MISSION

The mission of the Breast Cancer Research Foundation is to prevent and cure breast cancer by advancing the world’s most promising research.
Together,

WE CAN BE THE END OF BREAST CANCER.

It all started in 1993 in Evelyn Lauder's kitchen. Over a cup of coffee, Mrs. Lauder and her dear friend Dr. Larry Norton began a conversation that, over time, would change the history of breast cancer. Recognizing the power of research and its potential to change the lives of millions of women and men, they realized that to tackle this disease a new approach was critical.

They believed research was the way forward and founded BCRF on the belief that funding research was the only obstacle between breast cancer and a cure. Today, we remain as committed as ever to advancing the world's most groundbreaking research because we see its ability to transform lives each and every day. Investing in research produces results. It's just that simple.

Since its founding, BCRF has raised more than half a billion dollars to fund research that is changing the very definition of cancer. Our goal is not only to make new discoveries and invent new methods to address all aspects of breast cancer, but also to do it in record time. To us, progress means breakthroughs in the lab and clinic that will have a meaningful impact on breast cancer patients today as well as tomorrow.

Research will bring an end to cancer, and we all have the power to play a role in eradicating this disease. Everyone can be part of the solution.

Be the end of fear. Be the end of hospital visits. Be the end of side effects and needless suffering. Be the end of loss. Be part of the cure.

The end of breast cancer begins with each and every one of us.
In 1994, the Breast Cancer Research Foundation awarded $159,000 to eight researchers in the United States. This year, we crossed a significant milestone by dedicating a record $58.6 million to breast cancer research, including $11.6 million from the Evelyn H. Lauder Founder’s Fund focused on metastasis. We now support 223 committed scientists on six continents. Today, BCRF stands as one of the largest private funders of breast cancer research in the world, and we owe that all to you.

Thanks to the enduring generosity of our donors, supporters and corporate partners, BCRF is able to fund the game changers committed to tackling one of the world’s greatest health challenges. Over the last two decades, BCRF researchers have been behind some of the biggest breakthroughs in breast cancer including:

• the finding that breast cancer is not one but many diseases
• the role of genetics in breast cancer
• the use of immunotherapy as a means to attack breast cancer
• a better understanding of the biology underlying the spread of cancer, known as metastasis
• the links between obesity, inflammation and breast cancer

But there is still work to be done. As the most common cancer in women worldwide and the second most common cancer overall, breast cancer remains a fact of life. Nearly 1.7 million women around the globe will be diagnosed this year and incidence rates are on the rise. To tackle the disease from every angle, we are investing in the world’s greatest minds.

At BCRF, we believe in the power of proof. Just as science is built upon evidence, we expect our research to deliver results. Our track record is a testament to the care with which we invest your contributions. At the same time, we are mindful of our expenses, directing 91 cents of every dollar spent toward our mission, because the opportunity for scientific advances has never been greater. We are proud to be the only A+ rated breast cancer organization in the United States by CharityWatch.

Research matters and, until the number of deaths is zero, we will not stop. Everyone can be a part of the solution. We are all part of the cure. The end of cancer begins with you.
Since Evelyn Lauder founded BCRF, we have enabled over two decades of unprecedented progress against breast and other cancers. With your support, our annual grants program has grown at an extraordinary pace that fills us with hope, and we have created a global brain trust that aims higher every year and always exceeds expectations. From day one, BCRF has funded innovation and creativity, and the payoff is clear: our research is transforming lives every day as women and men benefit from better care. If we maintain this pace, we will achieve the breakthroughs that will forever change the course of this disease and the way the world thinks about cancer.

Much of our optimism results from our newfound ability to take on one of the core challenges of cancer: metastasis. Understanding why cancer spreads is key to prevention and a cure, and nothing epitomizes the power of BCRF’s scientific collaboration more than our Founder’s Fund, an international initiative focused exclusively on unraveling the mysteries of metastasis. The Founder’s Fund brings together world-class investigators in an unprecedented effort to dissect the molecular basis of metastasis. To accelerate advances in understanding the disease, the project, known as AURORA, aims to:

• identify changes in molecular and genetic markers that occur when breast cancers spread;
• follow individual patients to see how the molecular markers in their metastases change over time;
• perform comprehensive analyses of metastases at the time of treatment with medicines that target specific molecular changes.

