

20 YEAR ANNIVERSARY

Winter 2023

Brandon Carrington Lee Foundation MAGAZINE



The Three Faces of Brandon Illustration by Matthew Harwood

REMEMBERING

*Brandon transitioned 20 years ago.
His journey continues.*

'Those we love don't go away; they walk beside us every day. Unseen, unheard, but always near; still loved, still missed and very dear'

—Anonymous

Anthropologist Margaret Mead said, "Never believe that a few caring people cannot change the world."

I say, you are one of those people.

If we had a thousand tongues, we could not thank you enough for all that you have done. Since 2012, when we first asked you to have a cup of tea with us, and remember Brandon and your loved ones who battled cancer, you have been the wind beneath our wings. You have been with us every step of the way—from our early days when we provided scholarships to students who wanted to study medicine; to funding grants for research in pediatric cancers; and to our current focus of funding Grand Rounds in the field of pediatric palliative care. You care because of who Brandon was and how he instilled hope and faith in all of us.

You are the Brandon Carrington Lee Foundation (BCLF): With every sip of tea, with every question you ask, and every donation you offer, you demonstrate love. Your actions tell us that you care about the doctors, the nurses, the social workers, the clergy, and so many others who care for us and our family members as they navigate the tumultuous waters of cancer diagnosis and treatment.

This year marks the 20th anniversary of Brandon's passing but we want you to know that his living was not in vain. Through Brandon's legacy, you are helping to change the world. No, we have not cured cancer, but we continue to help patients and their families confront cancer with support and care. BCLF will continue the fight.

God bless you,

Jefferi K. Lee

Chief Executive Officer
Brandon Carrington Lee Foundation

***Letter from
Jefferi K. Lee, II
BCLF President***

— Page 10



From right-to-left: The Lee Family—Jefferi K. Lee; wife Tina; son Jefferi II, his wife Erin and their children Josie, Jackson, and June.

It's been 20 years since Brandon passed. It's hard to believe that our time apart has been longer than our time together. Yet, he remains in our hearts and minds each and every day. We give thanks for the blessing he has been to us—the life he lived, the love he gave, and the brilliance of his light that shined and continues to shine through the Brandon Carrington Lee Foundation (BCLF).

Dr. Aziza T. Shad, who is featured on page 3 in this edition, has been an incredible inspiration to the BCLF. Because of her we have come to learn and appreciate the concept of palliative care, which continues to be at the forefront of our mission.

With your support, the BCLF has:

- Provided scholarships to students studying architecture and medicine.
- Financially supported the Aslan Project, which has worked successfully to raise awareness about and transform the delivery of pediatric cancer care in Ethiopia.
- Established a Brandon Carrington Lee Fellowship at MedStar Georgetown University Hospital to research the causes and, hopefully, a cure of childhood cancer.
- Established the Brandon Carrington Lee Grand Rounds Lectureship at MedStar Georgetown University Hospital and Sinai Hospital in Baltimore to assist in educating medical professionals about the importance of providing a more compassionate approach to their patient care.
- Named a patient room at the new Verstandig Pavilion at Medstar Georgetown University Hospital.

In this edition of the Brandon Carrington Lee Foundation Magazine, as we continue to celebrate the life and memory of Brandon, you'll get to know more about Dr. Aziza Shad and the work she continues to do; you'll discover the impact of the foundation at MedStar Georgetown Hospital; you'll read a heartfelt tribute from Brandon's best friend – Marcus Cotton; be inspired by the testimony of BCLF scholarship recipient Temi Fasusi; and be lifted by a prayer from family friend, Min. Kristin Kelly.

Thank you for all you have done and continue to do to support the Brandon Carrington Lee Foundation.

With much love and appreciation,

Tina Mance-Lee

Chief Operating Officer
Brandon Carrington Lee Foundation



Nurturing Dreams as We Search for a Cure

Gracious God of life and hope, You have called us to work with you to make your love seen in this world.

You have called us to be the hands and the feet that bring hope and renewal.

We thank you for the life and legacy of Brandon Carrington Lee.

We thank you for his will to live and his strength to believe deeply enough in the complexity of healing.

