

## Global Impact

After obtaining a medical degree from United Arab Emirates (UAE) University in 2002, **Dr. Khalid A. Alnaqbi** completed his Fellowship training at the University of Toronto, where he says "Spondyloarthritis (SpA) stole my heart". In 2010 he began the Clinician Investigator Program alongside AARC scientist Dr. Robert Inman while he worked towards his master's degree in Clinical Epidemiology.

"Working in the Spondylitis Program gives me many advantages, starting from interaction with the Spondylitis team and other health care workers to learning how to build and use a database. I am also lucky to work and learn from Dr. Robert Inman who is one of the international experts in the world of Spondyloarthritis!" says Dr Alnaqbi.

"By the end of my training, I will probably be the first rheumatologist in the UAE who has formally trained and become an expert in SpA."

He believes that the disease may currently be under-diagnosed and under-reported



*Dr. Khalid A. Alnaqbi*

in the UAE. But once primary health care physicians and other specialists are made aware of this disease, patients can be diagnosed earlier and avoid suffering.

Upon completing his graduate degree, Dr. Alnaqbi plans to return home to the UAE and establish a Rheumatology referral centre for patient care and research. As part of that

initiative, he hopes to establish a Spondylitis Centre and a partnership with AARC.

**We are thrilled to have Dr. Alnaqbi as a member of our AARC team, and look forward to seeing his further successes upon returning home to the UAE.**



**Contact us at:**

**Arthritis Research Foundation**

R. Fraser Elliott Building, 5th Floor, 190 Elizabeth Street

Toronto, ON M5G 2C4

416-340-4975 • [info@beatarthritis.ca](mailto:info@beatarthritis.ca)

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## Legacy Giving

The Arthritis Research Foundation funds the innovative research taking place at the Arthritis & Autoimmunity Research Centre through the generosity and support of our donors and friends.

Many of these donors choose to support us through legacy giving, making special gifts like bequests, charitable remainder trusts, gifts of property and more. Leaving a legacy gift to the Arthritis Research Foundation means our researchers, doctors and scientists will be able to continue their groundbreaking work that you supported during your lifetime.

Marilyn Ritz has faced many personal challenges while living with scleroderma, and that was one of the motivations for her and her husband, Morton Ritz, to leave a legacy with a future gift to the Arthritis Research Foundation. The Ritzs want to ensure that research in this medical field continues to make a difference in the lives of those facing similar challenges. Their hope is that one day their contributions will lead to a proper treatment and cure for scleroderma and other chronic illnesses.

If you are interested in leaving your own lasting legacy, or want to find out more information about the multitude of ways in which to do so – please don't hesitate to contact the Arthritis Research Foundation or visit us online at [www.beatarthritis.ca](http://www.beatarthritis.ca)



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## Imaging Inflammation: Turning the Disease Off Before It Turns On

As Director of the Arthritis & Autoimmunity Research Centre (AARC), **Dr. Eleanor Fish** is leading some new and exciting research initiatives, and her work could potentially improve methods for diagnosing arthritis. Using high



*Dr. Eleanor Fish*

resolution imaging techniques to view inflammation in arthritic joints, Dr. Fish and her team are studying cells and tissue damage, as well as the spread of the disease among different joints.

Notably, this technique allows researchers to detect the first signs of arthritis before any obvious symptoms surface in the patient. By diagnosing

patients before these painful symptoms begin, doctors will be able to offer treatment options to prevent major joint damage.

The vision for the future is to scan small joints – like hands and feet – right in the doctors' office as part of a routine medical check-up. This simple step could help millions of Canadians avoid the pain and suffering caused by arthritis.

As Dr. Eleanor Fish says, "This imaging technology is transformative."

The Arthritis Research Foundation would like to give a special thanks to the **R. Howard Webster Foundation** for pledging \$300,000 in support of this imaging research.



*Alexandra Bennett and Kara McIntosh*

## Strong. Inspiring. Dedicated.

These are some of the words that come to mind when we think of **Alexandra Bennett** and **Kara McIntosh**. Last fall they launched the Kara and Alex Fund with a goal of raising \$50,000 to create a **Research Fellowship Fund**. These cousins, who both developed rheumatoid arthritis after giving birth, are committed to beating this disease so their children won't have to experience it in the future. Thanks to help from generous supporters like you, they are nearing their goal. Over \$42,000 has been raised – we are so close to the finish line!

**Help us make the final push to raise \$50,000 by making a donation today at [www.beatarthritis.ca](http://www.beatarthritis.ca)**

As you can see by our brand new logo, our foundation has recently changed our name to the Arthritis Research Foundation. Our mission still remains the same: to raise funds for leading edge research on arthritis and autoimmune conditions.



## Healthy Tips

It seems to be a common myth that those suffering with arthritis should not participate in exercise as it is too difficult and painful. We decided to speak with **Dr. Aileen Davis**, Senior Scientist in the Division of Health Care and Outcomes Research and Arthritis and Community Research and Evaluation Unit, to see if there is any truth behind this myth.