Our researchers are already hard at work in clinics and laboratories across the United States and around the world. We expect to analyze thousands of cases and develop new knowledge that will enable us to stop the spread of breast cancer in its tracks and provide valuable insights on many other kinds of cancer.

It is BCRF’s commitment to collaboration that has allowed our scientists to make critical headway and become award-winning, internationally recognized leaders in the field. In the past year, BCRF has been a potent convener of minds, helping to advance the world’s scientific agenda at meetings and conferences at home and abroad. Just recently, we co-sponsored a Food and Drug Administration meeting to design new and faster approaches to develop effective drugs for metastatic breast cancer and held a two-day think tank to address disparities in cancer care and treatment.

As we make new discoveries and forge more collaboration, we want to share our findings. To that end, we have partnered with internationally renowned publishing groups, Springer and Nature, to provide our scientific peers and the general public with more information on the current state of cancer research. With these scientific publications, we plan to capture not only important areas of breast cancer research but also the creative thinking intrinsic to the process.

BCRF fosters creativity but, to us, progress means making discoveries that will have a meaningful impact on breast cancer patients today as well as tomorrow. Research has always been our mission because research saves lives, our ultimate goal.

Dr. Larry Norton
Scientific Director

Dr. Clifford Hudis
Chairman, Scientific Advisory Board

A MESSAGE FROM OUR SCIENTIFIC CHAIRS
With this year’s grants, BCRF now supports 223 researchers at leading medical institutions in 14 countries and 25 states. Our newest grantees will add to our roster of leaders in tumor biology, genetics, prevention, treatment, survivorship and metastasis, and allow us to continue to move the field forward with more speed and excitement.

**Suzanne Fuqua, PhD** (Baylor College of Medicine) and her laboratory were the first to discover a mutation in the estrogen receptor gene, ESR1. Mutations in ESR1 are associated with resistance to aromatase inhibitors, commonly used anti-hormone drugs that block the production of estrogen, a major driver of most breast cancers. The goal of Dr. Fuqua’s BCRF project is to identify ways to target these alterations and restore sensitivity to aromatase inhibitor therapies and to find other mechanisms of resistance to improve outcomes in drug-resistant breast cancers.

**Mehra Golshan, MD** (Brigham and Women’s Hospital/Dana-Farber Cancer Institute, Harvard Medical School) is working to reduce the risk of recurrence for patients with early stage breast cancer. Lumpectomies, along with whole breast radiation, are the standard treatment approach for these patients, but they often face additional surgery to achieve complete tumor removal due to challenges in distinguishing cancerous from normal breast tissue during surgery. Dr. Golshan and his team will use a combination of intraoperative mass spectrometry and MRI to more accurately distinguish the cancerous area from the normal breast tissue and reduce the need for additional surgeries.

**Yibin Kang, PhD** (Princeton University) will combine genetic and pharmacological approaches to develop new strategies to prevent drug resistance and metastasis. Metastasis is the leading cause of death in breast cancer, making it a significant clinical challenge and one of BCRF’s top priorities. Our hope is that Dr. Kang’s studies may accelerate the development of better treatments for metastatic breast cancer.

**Elisa Port, MD, FACS** and **Hanna Irie MD, PhD** (Icahn School of Medicine at Mount Sinai) are working with a new model system derived from patient tumors to test chemotherapeutic agents against triple negative breast cancer. Usually occurring in young women and women of African descent, triple negative breast cancers are typically aggressive and have no targeted treatments. To develop personalized medicines for this type of cancer, scientists need experimental model systems that accurately reflect human disease to test new therapies. This new model could dramatically change how we test new drugs for breast cancer.

**Laura van’t Veer, PhD** (University of California, San Francisco) will assess early changes in gene and protein expression caused by neoadjuvant chemotherapy, or therapy before surgery, to identify markers that can predict who will or will not respond. Women who respond well to neoadjuvant chemotherapy have a much better prognosis. The challenge for clinicians is determining what to do when a woman does not respond. Early predictors of non-response can help clinicians better determine the best treatment for a patient’s cancer and spare women from ineffective treatment.

