementia uprooted my father from who he was and everyone who knew him.” Ken Jr. played a key role in caregiving before Ken Sr. passed away in May 2020. He continues to share his father’s story to raise awareness about dementia. He wants to find a cure so future generations won’t know the pain of seeing someone they love slip away. Your support of the American Brain Foundation helps give people like Ken Jr. more time to make memories with their loved ones.

ROBIN’S WISH: A LEGENDARY ACTOR’S STRUGGLE WITH BRAIN DISEASE

On September 1, 2020, the American Brain Foundation hosted a special live online event with Vice-Chair Susan Schneider Williams and director Tylor Norwood to discuss the making of the documentary Robin’s Wish. An intimate portrait of Robin Williams and his invulnerable spirit, Robin’s Wish is the story of what really happened to one of the greatest entertainers of all time—and the battle he was unknowingly fighting with a deadly brain disease, Lewy body dementia. The virtual event was viewed by over 14,000 people and served as a platform to help raise awareness for Lewy body and other dementias while honoring the legacy of an iconic and beloved actor, husband, and father.
In the uncertainty of the coronavirus pandemic that marked 2020 as a year like no other, the American Brain Foundation knew that people with brain disease and their loved ones had questions about COVID-19 and brain disease. To help provide answers, we had leading physicians host Facebook Lives to share the most current information on COVID-19’s impact. This initiative provided valuable information that helped inform patients’ decision-making to benefit themselves, their families, and loved ones. Topics covered include stroke, epilepsy, Parkinson’s disease, developmental disabilities, Alzheimer’s disease, multiple sclerosis, and estate planning. You can access these recordings on our website at AmericanBrainFoundation.org/Events.

VIRTUAL SALONS

In 2020, we launched a Virtual Salon series featuring in-depth discussions with neurology experts on hot topics including Trends in Alzheimer’s Research and Lifestyle & Brain Health. This series will continue throughout 2021 and beyond as we continue to seek new ways to provide valuable and trustworthy information to the public and supporters of the American Brain Foundation.
WORKING WITH PARTNERS TO FIGHT BRAIN DISEASE

The American Brain Foundation partners with the most respected organizations in the neuroscience community working to defeat specific diseases of the brain and nervous system.

Thank you to our research funding partners.

Our founder and research partner: American Academy of Neurology

The ALS Association  
Alzheimer’s Association  
American Epilepsy Society  
American Heart Association  
Consortium of Multiple Sclerosis Centers  
CReATe Consortium  
Epilepsy Foundation  
International Headache Society  
The Mary E. Groff Charitable Trust  
McKnight Brain Research Foundation  
Muscle Study Group  
Myasthenia Gravis Foundation of America  
National Multiple Sclerosis Society  
Parkinson’s Foundation  
Society of Vascular and Interventional Neurology  
Tourette Association of America

PARTNER PROFILE: AMERICAN ACADEMY OF NEUROLOGY

In 1992, the American Academy of Neurology (AAN) founded the American Brain Foundation to bring the public and researchers together to cure brain diseases and disorders. Today, the American Brain Foundation is supported by over 36,000 AAN-member neurologists and neuroscience professionals from every corner of the globe and across all areas of brain disease. Through our partnership, the Foundation helps fund the Academy’s world-renowned research program, providing opportunities for groundbreaking research to unlock the door to treatments for previously incurable neurological diseases. Together, we have supported over 270 researchers and launched research careers for clinician-scientists who have gone on to make major contributions in the field, leading to advanced treatments for patients.
Financial Highlights

**GRANT EXPENSE BY DISEASE**

- Alzheimer’s Disease, Lewy Body Dementia, and Other Dementias: 17%
- Epilepsy: 9%
- Parkinson’s Disease: 22%
- ALS: 9%
- Tourette Syndrome: 9%
- Multiple Sclerosis: 9%
- Stroke and Vascular Diseases: 4%
- Cognitive Aging and Age-Related Memory Loss: 4%
- Neuromuscular Disease and Disorders: 9%

**TOTAL FUNCTIONAL EXPENSES**

- Operations: $770,938
- Fundraising: $608,965
- Programming: $2,772,131

**TOTAL PROGRAM EXPENSES**

- Public Awareness: $554,294
- Research Awards: $277,213
- Research Grants: $2,772,131

**TOTAL FUNDS RAISED**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Amount</th>
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<tr>
<td>2019</td>
<td>$4,603,425</td>
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- $0
- $2,500,000
- $5,000,000
- $7,500,000

**Total Net Assets:** $13,727,312
- Without Donor Restrictions: $4,946,046
- With Donor Restrictions: $8,781,266

**Total Support & Revenue**: $6,420,644

*Excludes conditional grants

*Our audited financial statements are available on our website or by request.*
Thank you to our incredible donors for your continued support. It makes what we do at the American Brain Foundation possible. You are the heart of our organization, and your help gets us one step closer to a world without brain disease.

Individual Giving

$50,000 - $999,999
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The Essey and Mikkelsen Families
The Potamkin Family

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In 2020, AAN member Steve Horowitz contacted the American Brain Foundation to set up a fund in memory of his dear friend Bob Burros, who died of dementia. Together with Bob’s widow, Adrienne Burros, he started the Bob Burros Family Memorial Fund. Bob’s friends and relatives donated, raising $15,000 for dementia research in 2020. They have decided to direct these funds toward research on posterior cortical atrophy, a form of Alzheimer’s Disease.

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