

Celebrating 16 Years of Cancer Support at Gilda's Club NYC

November 1, 2011 2:15 PM ET

NEW YORK – Gilda's Club New York City (GCNYC) will honor Dr. David Schenkein, Dr. James Allison, and ID Media on Thursday, November 17, 2011 at their 16th Anniversary Benefit Gala. This exciting affair will be held at the renowned Pierre Hotel. The evening will begin with a cocktail hour and silent auction, followed by a formal dinner, award ceremony and live auction. Donations made will enable GCNYC to raise awareness and help fulfill its mission to provide social and emotional support for everyone living with cancer in New York City, including their families and friends – **FREE of charge**.

GCNYC is proud to honor two visionaries at this year's event, whose work has helped individuals diagnosed with cancer, David Schenkein, MD, Chief Executive Officer, Agios Pharmaceuticals, Inc. and James Allison, PhD, Chairman, Immunology Program, Memorial Sloan-Kettering Cancer Center.

The efforts of these individuals have helped shape the course of medicine for thousands of patients living with cancer and their families. Dr. Schenkein joined Agios in 2009 as the CEO and has been a hematologist and medical oncologist for more than 20 years. He has published more than 75 peer-reviewed articles. Under his leadership as the former head of oncology drug development at Millennium and Genentech, multiple novel and important oncology medicines have come to market. Agios is passionately committed to the fundamental transformation of cancer patients' lives through scientific leadership in the field of cancer metabolism.

Dr. Allison is a leader in the field of immunology, particularly in developing ways to help the immune system recognize and destroy cancer cells. His research is focused on the mechanisms that regulate the immunological response of T lymphocytes. He found a molecule, CTLA-4 that plays a critical role in turning off T cells. He went on to show that antibodies to CTLA-4 could induce rejection of tumors in preclinical animal models. Allison was involved in the generation of antibodies to human CTLA-4 which have been extensively tested in clinical trials in a variety of human cancers. It was recently shown to significantly increase survival in late stage melanoma patients, with about 25% surviving 4+ years. This antibody, Ipilimumab, was the first drug ever to show survival benefit in late stage melanoma. It was recently approved by the Food and Drug Administration for the treatment of melanoma.

In addition, a special presentation of "The Bill Modell Heart of Gold Award" will be made to ID Media for their outstanding volunteer efforts within our community.

GCNYC is proud to have ABC's Diana Williams host the event for her seventh year in a row. "We are honored to have Diana's continued support as part of this important event, and to help us share our story," said Lily Safani, CEO of GCNYC. A new addition to the evening is our auctioneer, C. Hugh Hildesley, from Sotheby's.

About Gilda's Club New York City:

Gilda's Club New York City creates welcoming communities of free support for everyone living with cancer - men, women, teens and children - along with their families and friends. Our innovative program is an essential complement to medical care, providing networking and support groups, workshops, lectures and social activities, all **free of charge**. We provide our program in beautiful, non-residential homelike settings: our clubhouse is a four-story brownstone on West Houston Street in Manhattan, and we have seven sites in Brooklyn and the Bronx as part of our community satellite program. Visit www.gildasclubnyc.org for more information.

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