



## OAR Awards Seven New Graduate Research Grants

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*Arlington, VA* – The Organization for Autism Research (OAR) is pleased to announce the results of its sixth annual Graduate Research Grant Competition. This competition, open to graduate students pursuing Master's or Doctoral degrees, awards up to \$1,000 and \$2,000 respectively to those conducting research related to autism spectrum disorders. This year, OAR will make seven awards totaling \$13,000 to six doctoral students and one master's student conducting research related to autism. With today's grants, OAR has awarded \$97,000 in research grants to 53 graduate researchers since the inaugural competition in 2004.

The 2009 competition achieved a new first for OAR as Matthew Segal, a Ph.D. candidate at the University of Georgia, becomes the first person to receive an OAR grant at both the Master's and Doctoral level. Segal originally applied in 2007. His Master's research examined Factors relating to educational professionals' classroom practices for the inclusion of students with autism spectrum disorders. The Doctoral study will take his preliminary research a step further by studying the educational placement of these students.

OAR received 19 research proposals this year. In evaluating the research proposals, two members of OAR's Scientific Council reviewed and scored each proposal. The reviewers' task was to identify the studies that best matched OAR's research priorities and whose potential outcomes were most relevant for families. In keeping with OAR's dedication to quality research, only the best of the best were selected for funding.

The 2009 grant recipients are:

**Suzannah J. Ferraioli, Rutgers, the State University of New Jersey – Doctoral Grant**

*Comparative effects of mindfulness and skills-based parent training programs on the stress and interaction style of parents of children with autism*

**Tina R. Goldsmith, Ph.D., Yale University – Post-Doctoral Grant**

*Comprehension of pretense in young children with autism: The development of assessment and teaching techniques*

**Michelle Patriquin, Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University – Master's Grant**

*The effect of music on autonomic response in children with autism spectrum disorders*

**Julie Ramisch, Michigan State University – Doctoral Grant**

*Strengthening the relationships of couples who have children with autism*

**Kendra Rickard, University of Nevada, Reno – Doctoral Grant**

*Skill building in core language skills as a method for improving reading comprehension*

**Matthew Segall, University of Georgia – Doctoral Grant**

*Factors influencing the educational placement of students with autism spectrum disorders*

**Hui-Ting Wang, University of Washington – Doctoral Grant**

*The use of a visual cue and reinforcer time delay to teach waiting behavior for young children with autism*

Commenting after completing this sixth annual grants process, OAR President and Scientific Council Chairman, Peter Gerhardt, Ed.D. said, “Each year the number of young researchers applying for an OAR graduate grant increases as does the quality of their applications. Our hope is that all the applicants, whether or not they received an OAR grant, will continue pursuing intervention research as one part of their future professional lives. This is the real, long-term benefit of this program.”

For information on the 2010 Graduate Research Grants Program, please visit [OAR's Web site](#) or contact Alyssa Kruszyna, Assistant Director, Research and Programs at (703) 243-9717.

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](http://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](http://www.researchautism.org).