We are grateful for the lessons he taught us about faith and our ability to understand that wisdom does not have an age.

As we reflect on his life, we ask that you continue to bless the work of the Brandon Carrington Lee Foundation.

This is a work of love and hope.

This is work full of pain and triumph,

This is work that includes labor and joy,

Bless the Foundation as they provide for students studying medicine.



Kristin Kelly, M.Div.

Bless the Foundation as they teach about pediatric palliative care that supports a child holistically. Bless the Foundation as they support families experiencing the painful shift of cancer.

Creator, God, we thank you for Brandon. We thank you that he lived a life with so much courage and strength that people continue to carry the baton.

May the work of the Brandon Carrington Lee Foundation help us continue to dream and press forward to find a cure.

May the legacy of Brandon give us permission to live fully and understand that your healing work is not done.

God that heals and gives us strength in unimaginable ways, we pray. Amen.

Written by Kristin Kelly, M.Div.

Educator & Researcher

'How Can You Say He Was Not Cured?'

Dr. Aziza T. Shad, Brandon's oncologist, remembers a young man of hope

By Dr. Aziza T. Shad

Brandon was a teenager when he came to us with a tumor in his leg that turned out to be an aggressive form of cancer called osteosarcoma. Bone cancers . . . until you know the extent of the disease . . . you really cannot predict the outcome. At the time that Brandon was diagnosed, the survival rate for non-metastatic osteosarcoma was roughly 60 percent.

He was polite. He was, at times, very talkative. He loved sports. He was a regular teenager who wanted to go out and enjoy life and have fun. But there was also a quiet maturity about him. Over the years, that maturity showed up in many different ways—the way he handled this treatment, the way he handled news that was given to him, the way he handled every obstacle. But what really left a lasting impression on me was his unwavering faith and his ability to live life to the fullest.

Jeff and Tina Lee did a phenomenal job taking care of Brandon. They protected him. They sheltered him. They supported him through the difficult times, but they never lost hope. Families that pull together



Dr. Aziza T. Shad

at times of crisis tend to handle the worst of the news in the best possible way.

'Even if I die, it doesn't mean that God didn't heal me.'
—Brandon Carrington Lee

It's an incredible statement. It's also a very insightful statement about how he faced his cancer, how he fought his cancer, how he believed that he would be cured. Cure doesn't always mean just getting rid of the disease. Death is just a station for us . . . just another step towards eternal life. How can you say he was not cured?

Regarding his cancer, over the years, there have been some advances in the treatment of osteosarcoma, but not many. This is one of the cancers that if localized, restricted to one area, you can still cure it and give excellent quality of life to the patient. But once it spreads, either to other parts of the bone or to the lungs, it's very difficult to cure. His parents left no stone unturned. They took him to the top experts in the field to get opinions on his treatment. Even when it became clear that Brandon's tumor was not responding to treatment, Brandon and his parents never

Continued on Page 4

How Can You Say : continued from Page 3
lost hope.

As a pediatric oncologist, a big part of my job is to deliver bad news and do it without taking hope away. Even though I've done it for many years, it is still tough at times to find the emotional strength and balance to break bad news effectively, support families as expectations change from cure to palliative care and keep them hopeful.

People will often ask, "Why pediatric oncology?"

The story goes back a long way. I'm originally from Pakistan. I trained in pediatrics at one of the premium institutions in my country. Children with cancer came to the hospital all the time, however, in those days, treatment of cancer in children was not a priority. We were bogged down by diarrhea, malnutrition, and infectious diseases. We were not taught much about it, and we certainly didn't know how to treat it. Yet, the kids kept coming!

So, I made up my mind that when I finished my residency training, I would go to England, learn how to take care of kids with cancer and bring that knowledge back with me to Pakistan. It was during my training there and the opportunity I had to spend some time on a children's oncology unit that I truly realized the value of human life and understood what it takes to treat cancer in children. I learned that treatment of cancer is not just medical, it's much more. It's multidisciplinary, a combination of medicine and strong psychosocial support. It means not only do you treat with chemotherapy, surgery or radiation, but you also take care of the medical and psychological well-being of the child and the entire family. This was reinforced repeatedly during my years of residency and fellowship in the U.S. as well.

