

## Rekindle Your Spark

*Igniting a New Era in Oncology Nursing: A Conversation with Laura Benson*



Laura M. Benson, RN, MS, ANP  
Oncology Nursing Foundation  
President

The Oncology Nursing Foundation conveys a huge thank you for your support, kindness, and generosity on behalf of our mission to support excellence in cancer care in 2023. The past year brought back an outpouring of support at the 48th Annual ONS Congress® in San Antonio followed by a record-breaking Parade of Chapters. For that we are truly humbled.

With a career spanning decades, her dedication to oncology nursing is evident. Benson's connection to the profession is deeply personal and her experiences have shaped her vision for the Foundation, focusing on nurturing the next generation of oncology nurses through education, research, and leadership development. She emphasizes the Foundation's commitment to not just sustaining but elevating the field.

As we approach the Oncology Nursing Society's 50th anniversary, we stand at the threshold of a new era for the Foundation—a era that needs your support.

We invite you to be part of this new era for the Oncology Nursing Foundation. Together, we will honor the role oncology nurses have played, fortify the profession, and pioneer the future of cancer care.

While the world of oncology nursing and cancer care evolves, the Oncology Nursing Foundation stands at the forefront of this transformation.

As the President of the Foundation, Laura Benson brings a wealth of experience and a deep passion for oncology nursing to the Foundation.



Scarlott K. Mueller, MPH, RN, FAAN, and Laura M. Benson, RN, MS, ANP at the 48th Annual ONS Congress.

## 1. Could you tell us a bit about your background and your connection to the field of oncology nursing?

When oncology was a new, burgeoning specialty within the practice of medicine, I was working on an inpatient internal medicine unit. The hospital administration chose my unit to be officially converted to the oncology unit. I jumped in with both feet and never looked back. The things that I loved and kept me engaged were the long-term relationships with my patients and their families, the ever improving and rapidly developing science, the ability to impact outcomes through clinical trials and the constant change and challenge.

The first half of my career was spent in traditional roles, in the later half, I held more nontraditional roles outside of the hospital and within pharma. There I provided education on new treatment options and worked on clinical trials, publications, and presentations.

“The one constant throughout my almost 40 years in oncology has been the Oncology Nursing Society. ONS has provided me with information, professional growth opportunities, experience, exposure to nursing thought leaders, and lifelong friendships with many other oncology colleagues.”

The ONS Enterprise has supported me throughout my career. I now hope to be able to support ONS Enterprise and the Oncology Nursing Foundation in having the same impact on the current and next generation of oncology nurses.

## 2. As the Foundation Board of Trustees President, what are your primary goals and vision for the Foundation during your tenure?

My goals for myself and the Foundation are simple yet lofty! I want to do everything possible to support current and future oncology nurses. As a profession, we see the

challenges that securing funding brings. Funding of all kinds. Nurse researchers have seen research dollars drying up. The Foundation responded by increasing the research grant funding in dollar amounts. The much-needed research will help us all better care for our patients.

Members of the Society report that employers are scaling back on people attending ONS Congress®; the Foundation has increased our support of ONS Congress scholarships. The learning, connectedness and inspiration found there is invaluable. I wish more people could attend!

Obtaining academic degrees (bachelor's, master's, and doctoral degrees) is a grueling process while working and attending school. Meeting financial obligations can be a barrier. The Foundation has been and continues to be committed to awarding scholarships to help ease the financial burdens of course work.

One of the critical goals the Foundation, along with the entire ONS Enterprise, tries to address is the development of future leaders. As we envision what the ONS Enterprise looks like for the next generation of oncology nurses, we know what we will need are well-prepared leaders to shape that vision into reality.



Tracy K. Gosselin, PhD, RN, AOCN®, NEA-BC, FAAN, Scarlott K. Mueller, MPH, RN, FAAN, Margaret Hansen Frogge, MS, RN, Brenda Nevidjon, MSN, RN, FAAN, Connie Henke Yarbro, MS, RN, FAAN, Laura M. Benson, RN, MS, ANP at the 48th Annual ONS Congress

### How has your first year gone?

#### 3. What are your visions for the future and the 50th anniversary?

The first year of my serving as President of the Foundation has flown by. Over the last year we have grown the Board in size, with a focus on ensuring diverse representation, and in anticipation of things to come. The next few years will be busy ones, as we prepare to celebrate the 50th anniversary of ONS and memorialize the accomplishments of oncology nursing over the last five decades. The first of two goals is raising funds for the development of the Oncology Nursing History Center that preserves our journey thus far.

The Foundation has a second prong to the major campaign underway. Our goal is to raise funds to support oncology nursing activities into the future. The Foundation wants to remain nimble and impactful in our support of oncology nursing research, education, and leadership development. To accomplish this goal, it is imperative that we grow the impact fund of the Foundation. I often tell people my main goal is to raise money, then give it away! The more money we can raise, the more we can give back to oncology nurses.

