Azrieli Foundation Donates $10M for Hebrew University Research Azrieli Foundation Donates $10M for Hebrew University Research

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Expanded center to focus on groundbreaking stem cell and genetic studies

The Azrieli Foundation, one of Canada's largest foundations, has donated $10 million to fund innovative research at the Hebrew University of Jerusalem's newly inaugurated **Azrieli Center for Stem Cells and Genetic Research**. The funds will also support Israeli doctoral students and young research faculty, and Canadian post-doctoral students.

Led by **Dr. Nissim Benvenisty**, one of the world's leading stem cell pioneers, working in collaboration with laboratories in Boston, New York and Los Angeles, the new center will be home to one of the largest repositories of stem cells carrying genetic diseases and chromosomal disorders in the world.

This uniquely positions the Azrieli Center to study and develop cures for a wide variety of genetic disorders.

Focusing on modeling human diseases without the use of animals, the center will study Down syndrome, Prader-Willi syndrome, hereditary diabetes, and will pay special attention to Fragile X syndrome, a genetic condition that causes intellectual disability and behavioral challenges and is linked to autism in boys. Researchers will focus on developing novel therapies to treat these diseases.

"This donation will take stem cell research to the next level on a global scale. Scientists at the Azrieli Center will be able to expand their work and impact in material and meaningful ways, studying multiple disorders and paving the way for therapies that may offer hope to people and families all over the world." said **Dr. Naomi Azrieli**, Chair & CEO of the Azrieli Foundation.

"The Hebrew University has a tradition of innovation and world class science and we are proud to be at the forefront of research on genetic disorders. Canadian Friends of the Hebrew University have been catalysts in identifying ideal research partners in Canada to collaborate with centers of this caliber. We invite leading Canadian scientists to partner with the university and join this international hub for stem cell research," said **Rami Kleinmann**, President & CEO, Canadian Friends of the Hebrew University.

The Azrieli Foundation selected the Hebrew University of Jerusalem following an extensive process to identify the world's leading researchers and labs studying Fragile X syndrome.

The donation will go towards expanding and redeveloping the physical space of the newly-named center as well as providing it with ongoing operational support. The facility will house the world-class stem cell repository for the purpose of researching and treating genetic disorders, along with imaging equipment and dedicated equipment for cell storage.

The Azrieli Foundation supports groundbreaking scientific and medical research in both Canada and Israel, with a focus on neurodevelopment, with Fragile X syndrome being of particular interest.

The Hebrew University is Israel's leading academic and research institution, producing one-third of all civilian research in Israel.

About Dr. Nissim Benvenisty

Dr. Nissim Benvenisty M.D., Ph.D. is the Herbert Cohn Chair in Cancer Research and the director of The Azrieli Center for Stem Cells and Genetic Research at the Hebrew University of Jerusalem. His research focuses on stem cell biology, tissue engineering, human genetics, and cancer. His revolutionary work on Fragile X syndrome has paved the way for research into how to restore normal gene expression for those affected by the disorder.

About the Azrieli Foundation

Established in 1989, The Azrieli Foundation supports and operates a wide range of initiatives and programs in the fields of scientific and medical research, Holocaust education, architecture and the arts, and also promotes excellence in and access to education.www.azrielifoundation.org

About The Canadian Friends of the Hebrew University

The Canadian Friends of the Hebrew University (CFHU) facilitates academic and research partnerships between Canada and Israel as well as establishing scholarships, supporting research, and cultivating student and faculty exchanges. The Hebrew University of Jerusalem was founded in 1918 by such innovative thinkers as Albert Einstein, Martin Buber and Sigmund Freud. It opened in 1925 and today is ranked as one of the world's leading research universities and is at the forefront of the international academic and scientific communities. Its graduates and faculty have won eight Nobel Prizes and the Fields Medal in Mathematics. The Hebrew University is a pluralistic institution where science and knowledge are advanced for the benefit of humankind in an atmosphere free of discrimination and prejudice.www.cfhu.org

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