BCRF’s mission to eradicate breast cancer depends on maintaining an intellectual pool of highly trained clinical and research scientists. To support postdoctoral and young scientists, we have partnered with the Conquer Cancer Foundation of the American Society of Clinical Oncology since 2001 and the American Association for Cancer Research since 2006. To date, we have contributed more than $10.5 million to help young scientists gain career independence as they advance the breast cancer field. This year, we welcomed seven scientists selected by both organizations as new grantees.

**THE NEW FACES OF BCRF RESEARCH**
Our Conquer Cancer Foundation Grantees

Vanada Abramson, MD, MS [Vanderbilt University Medical Center] is testing new combination therapies based on the genetic and biological underpinnings of specific triple negative subtypes. Treating triple negative breast cancer is a challenge because it is a very heterogeneous disease made up of different subtypes that respond differently to therapies. The ultimate objective of Dr. Abramson’s research is to improve the survival of these patients by uncovering subtype-specific combination therapies.

Mekhail Anwar, MD, PhD [University of California, San Francisco] is working with a multi-disciplinary team to test new methods of fluorescent imaging that will enable live visualization of microscopic cancer during surgery. To achieve local control of early-stage breast cancer, removing the complete tumor is essential. But microscopic disease, which cannot be seen or felt, is often left behind, increasing the risk of local recurrence. This innovative technique being developed by Dr. Anwar could improve detection of microscopic disease and guide real-time surgical resection that could decrease the risk of the cancer returning.

Erin Macrae, MD [Ohio State University] is studying genes and proteins that may be important to the growth and spread of triple negative breast cancer. Metastatic triple negative breast cancer is incurable using standard therapies. Dr. Macrae will determine how often certain pathways are active in metastatic tumor tissue and assess if new drugs that inhibit key proteins will reduce tumor growth and improve the lives of patients.

Dean Shumway, MD [University of Michigan] is conducting studies to identify barriers in achieving optimal care of older breast cancer patients. Roughly one third of all breast cancers occur in women 70 years or older. Studies have shown that radiation therapy does not significantly improve outcomes for these women, yet many continue to receive radiation regardless of their tumor grade and risk of recurrence. The goal of Dr. Shumway’s research is to improve how doctors communicate the risks and benefits of available therapies with their patients and reduce unnecessary treatments in older cancer patients.

Corey Speers, MD, PhD [University of Michigan] is investigating ways to improve response to radiation in triple negative breast cancers. Research has shown that cancer stem cells, which are common in triple negative breast cancers, are relatively resistant to radiation, a key component of treatment of this disease. By targeting the stem cells in triple negative breast cancers, Dr. Speers hopes to provide a viable therapeutic option for these aggressive tumors.

Our American Association of Cancer Research Grantees

Fariba Behbod, PhD [University of Kansas Medical Center] is studying ways to predict the progression of ductal carcinoma in situ (DCIS), considered a non-invasive precursor to breast cancer. While many DCIS will never progress to invasive breast cancer, they are treated in the same way, exposing some women to unnecessary drugs and their side effects. Dr. Behbod’s studies could improve risk prediction and identify women who should be treated aggressively to prevent future breast cancer and reduce overtreatment of benign breast lesions.

Amy Brock, PhD [University of Texas at Austin] and her lab pioneered an innovative targeted approach to silence cancer-specific genes by injecting a gene-targeting therapy directly into the mammary ducts. DCIS is by definition confined to the duct tissue. As we learn more about the unique gene signature of DCIS, it may be possible to target specific genes to prevent it from becoming an invasive cancer. This method of localized treatment could reduce adverse side effects while maximizing the therapy’s efficiency.