#### 4. The Foundation plays a pivotal role in supporting oncology nursing. In your opinion, what are the key areas where the Foundation can make the most significant impact?

When I joined the Foundation Board, I was a seasoned leader. I had held several leadership roles within the ONS Enterprise, yet I discovered I knew very little about the Foundation, how it worked, and all the great work that it did and does. In my opinion the Foundation is the best kept secret in the ONS Enterprise. The Foundation Board is committed to spreading the word about all the funding available to oncology nurses in conjunction with raising the donations needed to ensure success well beyond the 50th anniversary of ONS.

Everyone I know or meet has been affected by cancer. Almost universally they are so very grateful for the care that “their” nurses have given them. The nurses took care of their needs, physically, emotionally, and educationally. Why is it that they don’t think about donating to the Foundation in honor of “their” nurses? Do the general public and patients and their families know of the opportunities the Foundation provides and that

we are a 501(c)(3) organization? Do they know their donations are tax deductible? They often do not know of the opportunities and support offered by the Foundation. It is the goal of the Foundation Board to change that paradigm.

#### 5. As a leader in the field, what strategies do you believe will effectively engage the community of oncology nurses and encourage their active participation in the Foundation’s programs and initiatives?

The Board and I are committed to communicating with as many people as possible. We are reaching out to individuals, chapters, healthcare organizations, philanthropies, and patients and families. We will meet in person, on the phone, and over video call. Any mode available to us, we will try to make it happen.

#### 6. Do you have any final comments?

Yes! I would be remiss if I did not call out the awesome staff who work day in and day out to make the Foundation a success. Angie Stengel leads the team as the Executive Director. She and her great staff Michelle Leta, Michelle Kimbrel, Molly Vogel, and Laura Rosenthal are focused on making the Foundation the great organization that it is. I am eternally grateful for their dedication.



Laura M. Benson, RN, MS, ANP speaking during the Mara Mogensen Flaherty Memorial Lecture at the 48th Annual ONS Congress.

# Celebrating The ONS 50th Anniversary in 2025

As we approach the milestone 50th anniversary of the Oncology Nursing Society, the Foundation is excited to announce an extraordinary \$8 million fundraising campaign, supporting two priorities.

This endeavor is our commitment to ongoing support for oncology nurses into the next half-century, and will allow us to respond to the evolving landscape of cancer care.

At the heart of our campaign is the launch of the Sustaining Impact Fund and the creation of the Oncology Nursing History Center.

## Sustaining Impact Fund

Even though the Foundation recognizes the invaluable support received from donors with specific designations, the pandemic taught us that we urgently need to increase our flexibility to adapt in real time to the emerging needs of oncology nurses. With this goal in mind, we created the Sustaining Impact Fund, which will allow us to be agile in responding to pressing requirements to better serve our mission of supporting oncology nursing excellence.

The spending of the fund will be at the direction of the Foundation's Board of Trustees and could cover important priorities such as virtual education opportunities, addressing nurse burnout, responding to nurse shortages, virtual networking events, and enhancements to our current programs.



**Join us on this visionary journey as we pay tribute to the past, improve the present, and ensure a vibrant future for oncology nursing.**

## Oncology Nursing History Center

The Oncology Nursing History Center (the Center) will be an innovative, interactive, and engaging space to celebrate the legacy of oncology nursing and the enduring leadership that oncology nurses display every day.

The Center will employ storytelling to highlight the evolution of oncology nursing and the challenges ahead to improve our future. Featuring interviews with ONS members, oncology nurses, and professionals, it aims to share the stories of those who have advanced the profession. With a focus on diversity, equity, and inclusion, the collection will celebrate the diverse backgrounds of oncology nursing professionals and the communities they serve, amplifying voices that are often overlooked.



Oncology Nursing Foundation  
125 Enterprise Drive  
Pittsburgh, PA 15275-1223  
+1-866-257-4667  
info@onfgivesback.org

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# Visit the Oncology Nursing Foundation at ONS Congress®



We're thrilled to reunite with the oncology nursing community at the 49th Annual ONS Congress in Washington, DC! This year, find the Oncology Nursing Foundation booth on the L Street Bridge. Attendees can support the future of oncology by donating at our booth, where they'll receive an exclusive Foundation ONS Congress pin. Discover our scholarships and awards, sign up for financial planning sessions, and learn more about the Foundation.



The Passport to Care guides participating attendees to explore the ONS Learning Hall and track the valuable information they learn at the exhibitor booths they visit. Exhibitors will stamp the attendees' passports after their visits. Once attendees have collected all the stamps for their passport, they can return to the Foundation booth to receive a prize and be entered in a drawing for a special giveaway.

