



## MEET OUR AMBASSADORS



### Estee Kurant

Associate Professor

Head of the Department of Human Biology,

Faculty of Natural Sciences

#### Field of Research:

Development and ageing of the brain, neurodegenerative diseases

#### **SHORT BIO**

I completed my post-doctoral research at Rockefeller University in New York and afterwards established my own lab at the Technion -Institute of Technology. Six years later, I accepted a position at the University of Haifa. I serve as the Israeli representative on the board of the European *Drosophila* Society and on the editorial boards of several international academic journals as well as international and national committees of different grant foundations.

My research team studies development and ageing of the brain. Specifically, we focus on molecular mechanisms controlling elimination of dying neurons by other brain cells, which is crucial for embryonic development and maintenance of the healthy and functional brain. This process also plays a critical role in multiple neurodegenerative disorders including Alzheimer's and Parkinson's diseases. Our research goals are to discover molecular markers for early diagnosis of these devastating disorders and expose new directions to prevent neuronal loss and reverse pathology. We developed several models of different neurodegenerative diseases and recently found that blocking elimination of stressed neurons can protect them and hinder neurodegeneration.

[My Lab's Website](#)

In my free time, I love to travel, especially to ski resorts with my husband and two kids, and I love dancing.

#### **FUNDRAISING NEEDS**

The Human Biology is the youngest department in our Faculty. Our primary investigators focus mostly on molecular mechanisms of healthy ageing and pathological conditions such as neurodegeneration, inflammation and cancer. Our graduate students perform their research in experimental laboratories in a full-time capacity and need financial support. **My first priority is to establish a fellowships fund for excellent graduate students including travel grants for presenting their research at international conferences and establish a scientific network in their field. This will support and encourage young Israeli scientists to continue their academic career.**

**My second priority is to fundraise for a new building of research laboratories for the Faculty of Natural Sciences, which will expand current research by enlarging research teams (now limited by space) and student teaching lab. We need to increase the number of undergraduate and graduate students in the Faculty. This new building will improve interactions between senior and young researches and intensify the use of interdepartmental equipment, provide space for scientific seminars, national and international meetings, and outreach activities.**