



Lymphatic Education
& Research Network

LE&RN 2025 Annual Report:

Building a Field. Transforming Lives.



*Building the scientific, clinical, and philanthropic
infrastructure for the future of lymphatic disease
research, care, and patient impact.*

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Leadership Letter 2

About LE&RN 3

About Lymphatic Diseases 3

2025 by the Numbers 4

A Pivotal Year for Lymphatic Science and Care 5

Strategic Priorities in Action 5

 Advancing Research and Scientific Discovery 5

 Strengthening Clinical Care Through
 Centers of Excellence..... 6

 Elevating Patient Resources, Education,
 and Advocacy..... 7

 Driving Federal Recognition and
 Public Awareness..... 8

 Building the Infrastructure for Impact 9

Financial Overview 9

Board, Leadership, and Professional Partners 10

Donor Recognition 10

Looking Ahead: From Momentum to Impact 11

LEADERSHIP LETTER

A Turning Point for Lymphatic Science



For more than 25 years, LE&RN has worked to bring lymphatic diseases out of the shadows. In 2025, we began to see the power of those investments take hold.

Throughout our history, LE&RN has invested in research,

advocacy, patient engagement, education, and clinical infrastructure to create the conditions necessary for lasting progress. **In 2025, those efforts helped generate unprecedented momentum across the lymphatic field.**

Among the most significant developments were the launch of the first-ever *National Commission on Lymphatic Diseases* at the National Institutes of Health (NIH) and the establishment of a dedicated lymphatics program at the Advanced Research Projects Agency for Health (ARPA-H). These milestones are a result of our advocacy efforts and reflect growing recognition that the lymphatic system plays a critical role in human health and deserves greater scientific attention and investment. They also demonstrate how sustained strategic engagement and partnerships can help unlock opportunities far greater than any single organization could achieve alone.

At the same time, LE&RN strengthened the infrastructure that will support future discovery and patient care. We expanded our global *Centers of Excellence* network to 74 institutions across more than 20 countries, expanded our scientific leadership, supported translational research, grew our worldwide Chapter network, and connected patients and families to education, resources, and expert care.

During 2025, we also undertook a thoughtful planning process to identify where LE&RN can have the greatest impact in the years ahead. That work reinforced our commitment to advance

research, strengthen Centers of Excellence, expand patient resources and education, improve data and clinical infrastructure, elevate advocacy, and secure the resources necessary to accelerate progress across the field.

These efforts share a common purpose: build a stronger, more connected lymphatic community to accelerate progress. Through research, advocacy, clinical care, patient resources, and public awareness, LE&RN helps create the foundation upon which future diagnostics, treatments, and cures will be built.

The opportunity before us has never been greater. Scientific understanding of the lymphatic system is advancing rapidly. New federal, philanthropic, and industry partners are recognizing the importance of this work. Patients are demanding better answers and better treatment options.

Our responsibility is to ensure that momentum becomes lasting progress. To our donors, partners, clinicians, researchers, advocates, volunteers, Chapters, and patient community, **thank you.** Every breakthrough is made possible by your support and belief in what can be achieved when a community comes together around a shared purpose.

Together, we are improving lives today and strengthening the infrastructure, partnerships, and knowledge necessary to transform the future of lymphatic health.



William Repicci,
President & CEO



Melissa Aldrich PhD,
Board Chair

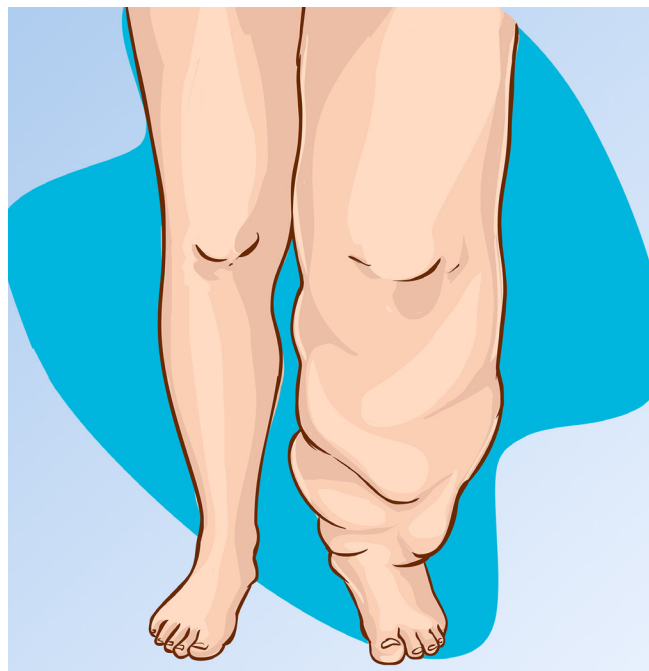


ABOUT LE&RN

Founded in 1998, the Lymphatic Education & Research Network (LE&RN) is an internationally recognized nonprofit organization dedicated to fighting lymphatic diseases through research, education, advocacy, and patient resources.

