

ANNUAL REPORT 2024



MISSION, VISION AND VALUES



Mission:

We will unite and empower the international spinal cord injury community to cure paralysis through advocacy, education, and support for research.

Vision:

Every person has equal access to treatments that will restore health and independence after spinal cord injury.

Values:

- **Integrity.** We hold ourselves to the highest standard of honesty and transparency in all of our actions.
- **Creativity.** We are open-minded and imaginative in the pursuit of our mission.
- **Education.** We believe shared knowledge is the key to accelerating progress toward cures.
- **Community.** We serve everyone who shares our mission.
- **Persistence.** We are focused and energetic in the face of obstacles and disappointments.
- **Empowerment.** We lead our community on a path toward responsible self-determination.





“

This is my third straight year attending U2FP's Annual Symposium and it is absolutely my favorite conference. I am continually impressed by the welcoming community of U2FP, and each year I make new connections that are amazing both personally and professionally.”

- Jason Biundo, T-12 SCI / PhD Student at Harvard Medical School | NSF GRFP

19th Annual Science & Advocacy Symposium

Atlanta, Georgia in the eye of Hurricane Helene



Reveca5 by Reveca Torres.



Scan here to watch any presentation or panel discussion from U2FP's Annual Symposium in Atlanta 2024.

Stats



208 attendees from **4 countries**, representing over **41 unique companies or organizations**.



43% of attendees from the SCI community (injured or family members)



Value

We provided discounted registrations totaling

\$44,284

in **cumulative savings** for event attendees



Highlights

- Hurricane Helene disrupted travel for many speakers and attendees. Fortunately, everyone who could make it arrived safely and the impact on the Atlanta area was minimal.
- Our poster session included short presentations from each of the presenters on our main stage.
- Our testimonial session was a powerful opportunity for attendees to share their thoughts and feelings.
- Original artwork and music by SCI artists Reveca Torres and Gabriel Rodreck.

Over
20,000
plays logged in 2024



Nearly 110,000 plays
to date since CureCast first
launched in 2016



Consider having your company
become a sponsor of this
award-winning podcast



**We were proud to gain
the following sponsors
in 2024:**



Scan here to listen to one of our most popular episodes in 2024, ONWARD to Recovery (Episode 105), where we interviewed ONWARD CEO Dave Marver about his company's quest (and eventual success this year!) for FDA approval of their ARC-EX device, along with the results from their UPLift Trial.

CureCast Podcast

At the end of 2024, we surpassed 100,000 plays! This represents a milestone in the reach of our podcast specifically, but also our broader mission to educate those living with and researching this difficult injury.

U2FP's CureCast continues to be required listening among several of the top SCI graduate research programs in the country. It's also an empowering educational tool that reaches tens of thousands of individuals in the SCI community. Our podcast continues to attract and feature many of the leading scientists, researchers and advocates while highlighting cutting-edge developments in SCI research.



ONWARD
EMPOWERING MOVEMENT™



u2fp CURECAST



Cure Advocacy Network (CAN)

After months of work at the beginning of 2024, we got our \$3M SCI Research Grant bill introduced on the Assembly floor and brought to a vote. Just before midnight on February 22, 2024, our bill was passed: 93-3! Unfortunately, our legislation was not granted a vote on the Senate floor and we were unable to pass our bill during the remainder of the session. But we re-grouped and are poised to have our bill heard in the upcoming fall session of 2025.

Meanwhile, funding continues to be allocated toward translatable, functional recovery research in our other state legislative programs.

\$40M

was appropriated towards SCI research by the end of 2024



This money has helped over

200 People

with an SCI get an intervention



Highlights

- WI SCI Research Grant bill passed in the Wisconsin Assembly by a vote of 93-3
- Ongoing support from Paralyzed Veterans of America and the Wisconsin American Legion
- Governor Evers preliminarily agreed to put our bill in his proposed budget
- Planning for our national legislative campaign began at the end of 2024

SCI Consultants

For the past four years, U2FP has been placing individuals with a spinal cord injury into research labs as lived-experience consultants. These SCI Consultants - or "Lab Rats" as we call them - keep research labs focused on the practical implications of their goals. Our SCI consultants learn about the complex challenges facing research labs and their presence gives researchers real-time feedback on their targets and priorities.

Highlights

- Mackenzie Wann is working in Kristin Zhao's lab at Mayo Clinic on Spinal Cord Stimulation for improved autonomic function.
- Frank Acosta is working with Ladan Jiracek's startup IntimaStim at the University of Florida on male sexual function (ejaculatory).
**Note that female orgasm research is currently in development here as well.*
- Cole Sydnor & Mandy Mackenzie are working on a multi-lab collaboration with David Darrow, Phil Horner, Dimitry Sayenko and Alex Herman (University of Minnesota and Houston Methodist) studying the recovery effects of Psilocybin on individuals with SCI.
- Kent New, Marco Sorani, Chris Barr, Ian Burkhardt, Peter Nowell, Jason Biundo, Alexander Rabchevsky, Matthew Rodreick, et al all contributed to Dr. Jen Dulin's preliminary study, entitled "Funding distributions, trends, gaps, and policy implications for spinal cord injury research: A systematic analysis of US federal funds." This paper is currently being considered by the journal Neurotrauma.

