



2024 Annual Review

**KEEPING THE WOMEN
WE LOVE HEALTHY**



Celebrating Breakthroughs, Inspiring Progress

Where are they now?



2021 Howell Scholar

Hannah Heath

3rd year PhD student
University of Illinois
Urbana Champaign



“My experiences as an undergraduate research assistant opened an entire world that I didn’t realize existed, and it was through this role that I discovered a love for metabolomics, as well as a love for interpreting large data sets. The research the Howell Scholarship enabled me to pursue not only shaped my decision to obtain a PhD, but also sparked my interest in seeking a career in metabolomics research.”

The Howell Scholars program is designed to set students up for post-graduate success in graduate or medical school, in hopes students will go on to careers in women’s health research.

Ms. Heath is working in Dr. Zeynep Madak-Erdogan’s lab, where she’s studying the effects of cortisol on tumor aggressiveness in women with estrogen receptor positive (ER+) breast cancer.

She notes that Black women facing ER+ breast cancer have a 42% higher mortality rate from ER+ breast cancer, compared to non-Hispanic white women. These outcomes may be driven by chronic stress, as Black women experience systemic inequities that are known to raise cortisol levels.

She adds, “As a disabled Hispanic woman with several family members who also have chronic illnesses and disabilities, I have seen how crucial inclusive, cutting- edge research is for reducing the gaps in health equity.”

Keeping the women we love healthy by **Funding Future Researchers**

Why women’s health research?

“Women’s Heart Alliance reports that only 35% of participants in clinical trials of cardiovascular disease are women, and just 31% of studies report outcomes by sex.

Against that backdrop, our academic research partners face deep cuts in research support as the new administration makes moves to deprioritize federally funded research. **The Howell Foundation can make a difference going forward by encouraging early-career researchers and physicians to persist and work to develop treatments to serve women’s health needs.”**

Susan Baxter, PhD, Outgoing Chair



Donate Today!

**Keep the women we love healthy
for the next 30 years.**





Leading with Vision, Inspiring Success

Our Mission:

The Doris A. Howell Foundation for Women’s Health Research invests in scholars’ research and community education to improve women’s health.

IN THIS ISSUE:

- **2024 EVENT SUMMARY**
Providing early access to **CUTTING-EDGE RESEARCH**
- **OUR SCHOLARS INVESTING AND INSPIRING**
the next generation of women's health research professionals
- **HOWELL HAPPENINGS**
Our work towards **KEEPING THE WOMEN WE LOVE HEALTHY**
- **WITH OUR DEEPEST APPRECIATION**
Your support advances **WOMEN’S HEALTH RESEARCH**

Dear Howell Foundation Supporters,

I am thrilled to report that **we had a terrific 2024 celebrating Dr. Howell’s 100 birthday!** We invested in research and education programs for 25 scholars, welcomed 56 new “Friends of Howell”, held 4 outstanding in person luncheons where attendance was at capacity, and exceeded our income goals!

We are so grateful to our founder Dr. Doris Howell for her vision for women to take measures to improve their health, advocating for women to pursue careers in women's health to create active change and Dr. Howell’s leadership and lasting impact in the overall well-being of women in our community.

This is the guiding principle that Howell’s volunteer Board has worked to achieve; to inform women about the latest research advances for the sake of the individual, her family, and the greater community, while advocating for women’s health by funding undergraduate and graduate level researchers, tapping their innovation, and creating a sustainable pool of next generation researchers in the field of women’s health.

I believe Dr. Howell would be pleased and proud of our work this past year - especially during her 100th birthday! A heartfelt thank you for your ongoing financial support of the Howell Foundation and supporting women’s health research. Because of you, we continue to provide important research scholarships and valuable educational outreach to the San Diego community.

This year-2025, we will be celebrating 30 years of the Howell Foundation! We have a new 30-year campaign logo, an ambitious fundraising budget and will focus our efforts on “getting the word” out in the community about the Howell Foundation. Please share the message and bring a friend-or two to our upcoming luncheon lectures.

Our work is not done. We need momentum to keep it going. **Imagine the difference you can make when you share the work the Howell Foundation is doing and provide financial support to assist our researchers to being discovering how to improve women’s health.**



Thank you for your continued support and being a “Friend of Howell”!

Marla Black
Executive Director



Earning your trust

The Candid seal is the highest possible rating and indicates that we exceed nonprofit industry standards. Thank you to all our Board Members who are committed to serve in the advancement of women’s health, and to our volunteers and donors who with their support help make this happen.

Stay Connected!