My Mission and The Impact of Palliative Care

My mission is to bring cancer care to every child, irrespective of where he/she was born, his/her socioeconomic status, color, ethnicity or level of education probably began when I was a medical student in Pakistan. My desire to stamp out disparity, to provide the best care for them has only intensified over the years through my long journey as a pediatric oncologist. It has taken me to different parts of the world, low- and middle-income countries in Asia, Africa, the Middle East and Latin America, where cancer care for children is still not a priority and where children present with incurable advanced disease. It has been the guiding force behind my non-profit foundation, The Aslan Project, whose mission is to establish and build programs in pediatric cancer in countries where there is none. Our focus currently is on Africa, specifically Ethiopia.

I have learned to accept that every child will not survive cancer, but every child has a right to palliative care. Palliative care is all about taking care of a child's needs (physical, emotional, spiritual, and psychosocial) from the time of diagnosis to either cure or death. Most importantly, it's about taking care of pain! The value of keeping a child comfortable and pain-free cannot be overemphasized.

I've been fortunate enough to train in top institutions in the U.K. and U.S. I have taken care of children with cancer as well as HIV, which at the time was a new entity that we were just learning how to treat. Clinical trials were just beginning at the NIH when I was in fellowship training. I



Dr. Shad, who practices medicine on a global stage, is big on hope but says. "Nobody can treat cancer alone. That's a myth. It's a team effort."

saw multiple children with HIV die from infections and other complications. That was where I learned palliative care. I saw what it took to keep those children pain-free and allow them to die with dignity. I learned how to communicate and take care of their families with compassion and empathy, which is what families need the most! That is the essence of palliative care.

Nobody can treat cancer alone. That's a myth. It's a team effort. Every single member of that team is just as important as the oncologist making the decisions regarding treatment. The team begins from the person who opens the door for you in the hospital, to a smile from the person who parks your car, to the nurse, the social worker, the art therapist, the child life specialist. Each one of us must provide the highest level of medical and compassionate care to the child and family.

One of my passions is to teach medical students and residents how to communicate bad news, which if done well, establishes a long-term relationship with a family, regardless of the outcome. That too, is part of palliative care.

What Brandon Means to Me . . .

Knowing Brandon was a privilege. Taking care of Brandon and getting to know the family was an honor. Learning from Brandon, who, at the age of fourteen, could articulate with conviction and unshakeable faith what 'cure' really means, is a lesson that I will carry with me for the rest of my life.

Seeing his legacy, the hope and faith that he and his family never lost, has inspired and encouraged me to continue my work, not just here but for underserved children in the world who continue to die from cancer.

Dr. Aziza T. Shad is the Ellen W.P. Wasserman Chair, Department of Pediatrics and Chief of Pediatric Hematology Oncology at The Herman & Walter Samuelson Children's Hospital at Sinai Hospital of Baltimore; Professor of Pediatrics and Oncology at Georgetown University School of Medicine, Washington, D.C.; Clinical Professor of Pediatrics at George Washington School of Medicine and Health Sciences, Washington D.C.; and Co-Founder and Medical Director of The Aslan Project, which supports clinical, palliative, and support care for children in Ethiopia.

'I am certain that you are watching over us'

Editor's Note: Marcus Bradley Cotton, one of Brandon's best friends, prefaced his letter with a poignant introduction to the family: "I wanted to share this letter with all of you as a way for us to collectively remember and celebrate Brandon's life. It's a small token of our enduring love and friendship, a reminder that he will always hold a special place in our hearts. Please know that I'm here for you, today and always, to lend a listening ear or simply to reminisce about the wonderful memories we created with Brandon. Let's lean on each other for support during these moments of reflection and remembrance."

Dear Brandon Carrington Lee,

Today marks two decades since you departed from our lives, but the profound influence you had on my life remains undiminished. As I take a moment to reflect on the lasting impact you left on me, I am overwhelmed with gratitude for the time we spent together and the invaluable lessons you continue to impart.

Your unwavering fortitude in the face of cancer served as an enduring testament to your indomitable spirit. Witnessing your courageous battle against that relentless adversary, all the while maintaining a radiant smile, was nothing short of inspirational. You demonstrated that healing takes on many forms and, sometimes, it is about finding the strength to embrace each day to the fullest, irrespective of the challenges.

