Autism Speaks
Movement for Global Mental Health
International Meeting for Autism Research (IMFAR) Travel Awards
2012 Request for Applications

Important Dates:
  Application Deadline: March 19, 2012, 5:00 p.m. (EST)
  Review: Early April, 2012
  Notification: Mid April, 2012
  IMFAR: May 16-19, 2012

Autism Speaks and the Movement for Global Mental Health invite applications for travel awards to attend the International Meeting for Autism Research (IMFAR) from qualified candidates pursuing an education or currently working in the field of global mental health and interested in pursuing careers in autism.

Background and Overview

*Autism Speaks supports global research into the diagnosis, causes, prevention, and treatment of autism.*

Our mission is to improve the future for all who struggle with autism spectrum disorders. In support of that mission we provide funding along the entire research continuum -- from discovery to development to dissemination -- for innovative projects that hold considerable promise for significantly improving the lives of persons with autism.

Autism Speaks Global Autism Public Health Initiative (GAPH) was launched in 2008 as an ambitious international effort to help underserved autism communities around the world develop and implement feasible, effective, and sustainable programs for enhancing autism awareness, research, and health services. GAPH is an innovative, integrated initiative that focuses on three goals: 1) Increasing public and professional awareness of autism spectrum disorders (ASD); 2) Increasing research expertise and international collaboration through training of autism researchers, with a focus on epidemiology, screening and early diagnosis, and treatment; 3) Enhancing service delivery by providing training and expertise to service providers in early diagnosis and intervention.

Autism Speaks is currently developing or exploring GAPH partnerships in more than 30 countries around the world and recently announced $1.1 million to support the first round of GAPH Research Grants through 2013. To learn more about GAPH, please visit: [http://www.autismspeaks.org/science/initiatives/global-autism-public-health](http://www.autismspeaks.org/science/initiatives/global-autism-public-health)

In 2011, Autism Speaks became an institutional member of the Movement for Global Mental Health (MGMH). The Movement for Global Mental Health is a network of individuals and organizations committed to improving the availability, access and quality of services for people with mental disorders worldwide. Particular emphasis is placed on low- and middle-income countries where effective services are often scarce. Two principles are fundamental to the Movement: scientific evidence and human rights. You may read more about the MGMH here: [http://www.globalmentalhealth.org/home](http://www.globalmentalhealth.org/home)

This current invitation for applications for travel awards is designed to support the growth of a promising cadre of young scientists who will explore ways to apply their work in global mental health to the field of autism and other developmental disabilities. Successful applicants will be awarded financial travel support to attend the 2012 International Meeting for Autism Research (IMFAR), the largest and most internationally represented meeting of autism researchers of the year. In order to cross-fertilize ideas and facilitate a network of collaboration, the AS/MGMH IMFAR Travel Award recipients will participate in the meeting of Autism Speaks’ Global Autism Public Heath Initiative, held annually at IMFAR.

This year, IMFAR will be held from May 16-19 at the Sheraton Centre in Toronto, Canada. You may find more information about IMFAR here: [http://www.autism-insar.org/index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=258&Itemid=201](http://www.autism-insar.org/index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=258&Itemid=201)
Awards
The AS/MGH IMFAR Travel Awards will be granted to qualified candidates (please see eligibility criteria below). The one-time award of $2500 USD must be applied towards travel support to attend the 2012 International Meeting for Autism Research in Toronto, Canada. The award may be used specifically for airfare and/or other means of transportation, accommodation costs, meal costs, and IMFAR registration costs. Autism Speaks intends to make up to eight (8) awards.

Eligibility and Roles
The candidate must meet at least one of the following criteria: 1) must be an enrolled student in a program leading to a masters degree, Ph.D., Sc.D., or a combined degree such as an M.D./Ph.D., in an academic department of an accredited university or health/medical institution; and/or 2) must have at least 2 years of experience working directly in the field of global mental health. This should be reflected in the submitted CV.