The Doris A. Howell Foundation for Women's Health Research

www.howellfoundation.org | friends@howellfoundation.org | 858-454-7797

The Howell Foundation is a 501 (c)(3) non-profit organization. Tax ID #33-0715532.



The primary goal of the Howell Foundation is to influence students to pursue careers impacting women's health, and to develop financial support for researchers that will accelerate solutions for women in our community.

Empowering Partners, Driving Results

2024 Scholars

CSUBIOTECH

Ximena Corona (Pomona)

"Disturbing Degranulation in Neutrophil-Like Cells and Investigating how Degranulation Deficiency Impacts Trophocytic Killing"
Mentor: Dr. Frances Mercer

Gurmanna Chalotra (Fresno)

"Dehydroabietylamine Derivatives as Potential Treatment for Triple Negative Breast Cancer"
Mentor: Dr. Qiao-Hong Chen

Siena Gunari (East Bay)

"Effects of Simultaneous Inhibition of Fatty Acid Amide Hydrolase and Soluble Epoxide Hydrolase on Migraine Pain in Rats"
Mentor: Dr. Ram Kandasamy

Audrey Tse (Long Beach)

"Structure-Function Analysis of Apolipoprotein AI to Understand Cholesterol Transport in Cardiovascular Disease"
Mentor: Dr. Vasanthi Narayanaswami

UC San Diego

Annie Do

"Predicting Breast Cancer Chemotherapy Outcomes with Tumoral Mutational Signatures"
Mentor: Dr. Weg M. Ongkeko

Shreya Dhanala

"Investigating the Role of the Gut Microbiome in PCOS Metabolic Dysregulation"
Mentor: Dr. Varykina Thackray

Ella Rust

"Redefining The Relationship Between Maternal Diet and Insulin-stimulated Glucose Uptake During Pregnancy"
Mentor: Dr. Lindsey Burnett

Arya Tanksale

"Investigating the Effect of Placental miRNAs on Kidney Cells in Preeclampsia"
Mentor: Dr. Priyadarshini Pantham

(CSUBIOTECH Cont'd)

Rhiannon Red Bird (Humboldt)

"Development of Endometrial Organoids for the Study of Endometriosis"
Mentor: Dr. Brigitte Blackman

Bryan Kang (Long Beach)

"Determination of the Quaternary Structure of Human Apolipoprotein A-I at Physiological Relevant Concentrations"
Mentor: Dr. Paul Weers

Emily Prince (San Luis Obispo)

"Targeting iron acquisition: a novel approach to UTI treatment"
Mentor: Dr. Alejandra Yep-Rodriguez

Isabella Lamont (San Luis Obispo)

"Developing a point of care diagnostic tool for bacterial and fungal infections."
Mentor: Dr. Jean Davidson

Reese Wang (Los Angeles)

"Customized Bioprinting of Three Dimensional Microbial Biofilm to Establish a Novel Vaginal Infection Model"
Mentor: Dr. Hyunsook Park

Ariana Leung (San José)

"Determining the role of the cotranscriptional repressor Hairless (Hr) in heart muscle cell proliferation"
Mentor: Dr. Alexander Payumo

Sevana Wassilian (Fresno)

"Employing Generative Artificial Intelligence to Design Novel Proteins Targeting Ovarian Cancer Marker MUC16"
Mentor: Dr. Cory Brooks

James Tower (San José)

"Testing positive autophagic markers in the GMR>Dnhe2 developing Drosophila eye"
Mentor: Dr. Bree Grillo-Hill



Laurie Rosa

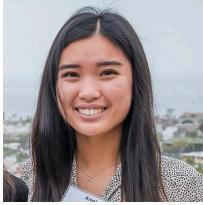
"Pregnancy-Associated Homicide in California"
Mentor: Dr. Cynthia Connelly

Shantee Collins

"Move It, To Lose It"
Mentor: Dr. Sheree Scott



Building a Legacy, Embracing the Future



Annie Do
UC San Diego

Mentored by Dr. Weg M. Ogenko, Annie researched the role of genomics in breast cancer. Mutations of certain genes have been linked to an increased risk within general populations and may differ in prognosis among breast cancer patients. The goal of this study is to determine the extent to which mutations influence treatment outcomes for breast cancer patients.

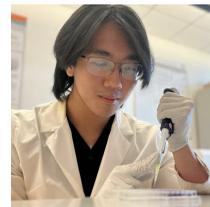


“Part of my proposal involved creating a machine-learning model that predicts the extent of a patient's response to common chemotherapy drugs based on their mutational profile. My findings could potentially be used in clinical settings to inform oncologists of the best course of treatment for individual patients. By increasing the efficiency of treatment plans, doctors can achieve maximum therapeutic benefits and patients can avoid needless suffering from chemotherapy side effects.”

