

NAAR NEWS

NLM Family Foundation Helps Kick Off \$7.5 Million Matching Gift Campaign for Autism Research

\$1 Million Challenge Grant Supports National Alliance For Autism Research
23 February 2000

Princeton, NJ (Feb. 23, 2000) – The Nancy Lurie Marks Family Foundation of Chestnut Hill, MA, is helping the National Alliance for Autism Research launch a \$7.5 million matching gift campaign with a Challenge Grant of \$1 million.

Autism is a devastating neurodevelopmental disorder estimated to affect as many as one in every 500 children worldwide. The National Alliance for Autism Research (NAAR) is dedicated to finding the causes – and a cure – for the condition by funding and accelerating autism biomedical research.

"The NLM Family Foundation has been a long-time leader in supporting autism research and – to date – has been NAAR's most generous donor," said Karen Margulis London, NAAR's president and founder. "We are thrilled by its commitment to NAAR and its mission."

The Nancy Lurie Marks Family Foundation concentrates its support on autism and related developmental disorders as well as civic, educational and arts projects in the Boston metropolitan area. The Foundation is one of the largest supporters of research and education for autism. In addition to the \$1 million Challenge Grant and past support for the NAAR, the Foundation also supports the clinical and research efforts of Dr. Margaret Bauman and other noted autism investigators.

"We believe this grant underscores the Foundation's and NAAR's belief in the urgency of significantly increasing the investment in autism research," Ms. London said. "Mrs. Nancy Lurie Marks has truly been an inspiration and leader in her passionate support of research aimed at understanding and finding effective treatments for the spectrum of autism disorders."

NAAR's \$7.5 million Major Gifts Campaign—the first such campaign ever on behalf of autism research—has already benefited from the NLM Challenge Grant. NAAR has raised an additional \$1 million, including a generous donation of \$50,000 from the Doug Flutie, Jr. Foundation for Autism.

"In providing this Challenge Grant, our Foundation recognizes NAAR's fine contributions to research in autism," said Eric Cushing, Director of the NLM Family Foundation. "We hope our Challenge Grant will assist in launching NAAR's exciting new Major Gifts Campaign and encourage other substantial donations so that autism truly gets the intensified research attention it merits."

Over the past three years, NAAR has committed \$1.7 million in grants to 32 scientists in the United States, Italy, Canada and Russia. It makes research awards, up to \$100,000 for two years, for innovative proposals highly ranked by its Scientific Advisory Board for scientific merit and promise.

In addition, NAAR sponsors conferences for scientists and families, publishes a research newsletter and, in collaboration with the Autism Society of America Foundation, sponsors the Autism Tissue Program, a national outreach program dedicated to encouraging post-mortem brain tissue donation which is critically needed in autism research.

"We must be in the position of availing ourselves of the latest findings in neuroscience research," said NAAR Chairman Clarence Schutt, Ph.D, Professor of Chemistry at Princeton University. "The NLM Family Foundation gift and the Major Gifts Campaign are aimed at assuring that no promising autism research goes unfunded."

Headquartered in Princeton, NJ, NAAR was founded in 1994 by Karen London and her husband, Dr. Eric London. After their son, Zachary, was diagnosed with autism in 1989, the couple founded NAAR, the first nonprofit in the U.S. dedicated to funding and accelerating biomedical research in the autism spectrum disorders.

Established in 1994, the National Alliance for Autism Research (NAAR) is the first non-profit organization in the country dedicated to funding and accelerating biomedical research for autism spectrum disorders. The organization was established by parents of children with autism concerned about the limited amount of funding for autism research. To date, NAAR has committed \$21.1 million in grants for biomedical research projects worldwide that seek to find the causes, prevention, effective treatments and, ultimately, cure for autism spectrum disorders.