Advancing Women in Science and Medicine
Empowering women scientists to discover new cures

To support AWSM, contact Robin Ross at (516) 465-8132.
For more information about AWSM, visit www.FeinsteinInstitute.com/awsm,
or e-mail AWSM.Feinstein@northwell.edu.
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About AWSM

Advancing Women in Science and Medicine has achieved success in gaining support for women in science and showcasing their impressive achievements. The AWSM initiative is important to the Feinstein Institute, and we want to ensure that women in science feel supported and celebrated today and in the future.”

Kevin J. Tracey, MD - president & CEO of the Feinstein Institute for Medical Research

Advancing Women in Science and Medicine (AWSM) was created in an effort to advance the career opportunities and career satisfaction of female scientists at the Feinstein Institute for Medical Research. The Feinstein Institute is renowned for achievements. The AWSM initiative is important to the Feinstein Institute for Medical Research.

AWSM is comprised of a group of Feinstein Institute female faculty members who lead programs in basic, translational and clinical research in a wide variety of areas. They research and make discoveries in autoimmune diseases, like lupus and arthritis, asthma, back pain, cancer, genetics, stem cell, spinal cord injury, hearing disorders, kidney disease and injury, heart disease, HIV, disorders of pregnancy, neurological disorders, and other diseases.

The core initiatives of AWSM are career development, recognition, advocacy, education, and mentoring.

Betty Diamond, MD, investigator and head of the Center for Autoimmune and Musculoskeletal Disease, The Feinstein Institute for Medical research

Betty Diamond received an MD from Harvard Medical School in 1973. She performed a residency in Internal Medicine at Columbia Presbyterian Medical Center, and then a post-doctoral fellowship in Immunology with Dr. Matthew Schaff at the Albert Einstein College of Medicine.

Dr. Diamond’s research has focused on the induction and pathogenicity of anti-DNA antibodies in Systemic Lupus Erythematous, or lupus.

She is a member of the American Society for Clinical Investigation and the Association for American Physicians.

She received the Outstanding Investigator Award of the American College of Rheumatology in 2001, the Lee Howley Award from the Arthritis Foundation in 2002, the Recognition Award from the National Association of MD-PhD Programs in 2004, was elected to the Institute of Medicine in 2006, and received the 2012 Lifetime Achievement Award in Rheumatology from the Arthritis Foundation. She is a fellow of the American Association for the Advancement of Science. Dr. Diamond has served on the Scientific Council of National Institute of Arthritis and Musculoskeletal and Skin Diseases (NIAMS) and the Board of Directors of the American College of Rheumatology. Dr. Diamond is past president of the American Association of Immunologists.

Why is there continued surprise that women are not rising in the ranks of academic science as one might expect? There are a multitude of explanations, and the key factors may differ for each woman, but some deterrents, both extrinsic and intrinsic, to success are all too repetitive and all too familiar.

My own experience mirrors that of most women in science and exemplifies some of these issues. My all-girls high school’s curriculum emphasized history and literature, so I chose to attend a summer science program at Rockefeller University. At the end of the summer, during an evaluation of my scientific potential, I was told that I would have to choose between an interest in science and an interest in men. Let’s rephrase that comment and assume it concerned the potential difficulties of negotiating both career and family. This remains a concern for many women, and for women more than men.

In medical school, I was one of six women in my class. During an evaluation of my performance by a program director, I was told if I kept smiling no one would take me seriously. Indicators of professionalism, commitment, etc. are still based on behavior patterns of men.

I have been, and continue to be, exposed to gender bias. These unfortunate incidents often arise from habit, an excess of misplaced energy or inattention more than they do from male malice. But the facts are that female scientists have lower salaries than their male counterparts, need to have more publications to be considered for promotion, and only a very few are chosen to write reviews and speak at national meetings.

The approach that many institutions use to address the status of women is inadequate. Furthermore, what may be surprising is that we have learned that women, themselves, contribute to the lack of advancement of women scientists — they can be competitive more than collaborative and too insecure to be supportive. If we look at successful women, we see that what they have in common is someone providing encouragement and advocating for them in professional fora. What we need instead of more anger, more self-pity or more amassing of data is self confidence, empowerment and mutual support.

