

## A Fortunate Chain of Events

### Networking leads to diabetes research support

**W**hen Michael Golemi was invited to the home of a college friend for an update on diabetes research at UVa, he almost didn't go. "I assumed there would be some sort of pitch for money. I'm glad to give what I can, but frankly speaking, I'm just not in a position at this stage of my life to make a financial impact," says Golemi, who has a child with type 1 diabetes. Yet, Golemi did attend. And his subsequent actions ultimately led to a sizeable gift, which is enabling UVa researchers to progress quickly toward a potential diabetes cure.

The chain of events began in January 2006, when Sam and Katy Murray invited Jerry Nadler, M.D., and Raghu Mirmira, M.D., Ph.D., to Houston to share their promising research with local families affected by type 1 diabetes. "We felt our guests would be, if anything, very encouraged by what Drs. Nadler and Mirmira had to say," explains Sam Murray, who also has a child with the disease.

The Murrays—along with Katy Murray's parents, Tog and Alison George—provided early support of Nadler's approach to reverse diabetes using lisofylline and another compound. Pre-clinical trials since have been successful. "These results offer a great deal of hope. We are optimistic that a clinical trial for testing this approach in people could happen very soon," says Nadler.

Golemi was so impressed by what he heard at the Murrays that he wanted to do something. "I don't have the resources to fully support this cause," says Golemi. "But I know a ton of people—some who are in a position to be generous and some who can spread influence." So, Golemi shared what he had learned about UVa's research in a very heartfelt letter sent to family, friends, and colleagues.

Pete Seale, a work colleague, was one recipient. Seale hadn't known Golemi for very long, but says Golemi's personal request compelled him to take action. "One of my clients has a family foundation with a history of supporting medical research, and I also knew the family had a UVa connection. I thought this might be an appealing opportunity for them, and it was," explains Seale. The foundation donated \$215,000. This commitment, in turn, helped UVa secure an additional \$370,000 from the Iaccoca Foundation.

Golemi's actions as an ambassador of diabetes research have brought tremendous value to Nadler's program and allowed Golemi to play a significant role in what could be a cure for his daughter. "It's incredible to me to think that my daughter might be cured before she's a teenager. I figured that if people are willing to be charitable, why not give them a good reason to be."



Two families work together to fund innovative diabetes research support. Pictured (L to R) the Golemis: Michael Golemi with daughter Isabella, wife Alexandra, and son Dominic. And the Murrays: Sam and Katy Murray pictured with (L to R) daughter Claire, son Sam, and daughter Margaret.