



OAR and COVID-19 A Message from OAR's Executive Director

Like most of the country, if not the world, the COVID-19 pandemic has impacted all of us in one way or another. OAR has gone to a telework model, which thankfully is working well. Our employees are home, safe, and able to observe all the recommended preventive measures. And, thanks to their efforts from home, OAR remains fully operational and capable of fulfilling our mission without interruption.

Thank you to our heroes. On the national scene, we join many throughout the nation in applauding the courage, determination, skill, and heart of all the medical professionals, doctors, nurses, ER and hospital staff as well as our first responders for their heroic efforts in the face of this unprecedented health crisis. Let's include the people who work in our grocery stores and the Post Office in that salute too. Thank you does not express our gratitude well enough.

The Mission continues. COVID-19 hasn't changed OAR's mission or diminished the autism-related challenges faced by self-advocates, parents, siblings, teachers, and more face every day. In fact, it has added even more complexity. To that end, our Research and Programs staff has compiled a list of COVID-19 related links and resources, which can be found at researchautism.org/COVID-19/. I especially recommend the Supporting Individuals with Autism through Uncertain Times resource created by the Frank Porter Graham Institute at UNC Chapel Hill.

Runners and fundraising. The [RUN FOR AUTISM](#) is and will continue to be our signature, national fundraising and awareness program. We understand that these are uncertain times economically both for our runners, prospective runners, and the family and friends they rely on to help meet fundraising requirements and goals. We want you to train, run, and represent OAR and autism regardless, especially this year. As a result, we will accept each runner's pledge to try to reach the fundraising level for each race and be flexible in adjusting goals and deadlines as necessary.

COVID-19 Impact on OAR. The good news is that COVID-19 hasn't stopped us from continuing OAR's work. It takes a little longer for our resources to be delivered as our fulfillment partner scales back the number of workers per shift. Nonetheless, we're still sending them out.

We just received 191 new research proposals. That's more than 40 more than ever before. Not surprisingly, several them look to examine issues arising from the effects of COVID-19 on learning, living, and coping under rapidly changing, stressful conditions. In May, we'll announce new graduate research grants. Then in July we'll be awarding 34 scholarships to individuals with autism continuing their studies after high school.

The only bad news, and a short-term challenge in our view, is that our donations from now through the end of the year may not meet the optimistic goals we had starting the year. Between the economic strains on many people and the immediate response to reliable COVID-19 charitable funds in both the autism and greater national communities, we understand. Most important, we are built on a solid

foundation and capable of sustained operations regardless. That's the best news! We're still accepting donations, of course.

Stay safe and [keep your eye on the ball](#).

All the best,

Mike

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Michael V. Maloney". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Michael V. Maloney
Executive Director