Your relentless dedication to helping others and giving back to the community was truly awe-inspiring. You possessed an unwavering desire to make a difference in this world, and you achieved this in ways you may never fully comprehend. Your commitment to serving others motivated me, alongside our dear friend Jason, to create something meaningful in your honor. The Carrington League stands as a symbol of your enduring legacy, providing a platform for aspiring basketball players to chase their dreams, just as you did.

Your exceptional character and unwavering moral compass set you apart. You were a beacon of kindness, humility, and selflessness—qualities that I aspire to instill in my own children. Your profound love for your family—your parents Tina and Jeff, and your brother Jefferi—forged bonds that transcended blood ties; they were a testament to the power of love and connection.

Through your life and even in your passing, you taught me the significance of faith. You demon-



Marcus Bradley Cotton, Brandon's boyhood friend, is now a business executive.

strated that though God's plan may often elude our understanding, it is always guided by love and purpose. You encouraged me to trust the path that God has charted for me, even when it seems shrouded in mystery.

Above all, you bequeathed me the priceless lesson of paying it forward. Your kindness, love, and selflessness were a testament to your burning desire to make the world a better place. In your memory, I endeavor to perpetuate your legacy of love and benevolence.

I am forever grateful for the extended family you introduced into my life through your parents, Tina and Jeff, and your brother Jefferi. They have become an integral part of my journey, a constant reminder of the remarkable individual you were and the love that enveloped you.

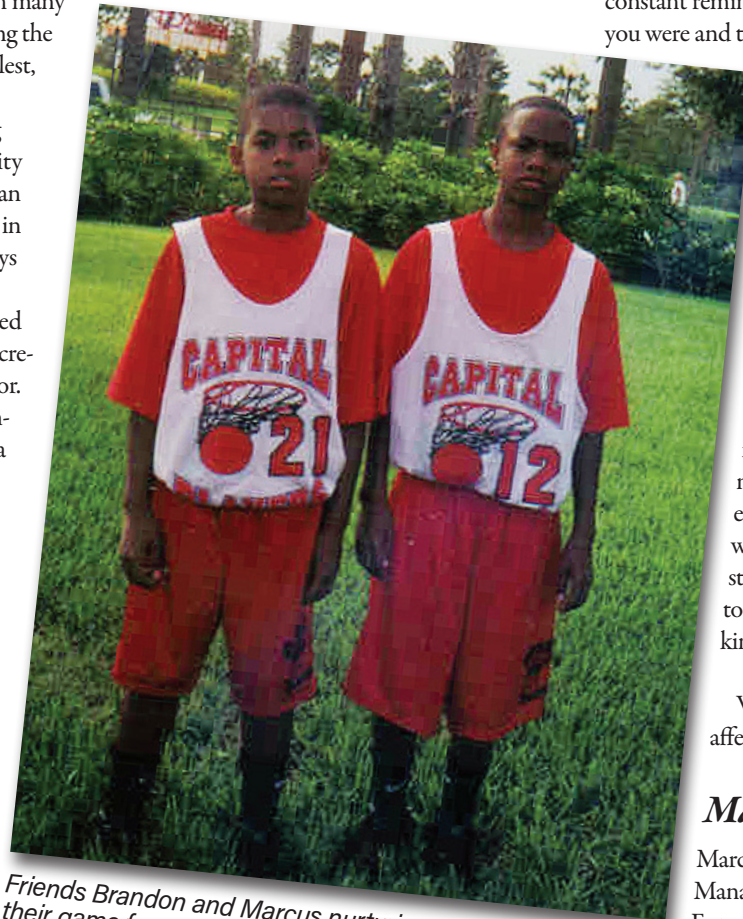
I am certain that you are watching over us, smiling down upon us, and gently guiding us along the right path. Your spirit lives on within the hearts of those who knew and cherished you, and it continues to inspire us daily.