Working with Dr. Paul Weers, Bryan studied a protein, apolipoprotein A-1, that is part of the high-density lipoprotein (HDL) complex, otherwise known as the “good cholesterol.” The Weers group is working to learn how HDL complex proteins help prevent cardiovascular disease.



“One specific interest of mine is to address the differences between sexes and how exactly these molecular, cellular, and biochemical nuances confer resistance or increased likelihood of developing diseases. And so, as I pursue this path, I would like to acknowledge the support from the Howell Foundation and its donors.”



Bryan Kang
CSU Long Beach



Shantee Collins
PhD Candidate

Hahn School of
Nursing and
Health Science

Driven by her passion to reduce health disparities in underserved populations, Ms. Collins ‘Move it to Lose it’ research project recruited African American adult women who have been diagnosed as prediabetic and/or diabetic at their most recent primary care visit. The study's specific aims were to evaluate the adoption and maintenance of the recommended 150 minutes of weekly physical activity and its impact on weight control and biomarkers such as hemoglobin A1c, and their overall health.



“I have witnessed the severe consequences of obesity firsthand with close friends and relatives who had strokes, heart attacks, fertility challenges, and cancer at a very early age. This study is the first step to understanding how the relationship in physical activity and its effect on hemoglobin A1c levels can improve the health of women in San Diego County.”

Honorable Mention

In recognition to the Howell Scholarship Committee whose time, dedication and pursuit of Scholar information exemplify the talent of future women’s health professionals:

Trista R. Campbell, PHD, RN, CPHQ,
Chair, Scholarship Review Committee

Committee Members:
Mary H Nunnally, PhD
Elizabeth Sophy, MD

Andrea Z. LaCroix, PhD
Susan M. Baxter, PhD
Mandy Butler, PhD



Uniting Talents, Fueling Innovation

Early Access to cutting-edge research

November



The program featured guest speaker Lindsey Burnett, PhD, Assistant Professor, Division of Urogynecology and Reconstructive Pelvic Surgery at UCSD. Dr. Burnett presented **"Taking Back the Floor: Understanding Pelvic Floor Disorder Diagnosis and Treatment Options"**. It was an engaging session on various pelvic floor disorders, how they occur and the latest treatment options.

May



Guest speakers Dr. Christine Chung, Director, Musculoskeletal Imaging Research Group and Interim Chair, Department of Radiology, UC San Diego and Dr. Gina Woods, Clinical Professor of Medicine and Co-Chief, Division of Endocrinology, UC San Diego, presented the latest research on **"Musculoskeletal Health in Aging"** for women. As we journey through life, maintaining our musculoskeletal health becomes increasingly vital to stay strong, mobile and independent. Drs. Chung and Wood introduced attendees to groundbreaking diagnostic tools that are transforming the approach to aging and musculoskeletal health.

September



Paulette Cazares, MD, MPH, Principal Investigator at the Sharp Neurocognitive Research Center, presented **"Is Something Wrong or Is It Just My Anxiety? Updates in Anxiety for Women Across Middle Age"**. Dr. Cazares spoke on the latest growth in research supported by gender equity, social science, and advances in the gut-brain connection that are opening new scientific doors, and improving our knowledge of anxiety in women across midlife.

July



We offered a summer webinar at which Dr. Jennifer Graves, MD, PhD, MAS, Professor of Neurosciences and Vice Chair of Human Clinical Research at UC San Diego, presented the concept of **Optimal Aging**. While chronological age is fixed and unchangeable, biological age can vary based on various factors. With her unique perspective as a patient-facing neurologist and a federally funded researcher, Dr. Graves presented cutting-edge research about biomarkers like telomeres (part of chromosomes) and DNA modifications that can be used to determine biological age.

March



The Howell Foundation health lecture series luncheon held March 1st sold out quickly! The program featured medical experts Dr. Robert Stein and Barbara Buesch, MSN, RN who talked about **"Women's Heart Health 2023: What's Killing Us and How to Prevent It."** They described the huge gap between scientific research and medical practice, called Therapeutic Inertia, that is one reason that therapies, devices, and treatments for cardiovascular disease are underutilized in women.

2025 Save the Dates

March 21
"The Labyrinth of Longevity"

May 23

September 26

November 7



Envisioning Tomorrow, Embracing Opportunities

Dear Friends of Howell,

In mid-January, I wrapped up my time as Board Chair. It has been an honor to serve alongside passionate individuals who are committed to drive groundbreaking **women’s health research** that improves lives and leads to better health outcomes for all women.

