



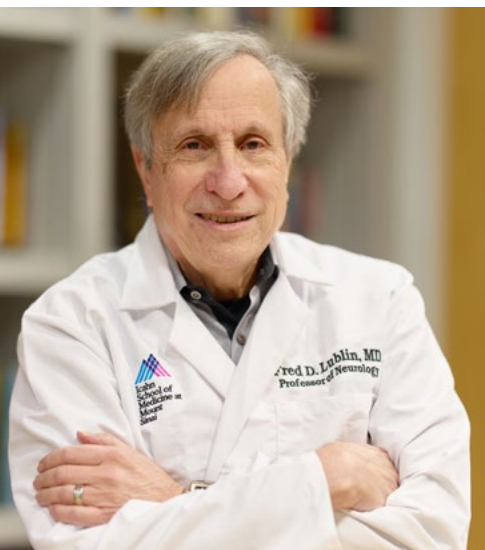
Icahn
School of
Medicine at
Mount
Sinai

Corinne Goldsmith
Dickinson Center for
Multiple Sclerosis

Newsletter | Spring 2025

MS Interactions

News from the CGD Center



Welcome! This is the first issue of our printed edition of MS Interactions, The Corinne Goldsmith Dickinson Center's newsletter. Many of you are familiar with our email newsletter, launched this past fall, and we are thrilled to debut this periodic printed version. This edition features a curated collection of insightful articles, and updates from recent months.

Each printed newsletter will also include a new article. For this inaugural issue, we bring you highlights from our 23rd Annual MS Center Celebration, held in March at the Metropolitan Club.

A great success, the

event welcomed over 200 community members and raised critical funds to support patient care, research, education, and training.

This issue also features articles on Stephanie Tankou, MD, PhD's research into how gut bacteria influence MS progression, the C. Olsten Wellness Program led by Ilana Katz Sand, MD and our providers walking the runway during Fashion Week in custom lab coats to raise awareness and funding for MS. These are just a few of the exciting initiatives underway at our Center, including expanded care programs like adding a pediatric MS clinician, bringing our clinical staff to 11, and our expanded neuropsychology/cognitive assessment group.

At the CGD Center, we are committed to keeping you informed, inspired, and connected. Whether you are a patient, supporter, donor, or friend, you are essential to everything we do. This edition reflects the progress we've made together and the vision we continue to pursue.

Thank you for your continued support and for being part of our mission.

Fred Lublin, MD

Saunders Family Professor of Neurology at The Icahn School of Medicine at Mount Sinai and Director of The Corinne Goldsmith Dickinson Center for Multiple Sclerosis

Patient Spotlight: Emily's Marathon Journey

When Emily Martin was diagnosed with MS at just 24 years old, she wasn't sure what her future would hold. Early symptoms like numbness and the "MS hug" were overwhelming, but she found expert care at Mount Sinai's MS Center.

Initially, running a marathon felt out of reach, but through Finish MS, a program that encourages people with MS to take on athletic challenges, she found the motivation to start running. Training for a marathon wasn't easy—she had to manage fatigue, heat sensitivity, and her symptoms—but she stayed committed, running more than 500 miles to prepare.

On race day, Emily felt the incredible energy of New York City, with crowds cheering and loved ones supporting her every step of the way. Completing the 26.2-mile race was more than a personal victory—it was a tribute to the MS community. She hopes her journey inspires others with MS to discover what they can do to overcome challenges and keep moving forward.

Congratulations, Emily!



A Night of Magic & Medicine



On March 6, more than 200 members of the Mount Sinai community and guests gathered for the 23rd Annual MS Center Celebration, an event that brought magic, generosity, and inspiration to the Metropolitan Club in Manhattan. This highly anticipated evening once again raised crucial support for The Corinne Goldsmith Dickinson Center for Multiple Sclerosis at Mount Sinai, drawing together a passionate community dedicated to improving the lives of those affected by MS.

Dr. Ilana Katz Sand, Associate Director of the Center; Dr. Stephen Krieger, Professor of Neurology at the Icahn School of Medicine at Mount Sinai; and Anthony Rosa, Founder and CEO of Runway 7 Fashion, Advisory Board Member of the Center, and the designer behind the MS-themed lab coats showcased at New York Fashion Week, co-chaired the event.



Attendees were welcomed to the evening's program by Fred D. Lublin, MD, Director of the Center and Saunders Family Professor of Neurology at the Icahn School of Medicine, and Aaron Miller, MD, Medical Director of the Center and Professor of Neurology. Heartfelt remarks were delivered by Meruka Hazari, MD, a patient with MS and Advisory Board member of the Center. After a video featuring grateful patients, Dr. Katz Sand, and Dr. Krieger, who sported one of Mr. Rosa's designer lab coats, took the podium to address what the Center and patient care has meant to them. Additionally, Christina Kovacs, Director of Brand & Sponsorships for Runway 7 Fashion, and Mr. Rosa's mother, Elizabeth, whose late son, Ralph, battled



MS for 23 years, addressed the audience on behalf of Mr. Rosa, who could not attend. They spoke of their deep connection to the cause. The night was capped off by an incredible performance by David Gerard, a renowned mentalist and magician, who once again captivated the audience with his mind-bending skills.

