



ORGANIZATION FOR AUTISM RESEARCH

History and Mission

The Organization for Autism Research (OAR) is a national non-profit founded in 2001. It uses research to help families, educators, caregivers, and individuals with autism find answers to their immediate questions. OAR provides timely and relevant resources, funds studies that have the potential to enhance quality of life, and is an active partner in the autism community.

OAR's mission is to apply research to the challenges of autism.

OAR has an annual operating budget of \$1.8 to \$1.9 million annually broken down as follows:

- Information (37.8%)
- Research (27.9%)
- Education (15.6%)
- Fundraising (14.4%)
- Management and General (4%)

OAR receives funds from multiple sources:

- *RUN FOR AUTISM*. National and international charity running program. (35%)
- Public support. General, honor-memorial, annual campaign, and online contributions (27%)
- Major Gifts and Grants. Donations of \$5,000 or more. (10%)
- Board Donations. (8%)
- Chairman's Dinner. Annual event. (7%)
- Bequests (4%)
- Grassroots fundraising. Social media, local, independent events (3%)
- Workplace charitable campaigns (2%)

OAR has four mission areas: research, information, education, and community impact.

Research: Annual process of evaluating and selecting research proposals, funding applied research, and conducting general oversight of the research program.

Information: Disseminating evidence-based resources and OAR's research findings to the autism community via the website, *The OARacle* monthly e-newsletter, blog, social media, and printed resources: the *Life Journey through Autism* guide series, several "Autism in the Schoolhouse" resources (e.g. *Kit for Kids* peer education materials, *Understanding Autism: A Guide for Secondary School Teachers* curriculum on DVD), and resources for siblings and military families

Education: The OAR [Webinar Series](#), introduced two years ago, features autism experts from across the U.S. speaking on topics of high interest to the autism community three times a year. Education also includes the OAR Scholarship program, which offers **\$3,000 scholarships** to students with autism pursuing post-secondary undergraduate studies, trade and vocational training, and cooperative life skills programs.



Community Impact: Long term programs whose goals are to effect significant positive change. Current initiatives are “Autism in the Schoolhouse”, begun in 2012, and Hire Autism an adult employment initiative launched in April 2017.

Accomplishments

National Standing Charity Navigator 4-Star rating (5 years); Top-Rated by Great Nonprofits (9 years)

Research. Funded more than \$4 million for 263 research studies since 2002.

Information:

- Published nine [Life Journey Through Autism](#) guides to include guides for parents on research, assessment, transition to adulthood, special education, and safety and three different *Educator’s Guides* for teachers and school administrators,
- Created unique resources for military families impacted by autism: [A Guide for Military Families](#) and *Operation Autism*, www.operationautism.org, a website that provides 24/7 information
- Created [autism sibling support resources](#) to help typically-developing children and teens develop positive relationships with their brothers and sisters on the spectrum

Education:

- OAR Webinar series educates on topics of high interest to the community three times a year.
- Awarded almost \$1.1 million in [scholarships](#) for post-secondary education to 356 individuals with autism since 2007,
- Released [Finding Your Way: A College Guide for Students on the Spectrum](#)
- Launched an online [sex education resource](#) for individuals with autism

Community Impact

- Introduced the “Autism in the Schoolhouse” initiative to promote peer acceptance ([Kit for Kids](#)) among more than 118,000 students to date and provide teacher professional development (“[Curriculum in a Box](#)”)
- Launched [Hire Autism](#), an adult employment initiative that has helped 56 individuals with autism find jobs in the test program in Northern Virginia.

Near-Term Objectives

- Fund 6 applied research studies (\$320,000) and 10 graduate grants (\$20,000) in 2020
- Award 40 more scholarships to students with autism pursuing post-secondary education
- Publish an updated *Parent’s Guide to Research* and Military Families Guide
- Take the Hire Autism program national
- Develop an awareness/acceptance messaging campaign resource targeting middle and high school students
- Introduce a small grants program to expand the reach and impact of the Kit for Kids nationally