



OAR Awards \$240K in 2009 Applied Research Grant Competition

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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ARLINGTON, VA – On October 28, 2009, the Organization for Autism Research (OAR) Board of Directors voted unanimously to approve a total of \$240,000 to fund seven new research studies, as recommended by the OAR Scientific Council, bringing the 2009 Applied Autism Research Competition to a close. OAR holds the competition in support of its mission to improve the quality of life for those with autism and their families through the funding of applied research studies that offer to produce practical outcomes. The seven studies selected represent the best of 75 proposals, which OAR received from across the globe. With this year's grants, OAR will have funded just under \$2 million in innovative, practical, autism research since its founding.

This process started last November with the publication of the Request for Proposals (RFP) on OAR's Web site and in print ads and electronic posts by a number of research organizations and professional journals. By April 3, 2009 – the closing date for the preproposal stage of the competition – OAR had received preproposals from 75 researchers from across the United States and Canada. Each of these preproposals was then reviewed by three doctoral level reviewers including at least one member of OAR's Scientific Council. From the initial group of preproposals, OAR selected 32 to advance to the full proposal phase of the competition.

Full proposal submissions go into much greater depth than the preproposals, particularly in terms of background, methodology, participant description, and outcome analysis. OAR received 30 full proposals by the August deadline. Each was reviewed by three doctoral level reviewers, including at least two members of OAR's Scientific Council. On the basis of these reviews, OAR selected 11 proposals for final review at the Scientific Council's annual meeting on October 22. The Council in turn recommended the seven studies described below (approximately a 10% selection rate overall) to the Board of Directors, who as indicated earlier approved the new research grants.

The winners of OAR's 8th Annual Applied Autism Research Competition are below.

2009 Applied Autism Research Competition Awards

PI: Jon Campbell, Ph.D.

Institution: University of Georgia Department of Educational Psychology and Instructional Technology

Project: *University of Georgia-Carolina Autism Resource and Evaluation Center (UGA-CARES): A Collaborative Autism Screening Project Utilizing Web-based Technology*

Award: 2-year, \$60,000 award

PI: Kelly Whalon, Ph.D.

Institution: The College of William and Mary, The School of Education

Project: *The Effects of a Reciprocal Questioning Intervention of the Reading Comprehension and Social Communication of Students with Autism Spectrum Disorder*

Award: 1-year, \$30,000 award

PI: Carolyn Hughes, Ph.D.

Institution: Vanderbilt University, Peabody College, Department of Special Education

Project: *High School Inclusion Program for Students with Autism Spectrum Disorders*

Award: 1-year, \$30,000 award

PI: Alexander Gantman, Psy.D.

Institution: UCLA Semel Institute for Neuroscience and Human Behavior

Project: *Social Skills Training for Young Adults with Autism Spectrum Disorders*

Award: 1-year, \$30,000 award

PI: Audrey Blakeley-Smith, Ph.D.

Institution: University of Colorado Denver, Departments of Psychiatry and Pediatrics

Project: *Peer-mediated Intervention for Elementary School Students with Autism Spectrum Disorders*

Award: 1-year, \$30,000 award (This is a 2nd year award for a previously approved grant)

PI: Kristi Asaro-Saddler, Ph.D.

Institution: University of Albany, SUNY

Project: *Writing Instruction for Children with Autism Spectrum Disorders: A Study of Self-regulation and Strategy Use*

Award: 1-year, \$30,000 award

PI: Rebecca MacDonald, Ph.D. BCBA

Institution: The New England Center for Children

Project: *Using a Direct Observation Assessment Battery to Assess Outcome of Early Intensive Behavioral Intervention for Children with Autism.*

Award: 1-year, \$30,000 award

OAR offers its sincere congratulations to all award winners and, in addition, expresses its great appreciation to all who submitted proposals.

The RFP for the 2010 Autism Research Competition is now available. Pre-proposals are due April 2, 2010. OAR will consider funding one year studies with a maximum grant award of \$30,000. For complete RFP information, please visit

www.researchautism.org/professionals/grants/application/index.asp.

ABOUT OAR: The Organization for Autism Research (OAR) is a national, nonprofit organization formed and led by relatives of children and adults with autism and Asperger Syndrome. OAR is

dedicated to promoting research that can be applied to help families, educators, caregivers, and individuals with autism find much-needed answers to their immediate and urgent questions.

Since 2001, OAR has awarded more than \$2.2 million to fund 112 applied research studies and published six community-friendly resource guides in its *Life Journey through Autism* series. OAR introduced the Schwallie Family Scholarship Program offering college and vocational school scholarships to individuals with autism spectrum disorders in 2007, and in 2009 and 2010 produced Operation Autism, www.operationautismonline.org, a web-based resource for military families touched by autism, and a companion resource guide, *Life Journey through Autism: A Guide for Military Families*.

For more information about OAR, please visit www.researchautism.org.