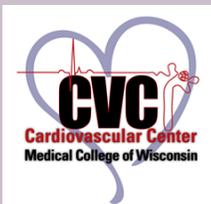


In its 19 year history, the Steve Cullen Healthy Heart Club Run/Walk:

- Has directly funded research projects to identify **genetic risk factors** of heart disease, helped underwrite a **medical history project** to provide insights into cardiovascular risk factors, and supported stem cell research with promising impact on **heart disease treatment**
- Has had no overhead costs, as it is entirely run by volunteers
- Has utilized corporate underwriting to ensure that every single dollar raised goes directly to heart research
- Has seen a huge growth in popularity as southeast Wisconsin's premier winter running event, with a 600% increase in participation from its inception in 1997
- Has a reputation for excellence that continues to attract hundreds of dedicated runners, walkers and volunteers year after year

www.cullenrun.com

Your support makes the search for a cure through groundbreaking heart research possible!



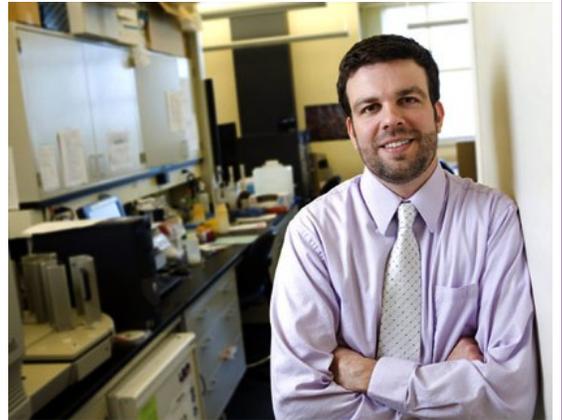
Dr. Aron Geurts

2016 Steve Cullen Healthy Heart Scholar

What do we do? Within the Cardiovascular Center (CVC) at the Medical College of Wisconsin (MCW), the Geurts lab is intensely interested in studying heart disease and other diseases that affect patients here in the greater Milwaukee metropolitan region and world-wide. Following the successful decoding of the human genome, we are now in an era in which sequencing a patient's DNA can provide new clues to the genes that likely contribute to heart disease, increasing our basic knowledge of the human condition, while presenting new challenges for basic researchers, namely, how to validate and study these new discoveries. The Geurts lab and other CVC laboratories seek to establish a national reputation at MCW for meeting this particular challenge by using cutting-edge genetic engineering technologies in human (non-embryonic) stem cells. These stem cells, which are collected from blood, urine, or even skin scrapings, can then be coaxed in a dish to become beating heart cells and certain aspects of heart

cell function can be studied in order to link gene mutations found in families and patients to actual heart cell defects and heart disease. The Steve Cullen Healthy Heart Scholar Award is allowing us to accelerate these efforts in a significant way.

How is this award impacting our work? With this award, we believe we have been given a real opportunity to make advances with our own science and to make a difference in the lives of our families and patients who take advantage of the services at Froedtert & the Medical College of Wisconsin and Children's Hospital of Wisconsin. Resources from the Steve Cullen Healthy Heart Scholar Award have provided support for a talented young scientist and related material costs to motivate ideas from the drawing



board into action. We are currently attempting to model specific mutations identified in families with a disease called "Dilated Cardiomyopathy", a disease that typically progresses to heart failure. We aim to demonstrate that certain gene mutations lead to heart cell defects and thus provide supporting evidence that these gene mutations are causing this disease. Achieving these goals will provide us a useful roadmap which we can build upon to study other genes, families, and types of heart disease in the future. Our ultimate goal is for this information to lead to the prevention and treatment of heart disease.

What's it like to win this award?

Being the inaugural recipient of the Steve Cullen Healthy Heart Scholar Award holds special meaning and demands extra effort from my research team to ensure we maximize the impact of this award. As scientists, we often don't get an opportunity

to directly share the details of our work with our supporters. These are efforts we, as researchers, are proud of and we hope our community in Southeast Wisconsin will also feel proud to know that these kinds of breakthroughs are hap-

pening in their backyard. I feel very blessed to be the first recipient of this award and I am grateful to the Cullen family and all of the past, present, and future supporters of this important event!