

MassNextGen Year Three Cohort

Joanna Stackina, PhD, CEO and CSO, Axonis

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Axonis Therapeutics is advancing breakthrough drug discovery to develop groundbreaking therapies for spinal cord injury and other currently incurable neurological disorders, making a real difference for patients, their families, and the global healthcare system.

Joanna is a biochemist, cell biologist, and neuroscientist. She was recruited to Axonis while completing postdoctoral research to in nerve injury at Harvard Medical School. While at the helm, Joanna has led the company to earning a Boehringer Ingelheim Innovation Prize, Golden Ticket to LabCentral and an International Space Station and Boeing grant.

Natalie Artzi, PhD, Co-Founder and CEO, BioDevek

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BioDevek is developing the next generation of adhesive materials, with an early product that forms a protective layer over suture to prevent leakages during surgeries. The company was founded after more than ten years of research on tissue-biomaterial interactions.

Natalie is an Assistant Professor at Brigham and Women's Hospital and is a Principle Research Scientist at MIT's Institute of Medical Engineering and Science. With BioDevek, Natalie was selected to participate in the IGNITE program at MassMEDIC.

Nele Van Dessel, PhD, CEO and Co-Founder, Ernest Pharmaceuticals

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Ernest Pharmaceuticals is developing programmed bacteria to destroy cancer. Bacterial therapeutics have the power to seek out tumors and deploy potent anticancer payloads. Therapeutic bacteria have unique properties that enable them to treat metastatic disease and inoperable tumors. Ernest is leveraging these properties to develop novel cancer solutions.

Nele is a post-doctoral researcher at UMass Amherst and has studied cancer cell proliferation and gene expression throughout her career. While working with Ernest, she has participated in the Valley Venture Mentor program and the MassConnect program.

Virginia Burger, PhD, Co-Founder and CEO, New Equilibrium Biosciences

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New Equilibrium Biosciences is developing a computational-experimental platform for drug discovery targeting a class of proteins found in cancer and neurodegenerative diseases for which no drugs have been successfully developed.

Virginia completed postdoctoral research in computational biophysics and applies this knowledge to drug discovery at New Equilibrium. She worked at an early stage company prior to joining New Equilibrium and participated in MIT's Healthcare Ventures course, Translational Fellows program, and Drug Discovery course.

Ida Pavlichenko, PhD, CEO, President, and Co-Founder, PionEar

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PionEar Technologies is developing innovative ear tube implants with unique drug transport capabilities for treatment of ear and hearing disorders. This technology will enable more efficient infection resolution, reduced risk of revision surgeries, and targeted drug delivery.

Ida has 10+ years of experience in materials science and bioengineering research. Since founding the company she has won the Grand Prize in Health and Life Sciences at the Harvard President's Innovation Challenge, Wyss' Validation Grants for Technology Commercialization, and Gold Prize at MassChallenge Boston.

Camille Martin, Co-Founder, CEO, and President, Seaspire

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Seaspire is pioneering a new category of multifunctional materials with extensive implications for human health and environmental safety. Initially the team is targeting replacement of harmful active ingredients that provide UV filtering in existing sunscreens.

Camille recently completed her PhD at Northeastern University where she aided research vital to founding Seaspire. While at Northeastern, she was inducted into the Huntington 100 and participated in the NSF I-Corps program.