As BCRF’s family of grantees grows, we continue to foster a collaborative environment linking scientific research with clinical medicine. Staying true to the vision of our founder Evelyn Lauder, BCRF remains committed to providing scientists with the security and flexibility to pioneer the research that will address the most urgent issues in breast cancer and to build relationships that will facilitate those goals.
PARTNERSHIPS

BCRF’s growing investment in research would be impossible without the support of its corporate partners. What makes these partnerships such a success? Our partner CEOs are in unison: “Our employees.” The nearly 1.5 million employees of our 151 partner companies have proven our greatest assets, driving success across sectors and audiences to support BCRF.

Sophia Zacharatos works with Smart Circle International, the exclusive distributor of RGS Labs’ FW1 car care products through live, in-person demonstration events. Through those in-person sales, Smart Circle and Sophia realized in 2012 that nearly half of the company’s FW1 car care customers were women. Sophia knew it was time to show support for their female consumers. Having watched her own mom triumph over breast cancer, Sophia understood the importance of women’s health and the power of medical research.

Sophia secured a check for $10,000 from Smart Circle chairman, Larry Tenebaum, with the directive to develop a plan for a program. After 12 months of market research and program-building across 60 sales distributors, Sophia achieved the full faith of her company in the form of a $500,000 initial commitment to an organization of her choice, and the FW1 Pink Promotion, a joint effort between Smart Circle and RGS Labs to support BCRF, was born.

“When Myra Biblowit told me that BCRF’s goal had always been to ‘find a cure and put breast cancer out of business,’ I knew it was the right place to invest,” Sophia said.

To date, the FW1 Pink Promotion has donated more than $4 million to BCRF and supported 12 research grants.

Bill Cohen, a Delta Air Lines flight attendant, had long admired the airline’s commitment to BCRF and the enormous outpouring of employee support year after year. He wanted to leave his own indelibly ‘sweet’ mark on the program and purchased and donated specially made Boeing 767 cookies in 2010 to sell through Delta’s channels.

Since then, the cookies have been sold on Delta flights, at airports across the country and through many of Delta’s corporate partners. Their sales raised more than $80,000 in 2014 alone. Bill is modest about his contribution to Delta’s donation of over $8 million to date—the labels on his cookies simply read: “donated by a very proud Delta family member.”

When Jordann Lavin moved to New York in 2010, she sought a way to give back to her new community and make the city feel like home. At a fundraiser for The Pink Agenda (TPA), a young professionals organization that raises money for BCRF by engaging today’s generation, Jordann was struck by the passion of founder Marisa Renee Lee. She knew she had found a home both in NYC and at TPA.

Personal and professional goals aligned in 2012 when Jordann joined ANN INC., the parent company of Ann Taylor and LOFT, a BCRF partner that has donated more than $18.5 million to date. She took great pride in working for a company truly committed to women. Today, Jordann serves as the Jewelry Merchant for LOFT and President of TPA, enabling her to support a cause close to her heart in myriad ways. Jordann’s great-grandmother was a 25-year breast cancer survivor, and Jordann’s hope is that her work will help to give others the same gift of time with their loved ones that she enjoyed.

When Jaclyn Henrikson arrived for her first day of work in ULTA Beauty’s salon division, she was greeted by a sea of pink ribbons. She was quickly introduced to the company’s BCRF partnership and annual Cut-A-Thon, where clients are treated to a free haircut with a donation of $10. Jaclyn’s only question was “How can we make it even bigger?” She set out to do so, expanding the program to include more clients and additional salon treatments.

In Jaclyn’s three years at ULTA, the company has raised nearly $7.5 million for BCRF. She credits that significant donation to ULTA’s loyal guests, vendor partnerships and associates.

“Knowing that BCRF invests such a large percentage of our funds directly into research makes everyone want to do more,” Jaclyn said. “Supporting BCRF and its amazing researchers is ULTA’s goal 365 days a year.”

Terry Gutierrez has spent the better part of two decades working for The Estée Lauder Companies’ (ELC) biggest brands. Through their Breast Cancer Awareness Campaign, which has raised over $42 million for BCRF, Terry cherished the opportunity to give back to those living with breast cancer.

She never, however, expected her professional work to become so personal. At 36, Terry went in for a minor surgery and learned there were small cells on her breast. Certain it was nothing, she suggested that her husband stay home with their two children while she made the short flight to the Mayo Clinic. Terry was diagnosed with ductal carcinoma in situ, which quickly spread to become Stage I breast cancer.