Successful applicants will be expected to attend all dates of the International Meeting for Autism Research. Awardees will also be required to attend the annual meeting of the Global Autism Public Health Initiative to be held in conjunction with IMFAR on Friday, May 18 from 6:00-9:00 PM (location TBD). The GAPH meeting will provide an opportunity for networking with the international autism and broader global mental health research community. It will also feature a series of presentations from Autism Speaks’ funded investigators recently awarded GAPH grants. Please read more about the GAPH awards here: http://www.autismspeaks.org/about-us/grant-search/results/taxonomy%3A9771%20field_grant_award_type%3A%22Global%20Autism%20Public%20Health%22

For monitoring purposes, successful applicants will be required to provide a summary of their experience attending IMFAR following the meeting and will be asked to submit copies of receipts for travel expenses. More information will be provided after funding decisions have been made.

Beginning the Application
Applications must be submitted electronically using the Autism Speaks Partner System, http://science.grants.autismspeaks.org. Login (or register if you are new to the system) and complete/edit your profile page. Click the ‘Applications’ link in the navigation bar. Choose the ‘MGMH IMFAR Travel’ award type.

Applications that are late, incomplete, exceed the document limitations, or do not adhere to the required format will not be reviewed. Applications that are faxed or emailed will also not be reviewed. Autism Speaks reserves the right to return without review any application that in its judgment is not compliant with its rules and procedures for application preparation and submission. It is the responsibility of the applicant to ensure that the application is complete and conforms to the guidelines.

Completing the Application
1. Basic Information page
   a. Enter a title.
   b. Collaborators – Enter the names of the persons who will be sending the Reference Letters. Start by typing the last name. The system will show names of people already in the database. If the person is not on the list, you will need their name, institution and email to add them. Choose one of the mentor roles in Collaborator Type.
   c. Continue to Application.

2. Personal Statement: Maximum of 2 pages. In general, the applicant should describe his/her interest and experiences in the field of global mental health, and how it applies specifically to his/her interest in pursuing a career in autism science. The personal statement should describe the applicant’s education and future career goals. It should include specific examples of activities and experiences that are directly applicable to the fields of global mental health and autism such as but not limited to employment, internships, research projects, coursework, and personal stories. If there is a particular population you are interested or have experience in working with, particularly underserved or from low- and middle-income countries, please highlight and explain. Please clearly state why you think attending the International Meeting for Autism Research is important to you and what you hope to achieve by participating in the meeting. (Arial 11 font, 1 inch margins, either Microsoft Word or PDF)

3. Statement of Need: Maximum 500 characters. Applicant should clearly and concisely state the need for financial support to travel to IMFAR.
4. **Resume/CV of the applicant**, not to exceed four pages.

5. **Two Confidential Reference Letters, from mentor/advisor, professor, and/or employer**, of 2 pages or less must be emailed as PDF files by the referees to Joan New at grantadmin@autismspeaks.org. Each letter, on institutional letterhead, should have the name of the candidate at the top and the referee’s name, title and institution at the bottom. These persons should be entered on the Basic Information page in the collaborator section. See #1 above.

6. **Save as Draft until all entries are complete. Then submit.**

**Notification and Announcements**
Applicants will be notified by e-mail after the funding decision process is complete.

**Payment of Awards**
The recipient of any grant from Autism Speaks must use the awarded funds for the specific purpose for what they were originally intended. Any funds not used in the above specified manner must be returned to Autism Speaks.

**Review Process and Evaluation Criteria**
Applications will be reviewed by a peer review panel that may include members of Autism Speaks and the Movement for Global Mental Health as well as experienced investigators recruited from the scientific community. Applications will be reviewed on the following criteria:

1. Relevance to global mental health research and practice
2. Motivation to pursue education and/or career in autism spectrum disorders
3. Statement of need
4. Current activities and previous experience
5. Letters of recommendation
6. Applicant from or working in an underserved population and/or low- and middle-income country

**Contacts**
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