



## **Welcome to the Second Chordoma Community Conference**

### ***Persevering to Find a Cure***

As all of us whose lives have been affected by chordoma know, it is a challenging, confusing, lonely, and sometimes frightening disease. It is a disease that has, until recently, received little public attention, and was barely known to the medical and research community. Just as being a chordoma patient can be a challenging journey, so too is being a chordoma researcher. For years, a handful of scientists studied chordoma in isolation, often unaware of other researchers who shared their interest in this unusual disease, and hindered by poor access to funding and vital scientific resources they needed to do their work.

When we started the Chordoma Foundation in February, 2007, our first goal was to build a chordoma research community from the ground up by connecting, for the first time, the doctors and scientists studying chordoma, and recruiting top cancer researchers into the newly formed field. In May 2007, we brought together fifty-three of these researchers at this same hotel in Bethesda for the First International Chordoma Research Workshop. Most had never met one another, yet by the end of the workshop a vibrant community had coalesced around a shared mission to find a cure. New bonds had formed, collaborations had been sparked, and most importantly a path towards a cure was developed for the chordoma research community to follow.

Now, two year later, the chordoma research community has broadened even further, and exciting new insights about the molecular underpinnings of chordoma has opened up new possibilities for targeted treatments. The incredible progress of the past year has proven that by working together towards a common goal researchers are more productive than they could possibly be working alone.

We believe that the same is true of the patient community; together, we are stronger than the sum of our parts. That you have traveled here for this landmark event is a testament to the strength and determination of chordoma patients and their families. Every single one of us hopes, prays, and dreams for a cure to this terrible disease. Though our numbers are relatively small, by working together we can make a major impact, and turn our dreams into reality.

At this conference we build on the fabulous momentum generated at the First Chordoma Community Conference. And we stand at the tipping point of major breakthroughs in chordoma research. Now the chordoma patient community has the chance to join the chordoma research community in tipping chordoma research towards a cure. We all have something to offer to this effort and much to gain. This conference is a opportunity for the Chordoma Foundation to learn how to best meet the needs of the community that we serve, and it is also an opportunity for the community to understand how best to support the Foundation's mission. Knowledge is power, so we hope that you will walk away with a more in-depth understanding of chordoma, and with ideas and tools for how to get involved in bringing about a cure. We're all in this together and all can be part of the solution.

Finally, we thank our volunteers and sponsors for their generous contributions, and all the members of the coordinating committee for their, time, input and support. This is truly a grass-roots event, and would not be possible without them.

We are excited to see so many familiar faces and to meet many of you for the first time, and hope that each one of you will leave this conference optimistic about what the future holds. Together we will cure chordoma!

Warm regards,

*Simone & Josh Sommer*