

June 30, 2008

Chairman's Message

There are an estimated 1.7 million people with autism in the United States. The vast majority will live a normal lifespan. It is this generation living with autism that is the focus of OAR's mission. As the father of two children with autism, I appreciate the work that is now being undertaken to identify the causes of this complex disorder. This work is vital - its promise very long term. It offers little for my son and daughter today or in their lifetime. Applied research--scientific studies that test theories, treatments, and assumptions and offer practical answers to the everyday challenges of living with autism--does.

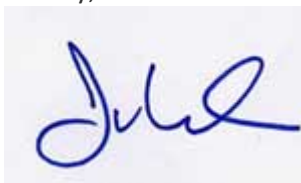
OAR's leadership team is built around an incredibly dedicated Board of Directors, a Scientific Council uniquely matched to OAR's mission, and a staff that delivers amazing results. Together we recognize that individuals with autism, their families, teachers, caregivers, and service providers need better answers to many and varied, pressing questions.

OAR's mission then is "to apply research to the challenges of autism." That implies three basic objectives: Raise money. Fund research. Change lives. It's that simple, and the ultimate goal—making a lasting impact on the lives of children and adults with autism—compels us to raise the bar in fundraising and research funding each year. This is our report card for Fiscal Year 2008.

Through our annual research competition, we fund pilot studies that investigate issues related to diagnosis, early intervention, education, community living and employment, and family support. In just six plus years, we have committed more than \$1.4 million to 76 applied research studies by researchers and graduate students pursuing degrees in field related to autism across the U.S. With the grants we make later this year, our total funding will surpass \$1.7 million.

We haven't done this on our own. From our first days, we have made every effort to engage the autism community in what we do, and it has paid dividends. The input we received from parents and professionals immeasurably contributed to the quality of each of the guidebooks in OAR's *Life Journey through Autism* series. And, the financial support OAR receives from the community allows OAR to provide its guides and information services at no cost to parents, teachers, and other front-line service providers who serve our children. Thank you.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Julia", is centered below the text "Sincerely,".

Chairman

Introduction

Founded in 2001, the Organization for Autism Research (OAR) is a nonprofit foundation dedicated to the advancement of applied autism research. Specifically, OAR's mission is to apply science to the daily challenges of autism, addressing the social, educational, and treatment concerns of parents, autism professionals, and caregivers. Parallel to this mission is the dissemination of new and useful information to as many members of the autism community as possible.

Throughout its sixth year of operation, OAR continued to grow and build upon previous successes. OAR's goals for this period included: assessing OAR's performance over its first five years and developing a strategic vision for the next five, drafting the *Proceedings* from the inaugural *Autism Research Convocation*, funding six to eight new professional research studies and 10-15 graduate research projects, hosting the fifth annual *Applied Autism Research and Intervention Conference*, publishing *A Guide for Transition to Adulthood* as the fourth publication in the *Life Journey Through Autism* series, and raising autism awareness as well as funding through special events.

On June 4, 2007, OAR's Board of Directors met to conduct an assessment of OAR's first five years and develop a strategic plan for the years 2007-2012. The Board concluded that its core programs were meaningful, relevant, and well worth continuing. Looking forward, the Board identified housing and residential supports, employment, and respite as high need areas where OAR has the opportunity to make a significant impact. OAR's plan is to maintain and expand the current program base as needed and focus additional resources toward the three areas identified as additional resources become available.

FY 2008 Program Accomplishments

OAR's programs can be categorized into three principal mission areas: research, information, and education.

Research encompasses the work of OAR's Scientific Council as it pertains to the direction and selection of OAR-funded research studies, funding research and general oversight of the research program, the annual research conference, and the biennial *Autism Research Convocation*.

Information includes OAR's *Autism Information Program* which centers on the Web site, with updated information pertaining to current research in the field of autism spectrum disorders, as well as the printed *Life Journey through Autism* series, and a monthly e-newsletter, *The OARacle*. New this year is the *Understanding Asperger Syndrome* DVD series.

