

NLMFF Featured Grantee Jacob Hooker, Ph.D., Lurie Center for Autism, Massachusetts General Hospital

“Lurie Center for Autism Celebrates Autism Acceptance April 2022”

Jacob Hooker: Hi Everyone. I’m Jacob Hooker, Scientific Director at the Lurie Center for Autism. During Autism Awareness Month, I wanted to step outside of my office and take a moment to let you know that researchers embrace neurodiversity as a concept while simultaneously recognizing that there are tremendous challenges that patients and their families are impacted by.

For most people with autism, we do not know the cause. For most negative symptoms of autism, we do not understand what drives them. And yet in science we are at the cusp of a technology revolution that will allow us to finally start to elucidate some of the mysteries.

Why is the incidence of autism increasing? How do we help people communicate who can’t? How do we help families that face tremendous obstacles?

My goal as Scientific Director at the Lurie Center is to really help connect families to research, researchers to one another, and the Lurie Center and our community to the ecosystem of autism research that is much bigger than we all.

I’m truly indebted to the patients and their families for their participation in our research mission, to volunteers outside of the autism community that help us understand the neurodiversity of autism. Thank you so much for all that you do. I look forward to continuing to partner with you as we try and solve some of the mysteries that drive autism.