While the entertainment thrilled guests, the heart of the evening was its mission: raising \$500,000 in vital funds to advance patient care, groundbreaking research, and innovative education at the Center. With more than 6,000 patients depending on its services, the need for continued support has never been greater.

Dr. Krieger reflected on his participation in the celebration, “After attending the CGD Gala for 20 years, it was an honor to co-chair and speak at the event. My remarks to ‘find the good we can do’ in the lives of everyone with MS who we care for, to envision their best possible outcomes and seek this with scientific advancements and also with empathy, generosity of spirit, and beneficence – really encapsulates our clinical mission at the CGD Center. I asked those in attendance to think about the good they can do for the Center, and although when I said ‘to be clear, this is a call to action’ it got a good laugh, I also hope that it inspired people to dig deep and contribute to our mission, as we can’t succeed without the philanthropic support that our gala provides.”

Thanks to the generosity of donors over the years, gala proceeds have developed and sustained transformative

initiatives such as the C. Olsten Wellness Program, launched in 2020 by Dr. Katz Sand. This program takes a holistic, multidisciplinary approach to improving the quality of life and long-term outcomes for people living with MS. Funds raised also play a critical role in supporting pioneering research and training future MS specialists.

In Dr. Katz Sand’s words, “It was truly an honor to serve as co-chair for this incredible event. We are extremely grateful to our wonderful community for helping us ensure the night’s success. We could not do the critically important work we do every day without this amazing support!”

The evening was a tremendous success, reinforcing the Center’s unwavering commitment to revolutionizing MS care and offering hope to thousands of patients and families.

Pictured clockwise from lower left: 1: Stephen Krieger, MD, Ilana Katz Sand, MD, Fred Lublin, MD, Meruka Hazari, MD, and Aaron Miller, MD. 2: Katherine Goldsmith and Aaron Miller, MD. 3: Cocktail Hour. 4: Ilana Katz Sand, MD. 5: Avery Lublin. 6: Stephen Krieger, MD.

Watch the video from the Gala!

Scan the QR code to watch the powerful video that premiered at The 23rd Annual MS Center Celebration.





Helping Patients Take Control of Their Health

By Kenneth Bandler

An MS diagnosis is life-changing. The challenge of managing doctor appointments, MRI exams, and treatments, while also focusing on how you feel, can be extraordinarily stressful. Many essential things in life, such as exercise, nutrition, sleep, work, and family, often receive insufficient attention in the face of these demands.

"Many of our patients seek and can benefit from a more holistic approach to their MS," says Ilana Katz Sand, MD, Co-Director of the C. Olsten Wellness Program at The Corinne Goldsmith Dickinson Center for Multiple Sclerosis. "Empowering people living with MS to take ownership of their health is the goal of our Wellness Program."

The Wellness Program is designed to enable people with MS to live their lives as fully as possible by creating healthier habits. Since its inception in 2020, more than 500 people have participated in this program, the first of its kind at a comprehensive MS care center in the United States.

The program is open to both newly diagnosed patients and those who have been receiving care from neurologists, nurse practitioners, and other Center staff for many years. Some of the original participants from

2020 are still engaged in their wellness activities, while others have found satisfaction in charting a course of action after just a few visits.

"The duration of participation is up to the patient," Dr. Katz Sand says. "We partner one-on-one with our patients, offering each individual options that help with changing behaviors, such as assistance with scheduling workout routines, adjustments to food shopping and eating habits, or support for addressing mental health. These are all key components of comprehensive MS care."

Empowering people living with MS to take ownership of their health is the goal of our Wellness Program.

Deciding to participate in the Wellness Program begins with conversations between patients and their health care providers. Before the first visit, patients undergo an evaluation through the Center's Comprehensive Annual Assessment Program at the MS Neuropsychology Clinic, which helps identify potential areas of need. The initial visit is extensive, lasting two

and a half hours, and involves individual meetings with staff.

Each specialist—nurse practitioners, dietitian, physical therapist, and social worker—assess various aspects of the patient's health, including their abilities, living environment, and support systems. Nurse practitioners Stacie Lyras, FNP-BC, and Gretchen Mathewson, NP, conduct an overall assessment and help each patient set goals. Dietitian Jessica Gelman, MS, RDN, CDN, reviews food choices, eating schedules, how groceries are obtained, and how meals are prepared. Elizabeth Pike, PT, DPT, NCS, physical therapist, evaluates the patient's current physical activity level and exercise program. Finally, social worker Konul Azimzade, LCSW, assesses the patient's emotional health.

