



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Contacts: Niles Frantz, Alzheimer's Association, 312-335-5777, nfrantz@alz.org

Anca Elena Call, Global Down Syndrome Foundation, 303-468-6664, acall@ajsfoundation.com

ALZHEIMER'S ASSOCIATION, LINDA CRNIC INSTITUTE FOR DOWN SYNDROME, AND GLOBAL DOWN SYNDROME FOUNDATION LAUNCH NEW RESEARCH GRANTS PROGRAM

Initial \$1.2 million aims to fund research to better treat Alzheimer's in people with Down syndrome and the general population

CHICAGO & DENVER, *November 29, 2012*] -- The Alzheimer's Association, the Linda Crnic Institute for Down Syndrome and the Global Down Syndrome Foundation today launched a new research initiative to better understand the development of Alzheimer's disease in individuals with Down syndrome (DS) and translate the research into improved treatments for people at risk to develop Alzheimer's.

The organizations are making a total of \$1.2 million available for new research projects, and have issued a Request for Applications (RFA) titled, Understanding the Development and Devising Treatments for Alzheimer's Disease in Individuals with Down Syndrome.

"Through this new initiative, we hope to better understand the mechanisms that lead to Alzheimer's in people with Down syndrome in order to get us a big step closer to new treatments," said William Thies, Ph.D., Alzheimer's Association chief medical and scientific officer. "The eventual goal is to advance the charge toward better Alzheimer's therapies for people with Down syndrome and for people without it."

"We're pleased to have leaders that represent a significant scientific brain trust leading this program, and we are grateful to have the scientific review apparatus and peer reviewers provided by the Alzheimer's Association," said Michelle Sie Whitten, Executive Director of the Global Down Syndrome Foundation.

Alzheimer's Disease and Down Syndrome

According to the U.S. Centers for Disease Control, Down syndrome occurs in 1 out of 691 infants in the United States and is caused by inheritance of three copies of chromosome 21. In addition to early physical and intellectual challenges, individuals with Down syndrome are at a high risk for developing the symptoms characteristic of Alzheimer's. People with Down syndrome develop the two hallmarks of Alzheimer's disease – amyloid plaques and tau tangles – in their 30s and 40s. Due to improved clinical care, people with Down syndrome are now regularly living into their sixth decade of life, causing many to develop dementia due to Alzheimer's.

The high incidence of the symptoms characteristic of Alzheimer's in people with Down syndrome is thought to be due to the extra copy of chromosome 21, which contains the gene that encodes the amyloid precursor protein (APP). APP is cleaved to form the amyloid-beta peptide; the primary component of plaques. It has been presumed that the extra copy of the gene produces an abnormally high amount of amyloid-beta.

The Funding Mechanism

This joint grant-making initiative is designed to enable preliminary pilot research or “proof-of-principle” studies that can provide strong initial data in order for the scientists to then obtain additional research support for larger-scale projects from other funding agencies.

The Alzheimer’s Association and the Linda Crnic Institute for Down syndrome have identified several potential themes on which researchers may submit projects, including:

- Can Down syndrome animal models provide new insights into the initiation and development of Alzheimer’s?
- Are therapies given before the emergence of dementia symptoms capable of slowing or blocking the development of Alzheimer’s in cellular and animal models of Down syndrome?
- Could early, non-drug interventions not only reduce the early physical and intellectual challenges caused by Down syndrome, but also slow and/or reduce the onset of Alzheimer’s disease?
- Can Alzheimer’s biomarkers be used in people with Down syndrome to identify the earliest onset of Alzheimer’s disease-related changes?
- Can cognitive tests be developed to measure Alzheimer’s-related memory impairment and early dementia in people with Down syndrome?

Proposals will be considered from both senior investigators and new investigators independently. Each Senior Investigator award has a maximum of \$300,000 for two to three years. Each New Investigator award has maximum of \$150,000 for two to three years. Funding will be awarded by August 30, 2013. For submission criteria, deadlines and other details, contact: grantsapp@alz.org or call 1.312.335.5747 or 1.312.335.5862.

More information can be found at: www.alz.org/research/alzheimers_grants/types_of_grants.asp

This innovative funding initiative grew out of a groundbreaking September 2012 workshop cosponsored by the Alzheimer’s Association, the Linda Crnic Institute for Down Syndrome and the Global Down Syndrome Foundation.

“The September workshop held by our organizations brought together key scientists from the fields of Alzheimer’s and Down syndrome research,” said Dean Hartley, Ph.D., director of science initiatives for the Alzheimer’s Association. “We are very pleased that one significant outcome of that workshop is this much-needed joint grant-making program that can clearly help both of our populations.”

“Collaborating closely with the Alzheimer’s Association makes perfect sense to us,” added Tom Blumenthal, Ph.D., Executive Director of the Crnic Institute. “Our goal is to foster and fund research that has direct benefit for people with Down syndrome and this joint grants program fulfills that goal.”

About the Alzheimer’s Association

The Alzheimer’s Association is the world’s leading voluntary health organization in Alzheimer care, support and research. Our mission is to eliminate Alzheimer’s disease through the advancement of research, to provide and enhance care and support for all affected, and to reduce the risk of dementia through the promotion of brain health. Our vision is a world without Alzheimer’s. Visit www.alz.org or call 800-272-3900.

About the Linda Crnic Institute for Down Syndrome

The Linda Crnic Institute for Down Syndrome is the first medical and research institute with the mission to provide the best clinical care to people with Down syndrome, and to eradicate the medical and

cognitive ill effects associated with the condition. Established in 2008, the Crnic Institute is a partnership between the University of Colorado School of Medicine, the University of Colorado Boulder, and Children's Hospital Colorado. Headquartered on the Anschutz Medical Campus, the Crnic Institute includes the Anna and John J. Sie Center for Down Syndrome at the Children's Hospital Colorado. It partners both locally and globally to provide life-changing research and medical care for individuals with Down syndrome. The Crnic Institute is made possible by the generous support of the Anna and John J. Sie Foundation, and relies on the Global Down Syndrome Foundation for fundraising, education, awareness and government advocacy. It is a research and medical-based organization without political or religious affiliation or intention.

About the Global Down Syndrome Foundation

The Global Down Syndrome Foundation is a public non-profit 501(c)(3) dedicated to significantly improving the lives of people with Down syndrome through research, medical care, education and advocacy. Formally established in 2009, the Foundation's primary focus is to support the Linda Crnic Institute for Down Syndrome, the first academic home in the US committed to research and medical care for people with the condition. Fundraising and government advocacy that corrects the alarming disparity of national funding for people with Down syndrome is a major short-term goal. The Foundation organizes the Be Beautiful Be Yourself Fashion Show – the single largest annual fundraiser benefitting people with Down syndrome. Programmatically, the Foundation organizes and funds many programs and conferences including the Dare to Play Football and Cheer Camps, Global Down Syndrome Educational Series, and Global Down Syndrome Multi-Language Resource Project. The Foundation is an inclusive organization without political or religious affiliation or intention.

###