



Vollum Institute

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Deafness Research Foundation:

July 2nd may sound like a usual day for everyone else, but I will certainly remember it for the rest of my life. On that day, I received the official notice that my K99/R00 application will be funded by NIH/NIDCD. For those who are not familiar with K99/R00, it is THE BEST career development award that anyone can get from NIH. It provides \$90,000 per year for two more years of training (K99), and then up to \$250,000 per year (the same amount as a R01 for established investigators) for a three-year independent phase (R00).

While my mentor, colleagues and friends congratulated me, I asked myself a few times: why me? Several things came to my mind, including luck, but the first one on that list is always Deafness Research Foundation (DRF).

Last October when I submitted my K99/R00 application, DRF was the only funding specifically dedicated to its pilot studies. While my mentor was busy to keep ends meet, it offered me tremendous support and help. It allowed me to pursue my own ideas, develop new lines of research, and more importantly accumulate enough preliminary data to convince the review panel that I am capable to carry out the proposed studies. In addition, all the three reviewers pointed out unanimously that DRF grant makes me stand out as a K99/R00 candidate.

In 50 years since it was established, DRF has helped hundreds and hundreds of young investigators in hearing research. I feel extremely lucky and honored to be one of them. I will always be deeply grateful that DRF supported my career when I was still establishing myself as an independent investigator in hearing research.

Sincerely,

Geng-Lin Li, PhD