



ANNUAL REPORT FOR 2007

June 30, 2007

Chairman's Message

There are an estimated 1.7 million people with autism in the United States. The current thinking is that 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. Realistically, 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 results that belie its size. 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 2006.

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 five 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 approach \$2 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,

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 fourth 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 2007 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*.

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.

OAR's key program objectives for the 2007 fiscal year included:

Research

- Selecting six to eight applied autism research studies to receive funding, and issuing the sixth Request for Proposals to identify new studies for funding in FY 2008

- 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 third Graduate Research Grants Program to award grants to graduate students conducting applied research in the field of autism
- Drafting 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*, convened in June 2006

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*, and *An Educator's Guide to Asperger Syndrome* to the autism community
- Publishing and distributing, *Life Journey through Autism: A Guide for Transition to Adulthood*, the fourth installment in OAR's series of informative guidebooks, which is geared toward planning for post-secondary life for adolescents and adults with autism.
- Beginning work on the fifth in OAR's series of community-friendly guidebooks. This Guide will focus on assessments and how parents can better understand the methods and apply the results for life planning purposes
- Continuing to publish the monthly e-newsletter, including a quarterly research edition featuring articles by some of the field's most prominent experts

Education

- Hosting the fourth 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 *AAR&I Conference*, to be held in the fall of 2007
- 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)

Research Programs. OAR's research programs consist of the annual Applied Research Competition, the Graduate Research Competition, and the Autism Research Convocation. The fifth Applied Research Competition began in January 2006 with the release of the Request for Proposals (RFP), and concluded in October 2006 when the Scientific Council presented the most deserving proposals to OAR's Board of Directors for funding consideration. The Board approved seven studies from an initial group of 74 pre-proposals. The grants ranged from \$20,000 to \$45,000 for five one-year studies to \$60,000 for two two-year studies. The total for the research grants awarded in FY 2006 was \$290,000 bringing OAR's five-year total of research funded through the annual competition to \$970,000.

FY2007 saw the continuation the Graduate Research Grants Competition introduced the previous year. OAR received 19 applications and awarded 11 grants totaling \$19,000 to nine doctoral students (\$2,000 each) and one master's level student (\$1,000).

Both the sixth annual Applied Research Competition and fourth annual Graduate Research Grants Competition began in January 2006 with the release of RFPs and are currently underway.

In addition to OAR's research grant activities, the Scientific Council convened its fourth general meeting in the October 2006 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 its 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 FY2007, OAR drafted the *Proceedings* of the Convocation and arranged for its publication during FY2008.

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 2007, 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* and *An Educator's Guide to Asperger Syndrome*. This year's addition to the series is: *Life Journey through Autism, A Guide for Transition to Adulthood*.

As the third key element of OAR's *Autism Information Program*, the monthly e-newsletter, *The OARacle*, serves to keep 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. Beginning in the 2004 FY, OAR introduced a quarterly research edition of the newsletter, focusing on current OAR-funded studies, and the latest research on autism treatment and intervention. These special quarterly reports continued in FY 2007 and were very well received. OAR's e-newsletter furthers OAR's mission by bringing research news to those autism community, who otherwise might not have access to such information.

Education Programs. The OAR *Applied Autism Research and Intervention* Conference was the centerpiece of OAR's Education Program in FY 2007. Held on October 27-28, 2006, 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 200 people attended the conference each day of the two-day event. Each attendee had a choice of receiving a copy of the *Parent's Guide to Research*, *An Educator's Guide to Autism*, or *An Educator's Guide to Asperger Syndrome* further expanding the reach of OAR's information resources. The 2007 conference is set to take place on October 26-27, 2007, and was well into the planning phase at the close of FY 2007.

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 2007 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 ones brokered with The LaSalle Chicago Marathon, Houston Marathon, and ING Miami 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 \$380,000 for new research and information programs. Plans for the 2007 *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, 2007, included:

- Seven new research studies funded through the fifth annual Applied Research Competition (\$290,000 in total grant awards); sixth competition currently underway
- Eleven grants (\$19,000 in total grants) to students through the annual Graduate Research Grants Competition. 2007 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 to 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 to 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 to of charge to over 2,300 teachers and families.
- *Applied Autism Research and Intervention* Conference held in October, 2006; fifth annual conference to be held in October, 2007
- Fourth annual *RUN FOR AUTISM* raised in excess of \$380,000, with more than 375 participants.
- Readership of *The OARacle*, OAR's monthly e-newsletter grew to more than 3,500 by June 30, 2007.

