



## First Research Grants

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Just one year after opening its doors, the Organization for Autism Research takes great pleasure in announcing research grants totaling \$60,000. These first awards --\$30,000 each--go to Richard J. Kubina, Jr., Ph.D., Assistant Professor of Special Education, Department of Educational and School Psychology and Special Education at The Pennsylvania State University, and Robert Stromer, Ph.D., Associate Professor of Psychiatry at the University of Massachusetts Medical School, Shriver Center, in Waltham, MA. These grants were made possible in part through donations from the Autism Society of America – Northern Virginia chapter and the Westchester Foundation for Autism.

The proposals submitted by Drs. Kubina and Stromer were two of 20 received by OAR in response to a Request for Proposals (RFP) published earlier this year. Scientific Council Chairman, Dr. Peter Gerhardt, spoke for all the reviewers in summing up OAR's inaugural Applied Research Competition, "It was very encouraging. We were impressed by the quality of the proposals and the range of topics for new studies. It's important for parents to know that there are many professionals working in the area of applied research. In addition to looking for well-designed proposals that fulfilled the requirements in the RFP, we were hoping to find studies whose potential outcomes would apply broadly. Kubina's and Stromer's are outstanding in virtually every respect."

Dr. Kubina's proposal, entitled Fluency Research for Children with Autism, will examine a critically important aspect of Applied Behavior Analysis (ABA), an intervention widely viewed as the most appropriate approach for intervention with children with autism by parents and professionals alike. The project seeks to determine whether skills taught to high frequencies of correct responding are more or less likely to be maintained and applied than skills taught to accuracy criteria alone. If so, according to OAR's scientific reviewers, Kubina's proposal has the potential to affect how ABA is delivered for each child and its outcomes would potentially extend to adolescents and adults with autism as well.