I’m especially excited to welcome **Eileen Gaffen** as our new Board Chair. Eileen brings a wealth of nonprofit board experience and leadership, as well as dedication to this role, and I have no doubt she will guide us forward with clear vision and purpose. **Trista Campbell, PhD, RN, Elizabeth Sophy, MD,** and **Jeffery Adler**, fill out the Executive Committee for 2025-2026. Trista spearheaded our scholarship program these past two years and Elizabeth recruited speakers for the Health Lecture Series Luncheons, so they both understand the nuts-and-bolts operations of the Howell Foundation. We welcomed Jeffery to the board this winter and he’s agreed to serve as CFO; he brings his entrepreneurial mindset as well as a dedication to improving the women’s healthcare ecosystem.

One of the things I’ve valued most about this board is its **diversity**—not just in backgrounds and expertise, but in perspectives and experiences. Our board includes leaders from **medicine, science, healthcare and business**, all coming together to make a difference. It’s this diversity that keeps our programs fresh, our partnerships strong, and our impact growing.

This year we welcomed not only Mr. Adler to the board, but also **Maria Ramirez, PhD, MPH**. Maria led clinical development at a series of pharmaceutical companies, but she also served in leadership at Soroptimist International of La Jolla – the organization that founded the Howell Foundation.

Of course, I also want to recognize our outgoing board members for everything they’ve done for the Howell Foundation. As CFO, **Bill Wurch** helped the organization adopt the executive director model. Likewise, after years of serving as Board Chair, **Carol Tuggey** left a lasting impact on the professionalization of the organization, and we are so grateful for her.

As I write this in the latter part of February (Heart Health Month!), the Women’s Heart Alliance reports that only 35% of participants in clinical trials of cardiovascular disease are women, and just 31% of studies report outcomes by sex. Against that backdrop, our academic research partners face deep cuts in research support as the new administration makes moves to deprioritize federally funded research. The Howell Foundation can make a difference going forward by encouraging early-career researchers and physicians to persist and work to develop treatments to serve women’s health needs.

Thank you for your support, your belief in Dr. Doris Howell’s vision, and your dedication to making a difference.



With appreciation,

Susan Baxter,
Outgoing Board Chair



Eileen Gaffen
Incoming Board Chair

2025 New Appointment to the Howell Foundation Executive Committee

“2025 is the Howell Foundation’s 30th anniversary since its founding in 1995. Dr. Doris Howell’s legacy lives on in each of us, as we carry forward her mission and vision. The Howell Foundation board of directors is emboldened to grow the resources needed to continue educating future women’s health medical researchers and sharing advanced research findings with our community. I’m looking forward to leading, learning, and collaborating to reach our goals.”



Gratitude, Collaboration, and Continued Success

Our deepest appreciation

“Thank you Carol, Bill and Diana for your years of service on the Howell Board. We are grateful you will continue your leadership on our Legacy Council.”



Carol Tuggey joined the Howell Foundation Board in 2015 with over 35 years of experience in the non-profit world in San Diego. She previously served as Chair of the Health Lecture Series Committee and Board Chair. She is the former CEO of Tuggey Interior Design.



William Wurch joined the Howell Foundation Board in March 2018, assuming the role of Chief Financial Officer. William is a lawyer and a CPA who has practiced for 25 years, and has owned and operated successful businesses.



Diana Hill is Past President of Soroptimist International of La Jolla. Her background in the sciences and technology field, and her perspective on the health needs of women and girls in the community were pivotal for the Howell Foundation.

Welcome!

to our newest Board Member



Jeffery Adler
Entrepreneur
Incoming Chief
Financial Officer

Early Access to cutting-edge research

The Howell Scientific Advisory Council enlists the expertise of researchers and clinicians who have been involved with and support the Howell Foundation in various capacities: Speakers, scholarship application reviewers, mentors, and past scholars. They advise the Board on cutting-edge research topics, evidence-based changes to standards of care, and new research developments that impact women’s health. The Council also assists in connecting us with relevant speakers for our ongoing health lecture series. We thank you!

