



## Looking Back, Moving Forward

The Parkinson Research Consortium (PRC) is now entering its eighth year of existence. In November 2011, with the help of the Ottawa Hospital Foundation we organized a "Celebration of Parkinson's Research" in Ottawa. This event was to thank all the donors who have helped support the PRC. In addition, we wanted to provide an overview of the exciting advances in our understanding of this disease stemming from the PRC efforts. Mark your calendar for this coming November's celebration!

### *Launch of the PRC—Ottawa Citizen 2004*

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CITY

## Two Davids against a Goliath

University of Ottawa researchers David Park and David Grimes are the leaders of a unique group with a huge challenge: Finding a cure for Parkinson's disease

BY ISABEL TESTONIO

David Simmonds holds a piece of paper in his trembling right hand. The only movement is a light crackling sound. The man, 60, is sitting at a long dinner table where he's seated. He has lost his Parkinson's disease so far that he no longer takes notice of his tremors. He is David Park, 58, a former lawyer forced into early retirement. He is acutely aware of the affliction he's had for 12 years and shares with his colleagues a desire to find a cure.

It is an incurable disease, where the tremor, which is measured in inches and there are just 12 in a foot, is only understood. Even greater distance must be travelled before the condition can be fully addressed and the condition rather than the symptoms treated.

"Research is the most effective drug," says Dr. Park. "It gives hope, it motivates people, it gives them energy, which gives you strength."

The paper in Mr. Simmonds' hands is the first issue of the Parkinson's Research Consortium (PRC), a research network operated by the Ottawa Hospital Research Institute (OHRI) in partnership with the University of Ottawa and the

David Park, left, says there is a tremendous amount of expertise on Parkinson's disease in Ottawa. Just waiting to be "brought together." David Grimes, right, says his late father, founder of the Ottawa Parkinson's Disease Research Laboratory, would be very proud.

There's a sense of camaraderie among the researchers in Canada, which is fairly unique and makes this easier to do," Dr. Park says. "The atmosphere in Ottawa is very positive and receptive to this type of effort."

The work behind the grant is really quite simple, says Dr. Grimes — it's about taking a disease that affects patients who wouldn't normally swap ideas.

"We're so far advanced in terms of different molecular tools and techniques that any scientist can know them all or be exposed to them quickly," he says. "Scientists can get really focused on one aspect of the disease, but can also look at other pathways, which might take five or 10 years of hard research. They can then see what they may know about their research in the context of the rest of the bigger picture. This (consortium) gives them the big picture."

It's a picture his own father, Dr. J. L. Grimes, would have loved to see. The older Dr. Grimes, a neurologist, was the founder of the Ottawa Parkinson's Disease Research Laboratory at the Civic Hospital and of the LOER Health Research Foundation, which also received grants from the Kiwanis Medical Foundation.

There's a sense of



"Over the next five or six years we'll definitely see Ottawa grow as a real recognized force in Parkinson's research. *Ottawa Citizen 2004*". With our efforts to date we have accomplished this goal. D. A. Grimes

Using posters and formal presentations from PRC investigators and students, we highlighted how PRC scientists have: created unique tools in multiple organisms to study PD; generated a better understanding of the signals which promote dopamine loss and how to manipulate these signals to generate new potential treatments; and sought to understand how Parkinson causing gene mutations lead to the disease in humans.

In moving forward, one of the PRC goals is to support innovative new ideas so that PRC scientists can obtain larger grants from traditional funding sources. Dr. Schlossmacher's lab is a good example of these efforts. An initial donation of \$25,000 from the Kiwanis Club of Ottawa Medical Foundation led to him obtaining funding from the Parkinson Society Canada which in turn led to a \$125,000/year, five year grant from the Canadian Institute of Health Research.

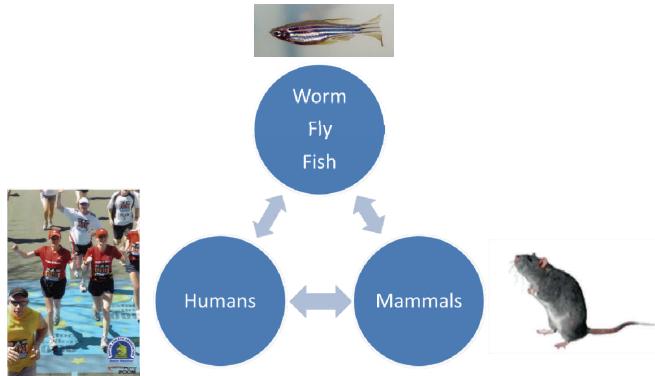
The PRC efforts have led to the creation of the "Canadian Guidelines on Parkinson's Disease" to be published this summer. These guidelines were developed to optimize the care of all Canadians with Parkinson's. The PRC has clearly established itself as a leader in Canada.

*"The time for quietly soldiering on is through. The war against Parkinson's is a winnable war, and I have resolved to play a role in that victory. Michael J. Fox—Lucky Man*

## How the PRC is Driving New Research

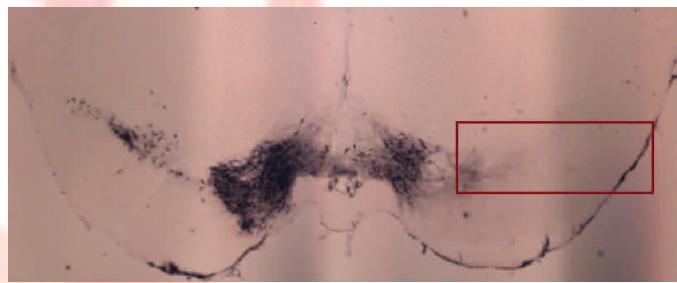
Why do we need more research into Parkinson's disease? The answer is clear. We do not have a cure and we don't have any treatments available that clearly affect its relentless progression. Only through a better understanding of the basic mechanisms that cause Parkinson's can effective treatments be developed. The PRC supports investigator initiated studies to enable the investigator to then apply for grants from other larger funding agencies.