Throughout her journey with the disease, Terry drew strength and inspiration from Evelyn Lauder, who counseled her every step of the way. In Mrs. Lauder’s honor, she continues to support BCRF—rallying her team to new levels of support each year, developing key corporate partnerships for the foundation, and turning employees into ambassadors for the cause.

“When cancer makes you feel powerless, knowing you can help is empowering,” Terry said. In 2015, Terry celebrates 20 years with ELC. To her, “ELC is more than a global cosmetics brand. It is a family company.”
Total funds raised by partners this year: $27.1 MILLION

Percentage of total BCRF revenue derived from partner donations: 46%

Number of research hours funded: 540,000

BCRF partner employees in total: NEARLY 1.5 MILLION

BCRF partners support 95 research grants in:

20 STATES

6 COUNTRIES

Number of BCRF-supporting products on shelf: 644

Number of total BCRF partners: 151
When Wendi Rose helped to establish the Jill Rose Award, she had no idea the award bearing her mother’s name would become the prestigious honor for breast cancer researchers it is today.

Wendi's mother, Jill, had been one of BCRF’s original founding Advisory Board members and a dear friend to Evelyn Lauder for more than 30 years. After Jill died in 1996, Mrs. Lauder approached Wendi and her father, Marshall, about creating an award in her mother’s memory to honor her commitment to BCRF. Presented annually at the Symposium & Awards Luncheon to recognize distinguished research achievement, the award has been bestowed upon some of the brightest minds in breast cancer research.

"Because of the doctors selected in those first years," Wendi said, "we set a high standard and attracted an unparalleled caliber of medical scientists."

For Wendi, the accolade is a personal way to combat a disease that’s been a large part of her life. "This disease has always been a factor in my life. When I was four years old, my grandmother died of breast cancer. Four months later, my mother was diagnosed—she was in her early 20s.

"If I can help protect other generations, why would I ever stop trying?"

Through the Jill Rose Award and her involvement on BCRF’s Advisory Board, Wendi carries on her mother and Evelyn’s mission of supporting noteworthy research and making breast cancer an issue of international importance. "When I was growing up, no one could speak about breast cancer," Wendi said. "So much of the work that BCRF did initially was de-stigmatizing the disease."

Today, Wendi is committed to the research that she believes has the potential to alter the course for thousands of women across the globe. "I can’t imagine a time when I wouldn’t be involved with BCRF," she said. "The lifesaving work we make possible is too important."

After New York, New England is home to the largest number of BCRF grantees. More than 30 of our researchers are based at the region’s state-of-the-art institutions.

We have such a large footprint in New England, thanks to key supporters like Nancy Kelleher and her husband, Rick. Boston residents and longtime philanthropists, the Kellehers have played an instrumental role in building support for BCRF in the area. While more comfortable behind the scenes, the Kellehers couldn’t say no when BCRF founder Evelyn Lauder wanted to honor them with the Humanitarian Award at the Boston Hot Pink Party in 2011.

"As Evelyn introduced us, I will never forget, she reached back to hold my hand and I felt her strength."

"Anyone who knows me knows I hate speaking in public. When I stepped up to give my speech, I dropped one of my cards and just winged it. Evelyn had given me the strength to speak."

That connection with Mrs. Lauder only reinforced Nancy’s commitment to the cause. Nancy knows firsthand the power of research and the importance of women helping women. She has lost family members to cancer, braved her own battle with breast cancer in 2008, and is a mother to three daughters.

"I think back to my grandmother in the ’60s when women couldn’t even say ‘breast cancer,’” Nancy said. "I am amazed at how far we’ve come. Research and technology helped to save my life and are my impetus to keep supporting BCRF, spreading the message, and bringing more young women to this cause."
In 2009, Stephanie Ginsberg and her sister, Betsy, attended BCRF’s October Symposium & Awards Luncheon at the Waldorf Astoria for the first time. Betsy had triple negative breast cancer, and the sisters wanted to educate themselves on the disease. They left not just informed but inspired by BCRF founder Evelyn Lauder and the foundation’s researchers—and wanting to do more.