Education extends to community outreach, both for education and general awareness, and formal, structured educational forums and formats, such as conferences, seminars, and workshops on a specific topic or theme and web-based or printed materials designed along the same lines. The OAR conference, held annually beginning in the fall of 2003, follows an educational format. FY 2008 saw the introduction of the Schwallie Family Scholarship Program for students with autism pursuing post-secondary education.

OAR's key program objectives for the 2008 fiscal year included:

Research

- Selecting six to eight applied autism research studies to receive funding, and issuing the seventh Request for Proposals to identify new studies for funding in FY 2009
- Gathering the Scientific Council for an annual meeting to complete the annual research competition and discuss directions for future OAR-funded research initiatives
- Conducting the fourth Graduate Research Grants Program to award grants to graduate students conducting applied research in the field of autism
- Publishing the *Proceedings* from the first *Autism Research Convocation*, a forum of experts and community stakeholders to examine *Evidence-Based Interventions for Adolescents and Adults with Autism Spectrum Disorder* that convened in June 2006.
- Hosting the second Autism Research Convocation to examine *Social Skills and Adaptive Behavior*.

Information

- Maintaining and improving the Web site in order to assure its accessibility and functionality as a user-friendly resource for current information on autism and autism spectrum disorders
- Distributing the *Life Journey through Autism* resource guides: *A Parent's Guide to Research*, *An Educator's Guide*, *An Educator's Guide to Asperger Syndrome*, and *A Guide for Transition to Adulthood* to the autism community
- Publishing and distributing, *Life Journey through Autism: A Parent's Guide to Assessment*, the fifth installment in OAR's series of informative guidebooks, which is geared toward planning for post-secondary life for adolescents and adults with autism.
- Continuing to publish the monthly e-newsletter, including a quarterly research edition featuring articles by some of the field's most prominent experts
- Introducing a new initiative in support of persons with Asperger Syndrome with the creation and distribution of *Understanding Asperger Syndrome: A Professor's Guide*.
- Conducting a pilot project to provide information and resources to the Latino Community.
- Introducing the *Understanding Asperger Syndrome* DVD series with *A Professor's Guide* as the first in the series.

Education

- Hosting the fifth annual *Applied Autism Research and Intervention (AAR&I)* Conference, focusing on the latest applied research in the field and how it can be used to improve the lives of individuals with autism
- Developing a plan for the fifth sixth *AAR&I* Conference, to be held in the fall of 2008
- Heightening public awareness of autism through existing OAR programs (the research competition, distribution of the *Life Journey through Autism* guides, as well as through conferences and special events
- Introducing a scholarship program for person on the autism spectrum pursuing post-secondary education.

Research Programs. OAR's research programs consist of the annual Applied Research Competition, the Graduate Research Competition, and the Autism Research Convocation. The sixth Applied Research Competition began in January 2007 with the release of the Request for Proposals (RFP), and concluded

in October 2007 when the Scientific Council presented the most deserving proposals to OAR's Board of Directors for funding consideration. The Board approved 11 studies from an initial group of 54 pre-proposals. The grants ranged from \$5,000 to \$45,000 for seven one-year studies to \$60,000 for four two-year studies, including OAR's first international grant. The total for the research grants awarded in FY 2007 was \$414,338 bringing OAR's six-year total of research funded through the annual competition to more than \$1.3 million.

FY2008 saw the continuation the Graduate Research Grants Competition introduced the previous year. OAR received 13 applications and awarded 11 grants totaling \$19,000 to eight doctoral students (\$2,000 each) and three master's level student (\$1,000).

Both the seventh annual Applied Research Competition and fifth annual Graduate Research Grants Competition began in January 2008 with the release of RFPs and are currently underway.

In addition to OAR's research grant activities, the Scientific Council convened its fifth general meeting in October 2007 just prior to the OAR conference. The distinguished members of the Council met to discuss the future directions of OAR's research funding, as well as to identify the most outstanding proposals in the annual *Applied Research Competition*.