LE&RN works to accelerate the prevention, diagnosis, treatment, and cure of lymphatic diseases, including lymphedema, lymphatic anomalies and related disorders that affect millions of people worldwide.

Guided by the vision of a world without lymphatic disease, LE&RN serves as a global voice for patients, caregivers, clinicians, researchers, and advocates working to advance awareness, improve care, strengthen scientific collaboration, and drive public policy solutions for a historically overlooked area of medicine.



ABOUT LYMPHATIC DISEASES

Lymphatic diseases affect millions of people, yet they remain underdiagnosed, undertreated, and underfunded. **Lymphedema impacts an estimated 10 million Americans and more than 250 million people worldwide.** One in five breast cancer patients develops lymphedema. One in 6,000 children is born with lymphatic malformations.

Emerging research suggests that the lymphatic system may play an important role in a broader range of conditions, including cancer metastasis, neurodegenerative disease, lipedema, and immune-related disorders.

Despite this burden, many patients still struggle for years to receive an accurate diagnosis, find knowledgeable care, and access effective treatment. Research funding remains limited, and too many patients and families continue to face lymphatic disease without the answers and support they need.

That is why LE&RN's work matters.

THE GLOBAL IMPACT OF LYMPHATIC DISEASES



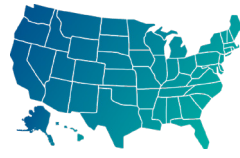
1 in 5

Breast cancer patients develop lymphedema



1 in 6,000

Children are born with lymphatic malformations



10 Million

Americans are estimated to be living with lymphedema



250 Million+

People living with lymphedema worldwide

2025 BY THE NUMBERS

6

Issues of *Lymphatic Research and Biology* published

10

Certification Scholarships for Lymphedema Therapists

20

Researcher Scholarships to attend LE&RN's *Lymphatic Forum*

20+

Countries represented in the *Centers of Excellence* network

40+

International Chapters

41

Jane Petty *Translational Science Catalyst Award* applications from 16 countries

74

Centers of Excellence member institutions

74

World Lymphedema Day events worldwide

200

Researchers attending LE&RN's *Lymphatic Forum* research conference

20,000+

Newsletter subscribers

28,000+

Virtual symposium views

81%

Of expenses directed to program services

\$1,442,732

Invested in program services—education and advocacy

\$3,124,699

Total Net Assets

SINCE OUR FOUNDING IN 1998, LE&RN HAS DELIVERED:

150 Professional Livestream Symposia

126 Lymphedema Therapist Scholarships

156 Researcher Conference Travel Scholarships

42 Conference Poster Awards

700+ Peer-reviewed articles published in *Lymphatic Research and Biology Journal*

547,500+ Online visits to our CDC-funded Lymphedema Awareness Campaign

\$1.8M+ In research grants

2025: A PIVOTAL YEAR FOR LYMPHATIC SCIENCE AND CARE



In 2025, LE&RN helped advance lymphatic disease in national scientific, policy, and public awareness dialogue while strengthening the programs and partnerships needed to support patients, clinicians, researchers, and advocates worldwide.

The year saw major federal advocacy progress, including the launch of a Congressionally mandated National Commission on Lymphatic Diseases at NIH and the creation of a dedicated Program Manager for Lymphatics at ARPA-H.

LE&RN also strengthened its scientific capacity by hiring its first full-time Vice President of Scientific Affairs as well as a Science and Medical Director.

At the same time, LE&RN expanded its global infrastructure for patient resources and clinical connections through its Centers of Excellence network, Resource Center, and international Chapters.

Together, these milestones mark the organization's transition from awareness and advocacy to a more ambitious phase of scientific leadership, clinical infrastructure, patient impact, and philanthropic growth.

