



Purposeful. Powerful.

The Hunter Prize advances research in neurobiology—specifically in getting therapies from concept to the clinic. This year's awards were given to projects designed to restore mobility.

Sue Hunter says her father “believed strongly in the power of capitalism to do good in this world,” and that taking something from concept to commercialization “required early investment and patience.”

As an investment industry icon and founder of Pittsburgh-based wealth management firm Hunter Associates, her father, David Hunter, would’ve known. He died in 2013, but his daughter is likewise impassioned about making profound change through strategic investments. Top of mind for Sue Hunter: helping Pittsburgh stake its claim as not only a clinical, research and robotics powerhouse, but also a global leader in life sciences commercialization.

In 2022 she established the Hunter Family Foundation Traumatic Brain Injury Translational Research Program at the University of Pittsburgh to support early stage developments in neurobiology. The first two grants from that fund were awarded in June 2024 to Jennifer Collinger, a PhD associate professor of physical medicine and rehabilitation, and Marco Capogrosso, a PhD assistant professor of neurological surgery.

Collinger aims to restore arm and hand function in people with quadriplegia. She’ll use her award to further develop brain-computer interfaces that enable patients to move a robotic arm and hand to perform tasks just by thinking about it.

“What I’m really excited about is that this award is allowing us to focus on things that can have practical clinical impact,” Collinger says. “We want to make progress in getting these

things we’re working on from the lab to the home.

“I’d like to work on improving our ability to control a robotic arm for reaching and grasping . . . and get it to a state where it’s much easier to use and much more robust.”

Capogrosso is developing neurotechnologies to enable spinal cord injury and stroke patients to regain control of their hands after paralysis—it’s research that builds on what he’s done with spinal cord stimulation to restore arm and hand movement in stroke patients.

Capogrosso says his newer approach, currently in preclinical testing, is designed to provide stimulation in the brain and along the spinal cord to treat patients with more severe effects from stroke or injury, essentially attacking the problem from above and below at the same time.

“This gives us the freedom to explore something that’s high risk,” he says of the award. “If it works, we can keep fueling this opportunity with other funds.”

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Jennifer Collinger, Sue Hunter and Marco Capogrosso