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 completion – 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: UCL A 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
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.


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