With this in mind, with a community of interested women, we started an organization of female scientists affirmatively call AWSM (which we pronounce “awesome”), and which stands for Advancing Women in Science and Medicine. We empower women and provide them with financial support, positive reinforcement, scientific critiques and assistance, recommendations for advancement and professional opportunity within the institution and at national and international organizations. We also reach and empower young women in high school, college and thereafter who are interested in science. We understand that our challenge is at least two-fold: 1) to support our scientists during a time when support from many private and government sources is low, and 2) to re-educate our female and male colleagues through our performance, our ability to nurture and support, our self confidence, our willingness to engage, and our intelligence. AWSM has made great strides since its beginnings in 2010. Women scientists at the Feinstein are more successful and are finding more satisfaction in their work. We need to maintain our progress and continue to demonstrate that the diversity in the workplace contributes to a better work product and a better community.

Message from Betty Diamond, MD

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Betty Diamond, MD, investigator and head of the Center for Autoimmune and Musculoskeletal Disease, The Feinstein Institute for Medical research
Spotlight on a few AWSM Scientists

Cynthia Aranow, MD
Investigator, Center for Autoimmune and Musculoskeletal Diseases, the Feinstein Institute
Professor, Molecular Medicine, Hofstra Northwell School of Medicine
Dr. Aranow directs the Autoimmunity Center of Excellence program at the Feinstein Institute and conducts investigator initiated therapeutic and mechanistic clinical trials in rheumatic diseases. As a member of the Systemic Lupus Collaborating Clinics (SLICC), she has an interest in factors that influence clinical outcomes and tissue damage in SLE (lupus). She will also be conducting the first clinical trial of a bioelectronic approach to regulating inflammation in lupus patients.

“I love what I do - as a physician, I care for patients and help each get better one by one, but, as a clinical researcher, we form a team and together, can move the whole field forward.”

Anne Davidson, MBBS
Investigator, Center for Autoimmune and Musculoskeletal Diseases, the Feinstein Institute
Professor, Molecular Medicine, Hofstra Northwell School of Medicine
Dr. Davidson studies the autoimmune disease SLE (lupus). She is interested in mechanisms of loss of tolerance that leads to the formation of autoantibodies and in how these autoantibodies damage the kidneys of lupus patients.

“As a physician-scientist, I spend most of my efforts in the laboratory, but I also enjoy my ongoing patient care responsibilities and teaching of Rheumatology fellows. My clinical activities are a crucial aspect of my work as they inform the questions that we address in the laboratory, and allow me to participate in the progress of drug development from discovery to clinical use.”

Annette Lee, PhD
Director, Laboratory of Translational Genetics, the Feinstein Institute
Associate Professor & Dean, Elmezzi Graduate School of Molecular Medicine
Assistant Professor, Department of Molecular Medicine, Hofstra Northwell School of Medicine
Dr. Lee’s current research focus is to discover and validate new biomarkers for prediction, early detection and treatment of cancer, particularly in breast and ovarian cancers.

“Be open to collaborating with others. Finding the right collaborator for me helped me initiate a new area of research in cancer – with this collaboration, we are able to benefit cancer patients.”

Barbara Sherry, PhD
Head, Center for Immunology & Inflammation, the Feinstein Institute
Director, Laboratory of Cytokine Biology, the Feinstein Institute
Professor, Molecular Medicine and Medicine, Hofstra Northwell School of Medicine
Dr. Sherry’s research focuses on the mechanisms that coordinate the innate immune response (the body’s first line of defense against invading pathogens including bacteria, viruses, parasites and tumors).

“A turning point for me was when I was in a biochemistry class in college – we met patients who were living with diseases we were studying. While it was fascinating with the science behind the disease, I quickly found myself drawn to and sympathizing with the patients themselves and how they were affected by their disease. This made me realize that I wanted to do translational research to help find cures for disease.”

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“Not all is known...the thrill of discovering something new is still out there. Just imagine changing someone’s life by what you’ve discovered!”

Katherine H. Karlsgodt, PhD
Assistant Investigator, Center for Psychiatric Neuroscience, the Feinstein Institute
Assistant Professor, Psychiatry, Hofstra Northwell School of Medicine
Dr. Karlsgodt uses structural and functional neuroimaging to study brain development in young individuals with schizophrenia and bipolar disorder, to help understand how we might better treat and prevent these illnesses.

“Growing up, I had never imagined myself as a scientist. Then, after volunteering in labs in college, I realized that medical research was a field that combined everything I loved: helping people, tackling complicated problems, and thinking creatively. After that, I dove into this career path and have never looked back!”

