



OAR Awards Spring 2023 Peer Education Grants

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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ARLINGTON, VA – The Organization for Autism Research (OAR) is pleased to announce the recipients of its [2023 Peer Education Grant](#) program, open to teachers, administrators, parents, youth group organizers, and autism professionals interested in organizing an autism awareness initiative in the school or other community-based areas. In this previous cycle, OAR continued its commitment to educating students by awarding grants ranging from \$500 – \$5,000 for applicants conducting programs in their local communities that aim to increase autism awareness and acceptance among students in grades K-8. This year, OAR is awarding five grants totaling \$14,817. Over the years, OAR has continued to help educate more than 184,000 students and peers from both the peer education resources and grant program.

Congratulations to the 5 grant recipients!

Christine Altounian

Autism Acceptance and Inclusion at Carthay Elementary Carthay Elementary School, Los Angeles, California

Altounian, teachers, and staff from the Carthay Elementary School will incorporate and use both the *Kit for Kids* and [Autism Tuned In](#) programs as a part of their current school curriculum with the goal of improving peer connections among students.

Kelly Miranda

Embracing Our Differences

Buffalo Ridge Elementary, Castle Pines, Colorado

Miranda and the staff at Buffalo Ridge plan to incorporate the *Kit for Kids* program in each K-5 class. They will use the *Kit for Kids* materials and the additional materials to celebrate differences and promote acceptance and inclusion for all students.

Alyssa Hansen

Autism Acceptance at Harrity Lower

Mastery Charter Harrity Elementary School, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania

Serving both autistic and integrated classes, Hansen and the staff at the Master Charter Harrity Elementary School plan to curate and promote an interactive and engaging inclusivity curriculum. For K-5 students, this program will be shared with their families to continue the understanding and use of toolkits outside of classrooms.

Jessica Lawson

Team Nick

Manchester Community Schools, Manchester, Michigan

Lawson and district staff at Manchester Community School District will use the materials and grant resources to teach and promote autism education among staff while also fostering a culture of community acceptance and engagement with autistic students, their families, and neurotypical students in the district.

Elizabeth Ringlee

Autistic Students and the Gifted

Ideal4Gifted, Longmeadow, Massachusetts

Ringlee and [Ideal4Gifted](#) staff will incorporate OAR resources into their current curriculum to continue to impact their student-centered education programs. Ideal4Gifted staff plan to empower and educate students and their support network about autism's intersection with giftedness by hosting a series of workshops and presentations for their students and families.

Ranjit Koodali

Neurodiverse Adults Supporting Inclusive School Environments

Western Kentucky University

The WKU team will use autistic adults who are supported by LifeWorks@WKU as the consultants who implement the OAR program in local schools. The WKU team's use of the Peer Education program will allow skilled participants interested in education or non-profit fields to improve their public speaking and service skills.

For inquiries regarding the Peer Education Grant program or for more information on the next grant cycle, please [visit the website](#) or contact OAR at 571-977-5391; e-mail programs@researchautism.org.

About OAR. OAR is a national, nonprofit organization formed and led by relatives of children and adults with autism; it 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. Committed to excellence in its services to the autism community, OAR seeks to fund applied research that will make a difference in individual lives; provide information that is timely, useful, and cost-efficient; and offer opportunities for the autism community to collaborate and make advances together. In short, OAR's mission is to apply research to the challenges of autism. Web site: www.researchautism.org.

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