

Smith Family Foundation: Odyssey Award

A program of the Richard and Susan Smith Family Foundation



Alumni Directory

2018 - 2020

The Richard and Susan Smith Family Foundation is committed to effecting permanent positive change in the lives of the residents of Greater Boston, particularly individuals and families in economically disadvantaged communities. Today, three generations of the Smith family oversee the Foundation, stewarding approximately \$15 million annually in grants aimed at promoting greater health, educational attainment, and economic mobility. In the area of health, the Foundation supports the advancement of biomedical research and the expansion of access to high-quality health care at safety net institutions serving low-income individuals and communities of Greater Boston.

The Smith Family Foundation: Odyssey Award was created in 2017 to fuel creativity and innovation in junior investigators in the basic sciences. The Award supports the pursuit of high impact ideas to generate breakthroughs and drive new directions in biomedical research. The Award funds high-risk, high-reward pilot projects solicited from the brightest junior faculty in the region. The Awards are currently in the amount of \$300,000 over two years.

Over the past 2 years, the Smith Family Foundation: Odyssey Award has helped launch the careers of 15 outstanding scientists with support totaling \$4.5 million.

The following is a listing of all Award Recipients in alphabetical order with current contact information as well as the title of the funded research project. The Smith Family is extraordinarily proud of the accomplishments of its Awardees and is honored to provide the critical support for their newly established research programs.

Lydia Bourouiba, Ph.D.
(2018 Award Recipient)
*Respiratory Disease Transmission:
Mechanistic Understanding for Control and
Prevention of Epidemics*
Massachusetts Institute of Technology
lbouro@mit.edu

Benjamin Lovegren de Bivort, Ph.D.
(2018 Award Recipient)
*Mapping Loci of Individuality for
Spontaneous and Stimulus-Evoked
Behaviors*
Harvard University
debivort@oeb.harvard.edu

Elena Gracheva, Ph.D.
(2018 Award Recipient)
*Regulation of Fluid and Ionic Balance Under
Extreme Physiological States in a
Mammalian Hibernator*
Yale University
elena.gracheva@yale.edu

Yonatan Grad, M.D., Ph.D.
(2020 Award Recipient)
*Mechanisms of Host-pathogen Interactions
from Conditionally Essential and Deleterious
Genes*
Harvard T.H. Chan School of Public Health
ygrad@hsph.harvard.edu

Ya-Chieh Hsu, Ph.D.
(2018 Award Recipient)
*Cellular and Molecular Mechanisms of Fetal
Skin Regeneration*
Harvard University
yachieh_hsu@harvard.edu

Shantanu Jadhav, Ph.D.
(2019 Award Recipient)
*Neural Coordination Mechanisms for
Memory Function and Dysfunction*
Brandeis University
shantanu@brandeis.edu

Gene-Wei Li, Ph.D.
(2020 Award Recipient)
*Breakaway Transcription as an Alternative
Paradigm for Bacterial Gene Expression*
Massachusetts Institute of Technology
gwli@mit.edu

Maofu Liao, Ph.D.
(2019 Award Recipient)
*Elucidating the Molecular Mechanism of
ABCA7, a Membrane Transporter associated
with Alzheimer's Disease*
Harvard Medical School
maofu_liao@hms.harvard.edu

Chenxiang Lin, Ph.D.
(2020 Award Recipient)
*Tension-loaded DNA Nanodevices for
Structural Determination of
Mechanosensitive Proteins*
Yale University
chenxiang.lin@yale.edu

Meenakshi Rao, M.D., Ph.D.
(2020 Award Recipient)
Glial Phagocytosis in Intestinal Homeostasis
Boston Children's Hospital
Meenakshi.Rao@childrens.harvard.edu

Sarah Slavoff, Ph.D.
(2019 Award Recipient)
*Non-Canonical Translation of Small Open
Reading Frames in the Human Genome*
Yale Cancer Center
sarah.slavoff@yale.edu

Mansi Srivastava, Ph.D.

(2020 Award Recipient)

*Comparing Development and Regeneration
to Uncover Mechanisms for Maintaining
Regenerative Ability in Adult Animals*

Harvard University

mansi@oeb.harvard.edu

Jing-Ke Weng, M.D., Ph.D.

(2018 Award Recipient)

*Novel Psychiatric Therapeutics Inspired by
Bioactive Plant Polyketides*

Whitehead Institute for Biomedical
Research

wengj@wi.mit.edu

Jessica Whited, Ph.D.

(2019 Award Recipient)

*Transmission of Amputation Information
Throughout the Body in Axolotl*

Brigham and Women's Hospital

jessica_whited@harvard.edu

Wesley Philip Wong, Ph.D.

(2019 Award Recipient)

*Single-Molecule Protein Identification with
Mechanical Nanocalipers*

Boston Children's Hospital

wong@idi.harvard.edu