Christine Metz, PhD
Director, Laboratory of Medicinal Biochemistry, the Feinstein Institute
Professor, Molecular Medicine and Obstetrics & Gynecology, Hofstra Northwell School of Medicine
In addition to being an investigator at the Feinstein Institute and a professor at the Hofstra Northwell School of Medicine, Dr. Metz is the director of research for the Department of OB-GYN at North Shore University Hospital and Long Island Jewish Medical Center. Dr. Metz’s research focuses on inflammation, a complex biological response to infection and injury, in both pregnant and non-pregnant populations.

“Follow your passion and make your own path. Don’t let obstacles get in your way—focus on the adventures and rewards of solving the mysteries of disease.”

Bettye Steinberg, PhD
Provost, the Feinstein Institute
Director, Laboratory of Papillomavirus Research, the Feinstein Institute
Professor & Chair, Department of Molecular Medicine, Hofstra Northwell School of Medicine
Dr. Steinberg’s research in the laboratory is primarily focused on diseases of the airway caused by human papillomaviruses (HPVs).

“My advice to prospective scientists is don’t be afraid to work hard, love what you do, and don’t give up when there are setbacks.”

Katie Ojamaa, PhD
Investigator, Laboratory of Molecular Cardiovascular Research, the Feinstein Institute
Associate Professor, Molecular Medicine, Hofstra Northwell School of Medicine
Dr. Ojamaa’s studies cardiac growth regulation, intracellular signaling and gene expression, and has recently focused on the role of innate immunity and inflammatory responses in heart and lung in response to infections and ischemia/hypoxia.

“Not all is known...the thrill of discovering something new is still out there. Just imagine changing someone’s life by what you’ve discovered!”
Reflecting on the achievements of AWSM over the past 5 years

By Christine Metz, PhD, President 2011-2015

The fifth anniversary of Advancing Women in Science and Medicine (AWSM) is an opportune time to reflect on the impact this organization has had on our researchers, our science, and our community. These results are truly awesome. AWSM affirms that confident and empowered women are more successful in advancing their science, collaborating with others and achieving excellence in their careers. Over the past 5 years, numerous and notable accomplishments of AWSM members include:

- A three-fold increase in grant funding among AWSM members (from 2011-present)
- Dozens of research papers have been published — many in high impact scientific journals, which expand our understanding of health and disease
- International and national recognition for scientific achievements
- Promotions in academic rank and leadership positions at the Feinstein Institute
- Successful ongoing and completed clinical trials that hold enormous promise for patients

One of my favorite aspects of AWSM has been our continued connection with women in our community — through our annual breakfast and quarterly gatherings. Their moral support is invaluable and their generous donations help us advance and extend our research programs and mentor young women, including Girl Scouts in high school.

These accomplishments over the past 5 years bolster the excellence of the Feinstein Institute. They are an indicator of what we have achieved and they predict what we will be able to achieve through our continued commitment to ensure that women scientists are empowered for success.

AWSM Goals & Accomplishments

Over the past five years, AWSM has achieved several goals in each of its focus areas; career development, recognition, advocacy and education, and mentoring.

Career development

- Female scientists participating in AWSM generated more than $12.5 million in new grant funding to support their research programs.
- More than 86 percent of AWSM members shared their research expertise or resources in supporting other female faculty.

Recognition

- AWSM raised nearly $500,000 awarded to women scientists, in recognition of their innovation, mentorship and/or scientific achievement.
- Eighty percent of AWSM members nominated fellow female faculty for institutional or national awards organized by professional organizations and societies.

Advocacy and Education

- Quarterly AWSM advisory board meetings allow community members to learn about cutting edge medical research.
- Women’s Health Symposium in collaboration with Katz Institute for Women’s Health.

Mentoring

- AWSM members have mentored hundreds of high school girls in the Feinstein Institute’s laboratories over the past decade. Every year, AWSM invites 50 Girl Scouts in the 10th and 11th grades from Nassau County Long Island and their parents to the Feinstein Institute to learn about careers in biomedical research. This exposure is important because, as found by the Girl Scout Research Institute, girls are much more likely to show an interest in STEM if they know someone who pursued a career in STEM. AWSM also created AWSM Girl Scout Awards. The winners of this award receive research training as summer interns at the Feinstein Institute and a $2,000 educational scholarship funded by generous donors of the AWSM Advisory Committee.

Members of AWSM are passionate about encouraging young women to develop an interest in science, technology, engineering and math (STEM).

This experience has opened my eyes to what I might want to do as a career choice. I didn’t know a lot about research before I got the experience of working in the lab, but now I know that I will likely pursue research when I finish medical school.

