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the *pulse*

**A**s a trained psychologist and a counselor who has helped hundreds, if not thousands, of people deal with addiction and emotional stresses, it's not surprising that relationships are at the heart of everything Janet Greeson, Ph.D., does in business. And her innate ability to listen and assimilate information are integral to how she leads Samaritan Pharmaceuticals.

Key to any good relationship is respectful, honest, and direct communication and Dr. Greeson has refined the art of communicating — both in how she senses what is being said and what is not is not being said.

"I'm trained to listen, and I know how to interact with people, which has become intuitive for me as a psychologist," she says. "I believe that 90% of communication is non-verbal and being able to sense what's happening or not happening has been an asset to me. This ability helps me lead Samaritan and evaluate relationships with other companies."

In 2000, Dr. Greeson became CEO of what was then Steroidogenesis Inhibitors International, a name she found impossible to warm to. Dr. Greeson's involvement with the

company had come about from consulting with a doctor who asked her to write about an HIV drug, SP-01A, one of the candidates in Samaritan's pipeline.

"I became so interested in the drug, that eventually I found myself pretty much running Steroidogenesis," she says.

The first thing she did upon taking the helm, was to change the name of the company to Samaritan Pharmaceuticals. Shortly after she contacted Dr. Vassilios Papadopoulos, who was then the head of the hormone division at Georgetown University. She had met Dr. Papadopoulos at a conference and, over time, they became a trusted friends.

He suggested she speak with researchers at the Tech and Transfer office at Georgetown, which was interested in spinning off a research and development unit or entering into a joint venture.

"The partnership with Georgetown is how Samaritan came about; it was serendipitous," Dr. Greeson notes. "It took about a year to finalize the contract. We agreed to give them a set amount of money to fund the scientists and the research lab. In return, all compounds discovered in the lab could be licensed to Samaritan. That's how we built our pipeline."

Ultimately, though, it is the relationship

with Dr. Papadopoulos that is the binding force with Dr. Greeson and Samaritan. When he took the role of director of the Research Institute at McGill University Health Centre, Samaritan transferred its research lab to McGill University.

Samaritan has since grown exponentially from its early days when it was Steroidogenesis and a one-drug company.

"I can't imagine a company having all of its eggs in one basket," Dr. Greeson says. "Now we have a pipeline of more than 300 drug candidates and are advancing about 20 compelling drugs."

Samaritan is focused on innovative therapeutics and has made progress in the fields of central nervous system diseases, such as Alzheimer's disease; cancer; cardiovascular disease; and infectious diseases, such as AIDS and hepatitis C.

Among the leading drugs in the company's pipeline is an Alzheimer's drug, Caprospinol (SP-233), which has been issued an IND by the FDA in preparation for a Phase I study. Data presented by the company from an *in vivo* proof of concept study demonstrated efficacy in the drug's ability to dramatically decrease beta amyloid plaque in the brain, accompanied by a complete recovery

With the will to overcome any hurdle and a lucrative pipeline to back up her determination to help others,

## Dr. Janet Greeson

is creating an aura of hope and possibility at

biopharma company

Samaritan Pharmaceuticals.



ery of memory back to baseline as shown in a Morris water maze task, a popular task in behavioral neuroscience that assesses learning and memory.

“The ability to restore memory function would be a dramatic upturn for Alzheimer’s patients and their families,” Dr. Greeson says.

Further along in the pipeline is an oral HIV entry inhibitor, SP-01A, which creates a firewall around healthy cells that prevents HIV entry.

Other molecules in the HIV pipeline include SP-10 and SP-03, also geared to preventing viral entry into healthy cells.

Also in early stages is a cardiovascular drug that, in animal studies, demonstrates an ability to remove plaque from the arteries in three to five days. If this drug were to come to market it could limit the need for open-heart surgery and stents, Dr. Greeson surmises.

While the pipeline appears diverse, Dr. Greeson says there is a common denominator running through the programs.

“Most of our technology is related to cholesterol, so while the research looks unrelated, underneath about 80% of our compounds are connected to cholesterol in some way,” she says. (Please see the box on this page for more information about Samaritan’s pipeline.)

### Growing Confidence

From early on Dr. Greeson has believed that with enough determination and perseverance anything can be accomplished.