Therefore, dear friend, as we commemorate you on this solemn anniversary, I wish you to know that your impact on my life is immeasurable. You have molded me into a better person, and I will eternally treasure the memories we shared. Until we reunite, I shall strive to lead a life that pays homage to your legacy by spreading love, kindness, and hope, just as you did.

With profound gratitude, love, and affection,

Marcus Bradley Cotton

Marcus is currently a Senior Project Manager for AEGIS—Advanced Enterprise Global Information Solutions.

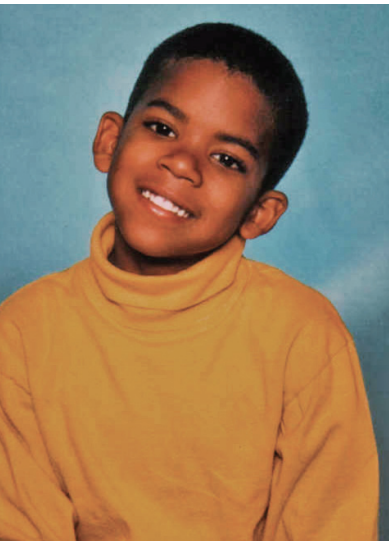


Friends Brandon and Marcus nurturing hoop dreams with their game faces on.

Brandon: An everlasting



Brandon in Hilton Head, 2003.



Brandon posing in elementary school.



Brandon loved being an easy rider on the bike.



Brandon traveling to his aunt's wedding ceremony in New York.



Man of the Year Award presented by the late Charles Moose, Montgomery County Police Chief, and the late Pastor T.J. Baltimore of The People's Community Baptist Church in Silver Spring, MD.

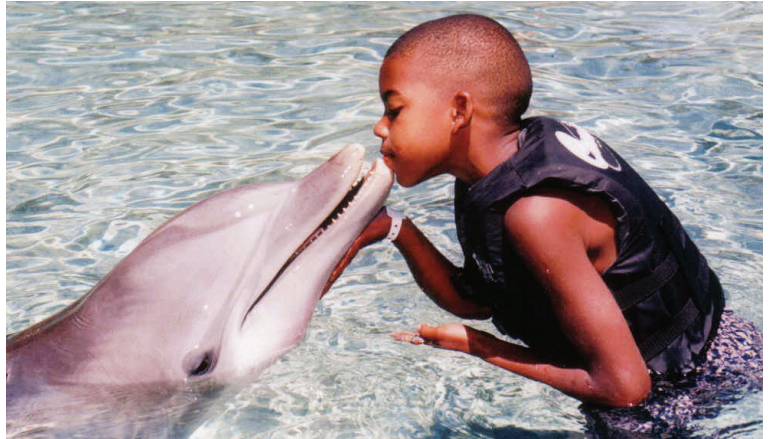


Brandon at the birthday of a friend.

life of love and legacy



Conquering the slopes with Mom, Tina.



Brandon gives a kiss to a dolphin.



Always a good citizen, Brandon was a model Scout.



Sailing was lots of fun on Martha's Vineyard.



Brandon, second row bottom, and dad, Jeff, third in upper row, enjoy whitewater rafting in West Virginia.

LifeBridge Reception and Lecture

Second Annual Brandon Carrington Lee Pediatric Palliative Care Grand Rounds Lecture was presented by **Andrea A. Hayes Dixon, M.D., FACS**. Dr. Hayes Dixon—Professor and Chair of Surgery at Howard University College of Medicine (HUCOM)—delivered presentations at Sinai Hospital of Baltimore and Medstar Georgetown on *Improving Survival in a Rare Sarcoma*. She is internationally known for her pioneering work in Desmoplastic Small Round Cell Tumor, leading surgical teams in procedures that can last more than 12 hours. Dr. Hayes Dixon is the first female Dean at HUCOM and has published more than 160 manuscripts and dozens of book chapters.



Dr. Andrea A. Hayes Dixon, who delivered this year's Grand Rounds lecture.



Jeff and Tina with Sinai Hospital President Amy Shlossman.



Dr. Hayes Dixon delivers Grand Rounds lecture.



Tracie and Juan Lee, Brandon's aunt and uncle.



From left: Dr. Aziza T. Shad, Brandon's oncologist; Jeff and Tina Lee; and Dr. Hayes Dixon.