STRATEGIC PRIORITIES IN ACTION

Advancing Research and Scientific Discovery

Research is the foundation for future diagnostics, treatments, and cures. In 2025, LE&RN continued to strengthen partnerships, programs, and the scientific infrastructure needed to accelerate progress across the lymphatic disease field.

LE&RN launched the inaugural *Jane Petty Translational Science Catalyst Awards*, committing \$120,000 to support two innovative research projects selected from 41 applications representing 16 countries. One award recipient, Dr. Di Chen of the University of Michigan, has already leveraged LE&RN's early investment to secure a prestigious American Heart Association research award. LE&RN's initial grant demonstrates an important principle: strategic philanthropic investments can position promising science to attract additional funding and accelerate discovery.

To further bolster the field, LE&RN continued publishing *Lymphatic Research and Biology* and hosted its annual *State-of-the-Art Lymphatic Summit* in partnership with Stanford University, fostering scientific collaboration and the exchange of new ideas.

By investing in scientific infrastructure, strategic partnerships, and translational research, LE&RN helps create the conditions for larger federal, industry, and philanthropic investments that will accelerate research, expand treatment options, and improve patient care.

Inaugural Jane Petty Translational Science Catalyst Award Winners

Dr. Lisa Pulianmackal of the University of California, San Francisco, will focus on defining and targeting kinase fusions, which are well-known cancer-causing mutations, as molecular drivers of lymphatic malformations.

Dr. Di Chen of the University of Michigan, will explore the MAPK signaling pathway and PIEZO1 as potential therapeutic targets for primary lymphedema.

STRENGTHENING CLINICAL CARE THROUGH CENTERS OF EXCELLENCE



LE&RN's *Centers of Excellence* have become one of the organization's most important strategic assets. In 2025, the network expanded to 74 Centers of Excellence across more than 20 countries, creating a global clinical and research infrastructure that connects clinicians, surgeons, therapists, researchers, and patient advocates.

While the network continues to help patients access expert multidisciplinary care, its broader value lies in its ability to advance collaboration, professional education, multicenter research, patient registries, clinical trials, and outcome studies. This shared infrastructure helps position

the field for greater federal, philanthropic, and industry investment.

Looking ahead to 2026, LE&RN will convene its first global *Centers of Excellence Summit*, bringing leaders from across the network together to strengthen collaboration, share best practices, and identify new opportunities to advance research and improve patient care.

This is the power of leverage: strategic investments in clinical infrastructure create opportunities far beyond any single institution, accelerating discovery, attracting additional resources, and improving patient outcomes worldwide.



74

Centers of Excellence

20+

Countries

One

Collaborative network to connect expertise, advance research, strengthen clinical care, and build the infrastructure needed for future discoveries.

ELEVATING PATIENT RESOURCES, EDUCATION, AND ADVOCACY

For patients and families, lymphatic disease is not abstract. It affects daily life, mobility, work, family, mental health, and the ability to plan for the future.



In 2025, LE&RN's **Resource Center** responded to more than 130 requests for information and resources, leading to over 35 individualized patient consultations. The LE&RN Resource Center routinely provided individuals with information on the LE&RN Centers of Excellence worldwide, enabling them to identify specialized lymphatic care. We expanded our global advocate network to more than 40 Chapters and engaged more than 80 Chapter leaders globally.



We also listed and celebrated 74 **World Lymphedema Day** events worldwide, connecting patients, families, clinicians, and advocates. This hub has served as the central World Lymphedema Day event database for more than 10 years.

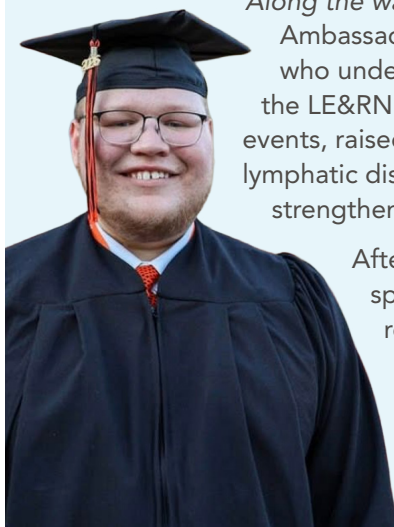


Through the **LE&RN/Lymph Notes Lymphedema Scholarship Program**, we provided tuition support for therapists seeking certification in lymphedema therapy to strengthen the specialized workforce patients rely upon.