Kalifa Davy, winner of the 2013 AWSM Girl Scout Award
Feinstein Institute and AWSM researchers seamlessly and frequently collaborate with each other and with 9,400 healthcare providers throughout Northwell Health, who make more than four million patient contacts each year in the health system’s 22 hospitals and hundreds of outpatient facilities located in New York and beyond. AWSM researchers tailor their research programs based on what they learn from their clinician collaborators and their patients. By tailoring their research to the needs of current patients, AWSM researchers get closer to providing these patients and their healthcare providers with new answers, new diagnostics and new treatments. Furthermore, through collaboration, AWSM researchers provide clinicians with cutting-edge insight into the diseases that affect the patients they treat. Their patients have opportunities to participate in non-clinical and clinical research programs, and those who do enroll in clinical trials enjoy higher-quality medical outcomes. The collaboration between AWSM scientists and clinicians drive them towards their scientific relationships with clinicians and the opportunity to do real science that affects patient outcomes.”

Ona Bloom, PhD - AWSM Member

“Many Feinstein Institute researchers have formal or informal affiliations with clinical departments – the two communities of researchers and clinicians often talk with each other. It is because Nadeen and I are Feinstein Institute researchers and have appointments in clinical departments that we have terrific relationships with clinicians and the opportunity to do real science that affects patient outcomes.”

Ona Bloom, PhD - AWSM Member

“The work that Ona and I have accomplished couldn’t have been achieved in silos. We build on each other’s strengths and support each other to help exponentially grow as opposed to having to do this step by step on our own. Furthermore, our accessibility to brainstorm a concept with a clinician, come back and easily navigate the regulatory pathways to build a clinical study is non-trivial – it took less than a year to get the clinical study with Shaheda up and running. Essentially, the Feinstein Institute helps break down barriers so that discovery can be accelerated.”

Nadeen Chahine, PhD - AWSM President

Scientists have found that many conditions and disorders affect women differently than men and that women have different medical needs than men. Through collaborative research efforts, we must learn more about gender differences in various diseases and disorders. This can ultimately lead to improving the health of both women and men. AWSM recently formed a collaboration with the Katz Institute for Women’s Health (KIWH), part of Northwell Health. Established to improve the health of women at every stage of their lives, KIWH serves as the infrastructure to align and integrate women’s health programs and services across Northwell Health. Specifically, KIWH aims to improve women’s health through four guiding principles: excellence in clinical care, community outreach and engagement, education and health literacy, and research. AWSM and KIWH are collaborating to better understand how gender affects the prevention, diagnosis, and treatment of disease. One activity that developed from the AWSM-KIWH collaboration is the organization and execution of several symposiums which are focused on women’s health, including women’s bone health and women’s behavioral health.

In addition, AWSM researchers have affiliations with the Hofstra Northwell School of Medicine, which is built upon the strong clinical and graduate medical education programs of Northwell Health and the robust research conducted at the Feinstein Institute. The role of AWSM researchers at the School of Medicine will help prepare the next generation of scientists and healthcare providers, ultimately bolstering the quality of healthcare in the tri-state area and enhancing the region’s standing as an epicenter for groundbreaking medical research.

Artist Elizabeth Jordan teamed up with creative director, Michelle Ort, to marry science with contemporary art in a collection of light sculptures and photographs called Refractions. 100 percent of the proceeds raised from the sale of their work supported AWSM. Jordan, alongside Ort, sourced hundreds of vintage laboratory beakers in an array of shapes and sizes, resulting in a unique form of design which constantly alters the sculpture’s appearance. This body of work was exhibited at the Museum of Arts and Design for 6 months in 2014-2015. AWSM President Nadeen Chahine, PhD highlighted the significance of the change in perception of refractions while pointing out, “It’s about the obstacles encountered in science and life when one asks the wrong question and the frustration encountered in science and life when one asks the wrong question and the frustration encountered in science and life when one asks the wrong question and the frustration encountered in science and life when one asks the wrong question and the frustration encountered in science and life when one asks the wrong question and the frustration encountered in science and life when one asks the wrong question and the frustration encountered in science and life when one asks the wrong question and…”

Jordan’s partnership with AWSM grew from her desire to put all people on the path to self-empowerment. Her art work aims to expose the difference of women while facilitating emotional and spiritual awareness throughout the world. “Create art for a purpose,” says Jordan. “My art is inspired by causes that will have an impact on my life and my family, and the Feinstein Institute is home to some of the most talented women scientists and researchers in the world.” Refractions successfully raised over $100,000 for AWSM, an amazing step in providing future opportunities for the advancement of women scientists. Proceeds were partially used to purchase research equipment that benefits all Feinstein Institute scientists.
Contributing to Advancing Women in Science and Medicine (AWSM) sends an important message of empowerment, while supporting exceptional women scientists and clinicians who diligently conduct cutting-edge research to move science forward and ultimately prevent disease and cure patients.

