

# Spotlight on the Dick Vitale Pediatric Cancer Research Fund

ESPN legend Dick Vitale continues to be a champion for the V Foundation.

Dick has hosted the Dick Vitale Gala since 2005. The Gala brings together the top stars in sports, Dick's All-Courageous Team of pediatric cancer thrivers, and ardent V Foundation supporters to raise money for pediatric cancer research funded by the V Foundation.

Under the National Cancer Institute budget, limited funding/a small fraction is allocated to pediatric cancer research, making private funding through the V Foundation critical.



Join Us at the  
**21<sup>st</sup> Annual  
Dick Vitale Gala!**

May 1, 2026  
The Ritz-Carlton  
Sarasota, Florida

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I have the utmost respect and admiration for Dick Vitale, not only as a person, but for what he's doing with pediatric cancer. How amazing is his energy, his commitment and his passion? **He's committed to these kids and making a difference.** -Derek Jeter



## Our Impact Through the Dick Vitale Pediatric Cancer Research Fund

We've funded

**over \$107 million in pediatric cancer research grants**  
(264 grants awarded to-date).

The good news is cancer research is working!

Since 1970, the cancer death rate has

**declined by 69% in children** (0-14)  
and by **58% in adolescents** (15-19) .

### V Foundation Funded Researchers – Proven Positive Impact

- **Duane Mitchell, M.D., Ph.D.**, is a 2017 Translational Grant awardee at University of Florida Health Cancer Center.
- Dr. Mitchell studies medulloblastoma: one of the most common brain cancers in children. Medulloblastoma is classified into four different types and oncologists use surgery, chemotherapy, and radiation to treat it.
- The problem is, while these treatments have helped a lot of kids, they can leave children with long-term side effects, and some kids still don't survive.
- Dr. Mitchell and team have found a better way to target medulloblastoma using a tool they developed called O.R.A.N which is like a high-tech scanner to look for "flags" on tumors. These flags help the immune system recognize and attack medulloblastoma.
- What's really exciting is that these flags are unique to the tumors, which means the Mitchell lab and others can design treatments that are more personal to each child.
- These findings could lead to new, more precise treatments that focus on the unique aspects of each child's tumor, potentially reducing the side effects and improving survival rates – a big step forward in childhood cancer research!



Duane Mitchell, M.D., Ph.D.,  
2017 Translational Grantee