Scan here to fill out our interest form and join our SCI Consultants program, either as a participating lab, or as an SCI consultant.



Cole Sydnor, one of our "Lab Rats," posing with his wife Charisma.

29 

Individuals with SCI
placed as consultants

29 

Participating lab
or research projects

Participating labs

Drexel University
Marquette University
University of Kentucky
Texas A&M University,
University of Texas, Austin
University of California, San Francisco
(Track SCI)
Ohio State University
University of Alabama, Birmingham
Emory University
Jefferson University
SCOPE Committee
Mayo Clinic
Hennepin Health/University of Minnesota
Case Western Reserve
Cleveland Clinic
Houston Methodist



Jason Stoffer racing in the Twin Cities Marathon with an e-assist handcycle.

Team U2FP

Team U2FP participants bring funds and awareness to the SCI movement for cures in a very specific way: the money they raise primarily supports our Cure Advocacy Network (CAN), where we train and mobilize SCI advocates to pass state legislation that funds curative research. We do this because it is extremely difficult to get grant funding for legislative advocacy, since it's technically considered political lobbying. Team U2FP racers help fill this funding gap while running or wheeling in one of our premiere race events!

Success!

U2FP Wins First-Ever Access for E-Assist Handcycles in a Marathon
(Scan the QR code for the full story!)



\$40,400

was raised by Team U2FP participants in 2024!



33 Runners + Wheelers

signed up for our races, challenging themselves physically while fundraising to advance the movement for curative therapies.



Race Events

- The Bank of America Chicago Marathon (23 participants)
- The Twin Cities Marathon & 10 Mile Races (8 participants, two of whom were wheelers).
- The Freestyle Challenge (2 participants), our DIY race event where participants designed their own courses and pace.

Scan here to read the article, "Getting an Assist - Twin Cities Marathon Makes History". This is U2FP staff member Jason Stoffer's account of how it felt to participate in his first marathon.



SPOTLIGHT ON 2025

Increased our bill allocation from
\$3M to \$5M



\$5M SCI Research Grant bill
introduced in the Assembly and
Senate in February

43 Co-sponsors



Disabled American Veterans just
passed a national Resolution
supporting SCI research to help
our efforts

Bill successfully passed out of the
Assembly Colleges/Universities &
Senate Health Committees

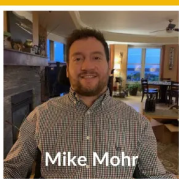


The Jacque Amendment has
brought on more Republicans than
we've previously had

CAN - Wisconsin

U2FP's CAN Manager, Jake Beckstrom wrote earlier this year, "Our Wisconsin CAN advocates have long had the mentality of The Little Engine That Could. And right now, we are at the toughest but highest point in our journey so far. Fortunately, we may have just received a big break."

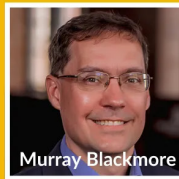
That break was convincing one of our strongest naysayers, André Jacque, to support our bill, after we included his amendment excluding the use of embryonic stem cells, which aren't necessary for SCI research these days. That concession has yielded even more legislative support for our bill and our chances of passing look strong for the upcoming fall legislative session!



Mike Mohr



Christina Bauritcher



Murray Blackmore



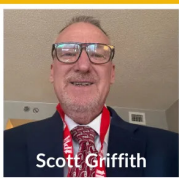
Bill Crowley



Kajana
Satkunendrarajah



Dan Hellenbrand



Scott Griffith



Bryon Riesch



Todd Fringer



Mackenzie Wann



John Martinson



Sam Troyer



20th Annual SCIENCE & ADVOCACY Symposium

February 15-17, 2026

Renaissance Arlington Capital View Hotel

Our 20th Annual Science and Advocacy Symposium is fast approaching. It is a moment to mark the birth of Unite 2 Fight Paralysis as an organization, and the beginning of a new wave of involvement and advocacy for curative therapies led by the SCI community. In the spring of 2005, six "bionic" women organized the first Rally in Washington on behalf of the spinal cord injury community. Now we're coming back to Washington D.C., where it all started 20 years ago, and we won't be wasting any time.

The return to our nation's capital will be the catalyst to launch our Cure Advocacy Network's national legislative campaign - join us!



Highlights

- Title Sponsor: Kennedy Krieger Institute
- Other sponsors (as of this writing): Craig H Neilsen Foundation, Paralyzed Veterans of America, Global Technologies and many others.
- Save the Date: February 15-17, 2026 (Three days!)
- Book your room: Renaissance Arlington Capital View Hotel (\$139/night in our block!)
- Our Cure Advocacy Network's National Legislative campaign kickoff (day three)
 - Roll on the Capitol
 - Meet with Legislators
 - Advocate for a national SCI Research bill
 - (Advocacy training provided during the symposium)



Scan here to get the latest updates on our 20th Annual Science & Advocacy Symposium.



