



CNCF presents \$50,000 to U of C from Anna's Hope

Together with the father of 26-year-old Anna O'Connor, CNCF presented a \$50,000 check to Dr. Sam Volchenbom, a pediatric oncologist who treated O'Connor's neuroblastoma at Comer Children's Hospital at the University of Chicago.

Before her death in February, O'Connor stipulated she wanted funds she had raised to go to Dr. Volchenbom's research. O'Connor's father and CNCF President Pat Tallungan surprised Volchenbom with the news.

"It's pretty wonderful," Dr. Volchenbom said. "I did not know Anna had plans like this. I took care of Anna and I knew she was raising funds, but we never talked about funding for my own work. So I was really touched that she would think about it."

Gifts like Anna's have become crucial, said Dr. Susan L. Cohn, a professor of pediatrics and director of clinical sciences at the University of Chicago.

"A \$50,000 check makes a huge difference particularly when the National Institutes of Health budget has been slashed," said Dr. Cohn, who collaborates on patient care and research with Dr. Volchenbom. "Especially for investigators starting out, funds like this are critical. Getting grants requires results, but you need seed money to hire scientists and buy supplies. That's why these \$50,000 gifts are so important -- you can pay a technician for a year and generate data for papers and grants. It can make the difference between a project getting off the ground or never getting funded."