



First Applied Autism Research and Intervention Conference a Success

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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ARLINGTON, VA - On Friday, October 24, and Saturday, October 25, the Organization for Autism Research (www.researchautism.org), with the support of the Doug Flutie Jr. Foundation for Autism and the Autism Society of America Northern Virginia hosted its first Applied Autism Research and Intervention Conference at the Key Bridge Marriott in Arlington, Virginia. The Conference featured an ensemble of top autism professionals from around the United States, including guest Keynote Speaker Ann Wagner, PhD, from the National Institute of Mental Health, who focused on the state of the science in autism research. Presentations varied from 45-minute seminars to two-hour workshops, and focused on the theme of Education and Intervention across the Lifespan.

Many of OAR's distinguished Scientific Council members were conference presenters, including Peter Gerhardt, EdD (Chairman), Michael Fabrizio, MA, BCBA, Joanne Gerenser, MA, CCC-SLP, Suzanne Letso, MA, BCBA, James Mulick, PhD, Michael Londner, MD, Robert Sprague, PhD, and Brenda Myles, PhD, one of the nation's foremost experts on Asperger Syndrome. In addition to Wagner, guest speakers included Edward Carr, PhD, Linda Meyer, EdD, MPA, Erin Richard and Patricia Rao, PhD.

Thanks to a significant grant from the Flutie Foundation, OAR was in a position to offer scholarship opportunities to a number of parents, enabling them to attend the conference at no cost. The audience was diverse, with a combined total of 100 people participating in the two-day conference including parents, educators, researchers and students. In addition, several autism organizations sent representatives to exhibit at the conference, setting up display areas and distributing information. The majority of attendees were from the Virginia and Maryland area, but a handful flew in from as far away as Rochester, New York and Somerset, Kentucky. One of the attendees, Lorie Wildman-Mackey explained why she traveled to the conference, "I decided to fly down to attend the conference to support further research into the causes and treatment of autism and also to increase public awareness. It is not only for my son Tyler that I want to support research into autism, but also for all of those afflicted who still have not found a treatment to help them significantly. A big thank you to OAR for an informative conference."

Peter Gerhardt, Chairman of OAR's Scientific Council stressed the significance of this conference, "It brought together some of the premier researchers and practitioners in the field to talk about one thing: the current state of applied research in autism. That was critical. This meeting also highlighted OAR's commitment to not just funding research, but ensuring that this research is available for use in classrooms, residences and adult employment programs across the country."

The success of this first conference is a major step for OAR on the eve of its two-year anniversary, helping to further establish its role as a national leader in the area of applied autism

research. As a result of this success, OAR is set to host a second Applied Autism Research and Intervention Conference in 2004 on October 29 and October 30.

For more information on the 2004 conference or other OAR events email [OAR](#) or call Mike Maloney, Sarah Snow or Nicole Fidler at 703.351.5031.