



**NEWS RELEASE: FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

## **The Progeria Research Foundation Celebrates 25 Years of Racing Toward a Cure**

*25th Annual International Race for Research Set for September 19, 2026, in Peabody, MA*

**PEABODY, MA** – The Progeria Research Foundation (PRF), an internationally-known nonprofit based in Peabody, will celebrate a landmark milestone this fall when it hosts its 25<sup>th</sup> Annual International Race for Research on Saturday, September 19, 2026. What began as a community 5k a quarter-century ago has grown into a global event. The race takes place at Leather City Common in Peabody, MA, with a virtual participation option for supporters around the world who want to be part of this historic moment.

Proudly presented by PRF and long-time event partner TruNorth Bank, the Race for Research is Peabody's longest-running family-friendly 5K. Participants can run the full 5K or walk the 2-mile course beginning at 9:00 AM while enjoying music, refreshments, and a dog watering station for four-legged friends. Whether racing through Peabody or joining virtually from anywhere on the globe, every step – and every dollar raised - moves Progeria research closer toward a cure.

PRF co-founders **Drs. Leslie Gordon (a Peabody native) and Scott Berns** will be on hand to mark the occasion, along with PRF Ambassador Carlos and other children with Progeria and their families.

"Twenty-five years ago, we had hope and not much else. Today, we have an FDA-approved treatment and a gene editing drug that could potentially cure Progeria in our lifetime," said Audrey Gordon, PRF president and executive director. "Every person who has ever run this race, walked this course, or otherwise supported this cause is part of that story. This September, we celebrate 25 years together as we race toward the finish line of a cure."

Funds raised support PRF's gene editing program, currently the most promising path to curing Progeria. This approach aims to directly correct the genetic mutation responsible for the disease. Progeria is a rare, fatal condition characterized by rapid aging in children; without treatment, most die of heart disease at an average age of just 14.5 years. Thanks to PRF's research programs and the support of events like this one, children with Progeria are living longer and reaching young adulthood – milestones made possible by lonafarnib, the first and only FDA-approved treatment for the disease.

"At TruNorth Bank, we believe in the power of community and the importance of supporting causes that truly matter," said Michael R. Wheeler, TruNorth Bank president and chief executive officer. "Being part of PRF's 25<sup>th</sup> Race for Research is a privilege, and this milestone is a testament to what happens when a community refuses to give up. We are proud to stand beside the Progeria Research Foundation as they race toward a cure."

### **Race details:**

- **Date:** Saturday, September 19, 2026
- **Race Start:** 9:00 AM
- **Location:** Leather City Common, 53 Lowell St, Peabody, MA (virtual option available)
- **Distances:** 5K run | 2-mile walk
- **Registration:** [www.prfroadrace.org](http://www.prfroadrace.org) or 978-535-2594



## **About The Progeria Research Foundation**

The Progeria Research Foundation (PRF) is the driving force behind the global effort to understand, treat and ultimately cure children and young adults with Hutchinson-Gilford Progeria Syndrome (Progeria), a rare and fatal genetic disease that causes rapid aging in children. Founded by the family of Sam Berns after his diagnosis in 1999, PRF has enabled or led major scientific breakthroughs in the field; from discovery of the causative gene mutation, to Progeria's first and only FDA-approved treatment, lonafarnib, to the advancement of gene-editing approaches now in development. Through rigorous science, global research infrastructure and close partnership with the worldwide patient community, PRF is advancing next-generation therapies and leading the Path to Cure Progeria program to determine whether a one-time gene-editing therapy can offer a durable, potentially curative treatment. For more information and to support PRF's mission, please visit [www.progeriaresearch.org](http://www.progeriaresearch.org).

## **About TruNorth Bank**

TruNorth Bank (formerly North Shore Bank and Abington Bank), headquartered in Peabody, Massachusetts has served the community for more than 135 years. We have more than \$3.3 billion in assets and offer a complete line of consumer and business deposit and lending products and services through 29 branches located throughout the North Shore and South Shore regions of Massachusetts and southern New Hampshire. We're proud to fulfill our community banking mission—providing individualized financial support, a suite of comprehensive products and services, and banking tools—all to ensure our customers can unlock their potential and build a successful future.

Through our sponsorship and charitable giving program, The Giving Tree, TruNorth Bank supports non-profit organizations and causes throughout the communities we serve. In 2025, The Giving Tree donated more than \$940,000 and over the last decade has donated more than \$5.3 million. We were named a Corporate Citizenship Award winner by *Boston Business Journal*, reaffirming our status as one of Massachusetts' most charitable companies. For more information, visit [TruNorthBank.com](http://TruNorthBank.com).

TruNorth Bank is a member of Hometown Financial Group, a \$6.9 billion multibank mutual holding company headquartered in Easthampton, Massachusetts, and the parent company of bankESB, bankHometown, TruNorth Bank, and Hometown Mortgage. Hometown Financial and our banks are proud to be recognized nationally as a four-time USA TODAY Top Workplaces award winner, an America's Best-In-State Bank by *Forbes*, and a top place to work by *The Boston Globe*. For more information, visit [bankHFG.com](http://bankHFG.com).

### **Media Contact:**

Tracy Lessor

[tlessor@progeriaresearch.org](mailto:tlessor@progeriaresearch.org)