Meetings of the Board of Directors in Fiscal 2007:

During the period of July 1, 2006 until June 30, 2007, the full Board of OAR met on the following dates:

July 19, 2006
 September 19, 2006
 October 28, 2006

January 30, 2007
 April 15, 2007
 June 4, 2007



ORGANIZATION FOR AUTISM RESEARCH

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.

OFFICERS

CHAIRMAN

James Sack
Attorney at Law
Sack & Harris, P.C.
McLean, VA 22102

VICE CHAIRMAN

Madeline Millman
Retired Event Planner
Englewood, NJ

PRESIDENT

Peter Gerhardt, Ed.D.
President and Chair, Scientific Council
Baltimore, MD

TREASURER

Dean Koocher
CFO/COO
Hooray Toy Company
White Plains, NY

SECRETARY

Michael Maloney
Executive Director
Organization for Autism Research
Arlington, VA

DIRECTORS

William Donlon
Retired NYPD Detective
Hicksville, NY 11801
Son with autism, age 10

Anthony Ferrera
Industry Marketing Director
AT&T Business Services
Bridgewater, NJ
Son with autism, age 5

Lori Lapin Jones
Attorney at Law
Great Neck, NY
Son with Asperger Syndrome, age 11

Gloria M. Satriale
Attorney at Law
1 McKinley Lane
Chester Springs, PA 19425
Son with autism

Edward Schwallie
Retired Partner
Booz, Allen & Hamilton
Manasquan, NJ
Son with autism, age 40

Gregory L. Smith
Technical Consultant
Booz, Allen & Hamilton
Lorton, VA
Daughter with autism, age 13

Staff

Michael V. Maloney
Executive Director

Peter F. Gerhardt
President

Douglas W. Marocco
Director, *RUN FOR AUTISM*

Alyssa Napolitano
Development Associate

Geoffrey T. Pan
Development Associate



ORGANIZATION FOR AUTISM RESEARCH

Statement of Financial Position as of June 30, 2007

Assets

<u>Current Assets</u>	<u>\$</u>
Cash and cash equivalents	356,801
Contributions receivable	189,000
Prepaid Expenses	7,651
Other Current Assets	<u>19,944</u>
Total Current Assets	<u>\$ 573,396</u>
Office equipment, net of accumulated depreciation	16,344
Other Assets	<u>2,530</u>
Total Assets	<u>\$ 594,293</u>

Liabilities and Net Assets

Current Liabilities

Accounts Payable	5,500
Accrued Expenses	9,339
Notes Payable	<u>7,635</u>
Total Current Liabilities	<u>\$ 22,474</u>

Net Assets

Unrestricted	540,296
Temporarily Restricted	<u>31,523</u>
Total Net Assets	<u>\$ 571,819</u>
Total Liabilities and Net Assets	<u>\$ 594,293</u>



ORGANIZATION FOR AUTISM RESEARCH

Statement of Activities and Changes in Net Assets
Years Ended June 30, 2007 and 2006

	<u>Year Ended</u> <u>June 30, 2007</u>	<u>Year Ended</u> <u>June 30, 2006</u>
Unrestricted Net Assets		
Contributions and grants	\$ 352,007	\$ 418,922
Special Events	620,846	491,709
Less: costs of direct benefit to donors	(97,527)	(65,843)
Other income	11,480	6,016
Net assets released from restrictions	<u>39,714</u>	<u>58,478</u>
Total support and revenue	<u>926,520</u>	<u>909,282</u>
Expenses		
Program	777,965	601,663
General management	76,013	78,341
Fundraising	<u>69,384</u>	<u>98,902</u>
Total expenses	<u>923,812</u>	<u>778,906</u>
Increase in Unrestricted Net Assets	<u>2,708</u>	<u>130,376</u>
Temporarily Restricted Net Assets		
Contributions and grants	90,000	31,523
Net assets released from restrictions	<u>(39,714)</u>	<u>(58,478)</u>
Increase (Decrease) in Temporarily Restricted Net Assets	<u>50,286</u>	<u>(26,955)</u>
Increase in Net Assets	52,994	103,421
Net Assets, beginning of year	<u>571,819</u>	<u>468,398</u>
Net Assets, end of year	<u>\$ 624,813</u>	<u>\$ 571,819</u>