



First Annual BEE BRAVE Pickleball Tournament March 15, 2025, 8 a.m.–8 p.m.



**Impact Dynamic Training
Hudsonville, MI**

Driving Discoveries in Breast Cancer: Bee Brave Impact Report

Since 2016, Bee Brave has raised nearly \$900,000 in support of breakthrough breast cancer research in the lab of Dr. Matt Steensma at Van Andel Institute. Your generous gifts have empowered research, driven discovery and contributed to new insights that may one day inform treatment. We are proud to be a part of such a passionate community of people who share a commitment to making a positive impact. We are deeply grateful for your longstanding support of our mission to improve the health of current and future generations.



Here is a snapshot of the crucial research supported by Bee Brave:

Investigating a genetic contributor to cancer

To combat cancer, we need to understand how and why it develops. Support from Bee Brave is helping the Steensma Lab study how the *NF1* gene contributes to breast cancer progression and resistance to hormone therapies. For example, the lab discovered that a change to *NF1* causes cells to lose vital protections that keep them healthy and alters estrogen signaling, making them more likely to become cancerous.

Ensuring right tools for the task

Scientists require state-of-the-art equipment to make life-changing discoveries. Thanks to Bee Brave, the Steensma Lab was able to purchase a specialized microscope and an automated cell counter — both of which enable detailed research into the underpinnings of breast cancer.

Bringing together a team of experts

Bee Brave funds have helped the Steensma Lab ensure it has the expert staff required to conduct leading-edge breast cancer research. Science is a hands-on task, and it is vital that the right team is in place to make discoveries.

"Bee Brave has made an enormous impact on our research. Your generous support has allowed us to ask high-impact questions about the role of NF1 in breast cancer risk and therapeutic resistance. We are immensely grateful — thank you for all you do!"

Matt Steensma, M.D.
VAI Associate Professor

"Bee Brave has impacted our research in profound ways. From supporting our amazing scientists to funding large, high-impact genomic studies, Bee Brave has helped us to advance our understanding of how breast cancer starts and progresses to more advanced disease."

Carrie Graveel, Ph.D.
VAI Senior Research Scientist



**FOR SPONSORSHIP QUESTIONS, PLEASE
EMAIL LINNAE SATTERLEE AT
LINNAE.SATTERLEE@VAI.ORG.
FOR ANY BEE BRAVE PICKLEBALL
QUESTIONS, PLEASE EMAIL
BEEBRAVE5K@GMAIL.COM.**

