



## 2003 Marine Corps Marathon™ / “Run for Autism”

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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The Organization for Autism Research (OAR) announced today that the foundation has been accepted as the first national autism organization to participate as a ‘Charity Partner’ in the prestigious and popular Marine Corps Marathon™ in 2003. “Our acceptance as a Charity Partner will enable OAR to create an event that will generate excitement as well as autism awareness across the country. We are honored to be the first autism group to participate in this special marathon. The fact that we have guaranteed entries will help attract runners. Their subsequent efforts for OAR will help raise awareness of autism and funds for autism research,” noted Mike Maloney, Executive Director.

OAR has crafted its Run for Autism within the broader Marathon. Ideally runners from each state will team with local autism organizations to help spread the message of the need for more funding for applied autism research – research that investigates issues like intervention, education, employment and life care that arise daily for families grappling with autism.

The run will take place on Sunday, Oct. 26, 2003 in Washington, DC. It typically attracts some 16,000 runners and 70,000 spectators annually. Often referred to as the “People’s Marathon,” the run draws many first-time marathoners and more experienced runners. It welcomes novice runners and very generously gives worthy charities the opportunity to raise funds.

OAR’s goals for the Run for Autism are to have a total of 100 Runners for Autism in the Marine Corps Marathon or its associated 5K run and among them have at least one runner from each state. In addition to running and raising funds, OAR expects each State Runner to carry a message that expresses the hopes and life expectations of the children and adults with autism in their state to Washington, DC.

“To say this is exciting for OAR is a vast understatement!” added Maloney, a 23-year veteran of the Marine Corps. “The Marine Corps Marathon™ and autism is a great match. Above all, a marathon demands courage, endurance, will and determination, qualities that parents in the autism community exhibit each day. The combined effect of having 100 Runners for Autism set in the arena of the Marine Corps Marathon™ set the nation’s capital, and their collective representation of the autism community, provides us with an opportunity to make a powerful, memorable, and highly visible statement about autism and the need for autism research. We hope that runners and autism organizations across the country will join us.” Maloney said.