

pioneer of giving

LEONARD LAUDER CREATES A VENTURE
PHILANTHROPY MODEL DEDICATED TO FINDING
A CURE FOR ALZHEIMER'S DISEASE BY AMIEE WHITE

Many people think Alzheimer's is a hopeless, inevitable epidemic. Just one look at the numbers and one can understand why: Alzheimer's is expected to affect up to 16 million Americans by 2050, with one out of three US citizens impacted before the age of 80. It has the potential to drain the country's healthcare system, individual finances, and people's ability to live with dignity in their sunset years.

If this estimate is even near accurate, the urgency for a cure is immediate and desperate.

When part-time Aspen resident Leonard Lauder, chairman emeritus of The Estée Lauder Companies, wanted to raise awareness and funds for Alzheimer's drug research, he looked no further than his own Colorado mountain community. In August, Lauder, who acts as the cochairman of the Alzheimer's Drug Discovery Foundation (ADDF) Board of Directors with his brother Ronald, hosted a dinner reception at the Maroon Creek Club with Alison and Buzz Zaino. Aspen, says Lauder, is a key location for raising awareness and research dollars.

"We have spent the past several years inviting people in Aspen to meet Dr. Howard Fillit, the ADDF's executive director and chief science officer," he says. "Everyone has said, 'How can I help, how can I help, how can I help?' One way everyone can help the lives of others—as well as his or her own life—is by supporting us in the fundraiser that we hope to be able to do in August 2013."

Every dollar raised from events such as these and even small donations go toward drug discovery that may one day cure Alzheimer's. According to Lauder, in seeking a cure for the disease, there has never been a scientific way of testing whether a drug is working or not. The ADDF has sought out, and was the first group to sponsor, the drug Amyvid, which was developed by Drs. Hank Kung and Daniel Skovronsky at the University of Pennsylvania. Amyvid, Lauder explains, is able to show through a PET scan if a person has Alzheimer's or is on the road to it, and it gives everyone the opportunity to see which drugs are or are not working. It's a major breakthrough in Alzheimer's research and will significantly cut the amount of time it will take to determine a drug's effectiveness.

When the drugs sponsored by the ADDF are developed, the money re-

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Leonard Lauder tirelessly seeks ways to fund Alzheimer's drug research.





The ADDF reception at Maroon Creek Club.



Jane Seymour



Barbara and Richard Furman

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couped by their sale to pharmaceutical companies is then reinvested into the nonprofit. The more effective work they do, the more money is returned to the organization for further research, development of drugs, and so on, until a cure is discovered. Consequently, this somewhat recent surge in venture philanthropy is proving highly significant.

“(This model) works,” says Lauder. “We have a number of scientists with promising innovations, and if we keep on, just by the law of numbers, someone will come up with the breakthrough we need. We seek out the most

promising investigators and support them in every possible way. Our search for brilliance will pay off!”

The cure for Alzheimer’s will “absolutely” be discovered in his lifetime, says the life-long philanthropist, who turns 80 in March. But in order to achieve this for future generations, the work needs to be done today.

“Now is the time to deal with this disease, not when the population is overwhelmed with it,” says Lauder. “The aging baby boomers are at risk. If we

don’t act now, tomorrow will be too late. There is no better time than right now.” *To donate or to learn more about Alzheimer’s, dementia, and the work of the Alzheimer’s Drug Discovery Foundation, visit alzdiscovery.org.* **AP**

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—LEONARD LAUDER

Charity Register

OPPORTUNITIES TO GIVE.



AJAX CUP

Who: The Aspen Valley Ski & Snowboard Club provides Roaring Fork Valley youth the opportunity to develop and flourish through winter sports. Founded in 1937, it’s the Valley’s oldest and largest youth nonprofit.

What: Held December 29 and 30, the third annual Ajax Cup features celebrities, professional athletes, and AVSC members, and is chaired by Katy Frisch, Marc Ganzi, and Jacolyn and John Bucksbaum. Fourteen teams compete head to head on a dual slalom course on Aspen Mountain (December 30), followed by an après-ski bash hosted by Antonio Banderas.

Where: *Aspen Mountain and St. Regis Resort, 315 E. Dean St.; 970-205-5100; ajaxcup.com*

ASPEN ART MUSEUM FREESTYLE WINTER BENEFIT

Who: The Aspen Art Museum showcases the latest in international contemporary art.

What: The annual Aspen Art Museum Freestyle Winter Benefit is one of the hottest tickets of the season. Held December 28 (4:30–7:30 PM), this après-ski soirée features one-of-a-kind auction items, a fashion show, Champagne, and caviar.

Where: *St. Regis Resort, 315 E. Dean St., 970-925-8050; aspenartmuseum.org*

AUTISM AWARENESS

Who: Autism Speaks is a leading nonprofit dedicated to funding research for causes, prevention, treatments, and ultimately, a cure, for autism. Additionally, it advocates on behalf of families and individuals with autism.

What: The second annual Light It Up Blue Gala, held April 2, features drinks and dinner paired with Ultimat vodka cocktails, followed by the lighting up of Aspen Mountain, as several other global landmarks are lit, too, for autism awareness. The event also benefits the local Extreme Sports Camp.

Where: *Element 47 restaurant at The Little Nell, 675 E. Durant Ave.; autismspeaks.org*



WINTER WORDS

Who: Founded in 1976, The Aspen Writers Foundation started as a poetry conference and literary magazine; today, it has become a leading literary center, as part of the Aspen Institute. It stages some of the world’s most celebrated authors, in addition to hosting an annual literary retreat and festival.

What: Aspen Winter Words is a season-long series that helps promote AWF’s membership program. A series of events staged throughout the season, featured authors include Gretel Ehrlich (February 20), Karen Russell and Elissa Schappell (March 4), and Cheryl Strayed (April 12), among others.

Where: *Wheeler Opera House, 320 E. Hyman Ave., 970-920-5770; aspenwriters.org*