Joining the Passport to Care fun ensures attendees discover all the fun activities and resources exhibitors provide in the Learning Hall.



The Foundation thanks the individuals, organizations, and sponsors who dedicated their time to creating this year's Passport to Care activity, in addition to our generous partners.

## Gold Sponsors:

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# 2024 Mara Mogensen Flaherty Memorial Lecture: Voice of Resilience

Bill Brummel, an award-winning documentary producer and 27-year cancer survivor will deliver the 2024 Mara Mogensen Flaherty Memorial Lecture at the 49th Annual ONS Congress®. Brummel is known for his impactful work, having been recognized with a Peabody Award, a primetime Emmy nomination, several National News and Documentary Emmy nominations, and two International Documentary Association awards.

The lecture will draw on his personal experiences and his documentary [Can You Hear My Voice?](#). The film highlights the Shout at Cancer choir, composed of individuals who, like Brummel, lost their voice boxes to cancer. Through film clips and personal narratives, Brummel will explore themes of identity, resilience, and the transformative journey of survivorship. This lecture promises to be an enlightening and emotional experience, underscoring the strength and spirit of those affected by cancer.



**Bill Brummel, 2024  
Mara Mogensen Flaherty  
Memorial Lecture Award  
Recipient**

Presented by the Oncology Nursing Foundation and supported in part by Memorial Sloan Kettering Cancer Center. The Mara Mogensen Flaherty Memorial Lecture Award supports an annual lecture on a topic related to the psychosocial aspects of cancer diagnosis, treatment, and care, presented by an individual who is an inspiration in the field. The first lecture was delivered in 1982 and was the first program initiative of the newly established Foundation. Its namesake was a young woman, Mara, who was diagnosed with Ewing's sarcoma at the age of 19. She was told she did not have long to live, but her passion for education and survivorship advocacy sustained her for another 14 years. She managed the National Cancer Institute's Coping with Cancer program, where her work on the project and her own.

## Thank You to our Event Sponsors



Memorial Sloan Kettering  
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**Dana-Farber**  
Cancer Institute

## Energize & Empower Zumba Power Hour at ONS Congress®

Get ready to stretch, move, and connect at the Oncology Nursing Foundation's Energize and Empower Zumba Power Hour Sponsored by Dana-Farber Cancer Institute during the 49th Annual ONS Congress. This year, we're embracing the spirit of community and togetherness in Washington, DC, with an invigorating group fitness activity.

The Energize & Empower Zumba Power Hour is an opportunity for you, your friends, and colleagues to kick off your weekend with a fun group fitness activity for a good cause. All proceeds benefit the Foundation and its Ann Olson Memorial Doctoral Scholarship Fund, which provides scholarships to registered nurses to continue their education by pursuing a research doctoral degree or clinical doctoral degree.



**ENERGIZE AND  
EMPOWER  
ZUMBA POWER HOUR**



**The Energize & Empower Zumba Power Hour event takes place on Saturday, April 27, in Room 204 in the Walter E. Washington Convention Center.**

Sign-ups are available when registering for ONS Congress (\$30) or on site (\$35) at the Dana-Farber Cancer Institute booth #1103 on Thursday, April 25, and Friday, April 26, in the ONS Learning Hall. Your fee includes an event T-shirt (while supplies last), participation in the event, and refreshments immediately following the event. Spaces are limited, so secure your spot today to ensure you're part of this morning of energy and empowerment.

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# Celebrating Oncology Nursing Month, May 2024

As an oncology nurse, you are a pillar of strength for your patients and their loved ones. Your specialized knowledge and compassionate approach are vital to empowering hope and transforming the landscape of cancer care.

This year's theme, "**Empowering Hope, Transforming Care,**" encapsulates the impact you have in your role, and we invite you to join the Oncology Nursing Foundation once again in the celebration.



## You Can Mark the Celebration in Many Ways:

- Become an active member of the ONS community by [volunteering to improve oncology nursing and patient care](#).
- Recognize an oncology nurse whose dedication has empowered patients and transformed cancer care in your community. Celebrate their inspirational role by [nominating them for an ONS award](#).
- Celebrate oncology nursing by empowering the next generation of nurses with [a gift to the Oncology Nursing Foundation](#).
- Join in the celebration with our [exclusive Oncology Nursing Month merchandise](#) featuring this year's theme. Discover a range of apparel, drinkware, bags, and more that honor the role of oncology nurses.

## Oncology Nursing Month 2024 Collection



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Pittsburgh, PA 15275-1223  
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info@onfgivesback.org



## Evolving with Care: Josh Gottheil Memorial SCT/BMT Career Development Award

For nearly 30 years, the Josh Gottheil Memorial Fund has provided funding to the Oncology Nursing Foundation to support career development opportunities for oncology nurses working in stem cell and bone marrow transplantation. This award was created in memory of Josh Gottheil, who died of lymphoma at a young age.