Over the next year, Ginsberg and her family collaborated with BCRF to create a fundraiser in her community of Long Island to unite her friends and neighbors in the crusade against breast cancer.

"With the prevalence of breast cancer so strong on Long Island, it was critical we take an active role," she said.

And so Pink Promises was born. What was originally intended as a one-time event is now in its fifth year, providing substantial support to BCRF and the breast cancer community. With Ginsberg at the helm, Pink Promises has cumulatively raised more than $3 million to fund eight research projects to date.

"Pink Promises has become a way to educate Long Islanders on BCRF’s mission and the importance of supporting research," Ginsberg said. “Without research, there is no cure."

Every year, Ginsberg returns to BCRF’s October Symposium & Awards Luncheon and leaves with an even greater desire to support BCRF. “It’s extremely rewarding to hear directly from the researchers or sit and talk to the grantees, like Dr. Lisa Carey, whose BCRF research was funded by Pink Promises, and know that the work we’re supporting is bringing about real results and impacting the lives of many people. It’s impossible to witness 200+ of the world’s best and brightest researchers stand on the stage together and not leave more inspired to help."

PINK PROMISES
Stephanie Ginsberg

WESTCHESTER HOT PINK LUNCHEON
Ellen Brown

It’s the impact of the research BCRF supports and the quality of our grantees that draw donors to our cause year after year. That’s what attracted Ellen Brown, now co-chair of the Westchester Hot Pink Luncheon, in 2009.

Ellen was undergoing breast cancer treatment when she was invited to the Westchester luncheon. She soon realized this event was different from other charity functions. “It’s one thing when you go to a luncheon and just raise money,” she said. “It’s another when you’re able to learn directly from the researchers how your money is used.”

With BCRF’s singular focus on research, deciding which breast cancer organization to support was an easy choice for Ellen. “Research is the most important thing with this disease, especially after having been through it,” she said. “All the research BCRF funds informs my doctors’ decisions and benefits me.”

The Westchester Luncheon has cumulatively raised nearly $1.6 million, and Ellen is proud that she’s been along for much of the ride. “I’ve gone from just being an attendee to becoming a chair along with the other women,” she said.

Ellen is not content with stopping there, however.

“I’d like to make this event bigger and better each year and give people more opportunities to interact with researchers and learn more about breast cancer advances.”

"With three daughters, I know that research is what will change their futures. Everyone has been affected by breast cancer in his or her life in some way. BCRF will help change that.”
Play for P.I.N.K.

When we see our researchers at BCRF’s annual Symposium & Awards Luncheon, they thank us but we also thank them. It’s an incredible feeling of mutual admiration and only makes us want to work harder. We are committed to BCRF for the long haul.

— Laura Lassman

Play for P.I.N.K. began in 1990 when founder Laura Lassman was inspired to raise money for her friend battling breast cancer. An avid golfer and member of Alpine Country Club in Bergen County, N.J., Lassman rallied her friends to play for a cause. For six years, they continued this tradition of fundraising through sporting events until 1996 when Laura met Evelyn Lauder—a pivotal moment in her life and her small organization’s history.

Their friendship flourished and led to the Play for P.I.N.K. we know today, an organization of more than 30,000 volunteers who have raised $38 million for BCRF. Over the last two decades, it has expanded rapidly across the nation. Men, women and children in 28 states host all kinds of sporting events to raise funds for breast cancer research. Even as Play for P.I.N.K. continues to grow, Lassman and Executive Director Stephanie Hamburger still make sure the organization retains that personal touch.

“All of the clubs that support us understand they are part of the P.I.N.K. family,” said Lassman. “Each fundraiser receives great response and true support from our leadership.”

Today, Play for P.I.N.K. Stands as one of our largest donors, thanks in large part to the sustained generosity of Bloomberg. The organization supports 17 research projects led by 25 world-class scientists. This is made possible because 100 percent of the proceeds go directly to BCRF.