That fierce sense of self-possession was fostered by her father, who constantly told her that she could do anything she set her mind to, and her mother, whose hard work and determined attitude demonstrated just what is possible.

“My father persuaded my mother to take a test to be a prison corrections officer and she did so; eventually, she became the warden of a New York state prison,” Dr. Greeson says. “She was an inspiration to me.”

Dr. Greeson grew up in the Brooklyn housing projects, where she developed a fascination for people, eagerly listening to their problems.

“People have always intrigued me, which led to my becoming a psychologist,” she says.

Her background in psychology has been hugely influential in helping her to navigate

life and career. Dr. Greeson says she learned early on that it’s important to define oneself before someone else does, and that’s particularly true for women in business.

“People who do well in life speak well of themselves to themselves,” she says.

In creating her self image, she crafted a mantra, one that she still relies on today: “I’m a loving, caring, abundant, strong person; I love to help people; I’m a contributor; and I have a fire in my heart to make a difference.”

Equally, it is important to be conscious of the fact that in business perception is king.

“In today’s world where contracts often are negotiated by phone, it’s hard for business associates to appreciate the essence of one another, so it’s important to project and communicate who we are and what we believe in,” Dr. Greeson says.

With a indefatigable attitude and tremendous optimism, Dr. Greeson believes anything is possible. She still relies on a motivational lesson learned in graduate school to get her through tough spots.

A professor asked the class to write down 10 things they wanted to achieve in life. He then instructed the students to read their lists

every night and first thing in the morning for a month.

“He said when a person sleeps the brain figures out how to achieve those goals, and I believe it; I swear by it; I’ve practiced this throughout my life,” she says. “But it’s impossible to go after what you want if you don’t know what that is. My experience in clinical practice has taught me that most people know what they don’t want, not what they do want; and I rarely saw a person in treatment that knew what they really wanted.”

### Broad Endeavors

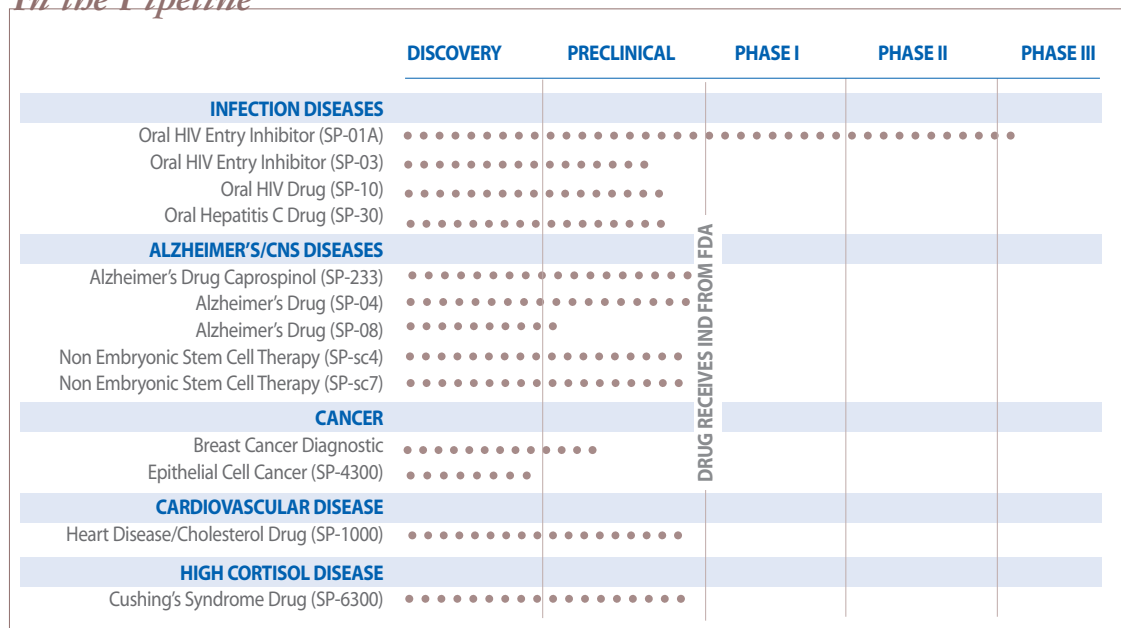
Practicing as a clinical psychologist and establishing treatment programs for addicts has given Dr. Greeson insights into drivers behind self-destructive behavior and thereby ways to tackle them, all of which help in managing difficult situations in any setting.

