

# BCCH BioBank Newsletter



[BCCHB WEBSITE](#)

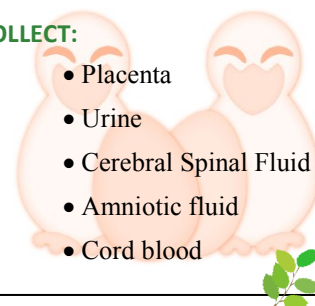


Have you seen our new BioBank video?

The BC Children’s Hospital BioBank is a collection of biological samples available for researchers, interested in improving medical treatments for children and families.

### WE CURRENTLY COLLECT:

- Blood
- Bone Marrow
- Tissue
- Saliva
- Stem cells
- Placenta
- Urine
- Cerebral Spinal Fluid
- Amniotic fluid
- Cord blood



## An Opportunity To Give Meaning to The Meaningless – Patrick Sullivan, father of Finn Sullivan

Patrick Sullivan is the President of Team Finn Foundation, one of the Founders and Chairman of Ac2orn (Advocacy for Canadian Oncology Research Network), and a supporter of the BC Children’s Hospital BioBank. He wanted to share his story about why he thinks biobanking is important.

“We couldn’t change what happened to Finn. Doctors couldn’t save him and in October 2008 the boy who lived life to the fullest died. In our grief, we chose to celebrate how Finn lived by raising funds and having fun. By living Finn’s mantra: Run Jump Bounce Dance Sing Love Smile & Ride.

Aside from raising funds, we have become very involved in doing everything we can to help advance pediatric cancer research. Which eventually and inevitably led us to biobanking and the BC Children’s Hospital BioBank. I think I first heard about the BioBank in late 2013 or early 2014. At that stage, the BioBank was going through the ethical review process and was not yet “open for business”. For several months, I chased Suzanne and Tamsin asking when? When was the BioBank going to be open? When could I donate Finn’s samples? Samples taken when Finn had surgery. Samples taken when they took biopsies of Finn’s tumours. Any samples.

Biobanking and the notion of capturing precious samples is relatively new and I wanted Finn to be part of that. I wanted Finn to be part of finding answers and changing stories. I knew those samples couldn’t make a difference for Finn. But I knew those samples could make a difference for others. For other Finns. For other children with rhabdomyosarcoma. The more researchers can learn about a disease, the more they know how to combat it next time and the next time and the next time.

Ultimately, I wanted the opportunity to give “Meaning to the Meaningless”. For me, the Biobank is a really important way of doing that.”

If you would like to share a story with us, please contact us through email at [biobank@cw.bc.ca](mailto:biobank@cw.bc.ca)

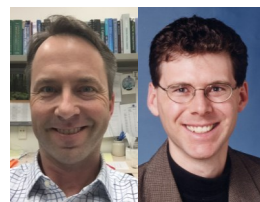
## BioBank’s Shining Star: Thyrsa May Toledo



Thyrsa May Toledo is a Masters Student at the BioBank. Recently, she received a Rare Disease Foundation microgrant to fuel her research on the potential use of circulating cell-free DNA found in blood as a non-invasive method for diagnosing cancer in children.

Thyrsa has also had a poster approved by the International Society for Biological and Environmental Repositories (ISBER). The poster will be presented at the ISBER Annual Meeting in Berlin, Germany in April of this year. Thyrsa’s research has helped the BioBank optimize an essential process for isolating white blood cells from blood samples, which we then store in the BioBank. The results of her research are exciting as they help us to run the BioBank more efficiently while still providing our researchers with high quality samples.

## Developing New Ultrasound Systems



At BC Women’s Hospital, we have recently completed the collection of 60 placentas from healthy mothers for a study involving the development of a new ultrasound system [Shear Wave Absolute VibroElastography (SWAVE)]. The placentas are being analyzed in collaboration with Dr. Jefferson Terry and the laboratory of Dr. Robert Rohling at UBC to understand how normal placentas look using the SWAVE device. The inclusion of SWAVE in prenatal ultrasound examinations could allow for an earlier diagnosis of placental abnormalities and associated complications.

## A Promising Stride in Leukemia Research



Dr. Gregor Reid is a researcher at the Child and Family Research Institute who is interested in pediatric leukemia. Dr. Reid writes here about a piece of his latest research using samples from the BioBank.

“In our study we are trying to grow out the leukemia cells that survive early chemotherapy. It is these cells that may cause the patient’s disease to return, so if we can grow them and examine them for sensitivity to different drugs, we may be able to come up with better treatments for the patients if they do relapse. So far, we have been able to grow leukemia cells from three patient samples, which indicates that this approach might work. We are currently trying to improve the efficiency of the leukemia cell growth.”

Dr Reid goes on to say “the BC Children’s Hospital Biobank has been absolutely essential for this project as it has provided my lab with the samples from patients that make the study possible.”

## PARTNERS