“When we see our researchers at BCRF’s annual Symposium & Awards Luncheon, they thank us but we also thank them,” Lassman said. “It’s an incredible feeling of mutual admiration and only makes us want to work harder. We are committed to BCRF for the long haul.”
The Pink Agenda

In 2012, BCRF officially partnered with The Pink Agenda (TPA), a nonprofit that engages today’s generation to find a cure for tomorrow. Marisa Renee Lee, Liana Douillet Guzmán and Jaquelyn Scharnick founded the organization to honor their loved ones affected by breast cancer and mobilize friends and family to contribute to finding solutions.

With BCRF as its primary beneficiary, TPA is growing rapidly and touching more lives every year. To date, it has raised nearly $1 million for breast cancer research. This year, the organization joined forces with Giuliana Rancic’s philanthropic initiative, FAB-U-WISH. After her own experience with breast cancer, the E! News anchor found that pampering herself helped maintain her self-confidence and keep her spirits up during treatment. With FAB-U-WISH, she aims to grant personal wishes to improve the lives of women during their breast cancer journeys.

This year also marked the seventh anniversary of TPA’s October gala. Chaired by Samantha Tritsch, Meghan Rooney and Danielle Haskin, it was the biggest and best yet. On October 2, The Pink Agenda welcomed more than 700 guests to its annual fundraiser at the Frank Gehry-designed IAC building in New York. Hosted by Rancic and special guest The Today Show’s Willie Geist, the gala raised $250,000 for breast cancer research.

From the very beginning, we’ve believed that fun and philanthropy are not mutually exclusive, and we prove that every day in every way,” Scharnick said. “While we’re serious about our mission, we’re also serious about having a good time and believe that together we can make breast cancer history.

Independent Fundraiser: Alaska Run for Women

What began as a scrappy, homegrown alternative to an expensive, financially inefficient race has turned into one of Alaska’s favorite ways to support women and raise money for breast cancer awareness and research—and one of the state’s premier runs—and one of BCRF’s biggest independent fundraisers.

The Alaska Run for Women was founded in 1993 by Anchorage resident Terri Paul and some of the state’s top female runners to encourage women to stay healthy and active. To keep costs low and participation high, Paul and the organizers did away with entry fees and instead asked runners only for voluntary donations of any amount to support breast cancer research.

I wanted the run to benefit all women, not just those who had already contracted breast cancer, and to earmark the money we raised for breast cancer research, to prevent it in the first place.

In its first year, the race drew more than 700 runners. With an average donation of $20 per runner, the race raised more than $12,000 in its inaugural year to fight the disease.

Today, the Alaska Run for Women has contributed more than $3.75 million to support breast cancer research and awareness both through national organizations like BCRF and local groups, including a mammogram program the group began to help low-income and uninsured women in the state get screened.

Thanks to the support of volunteers both in the race and on the sidelines, the Alaska Run for Women has become one of the largest all-female races in the United States. Participants include runners and walkers of all ages, from novices to competitive athletes. But among the women, the race inspires a spirit of camaraderie, sisterhood and support. Many run to honor a loved one who has made it through breast cancer treatment or in memory of those who have not.

Since 2007, the organization has raised more than $226,000 for BCRF and shows no signs of slowing down. The Alaska Run for Women is well on its way to reaching the breast cancer finish line.

[Images of event participants and sponsors]
We are grateful to the following individuals, companies and foundations for their generous support.

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In 2014, BCRF is investing $58.6 million in research: $11.6 million to the international Evelyn H. Lauder Founder’s Fund focused on metastasis and $47 million to more than 220 researchers across the United States, Canada, Latin America, Europe, the Middle East, Australia, and China. Since its inception, the foundation has raised more than $510 million. Currently, 91 cents of every dollar spent goes directly to our mission, with 87 cents to research and 4 cents to awareness.

BCRF has been recognized as one of the most financially efficient nonprofits in the country. For the 12th time since 2002, BCRF has earned 4 stars from charity navigator, which has assessed over 5,700 organizations to date.

Charitywatch has designated BCRF an “A+” charity, the highest possible rating. BCRF is currently the only breast cancer organization to hold this top ranking.