Beyond her work, both as a clinical psychologist and today as head of Samaritan, Dr. Greeson believes strongly in giving back to the community.

She has helped design addiction programs for Mother Teresa in Rome. She also served as the U.S. congressional nominee for Nevada in 1994.

She also finds time to write, having published several self-help books, one on eating disorders, titled *It’s Not What You Are Eat-*

### In the Pipeline







*What drives me is the feeling of accomplishment that comes from creating something and seeing it flourish. It's exciting to find an unmet need and fill it.*

ing, *It's What's Eating You*, and she preparing her next book, this time on underdog entrepreneurs, called *Never, Never Underestimate the Hunger of an Underdog*.

A believer in mentorship — having drawn extensively from the guidance of people early in her life — Dr. Greeson inspires those around her to reach for the stars.

"I started a group called Superwoman's Anonymous," she says. "There were about 30 of us in the group. Everyone of us went on to actualize our dreams, which demonstrates the power and support of groups."

An advocate for education, Dr. Greeson urges all she comes into contact with — young and old — to further their education.

Today at Samaritan, a central mission for Dr. Greeson is the Samaritan Innovative Science Foundation (SISF), which is a nonprofit organization founded by her in 2003. SISF's

goals are to help seriously ill children worldwide and to promote science education to middle and high school students.

"In the United States, education and excitement about science have diminished," she says.

To counter this waning interest, Dr. Greeson's concept is to field a bio-future bus, akin to the one on the popular TV show *CSI*, complete with an elaborate lab and equipment.

"The bus would travel from school to school, and kids could learn experientially to do their own DNA testing, fingerprinting, and forensic science experiments," she says.

The need to re-invigorate a love for science is pressing, Dr. Greeson believes, especially because of the huge drop in the number of students who are pursuing science education in the United States.

"Innovation is our future as well as the

future of our children," she says. "Statistical studies show that if we appeal to children and teenagers and get them interested in science then the percentages of those going to school for science degrees increases."

The two other central goals of SISF are to develop drugs for orphan indications, usually children's diseases, and to give free or affordable treatments to children and mothers who have HIV.

"If Samaritan is ever taken over by a major pharmaceutical company, I more than likely will devote 100% of my time to SISF," Dr. Greeson says.

### *Making it Happen*

Running a company involves both risk and reward. One of the largest risks revolves around funding.

"Money has become one of the biggest worries in the biopharma industry today," Dr. Greeson contends. "We are raising money but it's a tremendous challenge. Everyone I talk to agrees that this has been a particularly challenging time."

One bright spot is the potential donation of



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a \$10 million bond, which would go a long way toward helping the company continue its mission to bring life-saving drugs to the world.

But Dr. Greeson has learned not to rely on venture capital for raising money, and she and her team have found innovative ways to keep Samaritan in the black.

Once again, Dr. Greeson's relationship-building skills have proven dividends. Over the years at various industry conferences, Dr. Greeson had met and gotten to know Dr. Christos Dakas, whose expertise is in Greek and European markets

"Eventually we created a licensing program in the region, after Dr. Dakas joined Samaritan," she says.

With Dr. Dakas as managing director of Samaritan Europe/in-licensing, a unit spearheaded by he and Eugene Boyle, chief financial officer, business development, the company has entered into strategic collaborative relationships with other pharmaceutical companies to commercialize branded approved prescription products in selected niche territories, such as Greece, Albania, Bosnia, Bulgaria, Croatia, Cyprus, the Czech Republic, Egypt, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Hungary, Poland, Romania, Slovakia, Syria, Turkey, and Yugoslavia.

Samaritan uses its expertise to register approved drugs with regulatory agencies in the different countries where it holds the licensing rights, then, upon regulatory approval, it distributes, markets, and sells these products. Currently, Samaritan has in-licensed the rights to sell 14 drugs, including: Amphocil from Three Rivers Pharmaceuticals; Elaprase from Shire Pharmaceuticals; Infasurf from Ony; Mepivamol, Methadone, Morphine Sulphate, Naloxone, Naltrexone, and Oramorph from Molteni Pharmaceuticals; and Rapydan from EUSA.

