

# Center For Women's Health Research Quarterly Highlights

SPRING 2014



UNIVERSITY OF COLORADO  
ANSCHUTZ MEDICAL CAMPUS

## Message from Center for Women's Health Research Director, Dr. Judy Regensteiner



**Dr. Judy Regensteiner**

The first quarter of 2014 has been a very busy one for the Center for Women's Health Research! We are pleased to welcome two new BIRCWH (Building Interdisciplinary Research Careers in Women's Health) scholars, **Melanie Cree Green, MD, PhD** and **Kristen Demoruelle, MD**. In 2012, the CWHR was awarded this prestigious grant for a second time from the National Institutes of Health. These two outstanding young scientists join current BIRCWH scholars **Colleen Julian, PhD** and **Kristen Boyle, PhD**.

In February, the CWHR was highlighted in a special FOX news report about **Keeping Women in Science**. [Click here](#) to view. An important part of CWHR's mission is to train and educate the next generation of scientists, which is absolutely critical in the quest to find answers and cures to diseases like cardiovascular disease and diabetes. On February 20th, the CWHR partnered with the Anschutz Health and Wellness Center to provide an educational evening for expecting couples. Participants enjoyed a cooking class with **Chef Paolo Neville** of Bistro Elaia and registered dietician **Marsha Miller**; took a seminar about emotional health during and after pregnancy led by licensed psychologist **Denise McGuire, PhD**, learned about the benefits of exercise during pregnancy from ObGyn **Jaime Arruda, MD**, and decompressed in a prenatal yoga class.

The **12th Annual Women's Health Symposium**, sponsored by the Center for Women's Health Research, was held on March 1st at the Anschutz Medical Campus. Over 160 health care providers gathered to learn in greater detail about issues in women's health. Topics included cardiovascular disease; peripheral artery disease; sex differences in the ability to exercise in men and women with diabetes, obesity; risk factors during pregnancy as predictors of future disease, and the latest research on subtypes of breast cancer. The Annual Symposium highlights the extraordinary research being done right here on the Anschutz Medical Campus. We are grateful to the outstanding presenters at this year's Symposium: **Brian Stauffer, MD**; **Jane Reusch, MD**; **Nia Mitchell, MD**; **Jacinda Nicklas, MD**; **Kate Horwitz, PhD**.

The **Let's Talk: Conversations About Women's Health** event on March 15th was especially entertaining with the addition of the cast of **Girls Only®**. The unique mixture of health talks about topics relating to growing strong and healthy women and humorous skits from Girls Only kept the 220 women and girls learning and laughing all evening. Special thanks to our partners at University of Colorado Health for their commitment to continuing such a strong and collaborative educational series with us. [Click here](#) for more.

We invite you to consider supporting the CWHR through your sponsorship and attendance at the **Annual Community Luncheon** on October 8th. We are thrilled to have renowned cardiologist **Dr. Noel Bairey Merz** as this year's keynote speaker. [See article](#) in newsletter for more information.

**Thank you for your support of and interest in the Center for Women's Health Research!**

## This June, the Center for Women's Health Research will celebrate its 10 Year Anniversary as an official Center of the University of Colorado School of Medicine.

In 2004, the CWHR was formed in response to the lack of research on key aspects of women's health. Until the early 1990s, the limited research that had been conducted on women's health focused primarily on diseases affecting fertility and reproduction.

With the guidance of key community advisors, **Judy Regensteiner, PhD**; **Lorna Moore, PhD**; and **JoAnn Lindenfeld, MD** joined together to form the CWHR at the University of Colorado with a focus on sex difference research in cardiovascular disease and diabetes.

Over the years, the Center has grown from 3 to 30 scientists and is also focused on training and mentoring the next generation of researchers in women's health.