AWSM is extremely grateful for the continued support of so many friends. Since its inception in 2010, over $500,000 has been raised to support women in their scientific careers. We wish to thank all of our donors whose generosity and ongoing partnership enables us to fulfill our mission of advancing women in science and medicine.

All awards will be named in honor of the donor, and will be acknowledged by the recipients in their publications and presentations. Multiple awards may be awarded in each category.

**Fellow/Trainee Award**

$50,000

This award will help support a female trainee or fellow pursuing a career in translational or patient-oriented research. The award will enable a trainee/fellow to perform impactful research in a Feinstein Institute laboratory.

**Scientific Achievement Award**

$25,000

This award will help a scientist expand her research in pursuit of furthering her investigations, creating greater opportunity for scientific growth and discovery. The recipient must conduct research that has potential for clinical promise and must have already showcased her findings in high-impact journals and publications.

**Innovation Award**

$10,000

Researching innovative and challenging projects fuels a desire to pursue a career in science. This award will enable a scientist who has a potential project to pursue a novel research idea for which she currently does not have funding.

**Faculty Mentorship Award**

$5,000

This award will help support a female clinician collaborating with a female Feinstein Institute faculty member, investigator or physician to fund a novel, collaborative disease-specific project. Collaborations can be with anyone within Northwell Health.

**Researcher-in-Training Award**

$1,500

Attending educational conferences fosters intellectual growth and collaboration, but too often it is too costly to travel. This award will provide funds for a Feinstein Institute faculty member to travel to important scientific meetings.

**Scholar Award**

$2,000

Exposing female high school students to research and supporting them with mentors will encourage them to pursue education and careers, potentially in science and medicine. The recipient will receive a Feinstein Institute internship opportunity and a scholarship toward their education.

**Collaborative Women in Science Award**

$3,000

Collaboration is imperative for pioneering discoveries. This award will be given to a female Feinstein Institute faculty member, investigator or physician to fund a novel, collaborative disease-specific project. Collaborations can be with anyone within Northwell Health.

**Feinstein Institute for Women & Behavioral Health**

Feinstein Institute for Women & Behavioral Health

Supporting the next generation of researchers is crucial for promoting successful research. This award will be given to female faculty members of the Feinstein Institute to support training endeavors.

Thanks to our Supporters

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Cecilia Fullam
Janice Gensler
Marla and Bruce Golden

*Refractions successfully raised over $100,000 for AWSM. Thank you to Elizabeth Jordan, Michelle Ort, and all who supported.

Giving Opportunities

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Researcher-in-Training Award

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Milestones

2010

June
Betty Diamond has a vision

September
AWSM is born

2011

December
AWSM Advisory Board Created

2012

May
Laurie Glimerad, MD
Keynote Speaker at 2nd Awards Breakfast

2013

February
1st STEM Girl Scouts of Nassau County Careers event

October
AWSM-KWH Centricity Series: Bone Health for Women

2014

February
2nd career event for STEM Girl Scouts and their parents

July
Kalila Daveney, AWSM Girl Scout Intern

August
Researcher-in-Training Award

2015

February
3rd Career event for STEM Girl Scouts and their parents

March
AWSM-KWH Centricity Series: Behavioral Health for Women & Families

October
Elizabeth Jordan and Michelle Ort create the Refractions art show, and exhibit it at the Museum of Arts and Design (MAD).

2016

November
4th Career event for STEM Girl Scouts and their parents

May
Jennifer Doudina, PhD
Keynote Speaker at 5th Awards Breakfast

July
Setu Mehta and Krista Davy
AWSM Girl Scout intern/scholarship winners

May
Cor Bergmann, PhD
Keynote Speaker at 4th Awards Breakfast

July
Margaret Miller, AWSM
Girl Scout Intern and scholarship winner

October
Elizabeth Jordan and Michelle Ort create the Refractions art show, and exhibit it at the Museum of Arts and Design (MAD).

November
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May
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