"We've just started this in-licensing program in Eastern Europe, and it's already paying dividends," Dr. Greeson says. "We have an extremely small burn rate for a biotech; most biotechs burn \$1 million a month, we burn about \$2.5 million to \$3 million a year, and we have a program that we call Making Every Dollar Count. We had more than \$1 million last year in revenue and are expecting more than \$5 million this year. This revenue should allow us to be self-sustaining, so we won't have to keep going to the street to raise money."

The company also keeps its costs down by using its in-house experts — from writing its own regulatory reports and annual filings to handling all of its FDA filings and protocols — from its drug development team.

Entrepreneurial by nature, Dr. Greeson

has a knack for building success out of very little. She has initiated numerous treatment centers, such as Freedom House, a half-way house in Florida that provides shelter for up to 50 women at a time and offers treatment for substance abuse or eating disorders.

She started a hospital in-patient program on her own in Orlando, Fla., for the treatment of depression, anxiety, and eating disorders, which she built into 17 hospital in-patient programs nationwide; eventually she folded these into Columbia HCA.

Today Dr. Greeson continues to listen, learn,

and apply the skills that have made her a successful counselor and founder of care programs to developing drugs that make a significant difference to people's lives — from Alzheimer's to HIV to cardiovascular treatments.

"What drives me is the feeling of accomplishment that comes from creating something and seeing it flourish," she says. "It's exciting to find an unmet need and fill it." ♦

PharmaVOICE welcomes comments about this article. E-mail us at [feedback@pharmavoiced.com](mailto:feedback@pharmavoiced.com).

### *A Helping Hand*

#### **DR. JANET GREESON — RESUME**

- 2000 - PRESENT.** Founder, CEO, and President, Samaritan Pharmaceuticals Inc., Las Vegas
- 1996 - PRESENT.** Founder, Board of Directors, Samaritan Pharmaceuticals Inc., Las Vegas
- 1981 - 2001.** Clinical Psychologist, Private Practice; Continues to see occasional patients
- 1999 - 2000.** Cato Research, Durham, N.C.; Instrumental in developing FDA investigational brochure and FDA annual reports for HIV drug IND 52,663
- 1999.** AIDS Research Alliance, West Hollywood, Calif; Spearheaded and coordinated Phase II clinical trial for HIV drug SP-01A for HIV drug resistance indication
- 1999.** Analytical Solutions, Calif; Developed protocol for a pharmacokinetic and safety study of IND 52,663 for HIV infected patients
- 1993 - 1995.** Addictions Consultant to numerous HealthCare Corps., Calif., Nev., Fla., Minn.
- 1994.** U.S. Congressional Nominee for the State of Nevada
- 1986 - 1993.** Founder, Program Developer and Clinical Director of "Janet Greeson's A Place For Us" National Psychiatric Clinics, Orlando, Fla., and nationwide
- 1986 - 1988.** Founder and Clinical Developer of Freedom Walk Inc., A Residential Continuum Care, Orlando, Fla.
- 1985** Designed, developed, and implemented clinical eating disorder clinics for Brookwood Recovery Lodges, Birmingham, Ala.
- 1983 - 1985.** Clinical Psychologist, Developer of Clinical "Skid Row" Treatment Program, Metropolitan Alcohol Council of Orlando, Fla.
- 1983** Regional Coordinator of the Nancy Reagan "Secretarial Initiative in Teenage Alcohol Abuse," Dept. of Health and Human Services
- 1982 - 1986** Clinical Director of ARS, Navy Alcohol Rehabilitation Service, Orlando, Fla.
- 1981 - 1982.** Associate Professor, Rollins College Graduate Program, Winter Park, Fla.
- 1979 - 1982.** Regional Program Director, Navy Alcohol Safety Action Prevention Program, Orlando, Fla., under the University of West Florida
- 1978 - 1985.** Executive Director, Board of Directors for Overeaters Anonymous, Los Angeles
- 1975 - 1979.** Facilitator-Coordinator, Alcohol Rehabilitation Department of Navy, Orlando, Fla.

#### **EDUCATION**

- 1987.** Ph.D., Clinical Psychology, Columbia Pacific University, Mill Valley, Calif.
- 1979.** M.A., Clinical Psychology, Rollins College, Orlando, Fla.
- 1978.** B.A., Psychology, University of Central Florida, Orlando, Fla.