

**Joint press release by the International Society for Research in Human Milk and Lactation (ISRHML) and the Family Larsson-Rosenquist Foundation (FLRF)**

San Diego, Zug, 31 November, 2016

## **ISRHML and the Family Larsson-Rosenquist Foundation announce the first Trainee Expansion Program awardees**

**For the first time the International Society for Research in Human Milk and Lactation (ISRHML) and the Family Larsson-Rosenquist Foundation (FLRF) honoured four talented young scientists with the Trainee Expansion Program's awards. The international program funds research projects in the field of Breastfeeding and Human Milk research.**

The Trainee Expansion Program (TEP) – an international, early-career expansion program – was founded in 2016 in partnership by ISRHML and FLRF. It helps to foster the careers of gifted young scientists already in the field of breastfeeding and human milk and of those who would like to transition into it. The Program endows one to two Trainee Bridge Funds – a one-year scholarship of up to \$100'000 for launching an independent research career – and five to 10 Trainee Travel Funds of up to \$10'000 – a three months' exchange programs to help expand a young researcher's research portfolio and network. In addition, young researchers gain access to leading scientists, acquire state-of-the-art research techniques, bridge geographies, benefit from mentorship and expand their network.

The 2016 applications were examined by an independent Scientific Review Board based on merit and quality, which led to a successful first round of selected awardees. This year's TEP Trainee Bridge Fund awardee is Dr. Alecia-Jane Twigger for her project proposal on providing a single-cell comparison between resting and lactating human mammary cells at the Helmholtz Zentrum München in Germany. If successful, the project will increase the understanding of normal lactation and create a standard reference model for testing mammary gland function and modelling breast pathologies such as low supply and mastitis. The winners of the TEP Trainee Travel Funds are Kimberley Lackey from Washington State University in the US, who will work at the Anandaban Hospital and Mycobacterial Research Laboratory in Nepal to find evidence as to whether leprosy is transmitted via breastfeeding. Awardee Klara Strydom from Stellenbosch University in South Africa will work at the Bode Lab at the University of California, San Diego. She will learn how to use oligosaccharide analysis techniques to execute a sub-study on human milk oligosaccharide composition in women that are HIV infected. Further, awardee Melanie Wange Larsson from University of Copenhagen in Denmark will work at the Hartmann Human Lactation Research Group at the University of Western Australia. She will gain experience and learn how to analyse appetite hormones in human milk, to understand high weight gains in breastfed infants. As the TEP Review Board only honours exceptional quality, not all TEP Trainee Travel Funds were awarded this year. However, the 2016 Funds will be accumulated and will be available for awards in 2017.

Michael Larsson, chairman of the Family Larsson-Rosenquist Foundation, said “I congratulate each awardee and am very proud that our Foundation can support such talented young scientists. I strongly believe that everyone who has an innovative research idea or seeks to acquire new skills and techniques should be given the opportunity to pursue it. We are committed to improve the evidence-based understanding of breastfeeding and human milk. By helping to advance the young scientists’ careers, each of them will continue to contribute to this goal.” Dr. Lars Bode, ISRHML President and Associate Professor at the University of California, San Diego, added “We are delighted about the great interest the TEP has received. With the awarded funds we are able to foster a talented next generation of scientists, who will benefit from a global exchange of ideas and innovations among scientists.” Dr. Alecia-Jane Twigger, Trainee Bridge Fund awardee, affirmed “I am extremely grateful to ISRHML and the Family Larsson-Rosenquist Foundation, both for the financial support of the TBF award and the immense opportunities it provides in allowing me to undertake further research at the Helmholtz Institute. I will be benefiting from the equipment and resources of a state-of-the-art laboratory, surrounded by leading scientists and networks in the field which will help me to significantly advance my research career in in this interdisciplinary setting. “

For the 2017 award round the TEP accepts applications until December 31<sup>st</sup>, 2016 or June 30<sup>th</sup>, 2017 for the Trainee Travel Funds and June 30<sup>th</sup>, 2017 for the Trainee Bridge Fund. Given the lively interest and the numerous applications, the Family Larsson-Rosenquist Foundation has decided to increase its award funding to \$300’000 in 2017, endowing two Trainee Bridge Funds and 10 Trainee Travel Funds per year from 2017 onwards.

## **International Society for Research in Human Milk and Lactation**

The International Society for Research in Human Milk and Lactation (ISRHML) is a non-profit organization dedicated to the promotion of excellence in research and the dissemination of research findings in the field of human milk and lactation. Established in 1988, it strives to accomplish its goals by fostering communication among members and established liaisons with government agencies, public health authorities, industry, and other organizations interested in human lactation. ISRHML holds a biennial international meeting, and annual symposia and mini-symposia to discuss research finding and cultivate international and interdisciplinary collaborations. [www.ISRHML.net](http://www.ISRHML.net)

## **Family Larsson-Rosenquist Foundation**

The Family Larsson-Rosenquist Foundation is an independent, charitable foundation established to fulfil the family's vision of a world in which every child is granted an optimum start in life through the benefits of human milk. Founded in 2013 and based in Zug, Switzerland, its primary focus is on promoting and supporting human milk feeding. The Foundation's mission is to make human milk a matter of course worldwide. The Family Larsson-Rosenquist Foundation accomplishes its mission through its own programmes and by supporting the campaigns of other non-profit organisations. It invests globally in interdisciplinary projects and promotes research, thus instigating discovery, new knowledge and recognition of human milk as the best nutrition for newborns. With every endeavour, the foundation strives for sustainable impact by placing the highest value on the long-term well-being of mother and child. [www.larsson-rosenquist.org](http://www.larsson-rosenquist.org)

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