Below are Aileen's answers to our "myth busting" questions about exercising with arthritis:

**Q: Aileen, would you agree with the idea that "those with arthritis should not exercise?"**

A: I would say the truth is almost the exact opposite. It is incredibly important for anyone with arthritis to maintain an overall healthy lifestyle that includes exercise in order to strengthen bones and muscles as well as increase flexibility and sense of well-being. Maintaining

this well-balanced, healthy lifestyle can actually reduce the symptoms of arthritis and result in less pain and an improved frame of mind.

**Q: So you're saying that exercise could provide huge benefits to arthritis sufferers. Are there any specific routines or types of exercises that are best or offer the greatest results?**

A: In my opinion, there are three main categories I would suggest for arthritis sufferers: range-of-motion and stretching or flexibility exercises, strengthening and cardiovascular exercises. These types of exercises will provide a range of benefits including relieving stiffness in the joints, increasing joint flexibility, improving muscle, bone and connective tissue strength, improve energy levels and reduce stress. An example of including these into your regular life could be participating in classes such as yoga or dance (range-

of-motion), light weight training (strengthening) and swimming, biking or walking (cardiovascular). The key is not to do too much of one specific exercise but rather to do a variety of each type of exercise.

**Q: Those are great tips and seem simple enough to easily start including in your everyday schedule. Could these tips work for everyone with arthritis?**

A: As always, when starting any type of exercise routine, it is important to discuss your plans with a doctor and possibly even start with some help from a trainer or physical therapist who knows your specific needs. Also, remember to have fun with any routine you are doing; if you enjoy the challenge and the exercises then you will be far more likely to stick to it and continue to see the benefits.

## Congratulations



We would like to congratulate Dr. Dafna Gladman for receiving the prestigious Verna Wright Prize for

her "outstanding contribution to the field of Psoriatic Arthritis and to the birth of Modern Rheumatology." This prize is given by the Psoriatic Diseases Group, an international organization based in Naples, Italy. It was presented to her at their scientific meeting held in July 2011. This is only the second edition of this award.

## Edward Dunlop Research Challenge Award

We are very pleased to announce that **Dr. Shannon Dunn** was awarded the 2011 Edward Dunlop Research Challenge Award. This annual competition is open to all AARC researchers to support an innovative project in its early stages and provide funding to explore a new idea.

Dr. Dunn's project is going to explore why multiple sclerosis (MS), an autoimmune condition that attacks the myelin sheath, is three times more prevalent in women than men. Her investigation will address whether men and women show a difference in their immune system, which may explain why women are more susceptible to develop diseases such as MS and Rheumatoid Arthritis.

This could lead to the development of gender-specific therapies for women and men with autoimmune diseases – which could in turn be an extremely innovative step towards improving their quality of life.



Dr. Shannon Dunn

## Early Diagnosis Makes a Difference

I was diagnosed with Ankylosing Spondylitis (AS) back in 2007. An x-ray showed evidence of sacroiliitis – which is the hallmark of AS. Further testing indicated that the odds were quite high that I had it. But with the help of hot yoga, I felt healthy within 9 months, and I was back running half marathons the following year. I was hopeful I had a mild case of AS, and that I could remain physically active without the help of drugs...

I could not have been more wrong. In the spring of 2009, my right knee became inflamed. The next step was to have my knee scoped, which would hopefully stop the inflammation. However, the opposite happened. The AS attacked my injured knee, my healthy knee, both ankles, as well as my neck and rib joints.

Within 6 months I had to take a leave of absence from work because the pain was so severe. I had developed anemia, and I was often sleeping 18 hours a day. I needed help to get to the washroom at night when the stiffness in the joints was at its worst. Sneezing almost reduced me to tears because of the tightness in my rib joints.

The treatments worked initially, but within 2 months they were losing effectiveness. My body was shutting down, which led to fainting spells and chronic fatigue. That's when I started taking one of the biologic drugs. Within 2 weeks I was skiing. Within one month my hemoglobin levels were almost back to normal. Within 9 months I was running 5km races



Andrew and his children

again. This spring, I ran the Toronto half marathon and raised nearly \$30,000 to support AS research.

I was lucky that I was diagnosed early and received the proper treatment. I know there are thousands of people in agony, living with the depression that is associated with chronic pain.

I want to ensure that research continues so that we learn how to turn the disease off – before it turns on – so that my children never have to suffer.

## Upcoming Events

	<b>Day at the Races</b>	October 2nd, 2011	This year we will be celebrating the 12th anniversary of Day at the Races where we invite you to "Meet the Champions" from both the race track and our research team. For event and sponsorship information, to purchase a ticket or make a donation please visit <a href="http://www.racetobeatarthritis.ca">www.racetobeatarthritis.ca</a>
	<b>Scotiabank Toronto Waterfront Marathon</b>	October 16th, 2011	Go the distance with us as we take part in the Scotiabank Group Charity Challenge. Sign up to walk or run at any distance and choose us as your charity of choice. Register early to receive a free entry and access to great prizes and incentives at <a href="http://www.torontowaterfrontmarathon.com">www.torontowaterfrontmarathon.com</a>
	<b>Power of Movement</b>	March 4th, 2012	The country's largest yoga event is back for its 6th year and it is shaping up to be bigger than ever. On March 4th, 2012 the event will span the country from Vancouver, BC to Bedford, Nova Scotia. Online registration will open on September 12th at <a href="http://www.powerofmovement.ca">www.powerofmovement.ca</a> with an early bird special you won't want to miss!