The goal is to learn about mechanisms of Parkinson's using multiple model systems including humans



A focus of the PRC is to fund students to carry out the research work. The PRC is currently funding six students. Four are from our competitive fellowship programs

- Shelby Hayter Pass the Baton Fellowship
  - Elizabeth Abdel-Messeh
- Larry Haffner Parkinson Research Fellowship
  - Mabel Ao
- Toth Family Fellowship
  - Paul Marcogliese
- Crabtree Family Fellowship
  - Mansoureh Hakimi



This is a slide showing the results from a new mouse model of Parkinson's disease developed in Dr. Park's lab. Within the red box there is a loss of the dopamine cells that is very similar to the cell loss in individuals with Parkinson's.

The PRC continues to expand and we are particularly excited about our success in recruiting Dr. Tohru Kitada from Harvard University in Boston. Dr. Kitada is a world expert in gene identification and mouse modeling in Parkinson's, and his recruitment was made possible by many generous donors in the community.

Dr. Kitada's research will create better genetic models of Parkinson's, which in turn will help the whole PRC team. Better genetic models would allow us to objectively measure the effect of a new treatment more accurately and with fewer patients, so we get our answers faster. We are also excited that Dr. Kitada has joined us in treating patients in the Parkinson's Disease and Movement Disorders Clinic at The Ottawa Hospital.

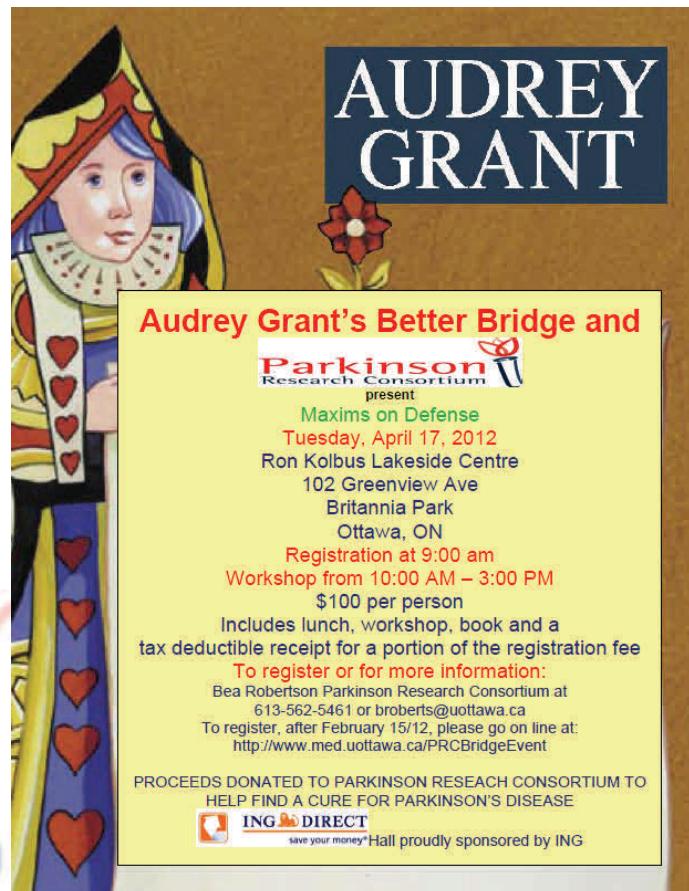
*"Yes the disease is progressive but so is the science" - David Iverson – Parkinson's individual.*

## Fundraising and Awareness efforts by the PRC

The PRC can only continue to function because of the generosity of its donors. Over the last seven years the PRC has raised \$1,026,359. This impressive figure was possible only because of the many dedicated individuals who are part of the PRC. The Ottawa Hospital Foundation and Partners Investing in Parkinson Research (PIPR) have been key to increasing our fundraising and awareness capabilities. The "Pass the Baton for Parkinson's" school program designed by Shelby Hayter (PRC member and PD patient) continues as an awareness and fundraising event to help find a cure for Parkinson's Disease. The program has been successfully running for five years with 60 school visits.



Dr. Park leading a Pass the Baton event at a public school.



New events such as the Audrey Grant Bridge Event have also started to raise awareness and money for Parkinson's in our community.



FOR MORE INFORMATION  
ON THESE FUNDRAISING  
EFFORTS OR TO MAKE A  
DONATION.  
[www.ohri.ca/prc](http://www.ohri.ca/prc)

# RUN FOR A REASON



## Partners Investing in Parkinson Research (PIPR)



Parkinson's disease affects more than 100,000 Canadians, including over 8,000 people in the Ottawa area.

PIPR is a group of community-minded citizens who all have a connection to this devastating disease. They are fundraising to support Parkinson's research at The Ottawa Hospital in hopes of finding a cure.

**Join the PIPR Team in finding  
a cure for Parkinson's disease.**



Run or walk with PIPR during Ottawa Race Weekend (May 26-27)  
Join The Ottawa Hospital Foundation's Run for a Reason Challenge

**PIPR**  
Partners Investing  
in Parkinson Research

To learn more visit:  
[www.ohfoundation.ca](http://www.ohfoundation.ca)



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