

# People on the go

By Vicki L. Wilson

## Professional people person

For Lee Stratton '82, the most remarkable thing about his work in human resources is the humans.

"It's fascinating," Stratton said. "It never ceases to amaze me the predicaments people get themselves into. And then, other days, I feel really humbled at what people can accomplish with the right support and the right conditions in the workplace. It's really dealing with human behavior — that's what I do all day long."

As senior vice president of human resources for SI International, Inc., a Reston, Va.-based provider of information technology and network solutions primarily to the federal government, Stratton has a lot of humans to look after. Last year alone, the company grew from 2,000 employees to 4,000, in more than 50 locations in the United States.

"It's business, it's psychology, it's teaching, it's training, it's sales, it's marketing," he said. "It's all these different parts of a corporation — and public relations and politics — and I have the opportunity to touch all of it. Every day, I learn something new."

And every day, there's something new to do, he said. Reporting directly to the SI CEO, Stratton is responsible for analyzing, establishing, and leading the human resource components of the company, such as incentives and employee motivation, staffing, compensation, coaching and counseling, training and professional development, conflict resolution, mentoring, and leadership development, all while managing his own staff of 50.

It's a long list for a man with only four months on the job. But Stratton has more than 20 years of HR experience under his belt working at corporate goliaths such as GE, Raytheon, and TRW. The critical thinking skills he learned at Colgate come into play, too, he said, as he looks ahead at some long-term questions for SI.

"What motivates these employees? What are the right recruiting strategies? How do we compete for top talent and retain them in such a competitive market? How do we differentiate this company and make SI an employer of choice?" he said. "At Colgate, I learned to ask the questions. I learned to look for better ways."

As the eldest of his six children heads into his teens this year, Stratton is asking what could be his toughest HR question yet: how will he handle having six teenagers in one house in a few years?

"I don't know," he laughed. His experience in conflict resolution, though, is sure to come in handy.

## Architectural trajectory

It was during her semester abroad with the Colgate Venice Study Group, led by classics professor Rebecca Ammerman, that architect Lea Ciavarra '91 first discovered her love of architecture. "I had always been interested in it, but

that semester and Rebecca brought it out," Ciavarra said.

Now, a short 15 years later, Ciavarra is an award-winning architect renovating Ammerman's Greek Revival house in Hamilton. As co-founder of the successful New York City-based architectural firm Lubrano Ciavarra Design, LLC, Ciavarra works regularly with residential clients, and on commercial and public projects in New York City and internationally.

"It wasn't in my master plan," Ciavarra said of launching her own business at a time when most new architects are still getting their feet wet. "But once I started doing it, I loved it." Ciavarra began her career as a teacher at the Syracuse University School of Architecture shortly after she graduated from there with her master's degree. Later, she returned to Italy to teach. "But then I decided I wanted to practice as an architect," she said. She went to work for Gluckman Mayner Architects in New York City, and renewed a friendship with Anne Marie Lubrano, a former architecture school colleague. "She had a small project on the side — a children's shoe store — and asked me to help," Ciavarra said. She did, and another project followed. The next commission they earned was big enough that Ciavarra could leave her day job.

"We officially established the business in 1999," she said.

A year later, the two architects tried their hand at school design in the Chicago Public Schools Big Shoulders, Small Schools Design Competition. Lubrano Ciavarra Design won the open competition, and came in a close second in the invited portion of a contest dominated by renowned, long-established firms. The partners have since taken on more school clients — work Ciavarra loves. And just last year, Ciavarra was awarded Syracuse's School of Architecture Dean's Distinguished Alumnae Award.

It has been a full-circle career experience for Ciavarra, who's made frequent trips to upstate New York to check in on her Hamilton project and to sit on the Advisory Board for the SU School of Architecture.

"I'm busy, but a friend of mine from Colgate said to me, 'Yeah, but you love what you do,'" she said. "And that's true. I've been really lucky."

*An exhibition of Ciavarra's work will be mounted at Colgate during Reunion Weekend June 1-4, 2006, on the first floor of Little Hall.*

## A pathway to hope

In the next year, Bill Gillick '75 could be helping Alzheimer's patients as far away as Japan improve the quality of their lives.