At the end of each new evaluation session, the Wellness staff meet with Belenmarie Mixon, program coordinator, and Dr. Katz Sand to make sure all providers are on the same page. Each patient has a unique set of circumstances and different ways that MS affects their life. A customized plan is prepared for and discussed with the patient.

Patients are so appreciative of the way our team listens to what is going on in their lives and what they need to feel better.

Dr. Katz Sand notes that several of her patients have had life-changing experiences with the Wellness Program. Using strategies learned from the program, some patients regained mobility through exercise. Others addressed longstanding mental health issues, or were finally able to manage their fatigue by changing diet or other lifestyle habits. "Patients are so appreciative of the way our team listens to what is going on in their lives and what they need to feel better. Providing care that is truly holistic is a different approach that puts patients at the center," says Dr. Katz Sand.

Dr. Katz Sand joined the Center in 2011 on a National Multiple Sclerosis Society-sponsored fellowship and became a full-time staff member in 2013. Today, she serves as the Center's Associate Director. In addition to treating MS patients, she has spearheaded research for more than a decade on the connections between gut health and MS. Her groundbreaking work on nutrition and how food choices affect MS was key to forming the holistic approach embraced by the Wellness Program.

To further encourage people living with MS in managing their nutrition, Dr. Katz Sand's team, led by Ms. Gelman, has produced a 73-page cookbook. It puts into practice the nutrition guidance Dr. Katz Sand has long advocated. The cookbook covers the basics of kitchen equipment, nutrition guidelines, and detailed recipes. It's user-friendly for both beginners and more experienced home chefs. The Wellness Program cookbook is available to Wellness Program participants upon request.

Providing care that is truly holistic is a different approach that puts patients at The Center.

As the Wellness Program becomes more popular, expansion will be necessary to accommodate more patients. This growth will require more space and staff so that more patients can take advantage of its unique offerings.

"Learning to live with MS is an enduring, educational process. We feel strongly that this holistic approach improves people's long-term prognosis and significantly improves their quality of life," says Dr. Katz Sand. "We want to be able to offer this to every person we treat."



Ilana Katz Sand, MD, Co-Director of the C. Olsten Wellness Program



PROJECT LAB COAT

Fashionably Fighting Multiple Sclerosis at New York Fashion Week



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During New York Fashion Week, hundreds of attendees gathered for Project Lab Coat—a showcase of custom-designed, colorful lab coats created and designed by Anthony Rosa, founder and CEO of Runway 7 Fashion, a Fashion Week production company. More than 30 faculty, staff, patients, and families from The Corinne Goldsmith Dickinson Center for Multiple Sclerosis at the Icahn School of Medicine at Mount Sinai attended the event, hosted by Runway 7 Fashion on Saturday, September 7, at Sony Hall in Times Square.

“We created Project Lab Coat to use our platform of Runway 7 Fashion for a greater cause,” said Mr. Rosa, who also serves on the Center’s Advisory Board. “The goal of the Project is fighting multiple sclerosis. It’s a first in many ways for us and could be a model for fighting additional important health battles—cancer, Lyme disease, or others. Our slogan is ‘Project Lab Coat at New York Fashion Week with Mount Sinai... Elevating awareness, fashionably fighting against multiple sclerosis, and uniting for a cause that truly matters.’”

In memory of his late brother, Ralph, who battled multiple sclerosis for 23 years, Mr. Rosa designed fashionable lab coats to raise multiple sclerosis awareness. In a unique touch, Mr. Rosa enlisted doctors, nurse practitioners,

and families from the Center to model the coats. Amid a thumping soundtrack by DJ Tone Experience, staff from the Center and professional models alike took to the runway, spinning, strutting, and creating an atmosphere that was both lively and emotional.

Before the models began their runway walk, Elizabeth Rosa, mother of Mr. Rosa and Ralph, presented Fred Lublin, MD, Saunders Family Professor of Neurology at Icahn Mount Sinai and Director of the Center, with a \$25,000 donation to support the Center’s critical work.

Elevating awareness, fighting against multiple sclerosis, and uniting for a cause that truly matters.

Walking the runway to support the cause were Ilana Katz Sand, MD; Stephen Krieger, MD; James Sumowski, PhD; Sammita Satyanarayan, MD; Sarah Levy, PhD; and Nurse Practitioner Gretchen Mathewson, alongside administrative staffer Lady Navia and research coordinator Claire Wigley, and several professional models. Adding a family touch, Michelle Fabian, MD’s

daughter Julia Fabian, Fred Lublin, MD's granddaughter Avery Lublin, and Social Worker Ilona Silva Alvarez's daughter Isabella Veliz-Silva also joined.