In June 2006, OAR introduced the Autism Research Convocation as a biennial event that would examine and illuminate topics of great research interest. The first Convocation examined the state of the science in *Evidence-based Interventions for Adolescents and Adults with Autism Spectrum Disorders*. In June 2008, hosted its second Convocation which focused on *Social Skills and Adaptive Behaviors*.

Information Programs. The OAR Web site has functioned as the main component of the *Autism Information Program* since OAR's founding. With frequent updates made by the OAR staff, the site offers visitors information on the current state of applied autism research, as well as news relating to OAR activities and events. Here visitors can sign up to receive the monthly e-newsletter, find information on autism centers in their area, and read about upcoming OAR conferences and fundraising events. As OAR continues to grow and expand its reach entering FY 2008, the Web site continues to be the primary communications platform from OAR to the global autism community.

In 2003 OAR introduced its *OAR's Life Journey through Autism* series with a publication entitled *A Parent's Guide to Research*. Since then OAR has added *An Educator's Guide*, *An Educator's Guide to Asperger Syndrome*, and *A Guide for Transition to Adulthood*. As this fiscal year ended the fifth guide in the series is: *Life Journey through Autism, A Parent's Guide to Assessment*, was being printed with distribution scheduled to commence in July 2008.

As the third key element of OAR's *Autism Information Program*, the monthly e-newsletter, *The OARacle*, keeps subscribers up-to-date on OAR activities, as well as current research in autism. Since its inception in the fall of 2002, *The OARacle* has featured articles from the Scientific Council as well as guest experts, teachers and parents, and has a readership of over 3,500. OAR's e-newsletter furthers OAR's mission by bringing research news to the autism community.

In celebration of five years of publishing *The OARacle*, OAR completed the process of compiling the best articles from 2002 to 2007, and published *The Best of The OARacle* in time for the annual conference in October 2007. Other new initiatives included the creation and release of *Understanding Asperger*

Syndrome: A Professor's Guide and OAR's first project involving Latino Outreach with events in Atlanta, GA, and Washington, DC.

Education Programs. The OAR *Applied Autism Research and Intervention* Conference was the centerpiece of OAR's Education Program in FY 2008. Held on October 26-27, 2007, the conference gathered autism experts from across the country to speak on topics ranging from early intervention for children with autism spectrum disorders to the latest on research initiatives at the National Institutes of Health and Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. Over 150 people attended the conference each day of the two-day event. Each attendee received a copy of the newly published *Best of The OARacle* and had a choice of receiving a copy of one of OAR guidebooks further expanding the reach of OAR's information resources. The 2008 conference is set to take place on October 24-25, 2008, and was well into the planning phase at the close of FY 2008.

In October 2007, OAR hosted its first Schwallie Family Scholarship Competition, receiving 85 applications from students with autism pursuing postsecondary education. OAR awarded three one-year scholarships of \$3,000 each.

Special events are included under the Education Program as they serve to heighten the public awareness of autism as well as OAR programs and activities. The 2008 FY saw the continuation of the highly successful *RUN FOR AUTISM*, introduced in October 2003 in conjunction with the Marine Corps Marathon in Washington, DC. Through this partnership and a new one brokered with the Chicago Marathon, Houston Marathon, ING Miami Marathon, and New York City Half Marathon since, OAR has been able to place the autism cause in the national spotlight as the only autism organization ever to participate in these events as an official charity partner. Through the efforts of its dedicated runners, OAR raised more than \$550,000 for new research and information programs. Plans for the 2008 *RUN FOR AUTISM* were underway at the close of the fiscal year. As the program continues to expand, it is introducing OAR to people around the U.S. and serving to further heighten autism awareness in communities across the nation.

