



# The Dog Aging Project

Dear Friends of the Dog Aging Project,

Happy New Year! It is fitting that 2018 is the Year of the Dog according to the Chinese Zodiac, as we anticipate big things happening at the Dog Aging Project in the coming year. I realize that it has been some time since our last newsletter, and many of you have contacted us wondering how things are going. Over the past months, our team has been focused on raising funds for research, establishing new partnerships, and planning for the launch of the phase 2 rapamycin intervention study. We have also been hard at work analyzing data. While there have been a few delays that we didn't anticipate, I'm excited to share our progress with you and our excitement about where we are headed in 2018.

## Fundraising for the Dog Aging Project

The Dog Aging Project is an academic, not-for-profit endeavor that relies on grants and donor support. Over the past year, the Dog Aging Project leadership team has put enormous effort toward securing the financial support needed to move forward. None of the principal investigators receives salary for the Dog Aging Project, which means that all of the funds we do receive go directly towards the research. This also means that we can only devote a relatively small percentage of our time to this project, as we each have more than full-time jobs running and funding our University laboratories.

Progress toward our shared goal of extending the healthy lifespans of our pets depends on securing long-term funding. We know you are all keen to see your dogs enrolled in the Dog Aging Project. Rest assured that we are too! Know that we continue to work hard to move this project forward.

**Federal funding.** We anticipate that funds to support the Dog Aging Project will come from multiple sources. But our single greatest source is likely to be the National Institutes of Health (NIH).

As described in [prior newsletters](#), we have been working hard to obtain NIH funding for this project since early 2016. The process is a long one, but we are in the final stages of putting together a resubmission of a large-scale grant proposal, which will be submitted to NIH in late January, and reviewed in the Summer of 2018. This proposal brings together a truly amazing team of researchers and veterinarians from around the country, and will allow us to launch both the long-term Longitudinal Study of Aging and the Phase 3 Rapamycin Intervention Trial. We are optimistic that we will be able to begin enrolling dogs into these studies toward the end of 2018 or in early 2019.

**Foundations.** Several non-profit Foundations have been wonderful supporters of the Dog Aging Project. The Irish Wolfhound Association of New England has provided partial support for Dr. Silvan Urfer's efforts over the past two years. Dr. Urfer is the lead author on two peer-reviewed papers published by the Dog Aging Project in 2017. We would also like to recognize the Glenn Foundation for supporting studies of the canine epigenome and the Donner Foundation for funding Phase 2 of the Rapamycin Intervention Trial.

THE  
WILLIAM H. DONNER  
FOUNDATION, INC.



IWANE  
founded 1934



GLENN FOUNDATION  
FOR MEDICAL RESEARCH

**Individual and charitable giving.** Individual donations and charitable giving continue to have a great impact on our ability to keep our current projects moving forward. We would like to thank everyone who has already donated to the project, and we ask each of you to please consider a donation through the University of Washington Foundation dedicated [Dog Aging Project fund](#). 100% of the donated funds go directly to research on the Dog Aging Project and are tax-deductible.

We hope that you will consider investing in research that could help our pets live longer,

## Updates on Dog Aging Project Research

*Longitudinal Study of Aging.* This study will include more than 10,000 dogs, and will identify the major genetic and environmental factors that affect lifespan and healthspan in our pets. Several thousand of you have already nominated your dogs to participate in this study, and we are well on our way to our goal of 10,000! As we mentioned above, we expect to begin enrollment in the study in late 2018 or early 2019. Rest assured that if you have already signed up through the website, we will contact you once the study is funded. If you haven't signed up yet, we encourage you to do so [here](#).

Even though the official long-term Longitudinal Study of Aging as not yet begin, we have already been able to obtain important preliminary data from a one-year study of veterinary records of more than 20,000 pet dogs. Dr. Urfer, DVM along with our lead veterinarian, at Texas A&M University, Dr. Kate Creevy, DVM, are leading this study, and we expect to publish the first results soon.

*Rapamycin Intervention Trial.* The first phase of our rapamycin intervention trial was completed in 2016. This was a double-blind, placebo-controlled randomized clinical trial to demonstrate safety and to determine the impact of rapamycin on age-related heart function in middle-aged pet dogs. Two peer-reviewed papers have been published from this study in the scientific journal *GeroScience*, the official journal of the American Aging Association. The most exciting outcome of this trial was evidence for significant improvements in heart function in the dogs receiving rapamycin.

Phase 2 of the Rapamycin Intervention Trial will begin formally enrolling dogs within the next two months. This will be a one year study to confirm the effects of rapamycin on heart function at a reduced dose, and to also determine whether treatment can improve cognition and activity in older dogs. This study will include about 50 dogs and will be run out of the Texas A&M University veterinary hospital.

Once funded, our NIH grant (see above) will allow us to launch Phase 3 of the rapamycin study, which will be held at multiple sites around the

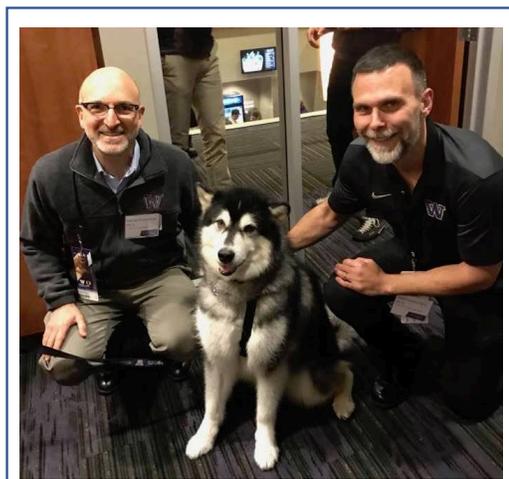
healthier lives.

United States. If you have previously nominated your dog to participate in either Phase 1 or 2, you will be automatically considered for Phase 3.

## News and Outreach

The Dog Aging Project has continued to receive enthusiastic media attention throughout 2017. Among the major stories on our project this year was a feature for the Today Show that included one of our Phase I participants, Rayna, and her owners Tom and Helen. In case you missed it, here is a [link to the video](#). We try to keep track of the various articles and news stories about the Dog Aging Project on our [website](#) and [Facebook page](#), and we truly appreciate the efforts of the writers and reporters who have covered our work.

We also continue to be active in outreach and always enjoy opportunities to discuss the importance of healthy aging for our pets. Some of the events we have participated in during 2017 include [SXSW](#), Open Mic Science, the CERES CGRI public lecture on "[Aging and Society](#)", Petapalooza (Auburn, WA), and several public seminars and breed group events.



Dr. Daniel Promislow (left) and Dr. Matt Kaerberlein (right) with University of Washington mascot Dubs.

As always, thank you for your continued support. Know that all of us at the Dog Aging Project are working hard to improve the quality and quantity of life for our beloved pets.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read 'Matt Kaeberlein', followed by a long horizontal line extending to the right.

Matt Kaeberlein, Ph.D.  
Co-Director, Dog Aging Project