

Meet our Community Scientists

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**Cynthia
Chmielewski**

Cynthia Chmielewski, a retired educator and myeloma survivor, uses her passion for education to teach a new group of "students"—myeloma patients and their caregivers. Cynthia educates and advocates by tweeting on @MyelomaTeacher and sharing myeloma resources, educational opportunities, and clinical trial information on her MyelomaTeacher Facebook page. She is the curriculum director of the HealthTree Foundation for Myeloma's HealthTree University for Myeloma. She is also the patient advocate on several research grants.

Cynthia loves being a Community Scientist because it allows her to be a liaison between the research and patient community. She shares the patient perspective with researchers and shares valuable research and clinical trial opportunities with patients.

Links:

- [@MyelomaTeacher](#)
- [MyelomaTeacher Facebook Page](#)
- [HealthTree University for Myeloma](#)



**Lavern
McDonald**

Lavern McDonald lives in Bedford Stuyvesant, NY and is a transplant from Jamaica in the Caribbean. She studied Sociology and Journalism and—after some years as a print and radio journalist—has spent decades working in higher education and secondary education as an administrator and classroom teacher. She finds joy in her extended family, pets, gardening, yoga, and travel.

As a Community Scientist, Lavern intends to develop a course curriculum to explore cancer as chronic disease. She is currently organizing a literature review to support this effort. From this review, she plans to identify a set of questions that lead to deeper inquiry into cancer. Lavern values her new role of Community Scientist as this will allow her to build new knowledge to expand understanding about cancer.



**Dolores
Moorehead**

Dolores Moorehead is the Community Engagement Director and Client Support Clinician for the Women's Cancer Resource Center (WCRC), a non-profit organization in Berkeley, California that is dedicated to assisting women with cancer navigate the complex healthcare system and improve their quality of life through education and supportive services. For over 34 years, Dolores has passionately devoted her professional career to serving individuals with cancer in the San Francisco Bay Area.

Dolores appreciates the opportunity to be a Community Scientist because it allows her to share her lived experiences and to increase personal knowledge about research. She is able to assist researchers in understanding the importance of bringing the community into research at the beginning, because individuals of diverse populations often are interested in making a difference when they recognize the benefit to them and their community.

Link: [Women's Cancer Resource Center](#)



**Jean Claude
Noel**

French-born and a United States citizen living in New York since 1991, Jean Claude Noel has been a volunteer at Mount Sinai Hospital Rutenberg Treatment Center since 2007. He is a founding member and former Co-Chair of the Patient and Family Advisory Committee (PFAC). In addition, he is a member of the Cancer Equity Accelerator at the Tisch Cancer Institute, and became a Community Scientist in 2021.

As a Community Scientist, he is working with Dr. Nihal Mohamed, Associate Professor and Director of Health Disparity Research in the Department of Urology, on the psychosocial aspects of men's cancers with the objective of reducing disparities in access to cancer care. His current activities include research on Active Surveillance and Decision-Making, as well as other grants at various stages of development.



**Karen
Peterson**

Founder and Chief Patient Advocate of Karen's Club, Karen Peterson's very own medical journey inspired her to help other patients of color understand the complex and sometimes skeptical world of clinical trials. A five-year, Stage IV Triple Negative Breast cancer survivor, her life was saved via a Phase I, immunotherapy only based clinical study. Karen successfully completed the exclusive 2021 Robin Hood/Blue Ridge Labs Fellowship Program, where she co-created the advocacy platform Karen's Club, which educates, informs and supports patients of color around clinical trials.

Karen's interest in the Community Scientist Program comes from her curiosity of innovative clinical research and how she can use the information to educate her community.

Link: [Karen's Club](#)



**Travis
Thomas**

Travis Thomas is the Founder and President of S.A.V.E.D 4 Life Cancer Corporation (S4LCC) and S4LCC Cancer ReSource Stations. She is also a certified holistic cancer and life coach and a cancer patient navigator. A three-time cervical cancer survivor (while pregnant twice) and with over 20 years' experience in the nursing field, Travis has dedicated her life to promoting cancer awareness, prevention and education.

She is interested in being a Community Scientist to gain more knowledge and help educate underserved communities about the importance of research and options before being diagnosed with late stages of cancer. As a Community Scientist, she is able to help her communities have access to information and learn more about clinical trials before it becomes a last resort.

Link: [S.A.V.E.D 4 Life Cancer Corporation](#)



**Colette
Smith**

Colette Smith is an Advisor and Community Scientist for the Community Outreach and Engagement program at The Tisch Cancer Institute at Mount Sinai. As a 7-year lung cancer survivor, she is excited to share her perspectives and assist with creating cancer care awareness in her community. Colette wants to become a Community Scientist to advocate for underserved populations while assisting them with finding the medical care they deserve. She works as a Claims Appeals & Dispute Manager with Molina Healthplan.