In summary, OAR's major program accomplishments through June 30, 2008, included:

- 11 new research studies funded through the sixth annual Applied Research Competition (\$414,388 in total grant awards); seventh competition in progress
- Eleven grants (\$19,000 in total grants) to students through the annual Graduate Research Grants Competition. 2008 competition is also underway.
- *Life Journey through Autism: A Parent's Guide to Research* distributed free of charge to over 1,000 families.
- *Life Journey through Autism: An Educator's Guide*, the second installment in OAR's series of resource books, was published and placed in distribution free of charge to over 850 teachers and families.
- *Life Journey through Autism: An Educator's Guide to Asperger Syndrome*, the third installment in OAR's series of resource books, was published and placed in distribution free of charge to over 2,200 teachers and families.
- *Life Journey through Autism: A Guide for Transition to Adulthood*, the fourth installment in OAR's series of resource books, was published and placed in distribution free of charge to over 2,300 teachers and families.

- *Applied Autism Research and Intervention* Conference held in October, 2007; fifth annual conference to be held in October, 2008
- Fifth annual *RUN FOR AUTISM* raised in excess of \$550,000, with more than 600 participants nationwide.
- Readership of *The OARacle*, OAR's monthly e-newsletter grew to more than 3,500 by June 30, 2008.

Meetings of the Board of Directors in Fiscal 2008: During the period of July 1, 2007 until June 30, 2008, the full Board of OAR met on the following dates:

July 31, 2007

September 19, 2007

October 27, 2007

January 16, 2008

March 19, 2008

June 2, 2008

OAR's Board of Directors

Terms of Service: The members of OAR's Board of Directors serve for one year, to be renewed through majority vote, until his or her earlier resignation or removal. A director may serve for any number of terms, consecutive or otherwise.

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Sack, Harris & Martin, P.C.
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Jessica Hopey
Coordinator, *RUN FOR AUTISM*

Statement of Financial Position as of June 30, 2008

Assets

<u>Current Assets</u>	\$
Cash and cash equivalents	415,415
Contributions receivable	196,644
Prepaid Expenses	15,464
Other Current Assets	<u>13,478</u>
Total Current Assets	<u>\$ 638,001</u>
Office equipment, net of accumulated depreciation	24,963
Other Assets	<u>4,563</u>
Total Assets	<u>\$ 667,527</u>

Liabilities and Net Assets

<u>Current Liabilities</u>	
Accounts Payable	15,704
Accrued Expenses	<u>1,318</u>
Total Current Liabilities	<u>\$ 17,022</u>
<u>Long Term Liabilities</u>	
Rent Abatement	6,295
<u>Net Assets</u>	
Unrestricted	83,288
Temporarily Restricted	<u>160,922</u>
Total Net Assets	<u>\$ 644,210</u>
Total Liabilities and Net Assets	<u>\$ 667,527</u>

Statement of Activities and Changes in Net Assets
Years Ended June 30, 2008 and 2007

	<u>Year Ended</u> <u>June 30, 2008</u>	<u>Year Ended</u> <u>June 30, 2007</u>
Unrestricted Net Assets		
Contributions and grants	\$ 284,254	\$ 352,007
Special Events	718,663	620,846
Less: costs of direct benefit to donors	(133,973)	(97,527)
Other income	53,785	11,480
Net assets released from restrictions	<u>89,878</u>	<u>39,714</u>
Total support and revenue	\$ <u>1,225,663</u>	\$ <u>926,520</u>
Expenses		
Program	\$ 978,255	\$ 777,965
General management	61,471	76,013
Fundraising	<u>166,54</u>	<u>69,384</u>
Total expenses	\$ <u>1,206,666</u>	\$ <u>923,812</u>
Increase in Unrestricted Net Assets	\$ <u>19,397</u>	\$ <u>2,708</u>
Temporarily Restricted Net Assets		
Contributions and grants	168,991	90,000
Net assets released from restrictions	<u>(89,879)</u>	<u>(39,714)</u>
Increase (Decrease) in Temporarily Restricted Net Assets	\$ <u>79,113</u>	\$ <u>50,286</u>
Increase in Net Assets	98,510	52,994
Net Assets, beginning of year	<u>624,813</u>	<u>571,819</u>
Net Assets, end of year	\$ <u>644,210</u>	\$ <u>624,813</u>