



# Wilmer Eye Institute

## Johns Hopkins Medicine

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### **Birdshot Research Fund**

Meredith Cross, who was diagnosed by Dr. Jennifer Thorne with Birdshot in 2012, established the Birdshot Research Fund in 2013 to begin to address the problem that Birdshot research dollars are as rare as the disease. With more than 105 donors to date, Dr. Thorne and her colleagues at the Wilmer Eye Institute use the funds to conduct a variety of Birdshot Research projects, including many in collaboration with Birdshot experts at other universities.

#### **Projects Supported:**

##### **IMAGING STUDY**

Through collaboration with five centers, we have collected imaging data on 95 patients and are correlating retinal findings on imaging with patient symptoms and demographics, treatment, visual function, and clinical exam findings. We are optimistic that the results of this research will benefit Birdshot patients in the future by providing enhanced imaging that will allow treating ophthalmologists to see active inflammation sooner in the disease course and treat the inflammation more aggressively and completely in the disease's earliest stages.

##### **PARIS COLLABORATIONS**

We are collaborating with Birdshot specialists in Paris to examine the visual outcomes, treatment outcomes, visual field analyses, imaging analyses, quality of life, and natural history of the disease. This is a unique opportunity in the study of Birdshot given the long duration of observation. We hope that this collaboration will dramatically increase our understanding of the natural history and pathogenesis of Birdshot, which should enable us to make real progress in the successful treatment of patients.

##### **DRUG-FREE REMISSION**

Our team is investigating the likelihood of drug-free remission in Birdshot. We presented these results at the Association for Research in Vision and Ophthalmology (ARVO) meeting in Vancouver this year.

##### **GENOMICS**

Our team is diligently looking for genetic markers other than HLA-A29 in Birdshot. This involves a massive amount of data to be analyzed, but while the progress is slow, it has been steady. Although similar to searching for needles in haystacks, this is among the most exciting work being done at Johns Hopkins, and hopefully, we will be able to add to the knowledge in this arena.

*For more information, please contact Jocelyn Bangerd, Associate Director of Development,  
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