Thank you to the Ted Mullin Fund and its donors for their leadership in driving pediatric cancer research, care, and education at the University of Chicago Medicine Comer Children’s Hospital. We are proud of their partnership with us, and honored by their steadfast support.

This decade-long commitment, totaling more than $1 million, has both advanced life-saving science and built the foundation for future advances through training and education.

We are pleased to share an update on what the Ted Mullin Fund and Comer Children’s Hospital have accomplished together in 2016.
Supporting Today’s Leaders

With the help of the Ted Mullin Fund and other donors, Comer Children’s Hospital physician-scientists work at the leading edge of pediatric cancer research and treatment. Their investigations cover the scientific spectrum from basic research into molecular mechanisms to clinical trials of drug combinations.

As both primary investigators and practicing clinicians, our faculty personally serve as the link between bench and bedside. They bring the same creativity and tireless dedication to each aspect of the endeavor, and—even when looking through a confocal microscope—never lose sight of the patients for whom this complex work is done.

They also understand the multifaceted challenges faced by our smallest patients and their families, and bring the full power of the University of Chicago research enterprise to bear on each of these challenges, whether biochemical, psychological, logistical, or economic. Our doctors strive not just to bring our patients to health, but to allow them to live the lives they want regardless of disease.

The Ted Mullin Fund currently supports the research of Eric Beyer, MD, PhD, and Ami Desai, MD, MSCE.
**Eric Beyer, MD, PhD**  
Professor, Department of Pediatrics — Section of Hematology/Oncology, Committee on Cancer Biology, Committee on Molecular Medicine/MPMM

Dr. Beyer’s laboratory investigates the junctions between adjacent cells, and how these junctions facilitate the passage of small molecules and electrical signals between cells. The junctions between endothelial cells (which line blood vessels) are disrupted by many diseases, including sickle cell anemia and spreading cancers. By elucidating the structure and regulation of healthy junctions and mechanisms that lead to their disruption, Dr. Beyer and his team hope to shed light on many aspects of cancer development and treatment, including how disease spreads, which patients are most at risk, and how drugs can pass between cells. Dr. Beyer’s clinical practice focuses on general pediatric oncology and benign hematology.

**Ami Desai, MD, MSCE**  
Assistant Professor  
Department of Pediatrics

Dr. Desai, who joined the University in 2016, leads research on drug effectiveness in pediatric cancers—including the development of new drugs, better understanding of treatment-related toxicities, and discovery of biomarkers to predict disease response and side effects. Her work advances the safety and efficacy of individual drugs as well as the ability to match each patient (and each tumor) with the drugs most likely to be successful. Dr. Desai’s clinical practice focuses on neuroblastoma, and sarcomas of the bone and soft tissue.
Supporting Tomorrow’s Leaders

For five years, the Ted Mullin Fund has created for talented young scientists the unique, transformative opportunity to work at the leading edge of pediatric cancer research and treatment. Ted Mullin Scholars, selected from among the bright and dedicated undergraduate students at participating universities, spend the summer researching with and shadowing University of Chicago physician-scientists. They gain valuable research experience, world-class training, and an inside look at the challenges and joys of day-to-day work at both bench and bedside.

The results speak for themselves: all of the 12 past scholars who have completed their undergraduate degrees are now studying or working in the medical sciences, with five currently in MD or MD/PhD programs.

The Ted Mullin Scholars also speak for themselves. Here are the four 2016 scholars.
Elizabeth Joyce
Biology major
University of Chicago
Class of 2017

Liz joined Dr. Beyer’s lab to study molecular mechanisms at work in sickle cell disease.

“Lab work became exponentially more meaningful when I was able to meet the patients I was trying to help. They were no longer just numbers on a coverslip: they were teenagers who wanted to go home for the Fourth of July, and six-year-olds with impressive collections of action figures.”

Geralyn Lam
Pre-medical studies major
Amherst College
Class of 2018

Geralyn worked with James LaBelle, MD, PhD, to advance targeted therapies for blood cancers based on the BCL2 family of proteins.

“In addition to the lab and clinical work, the relationships I formed with fellow lab members, Dr. LaBelle, and the numerous Principal Investigators were invaluable. Their advice and guidance regarding their careers in medical research convinced and helped direct my future.”

Jason Xu
Molecular biology major
Pomona College
Class of 2018

Jason investigated cancer genomics with Kenan Onel, MD, PhD.

“These are memories that I will hold dear to my heart as I go on to pursue a future career in medicine. My time here reminded me that I still have much to learn, and has inspired me to keep pushing myself to be a better scientist.”

Allie Clark
Biology major
Carleton College
Class of 2017

Allie worked in the lab of Susan Cohn, MD, investigating drug sensitivity in neuroblastoma cells.

“It was incredible to witness the passion of the doctors and the resilience of the kids in the cancer clinic. This was a constant reminder of this program’s bigger picture: we were here not only to learn new lab techniques or what life as a doctor is like, but to help advance the research needed to find a cure for cancer.”
We are grateful for the Ted Mullin Fund’s steadfast commitment to pediatric cancer research at the University of Chicago Medicine Comer Children’s Hospital. This decade of philanthropy has sparked critical research and fostered brilliant minds: catalyzed by this support, their impact will grow. With the help of the Ted Mullin Fund and its donors, we will continue to work toward better understanding and treatment of pediatric cancers—and better care, comfort, and hope for patients and their families.