Dr. Yorum Unguru, wife Gila, and Dr. Jennie Hart.

MedStar Reception & Lecture



Students take in Grand Rounds lecture by Dr. Andrea Hayes Dixon.



Judy and Maurice Jourdain-Earl.



Patricia and Curtis Symonds with Brandon illustration.



From left to right: Dr. Donnelly, Tina, Dr. Andrea Hayes Dixon, and Jeff.



Josie Lee, Brandon's niece.



From left: Rev. Sharon Graham, who wrote last year's BCLF prayer; Dr. David Nelson, and wife, Leslie.



From left: Rev. Dr. Donald R. Kelly with wife Brenda and daughter, Min. Kristin Kelly, who wrote this year's BCLF prayer.

BCLF Mission Shifts From Curing to Caring

Flatline occurred. I ran—past my friends, down the elevator, out into the parking lot, ready to run aimlessly. But my uncle caught me. In that moment, I thought it was the end. And in some ways it was; Brandon's fight with cancer was over.

Sportscaster Stuart Scott, who died from the disease in 2015, said no one ever loses to cancer; when you die, it dies. However, it does not have the spirit or the ability to leave the legacy that its host did. And because of that Brandon's death was not the end, but rather the beginning of story that's now lasted 20 years. A story of perseverance, a spirit of faithfulness, and a legacy of care that has been passed on to each one of us to continue.

The Brandon Carrington Lee Foundation (BCLF) is Brandon's living legacy of care. The mission of the foundation has shifted from curing to caring. The growth we have seen in palliative care has been nothing short of phenomenal. Cancer is not just an isolated physical malady, but a disease that can attack the spirit and psyche of the community. But we have made sure to promote the importance of palliative care, showing how filling patients and families with happiness can make each day a bit brighter. With every step BCLF takes, I can see Brandon stepping in, continuing to be the stabilizing force for so many, just as he did during his time here on earth.

Our community truly embodies Brandon's faithfulness in their support of the foundation. Each year, we are just blown away by the donations of time, prayers, and finances as we continue to build. Just as Brandon's faith kept his head high to the end, the faithfulness people have shown is a debt



Brandon with brother Jefferi, II, who says: BCLF "will persevere and pay it forward."

we can never repay. So, we will persevere and pay it forward. The blessings we receive are not for us, but for those in need around us.

Love and respect,

Jefferi K. Lee, II

President
Brandon Carrington Lee Foundation

BCLF Scholarship Winner Gives Thanks

I am a proud past recipient of a Brandon Carrington Lee Foundation scholarship. I was given this scholarship back in 2006 to study architecture at Temple University. I had the honor of growing up with Brandon, attending school with him and being around him as he bravely battled the same cancer that he eventually succumbed to. So, being given a scholarship in his honor was not something that I took lightly.

This scholarship contributed to my tuition for architecture, which was one of the more expensive majors. Architecture school requires the purchase of supplies beyond textbooks and notebooks. It also requires tools and art supplies, none of which are cheap and can be difficult to keep up with on a college student's budget. But thanks to this scholarship, I was able to spend countless years at a great program learning about a profession that I love and would eventually practice.

This scholarship allowed me to graduate from a five-year program at Temple with my Bachelor of Science in Architecture. Graduating with this degree ensured that I didn't need to go to grad school to get a master's degree in order to work as an architect.

During my career, I spent six years working for WDG, an architecture firm in Washington, D.C. While there I worked on different multifamily



Temi Fasusi

residential projects (apartments and condos) in the DMV area. Then I did a slight career pivot and worked as a design manager for CAVA, a nation-wide Mediterranean fast casual restaurant chain. I lead teams of architects, engineers and consultants through the concept and full design of our restaurants.

Most recently, my degree has allowed me to become a project manager at Wiencsek + Associates, which specializes in designing affordable housing. Most of our projects are in the DMV area. I am able to use the skills and education that I received while at Temple to lead our design team in creating beautiful spaces/homes for those who are most in need. It's been an incredibly rewarding job for me, and I couldn't have gotten to where I am today without starting this journey at Temple.

