

Zuckerberg, Brin join forces to extend life

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Facebook CEO Mark Zuckerberg delivers a keynote during the Facebook f8 Developer Conference at the San Francisco Design Center in San Francisco on September 22, 2011 in California. Famed founders of Internet rivals Google and Facebook joined forces on Wednesday to back big-money prizes for research aimed at extending human life.

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[Sergey Brin](#) and Mark Zuckerberg, along with their spouses, joined Russian [venture capitalist](#) Yuri Milner to award 11 scientists \$3 million each to launch the Breakthrough Prize in Life Sciences.

"Priscilla and I are honored to be part of this," Zuckerberg said.

"We believe the Breakthrough Prize in Life Sciences has the potential to provide a platform for other models of philanthropy, so people everywhere have an opportunity at a better future."

Art Levinson, who chairs boards at mobile device powerhouse Apple and biotechnology star Genentech, will head the non-profit foundation created to support breakthrough research.

Levinson said he believes the prize will spotlight outstanding minds in medicine and hopes it will help enhance medical innovation.

Zuckerberg, Milner, and Brin's wife Anne Wojcicki will be on the foundation's board of directors. They have agreed that going forward, five annual Breakthrough prizes of \$3 million each will be awarded.

"We are thrilled to support scientists who think big, take risks and have made a significant impact on our lives," said Wojcicki, co-founder of startup [23andMe](#), which provides personal [DNA testing](#) services.

"These scientists should be household names and heroes in society."

Brin remarked that "curing a disease should be worth more than a touchdown" in an apparent reference to riches heaped on professional athletes such as those who play US football.

This year's Breakthrough Prize winners, many of whom targeted cancer in their research, agreed to serve on a committee to select future

honorees.

"Solving the enormous complexity of human diseases calls for a much bigger effort compared to [fundamental physics](#) and therefore requires multiple sponsors to reward outstanding achievements," Milner said of the Silicon Valley heavyweights teaming up to back the award.

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