The Oncology Nursing Foundation recently updated the name of this award to the Josh Gottheil Memorial SCT/BMT Career Development Award. This change reflects the evolving field of stem cell and bone marrow transplantation, aligning with current terminology used by experts and the Be The Match program. [Learn more about this award and how to submit your application today.](#)



Stacy Rooker, RN-BSN, BMTCN®  
2023 Josh Gottheil Award  
Recipient

“I am so excited and grateful to be one of the recipients of the Josh Gottheil Stem Cell Transplant Career Development Award this year. This award will provide me the opportunity to attend the Pan Pacific Lymphoma Conference in 2024, where the most current and emerging therapies are presented and discussed by experts from all over the world.”

—Stacy Rooker, RN, BSN, BMTCN®,  
Council Bluffs, Iowa



### APPLY NOW!

Apply now for educational scholarships through the Oncology Nursing Foundation. The following opportunities for 2024 funding are now open:

Josh Gottheil SCT/BMT  
Career Development Award –  
Applications Due June 15, 2024

Leadership Scholarships –  
Applications Due September 1, 2024

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Pittsburgh, PA 15275-1223  
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# Advancing Oncology Care Through Research

The Oncology Nursing Foundation in 2023 awarded key research grants, marking a continued effort to drive forward the field of oncology nursing.

Claire Han, PhD, DNP, RN, ARNP from the Ohio State University, College of Nursing was awarded a \$50,000 grant for her study which investigates the gastrointestinal toxicity in patients with colon cancer. This study focuses on how chemotherapy affects the fecal microbiome, a key factor in gastrointestinal health, and its broader implications on patient well-being.

Sumin Park, PhD, RN, from the University of Utah, was also recognized for her research with a \$50,000 grant. Her study examines the influence of social determinants of health on patients with lung cancer and their caregivers during the post-treatment phase. By exploring these social factors, her work aims to improve overall health outcomes in this critical recovery period.



“A research grant from the Oncology Nursing Foundation will help me meet my academic and professional goals by allowing me to complete this research to support the development of innovative strategies in acute and long-term GI symptom toxicity prevention and management in colorectal cancer patients receiving chemotherapy. I am especially privileged to work alongside a team of dedicated oncology professionals and researchers at the Ohio State University Comprehensive Cancer Center-James and College of Nursing for this research to ensure we design solutions to improve CRC survivors’ outcomes and quality of life.”

Claire Han, PhD, DNP, RN, ARNP • 2023 Research Grant Recipient

“As an early-stage investigator, receiving a research grant (RE03) from the Oncology Nursing Foundation will serve as a catalyst for the next stage of my career. The grant will enable me to achieve two primary objectives: firstly, to gain insights and knowledge into the impact of social determinants of health on the health-related outcomes of patients with cancer and their family caregivers, considering multi-level perspectives; and secondly, to identify potential areas for future interventions that take into account the role of social determinants of health.”



Sumin Park, PhD, RN • 2023 Research Grant Recipient

## Research Funding Opportunities

### 2024 Research Funding Opportunities



- General Topic Research Grants RE03 (\$50,000 over two years) and RE33 (\$100,000 over two years)
- Focused Research Grant: Oral Chemotherapy Adherence (\$100,000 over two years)
- **Applications Open: February 15, 2024**
- **Letters of Intent (LOI) Due: May 16, 2024**
- **Full Proposals Due: June 28, 2024**
- **Funding Notification: January 1, 2025**

VISIT

[n.ons.org/giveback](https://n.ons.org/giveback)

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THE ONCOLOGY NURSING  
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## 2023 Donor Impact

**\$528,000**

Academic Scholarships



**\$176,595**

Conference Scholarships



**\$100,000**

Research Grants



**\$14,295**

Career Development  
Awards



## Meet Our Team

**HAVE A QUESTION?  
WE CAN HELP.**



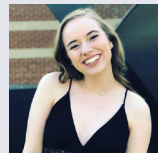
**Angie Stengel, MS, CAE**  
Executive Director  
412-859-6285  
astengel@onfgivesback.org



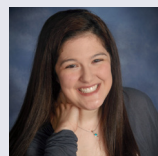
**Molly Vogel**  
Director of Philanthropy and  
Institutional Partnerships  
412-859-6409  
mvogel@onfgivesback.org



**Michelle Leta**  
Foundation Operations Coordinator  
412-859-6231  
mleta@onfgivesback.org



**Michelle Kimbrel**  
Foundation Programs Coordinator  
412-859-6236  
mkimbrel@onfgivesback.org



**Laura Rosenthal**  
Executive Assistant  
412-859-6314  
lrosenthal@onfgivesback.org

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MISSION TO SUPPORT CANCER NURSING EXCELLENCE!

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Pittsburgh, PA 15275-1223  
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