



For Immediate Release
November 1, 2017

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**MANDI M. MURPH, PHD, ASSOCIATE PROFESSOR, UGA,
AWARDED BREAST CANCER RESEARCH AWARD**

Mandi Murph PhD, Associate Professor, Department of Pharmaceutical and Biomedical Sciences (PBS) is one of three breast cancer researchers from three different universities in Georgia to be awarded \$50,000 funding from *It's The Journey* and *The Georgia Center for Oncology Research and Education (Georgia CORE)* for a Breast Cancer Research Award. The award was made at the end of the 2017 *Atlanta 2-Day Walk for Breast Cancer* this past weekend.

Dr. Murph's research focuses on a precise, safe and effective alternative to treating extremely aggressive triple negative breast cancer. Because cancer cells are incessantly consuming resources from their environment to grow, Dr. Murph intends to create a container using the cancer cell's own materials and those of neighboring cells, and load it with natural, deadly cargo. Like a Trojan horse, once inside, it is hoped that the cancer cells' replicating machinery will be hijacked, causing it to stop growing and ultimately die.

Dr. Murph has more than 17 years of scientific experience focused on understanding the molecular biology in breast and ovarian cancer, pharmacology, cell signaling, tumorigenesis and cellular trafficking of cancer. Her laboratory investigates the molecular biology of chemoresistance development in cancer, with a goal of pursuing novel compounds to combat this process. She earned her BS in Biology from Emory University, her PhD in Molecular Biology from Georgia Institute of Technology and did her postdoctoral fellowship on Cancer and Systems Biology at the University of Texas, MD Anderson Cancer Center in Houston.

It's the Journey and *Georgia CORE* teamed up to provide \$175,000 to recognize creative ideas that may advance progress toward detecting, treating or curing breast cancer. The two other \$50,000 grant awardees are Aneja Ritu, PhD, Adjunct Professor, the Center for Inflammation, Immunity and Infection, Department of Biology, Georgia State University and Susan Thomas, PhD, Assistant Professor, Institute of Bioengineering and Biosciences, Department of Mechanical Engineering, Georgia Institute of Technology. Dora Il'yasova, PhD, Associate Professor of Epidemiology, School of Public Health, Georgia State University, was granted a \$25,000 award.

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It's The Journey funded \$125,00 in grant awards through proceeds from the 2016 *Atlanta 2-Day Walk for Breast Cancer*, and *Georgia CORE* funded a \$50,000 grant using monies from the *Georgia State Income Tax Check-Off* award.

"We had several excellent applicants and feel confident that our reviewers have selected sound, creative ideas of scientific importance for the 2017 Breast Cancer Research Awards," says Laurel Sybilrud, Chairman of the Board for *It's The Journey*. All research plans are based on national research priorities.

"This one-year pilot funding supports investigators in achieving proof-of-principle," says Nancy Paris, President and Chief Executive Officer of *Georgia CORE*. "We support the researchers' efforts to establish that an idea, invention or process is feasible, so that they can move forward in applying for more extensive funding."

Georgia CORE oversees the scientific review process in collaboration with the *Georgia Research Alliance*. (GRA) Rating criteria included scientific importance, innovation, potential impact, investigator and institutional capacity, collaboration and inclusion of disparate populations.

The 2017 Atlanta 2-Day Walk for Breast Cancer, which took place the weekend of November 11-12, enables It's The Journey to support breast health programs across Georgia. Since 2003, It's The Journey has raised \$13 million and awarded 298 grants.

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