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By Elie Dolgin

Fingerprints for cancer

Geneticists step out of research role to raise funds for cancer

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The American Society of Human Genetics (ASHG) meeting kicked off this week in Philadelphia with a brushstroke. Several prominent geneticists -- including the ASHG's president [Aravinda Chakravarti](#), president-elect [Edward McCabe](#), and Allan Award winner [Haig Kazazian](#) -- rolled up their sleeves and grabbed a paint palette on Wednesday (Nov. 12) in a bid to help children coping with cancer.

Hosted by [Expression Analysis](#), a biotech company specializing in microarray technologies, the "Leave Your Fingerprint on the Cure" fundraising campaign asked the [meeting's](#) participants to help complete a 40 square foot mural by painting [flowers](#) and [pinwheels](#), with the artists' fingerprints at the center of their creations. In return, Expression Analysis pledged to donate \$10 per fingerprint to [Cure Kids Cancer](#), an organization that helps children battling cancer find appropriate hospitals close to home.

"It's fanciful, but as a pediatrician, I enjoy being child-like," McCabe, a molecular geneticist at the University of California, Los Angeles, Mattel Children's Hospital, told *The Scientist*. "We believe that through these kinds of approaches, we'll get to personalized medicine for kids," he added.



ASHG president-elect Edward McCabe stands proudly next to his masterpiece



ASHG president Aravinda Chakravarti leaves his fingerprint on the cure

What is a cancer-treatment fundraiser doing at a meeting of genetic researchers? "The American Society of Human Genetics is becoming more relevant to all aspects of human health," Chakravarti, a molecular geneticist at Johns Hopkins University, told *The Scientist*. "I think it's important to raise money for [treating cancer], not just for research."

"We believe that genomic technologies can play a significant role in diagnosis, treatment, and management of complex disease," added Steve McPhail, president and CEO of Expression Analysis. "And there is no complex disease that we'd rather address than pediatric cancer."

The [mural's](#) four panels, each around 2 feet by 5 feet, remained in the exhibitor hall for three days for anyone with an artistic -- and philanthropic -- urge to contribute. Today

(Nov. 14), the finished painting will be donated to the [Children's Hospital of](#)

[Philadelphia](#) (CHOP), along with a "substantial donation" to Cure Kids Cancer on behalf of CHOP that is "right now north of 10,000 [dollars]," said Expression Analysis's director of marketing Karen Michailo. Michailo expects additional individual and corporate donations to bump up the total contribution.



With a thumbprint, University of Pennsylvania's Haig Kazazian does his bit to raise money for cancer treatment

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Cure Kids Cancer Donation

by Karen Michailo

[Comment posted 2008-11-17 09:26:14]

The total donated from this event was \$13,071.00. We want to thank everyone who contributed to this worthy cause and all the wonderful and creative attendees of ASHG who help complete the mural. CHOP accepted the mural Friday 11/14 and said it will hang outside the Doctor free zone in the oncology ward.