**Judy Regensteiner, PhD**

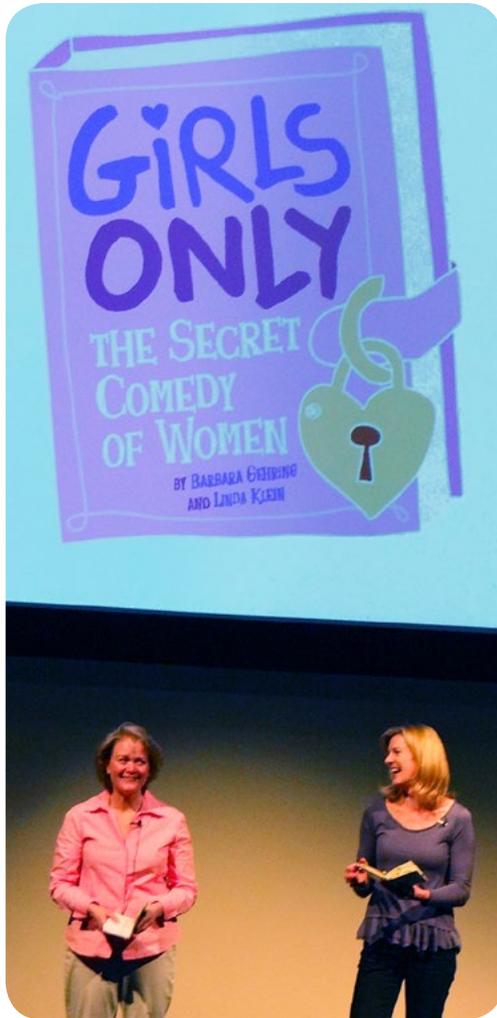


**Lorna Moore, PhD**



**JoAnn Lindenfeld, MD**





## LET'S TALK: Conversations About Women's Health

### Growing Strong Women: Mother-Daughter Event featuring Girls Only®

The Center for Women's Health Research and the University of Colorado Hospital are partners in a unique campaign to educate women and girls on topics of health. Relevant topics are presented by experts, physicians, and researchers who focus on women's health.

On March 15th, the cast of **Girls Only**® delighted the 230 women and girls with their hilarious skits celebrating the truth, honor, humor, and silliness of being female. In addition to bouts of belly aching laughs during the event, the participants gained very helpful information about exercise and nutrition, bone health, and self image and self esteem from the following subject matter experts:

- **Exercise and Nutrition for Girls – It's a Marathon Not a Sprint**, presented by Judy Regensteiner, PhD, Director of the Center for Women's Health Research
- **A Lifetime of Strong Bones**, presented by Micol Rothman, MD, Associate Professor of Endocrinology, Metabolism, and Diabetes and Associate Professor of Radiology.
- **The Importance of Self Esteem and Self Image in Being Strong Mentally and Emotionally**, presented by Michelle Herrera, EdD and Mardi McHugh, LCSW.

A **Let's Talk** participant shared that her daughter *"is reluctantly entering puberty and this helped her to relax, laugh, and recognize that every woman shares her concerns. It was excellent."*

Please check the [CWHR website](http://www.cwhr.org) for information on upcoming Let's Talk events for the Fall and Winter 2014 and Spring 2015.



*Dr. Noel Bairey Merz*

## 2014 Annual Community Luncheon

### Featuring Dr. Noel Bairey Merz

Every Fall, we eagerly await the educational and informative **CWHR Annual Community Luncheon**. With over 700 guests expected, this year's luncheon on October 8th will feature internationally known cardiologist and speaker, **Dr. Noel Bairey Merz**.

As the Director of the Barbra Streisand Women's Heart Center and of the Preventive and Rehabilitative Cardiac Center in the Cedars Sinai Heart Center, Dr. Bairey Merz is an internationally known researcher on sex differences and heart disease.

To purchase a table or an individual ticket, please [click here](#). For sponsorship opportunities, please call 303-724-9174.

## Adopt-a-Researcher Program

In January 2013, CWHR Advisory Board members asked to start the **Adopt a Researcher Program** so that board members could get to know individual researchers better and learn more about their specific research projects and body of work, the challenges of securing funding, and how they balance work and family.

**Catherine Petros**, Chair Elect of the CWHR Advisory Board and **Kerrie Moreau, PhD**, Associate Professor of Medicine, Division of Geriatric Medicine, were paired together last year and have created a special bond over the year. Dr. Moreau's work focuses on the vascular changes in postmenopausal women and how changes in hormone levels affect vascular health. She is also looking at the role of exercise on vascular health in pre and post-menopausal women.

Thanks to their regular meetings, Catherine has had the opportunity to visit Kerrie's labs and observe her analysis of sophisticated data and images. This has allowed her to share Kerrie's work with the advisory board members and the community.



*Kerrie Moreau, PhD  
and Catherine Petros*

# Donor Spotlight: Mary Sissel



Mary Sissel

*Past Advisory Board Chair and current board member reflects on her core belief in giving*

How did you first learn about the Center for Women's Health Research and what led you to join the Advisory Board? Tell us about your leadership style and how you were able to motivate and encourage supporters and donors to give to the CWHR in economically trying times

Throughout my adult life I have had a passion for supporting women — setting up college scholarships, funding programs that teach and promote economic independence for women and granting to organizations that provide opportunities for women to become community leaders. So, for me, it was a logical next step to explore the issue of women's health.

Although not closely involved in the early days of the Center for Women's Health Research, I was kept informed through the work of its first Managing Director Gay Cook. Gay periodically invited input and feedback on the challenges and opportunities of the Center, as she described me as part of her "kitchen cabinet." I was interested and honored to be included.