I was able to go to college armed with a T-square in one hand and the backing and encouragement of those who invested in me in the other. I am so thankful to the Lee family for seeing that potential in me. In his short time on earth Brandon was a ball of energy and he shined bright on all who were around him. It's beautiful that now in his memory others are given a chance to shine as brightly as he did.

Temi Fasusi

BCLF Greatly Impacts the Focus of Our Care

By Michael Donnelly, M.D.

I have had the honor of chairing the Department of Pediatrics here at Medstar Georgetown University Hospital for almost eight years now and came to know the Foundation's work just as I became Chair. I can honestly say that the mission of the Brandon Carrington Lee Foundation is intimately aligned with the mission of our hospital and our Department. The work of the Foundation has greatly helped us in our efforts to help end childhood cancer and to reduce the suffering of our patients and their families.

The motto of our hospital is *cura personalis*, taken from the Jesuits who founded Georgetown, and it translates from Latin to mean "care of the whole person." The tradition of healthcare that the Jesuits maintain teaches us to strive to a commitment of not just the physical well-being of our patients, but to the social, spiritual, and psychological aspects as well. To that end, since 2014 the Foundation has supported an annual Pediatric Palliative Care Lectureship for our students, faculty, and staff. This has been an incredible addition to our educational curriculum, bringing nationally and world-renowned providers and researchers in pediatric cancer and palliative care to our



Michael Donnelly, M.D.

Department. Unlike most of our other lectures, this series focuses our team on how to better care for the emotional, spiritual, and supportive aspects of the child's individual circumstances and what their family is going through, not just the medical aspects of each child's condition.

Rev. Sharon Graham, our hospital chaplain, was honored to know Brandon and the Lee Family during their long journey here at our hospital. She looks forward to these lectures every year and deeply admires the Foundation's "commitment to the education of medical students, interns, residents and fellows in the area of pediatric palliative care." These lectures have stressed to all of us over the years the value of various important aspects of care: alternative medicine techniques such as acupressure, massage therapy, meditation, and nutrition; the emotional and spiritual support of the child and their family; advances in surgical techniques in palliation of suffering; and ways medications can provide relief and symptom management. We are immensely grateful for the work of the Brandon Carrington Lee Foundation

and what it helps us to achieve.

Michael Donnelly, M.D., FAAP, FACP, is Chair, Department of Pediatrics, Medstar Georgetown University Hospital, Washington, D.C.



BCLF Fellow Named

George W. Kosturko, Ph.D., joined Georgetown Lombardi Comprehensive Cancer Center in July 2009 as a post-doctoral fellow in Dr. Aykut Üren's laboratory. Dr. Kosturko holds a doctorate in chemistry from the University of Virginia, where he developed novel chemical methodologies for drug discovery. Previous research experiences in the pharmaceutical industry include design and synthesis of small molecule inhibitors using high-throughput combinatorial methodologies at ArQule, Inc, focused on various molecular targets. As Brandon Carrington Lee Fellow, Dr. Kosturko's seeks to advance the successful osteosarcoma research developed at Georgetown Lombardi Comprehensive Cancer Center by applying a synthetic approach for the development of lead inhibitor molecules that can inhibit tumor metastasis.

BCLF Welcomes New Sponsor



Naturally London believes wellness is rooted in your feet. We create foot & hand care with 100% earth-derived ingredients with sustainable practices. Our results-driven formulations are crafted to maintain healthy feet & hands. What do we stand for? Sustainable packaging. No synthetics. Real results. Naturally London is a women-owned, veteran-owned, and black-owned business.

NATURALLY
LONDON®

NaturallyLondon.com



Take Time for Tea

The Brandon Carrington Lee Foundation encourages you to take time for a cup of tea on Thanksgiving Day, Thursday, November 23, 2023, in memory of Brandon and many others who have battled cancer. Then, fill out the enclosed card and send your donation to help us continue the fight against childhood cancer. Please think about expanding your support through estate planning, as our mission provides comfort and hope to those in need of His strength and light. Thank you.

**Brandon
Carrington Lee
Foundation**

To donate,
visit bclfoundation.org
The Brandon Carrington Lee
Foundation is a component
fund of the Greater Washington
Community Foundation, EIN:
23-7343119.