Fay Azad, MD

Adult and Adolescent Psychiatry

Christine Chung, MD

Director, Musculoskeletal Imaging Research Group and Interim Chair, Department of Radiology, UC San Diego

Carrie House, PhD

SDSU; Assistant Professor; Co-Leader, Research Project: Excessive Body Weight and Ovarian Cancer

Caroline Jordan

A.C.E. Certified Health and Fitness Coach

Traci Roberts, RD

UCSD Moores Cancer Center; Cancer Nutrition; Clinical Dietitian

Mana Parast, MD, PhD

UCSD, Professor, Pathology with specialty in Women’s and Perinatal Pathology

Maryam Tarsa, MD MAS

UCSD, Clinical Professor in Maternal Fetal Medicine; Obstetrics, Gynecology & Reproductive Services

Gina Woods, MD

UCSD; Endocrinologist and Bone Health Specialist; Associate Professor of Endocrinology and Metabolism



Legacy Council

Comprised of advisors of inestimable talent whose collective minds help the Foundation achieve its mission, the Legacy Council was established in 2015 to highlight the exceptional commitment of former Board Members. Thank you for your continued involvement and dedication!

- | | | | |
|-------------------|--------------------|------------------|-------------------|
| Brad Benter | Cher Conner | Jean McGrath | Kay Pierce |
| Betty Brayshay | Kathleen Franklin | Priscilla Moxley | Marilyn Tedesco |
| Mandy Butler, PhD | Gladys Kohn | Carolyn Northrup | Pattie Wellborn |
| Stacy Carota | Hamilton Loeb, Jr. | Colleen Peterson | Cheryl Wilson, RN |

A Legacy of Continuous Dedication to Women’s Health. Thank you!



Brad Benter



“Women have always played an important role in my life; my mom, my sister and the women I love are a huge part of me. Their health is very important, and with so many differences – especially in health-related issues, it is imperative that women –and especially men, get informed on how women’s health affects everyone. **Imagine the difference you can make when you give emerging researchers the financial support, they need to begin discovering how to improve women’s health; finally helping to find preventions, to slow down or even cure diseases.**“

Brad has served the Howell Foundation in various capacities, including Secretary of the Board of Directors. During his tenure, he worked to bring awareness to the need for women’s health research, and the need to streamline research findings to provide the most accurate information to both, the medical community and the patient so that the right decision can be made when discussing women’s health.



Pattie Wellborn



“I believe that women are the backbone of our family, and believe they have to be healthy, so they can be advocates of themselves.”

Pattie has a long history of philanthropy in support of women and their families: Program Committee for the Armed Services of the YMCA, past honoree of Women of Dedication SVP of the Board at Children’s hospital, founding member of the Achievement Rewards for College Scientists (ARCS), Junior League and Las Patronas, and recently nominated by the La Jolla Phi Beta Phi Alumnae Club to receive the Carolyn Helman Lichtenberg Crest. She led the Howell Foundation as Board Chair for many years. “Women have to be put on the map. I always encourage them pursue what they want to do – no matter what they endure. Their health needs to be at the top.”



Betty Brayshay



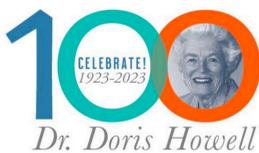
“By understanding the differences between women and men when it comes to health, we are able to make more accurate decisions as to the health care of our loved ones”.

With an extensive track record in philanthropy, she offered countless numbers of volunteer hours at several non-profit organizations –founding of a unit to the newly formed Children’s Hospital Auxiliary, Salvation Army, Girls Scouts –to name a few, until eventually she met Dr. Howell at St. Paul’s. She co-founded SPRITES to empower young girls from 7th to 12th grade by providing tools that stay with them for life. The impact of her work led to the creation of the “Betty Award”, in recognition of her 50+ years in philanthropy addressing the wellbeing of women. Betty was responsible for the fundraising efforts of the Howell Foundation for many years.



Solid Growth, Sustainable Prosperity

Thank you for making Dr. Howell's 100th birthday celebration a success! your investment continues to "keep the women we love healthy"



Women's Health Research Accelerator

Reuben H. Fleet Foundation Fund of TSDF
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William Wurch, JD, CPA, LLM

Women's Health Innovator

Jeffery Adler
Brad Benter
Mandy Butler, PhD
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Our philanthropic spirit is what keeps us focused on the road map towards women's health.



2025: 30 years of Celebrating Breakthroughs & Inspiring Progress

\$911k

Total Funded Scholarships

500+

New Friends of Howell (& growing!)

409

Research Scholarships Awarded

10,000

Community members informed on the latest research in women's health



Celebrate 30 years of women's health research with us by donating TODAY! Let's get to 1 million in 2025 and secure future scientific research for **the health of the women we love!**



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*"How many of you have wives;
how many of you have daughters;
how many of you have sisters?
And I know you all have mothers..."*

What do you do to help them stay healthy?"



Donate Today
to keep the women we love
healthy for the next 30 years

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