It was upon completion of my term as Chair of the Women's Foundation of Colorado in 2008 that Judi Wagner asked me to consider becoming a Visionary Investor in the Center; shortly thereafter, she recommended I join the Advisory Board. After talking with Judi and hearing her passion and after meeting co-founder and Director Judy Regensteiner and hearing her vision, it was with genuine enthusiasm that I said "yes" to both, and I have never looked back.

It wasn't long before I found myself moving into the position as Chair of the Advisory Board. It was a busy and vigorous couple of years as we chose to institutionalize our governance, grow our board, formalize our strategic planning and significantly increase our fundraising in the community. We had a very committed but small board, and we solidified that commitment by challenging ourselves to raise \$500,000 necessary to move the CWHR to a new level at the university and in the community. We succeeded and surpassed that goal, mostly from our personal donations, which set an impressive standard of giving for the future. Perhaps it was that successful effort by the full board that created the positive fundraising culture on which we continue to build.

*(continued...)*

## Donor Spotlight: Mary Sissel (...continued)

Please share a little about your background, family, education, work and interests.

I grew up in the Midwest with two sisters (no brothers) and a mother who, though she was not able to attend college, raised the three of us to believe that we could do — and become — anything we chose. After obtaining a BS in English and Speech and an MA in Communications, my longest career path was 20 years managing a law firm. As part of that position, I managed a primarily female staff. They were young women who were raising children while they worked to support their families. I observed their challenges and the stress caused by the many demands on them, and how that stress strained their health, both mental and physical. My passion to help women continued to grow.

What motivates you philanthropically? Who inspires you?

My father, with minimal resources, was a role model philanthropist. He set the standard for me, and I am driven, as was he, to support the community in which I live. I contribute first where I have a passion, and then only to those organizations in which I believe I can make a difference — where what I have to offer will have impact. Sometimes the impact is the ability to motivate others, whether it be the leadership, the board, the grantees or the donors. Other times it is impact around the larger issues of determining strategic direction or fund raising demands.

I have had many role models, since my father — men, women, older and younger, doctors and patients – but what they all have in common is the desire to make a difference by leaving a positive legacy. I am drawn to those who have a fierce spirit to survive, to live, to lead and to make a difference. They are my inspiration. I work with many of them today at the Center for Women's Health Research.

Why have you chosen to give your time to CWHR? Why have you chosen to financially support the CWHR?

In my life I've been witness to the many ways women influence, drive and lead change in our communities and in the world. One of the best examples is the mission of the Center for Women's Health Research to transform women's health, currently in the areas of cardiovascular disease and diabetes. The Center is not only searching for ways to diagnose, treat and prevent the diseases, but it is training and mentoring the next generation of scientists in women's health. I understand the timeline can be long to find solutions in science. I am driven to support this work, not to find the answers for my generation, but to "pay it forward" for my children and their children. That's what I hope will be my legacy.



**Dr. Amy Huebschmann**

*“...getting blood pressure under control, getting cholesterol levels under control — that’s probably what’s behind the improvements we’ve seen.”*

### Interview with CWHR Researcher

## Dr. Amy Huebschmann: Complications from Diabetes

Almost 26 million children and adults in the United States have diabetes, and 79 million have prediabetes. Recent studies show while the number of cases of diabetes continues to rise, patients are experiencing fewer complications.

Dr. Amy Huebschmann of the University of Colorado School of Medicine’s Center for Women’s Health Research says the credit goes to new drugs that treat other conditions. She explains that “getting blood pressure under control, getting cholesterol levels under control — that’s probably what’s behind the improvements we’ve seen.” Still, people with diabetes are more prone to heart attacks than those who don’t have the disease.

According to medical experts, the key to keeping your family healthy is cutting portion sizes, getting regular exercise and regular check-ups to monitor any rises in blood sugar.

The number of diabetes cases has jumped 300 percent over the past two decades and 90% of those cases are type 2 diabetes. Doctors put the blame on the nation’s weight problem. Dr. Huebschmann says, “the factors that drive obesity are generally eating more food than we need and consuming extra calories as well as being sedentary.”

[Click here](#) for KDVR interview with Dr. Huebschmann.

CWHR researcher Dr. Amy Huebschmann’s research is focused on understanding and ultimately removing barriers to exercise in underserved women with type 2 diabetes. Dr. Huebschmann is working to systematically identify which are physiological and which are psychological barriers in order to find the most effective intervention strategies.

## 2014 Donor Honor Roll

*The following gifts to the CWHR were received between January 1, 2014 and April 1, 2014. As a nonprofit organization, we are grateful for the support from donors and friends who share our belief that discoveries in women's health research will lead to healthier women and healthier communities.*

### 2014 Annual Community Luncheon

Kathleen Beatty  
Martha W. Cannon

### 2014 Gifts to the Center for Women's Health Research

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### In Memory of Suzan Ann Higgins

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### In Honor of Catherine Petros

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