Don't Leave Us Behind

SCIRP CUTS

In March of this year, the Federal Government eliminated the Spinal Cord Injury Research Program (SCIRP), which aims to find treatments for veterans (and all U.S. citizens) suffering from SCI. U2FP has been deeply involved with SCIRP, having referred staff and supporters to serve on their lived experience review panels, as well as inviting their Scientific Officers to speak at our Annual Symposium and be guests on our podcast.

Meanwhile, the trickle-down effect hit our state programs. Our flagship Minnesota legislation saw proposed cuts of over 80% - but we rallied the SCI community and were able to restore nearly all of the proposed cuts!

- Taking Action**
- Created a bi-weekly meeting of the leading SCI organizations
 - Crafted a unified statement
 - Saved Minnesota SCI/TBI Research Grant program from massive cuts
 - Rock to Restore Research concert fundraiser
 - Created a Save SCIRP resource webpage
 - Included the restoration of SCIRP into our national legislative campaign
 - Planning a Congressional Briefing in DC this fall to advocate for SCIRP
 - Just secured a Senate Sponsor from the Majority Party



Scan here to read Matthew Rodreck's story of how we save the Minnesota SCI/TBI Research Grant program from devastating cuts.



Scan here to listen to our interview with Dr. J. Andrew Taylor about what the loss of SCIRP could mean for SCI research around the world.



Scan here to download our Advocate Fact Sheet.



Scan here to download our Legislative Fact Sheet.

2024 Financial Report

2024 was a challenging year financially for Unite 2 Fight Paralysis. While we formed partnerships with lots of new organizations and continued our strategic expansion, overall giving couldn't quite keep pace and we had to access our reserves a few times.

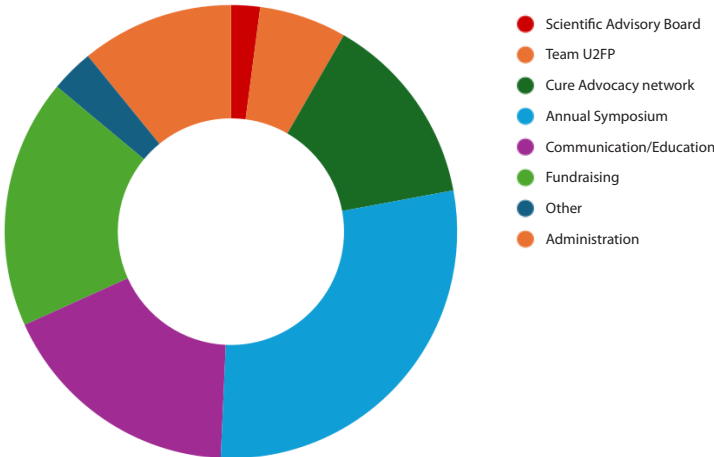
Fortunately, 2025 has seen an increase in investments, including a large two year grant, along with a higher level of individual donations. We continue to look for creative ways to sustain and expand our vital services for the SCI community. We are very grateful to all of our donors, especially those listed on the next page, the majority of whom come from the SCI community. Thank you!

Kathryn Christopherson

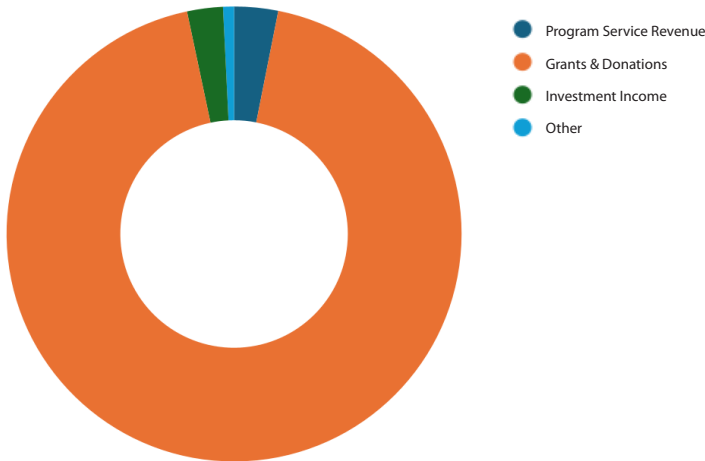
Scan here to view U2FP's 2024 financial documents as listed on our donation page: Financial Statement, 990 Form.



2024 Expenditures



2024 Revenue



**These pie charts reflect financial information for Unite 2 Fight Paralysis. Unite 2 Fight Paralysis relies almost exclusively on public contributions and grants to provide our services.*

Special Thanks to our Donors!

Sustaining Supporters (\$2,000+)

Jake Anderson
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Chris Barr
Kathryn Burns
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2024 Symposium Sponsors

Title Sponsor: Emory
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Craig H Neilsen Foundation
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of Kentucky
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ONWARD Medical
Push to Walk
The Rabchevsky Foundation
Shepherd Center
Wings for Life

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Zoë Says Go Band

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