By investing in patient resources, advocacy, education, and workforce development, LE&RN improves people's lives today, builds a stronger, more connected lymphatic community, and creates the foundation for better care, greater awareness, expanded access, and future advances in research and treatment.

Zac Finds His Voice

Growing up in The Woodlands, Texas, Zac Berger loved sports and played whenever he could. He was also navigating a lymphatic malformation affecting his neck, jaw, mouth, and tongue. By age 12, Zac had undergone numerous surgeries, including a major tongue reconstruction that left his family uncertain about how his speech might be affected.



Along the way, Zac and his family found a community in LE&RN. As a Texas Chapter Youth Ambassador and Courage Award Winner, he had opportunities to connect with others who understood his experience and turn his own challenges into advocacy. He emceed the LE&RN Virtual LymphWalk three years in a row, gave speeches and interviews, hosted events, raised awareness, and became a champion for other young people living with lymphatic diseases. LE&RN provided a platform for Zac to share his story and, in the process, strengthen a voice that would become central to his future.

After hanging up his cleats, Zac picked up a camera and pursued his lifelong love of sports at Oklahoma State University. Today, he is living his dream as a sports reporter at KNOE-TV in Monroe, Louisiana.

For someone who once faced uncertainty about his ability to speak, a career built around telling stories carries special meaning. Zac's journey shows what can happen when young people have a community behind them and the opportunity to find their voice.

DRIVING FEDERAL RECOGNITION AND PUBLIC AWARENESS



In 2025, LE&RN worked alongside patients, clinicians, researchers, and policymakers to elevate lymphatic diseases within the federal research and healthcare agenda. Through sustained advocacy and stakeholder engagement, LE&RN helped strengthen recognition of the lymphatic system’s critical role in human health and the need for increased investment in research, diagnosis, treatment, and patient care.

A defining milestone this year was the unprecedented national momentum surrounding lymphatic science. Through sustained advocacy and collaboration with patients, clinicians, researchers, and policymakers, **LE&RN helped elevate lymphatic diseases within the federal research agenda.** Those efforts led to more

than **\$300 million in federal investment** being committed through ARPA-H initiatives focused on advancing lymphatic science in 2026.

At the same time, under the guidance of the National Institutes of Health, a **National Commission on Lymphatic Diseases** continued its two-year effort to create the first comprehensive federal assessment of lymphatic disease research, diagnosis, treatment, and patient care.

LE&RN **expanded public awareness** through major media coverage on PBS NewsHour, the Los Angeles Times, and other outlets, helping elevate patient voices and increase understanding of diseases that have historically been overlooked.

These accomplishments go beyond individual policy or communications successes. They demonstrate LE&RN’s ability to build the partnerships, awareness, and infrastructure needed to attract larger investments in the lymphatic field.

: BUILDING THE ECOSYSTEM FOR FUTURE BREAKTHROUGHS

: Scientific progress depends on more than funding individual research projects. It requires an ecosystem where patients, researchers, clinicians, industry, philanthropy, and government work together.

: In 2025, donor support helped LE&RN:

- : ✓ Connect patient voices to more than \$300 million in new ARPA-H research initiatives
- : ✓ Launch the inaugural *Jane Petty Translational Catalyst Research Awards*
- : ✓ Expand scientific collaboration across a growing global network
- : ✓ Help early-stage research attract additional investment

: **Your investment does more than fund research—it helps build the infrastructure that makes future breakthroughs possible.**

BUILDING THE INFRASTRUCTURE FOR IMPACT



In 2025, LE&RN took important steps to prepare for its next phase of growth and impact.

Through strategic and philanthropic planning, the organization clarified priorities for the years ahead, including

research, Centers of Excellence, patient resources, advocacy, education, and data infrastructure. This work reinforces our central belief that lasting progress requires not only scientific breakthroughs, but also the infrastructure and partnerships needed to accelerate them.

LE&RN strengthened its foundation for major gifts, foundation partnerships, corporate engagement, planned giving, and mission-driven events. These investments are designed to build the capacity needed to advance the entire field.

As part of this effort, LE&RN is creating new ways for donors and partners to engage through impact reporting, scientific briefings, strategic philanthropy, and the return of LE&RN’s Gala.

