M otivated by a desire to help broaden the exploration of regenerative medicine as a treatment option for companion animals and horses, Dick and Carolyn Randall of Cupertino provided core funding to launch a five-year, $2.5 million study of the therapeutic potential of adult stem cells.

Mr. Randall, a retired business executive and quarter horse breeder, has been riding reining horses competitively for more than 15 years.

The Randalls’ gift of $425,000 last December allowed the Center for Equine Health to organize and initiate the comprehensive regenerative medicine and stem cell research program in veterinary medicine.

The Stem Cell Regenerative Medicine Group includes 10 faculty members from five academic departments. It is housed at the Center for Equine Health and led by Larry Galuppo, associate professor and chief of equine surgery in the School of Veterinary Medicine.

The research team is working in tandem with the UC Davis School of Medicine stem cell research program under the direction of Professor Jan Nolta, one of the nation’s leading stem cell researchers. Both the Center for Equine Health and the Center for Companion Animal Health are supporting graduate student researchers pursuing PhD degrees in conjunction with this project.

The initial focus will be on using regenerative medicine for bone healing and repair in dogs and horses. Scientists will work to determine the most effective harvesting, storage and propagation techniques for stem cells. They will also compare the osteogenic potential of mesenchymal stem cells derived from fat, bone marrow and cord blood.

In addition to the support from Mr. and Mrs. Randall, funding has been received or pledged from the Harriet Pfleger Foundation—for graduate student support; Thermogenesis Corporation of Rancho Cordova—for bioarchival equipment and graduate student and technical training; and Alamo Pintado Equine Foundation—for tendon ligament regenerative studies.