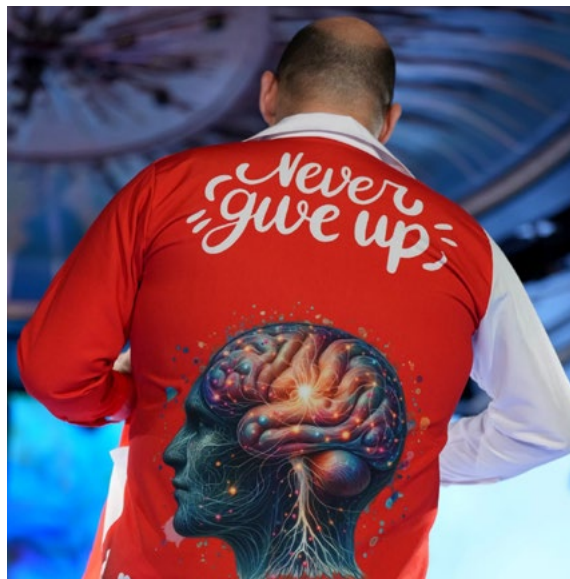
"All of us at the Center are deeply appreciative of the remarkable and unique opportunity that Anthony Rosa has afforded us in raising awareness of multiple sclerosis and the Center, and in raising needed funds for our goals," said Dr. Lublin. "I was especially appreciative of having my granddaughter, Avery Lublin, walk the runway and model Anthony's reimagining of the laboratory coat."

Ilana Katz Sand, MD, Associate Professor of Neurology, Icahn Mount Sinai, and a physician from the Center who walked the runway, shared her experience. "Participating in the fashion show was an amazing experience. Although I was completely terrified while we were standing backstage, I looked around at my wonderful colleagues and was reminded how fortunate I am to be surrounded by such dedicated and caring professionals. We were all there to raise awareness and resources for the Center and all people living with multiple sclerosis; this inspired me to step out onto the runway with my head held high. We are extremely grateful to Anthony for this incredible opportunity and his generous support."

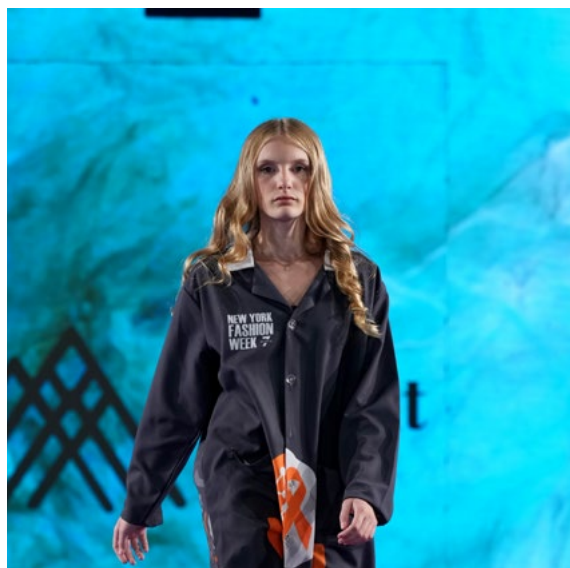
For Stephen Krieger, MD, FAAN, Professor of Neurology, Icahn Mount Sinai, the evening also meant getting a little uncomfortable. "I was thrilled—terrified, actually—to walk the runway at Fashion Week to support the Center and the



Sammita Satyanarayan, MD



James Sumowski, PhD



Avery Lublin

Mount Sinai Community," he said. "It was fun to step out of my comfort zone for the cause. My lab coat said, 'Find the Cure for MS: Someone I Love is Waiting.' I think this is an incredible message, our north star at the Center, where we focus every day on both caring for our patients and making advancements in the field."

All of us at the Center are deeply appreciative of the remarkable and unique opportunity that Anthony Rosa has afforded us in raising awareness of multiple sclerosis and the Center.

The event offered a space not only to enjoy the fashion show but also to connect and celebrate with each other. Attendees from the Center had reserved tables to relax, catch up over drinks and appetizers hosted by Runway 7 Fashion, and cheer on their colleagues as they showed off these meaningful designs.

"A heartfelt thank you to Mr. Rosa and Runway 7 Fashion for creating such a memorable night and for their unwavering support of the Center's dedicated staff and their work," said Dr. Lublin.



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Pioneering Research Examines the Role of Your Gut in MS

Is MS rooted in your gut? Dr. Stephanie Tankou's research reveals the connection between gut bacteria and brain inflammation, exploring a novel 'bugs as drugs' approach to MS treatment.

Scan the QR
code to read
the full story.