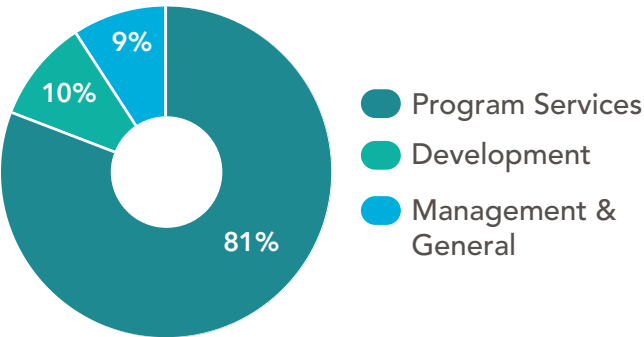
The goal is not growth for its own sake. It is building the infrastructure that attracts additional philanthropic, federal, and industry investment while accelerating research, strengthening care, supporting patients, and expanding awareness.

Your investment funds today’s work and helps build the infrastructure that makes tomorrow’s breakthroughs possible.

FINANCIAL OVERVIEW

LE&RN continued to direct most of its resources toward mission-related programs, **with 81% of expenses supporting program services in education and advocacy.**

At the same time, the organization continued to invest in scientific leadership, advocacy, patient resources, education, and the infrastructure needed to support future growth. As LE&RN moves forward, strengthening long-term philanthropic sustainability remains a key priority.



2025 Audited Financials*	
Program Services—Education & Advocacy	\$1,442,732 (81%)
Management & General	\$163,581 (9%)
Development	\$164,193 (10%)
Total Expenses	\$1,770,505 (100%)
Annual Revenue	\$1,296,497
Total Net Assets	\$3,124,699

**In 2025, LE&RN made planned investments from existing resources to expand scientific leadership and prepare the organization for its next phase of growth.*

BOARD, LEADERSHIP, AND PROFESSIONAL PARTNERS

Board of Directors



Melissa Aldrich, PhD, Chair
Associate Professor of Molecular Medicine at UTHHealth/McGovern Medical School



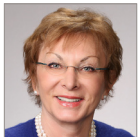
Liz Basaca, Treasurer
Director of Content and Communications, USA Hello



Dr. Doron Ilan, Secretary
Co-director of Montefiore Einstein Orthopedic Surgery, Hudson Valley, NY



Dr. Joseph Dayan
Board Certified Plastic Surgeon, Memorial Sloan Kettering Cancer Center



Dr. Emily Iker
Director of the Lymphedema Center in Santa Monica

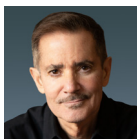


Rick Petty
Chief Investment Officer, Stavros Niarchos Foundation



Jonathan Ross
President of Bio Compression Systems

President and CEO



William Repicci

Accountants



DONOR RECOGNITION

LE&RN's progress is made possible by the generosity of individuals, families, foundations, corporations, clinicians, researchers, advocates, and volunteers who believe that lymphatic disease deserves greater attention, investment, and urgency.

We are deeply grateful to every supporter who helped advance LE&RN's mission in 2025. Your partnership strengthens research, expands education, supports patients and families, and helps build a future in which lymphatic diseases are no longer overlooked.

Corporate Sponsors and Professional Partners



Your support helps LE&RN turn this moment of scientific opportunity into lasting progress. Through our *Empowering Hope Campaign*, we are building the research, clinical, advocacy, and patient-support infrastructure needed to accelerate discovery and improve lives.



LOOKING AHEAD

LE&RN stands at a pivotal moment. Scientific momentum is growing, clinical infrastructure is expanding, and new opportunities are emerging to accelerate progress across the lymphatic field. Your investment does more than support today's work—it helps build the research, clinical, advocacy, and patient-support infrastructure that

attracts larger federal, industry, and philanthropic investments.

Together, we can leverage today's opportunities into tomorrow's discoveries, better treatments, and improved outcomes for patients and families worldwide.



"If I had found LE&RN eight years ago, I would have been in a better place. That's why I give back; to make sure no one else has to go through this journey alone."

—Gennelle Rice-Thomas, LE&RN Ohio Chapter Chair

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LE&RN's mission is to fight lymphatic diseases through education,
research, and advocacy. We seek to accelerate the prevention,
treatments and cures for lymphedema, lipedema, lymphatic anomalies,
and the continuum of lymphatic diseases.

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For more information about supporting LE&RN, email Joshua Corday at:
JCorday@LymphaticNetwork.org • Phone: 570-269-3475



Lymphatic Education
& Research Network

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