Pathways to Memory, a trademarked targeted memory enhancement program developed by Gillick, who is a professional healthcare consultant, and partner Ann Marie Doetterl, has been shown to improve memory and slow the progression of Alzheimer's Disease in patients. Launched in 2005

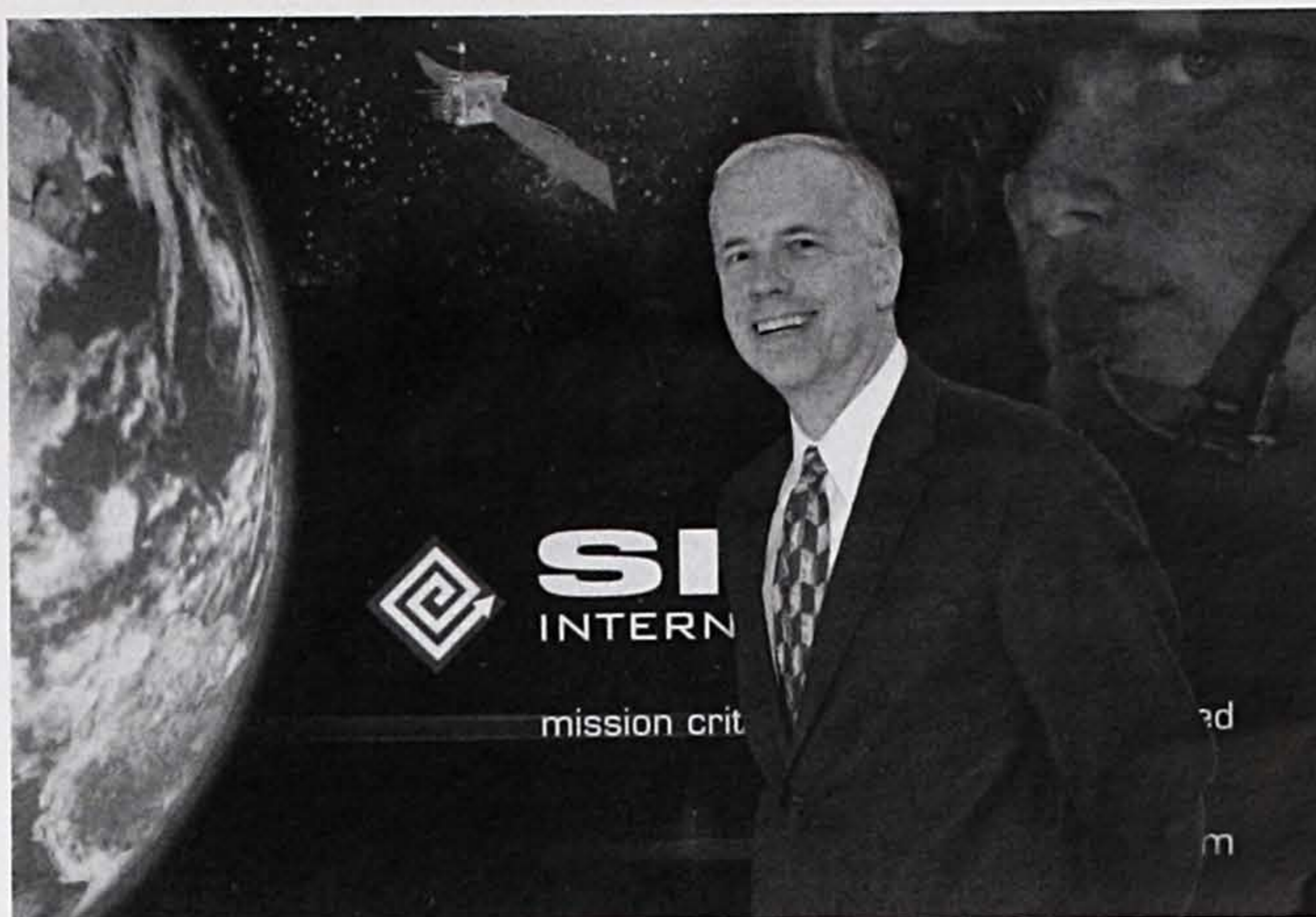


Photo by Timothy D. Sofranko



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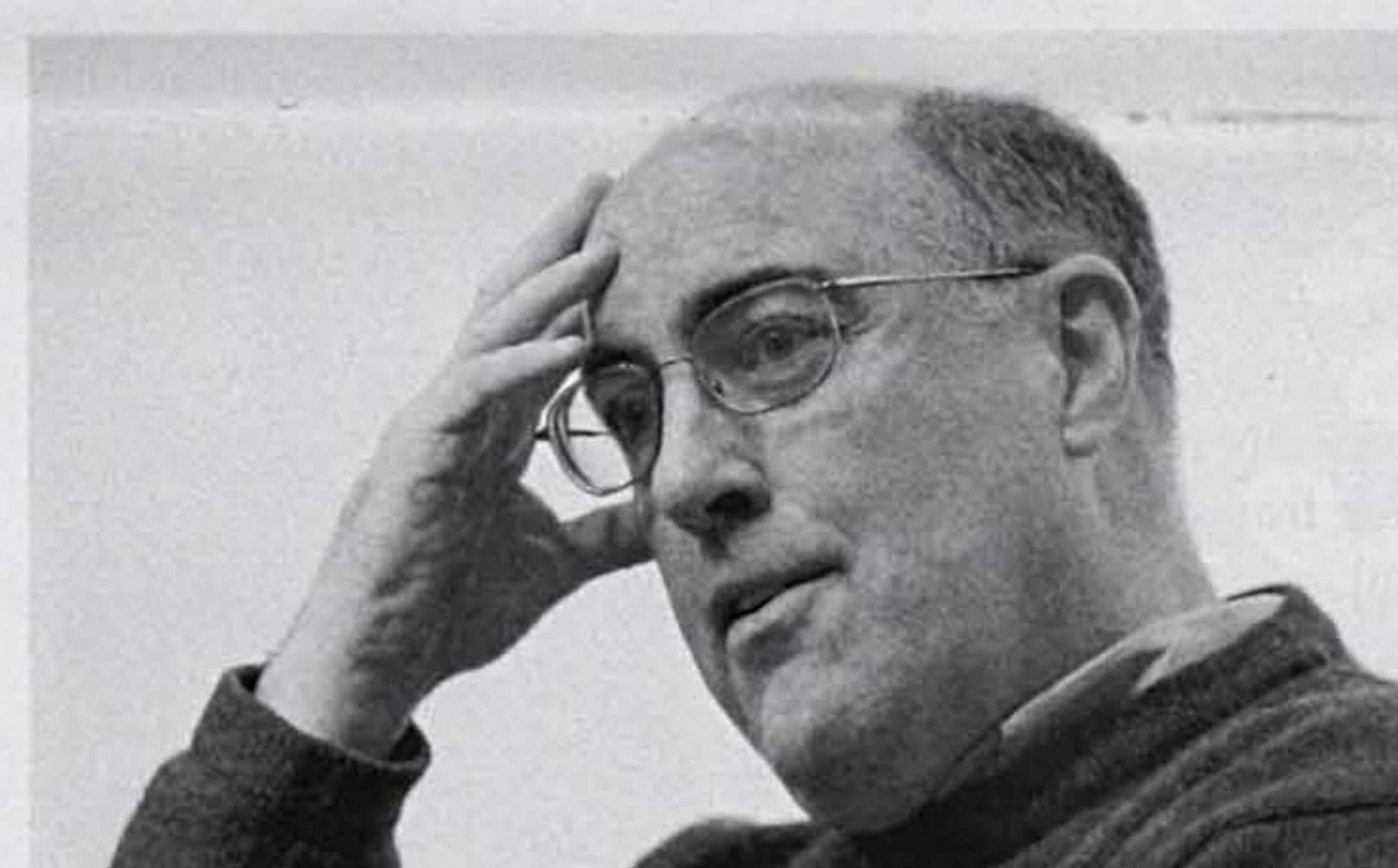


Photo by Aubrey Graham '06

Top: Lee Stratton '82, above: Lea Ciavarra '91, right: Bill Gillick '75

with remarkable success in western New York through Gillick's Home-watch CareGivers franchise, the program has quickly generated a buzz that has spread across the nation and internationally. Healthcare providers on the West Coast and in Canada, Ireland, and Japan are showing interest.

"We're very excited," Gillick said. "You start to hear stories about the woman who doesn't get lost now when she's driving because of Pathways."

Clinical studies have shown that implicit memory — the relatively unconscious or automatic memory that is used for speech, motor skills, basic memory, and the five senses — remains intact for individuals in early and mid-stage Alzheimer's Disease. Based on this research, Pathways uses an individually customized, one-on-one memory enhancement plan that combines flash cards and workbooks with instruction by trained staff.

"Fundamentally, we spend two hours a day, three days a week with these folks for 12 weeks," Gillick said. "The program actually gets clients to

think again, creating new pathways in the brain to replace the damaged pathways [that result in memory loss]."

Eventually the disease will destroy the new pathways as well, but Pathways to Memory can slow that progression, keeping Alzheimer's sufferers safely in their own homes longer and providing hope for patients and their families.

"When someone is diagnosed, the family members often retreat. They struggle with how to communicate with their loved one," Gillick said. The Pathways model encourages participation from family members, who often remark that the program gives them their relative back.

With experts expecting more than 11 million people to be diagnosed with Alzheimer's by the year 2050, Gillick is thrilled that the results from Pathways have been so positive, and that the word is spreading.

"You start to hear things like, 'I'm going to lick this disease,'" Gillick said. It's a declaration he hopes to hear around the world. 🌱