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Seaver Autism Center Launches Associates Committee

Unlocking the Mystery of Autism: From Genes to Novel Treatments

On March 13, 2014, the Seaver Center hosted a panel discussion and reception to launch the Seaver Autism Center

Associates Committee, chaired by Alison Singer, MBA, President of the Autism Science Foundation. Drs. Joseph Buxbaum, Alex Kolevzon, and Michelle Gorenstein-Holtzman presented on the work being done at the Seaver Autism Center, and Ms. Singer moderated the question-and-answer session.



Alison Singer, MBA, President of the Autism Science Foundation and Chair of the Seaver Autism Center Associates Committee; Joseph Buxbaum, PhD, Director of the Seaver Autism Center; Alex Kolevzon, MD, Clinical Director of the Seaver Autism Center; Michelle Gorenstein-Holtzman, PsyD, Director of Community Outreach for the Seaver Autism Center

The Seaver Autism Center Associates Committee is a group of committed stakeholders: parents, grandparents, siblings, and others, who want to learn more and do more to support their loved ones with autism and to support the work being done here at the Seaver Center. Members receive special access to presentations and Seaver

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Autism Awareness Day at Citi Field

For the third year in a row, the Seaver Autism Center will be participating in Autism Awareness Day at Citi Field. The New York Mets will be playing the Miami Marlins, and at this game a number of special sections at Citi Field are available for families of individuals with autism. A pre-game party for families attending will include art therapy projects by the Queens Museum

of Art, karate drills by Kicking the Spectrum, and yoga by Hosh Yoga. We hope you will join us at this exciting event!

To purchase tickets, please visit www.mets.com/autism and click on "Seaver Autism Center." With each ticket sold through this offer, the Mets will donate a portion of the proceeds to active research and clinical treatments at the Seaver Autism Center.



Seaver Autism Center Featured on Aliento Vision

Jennifer Reichert, Laboratory Manager at the Seaver Autism Center, was recently featured on the Spanish-speaking television show “En Comunidad – Autismo” on Aliento Vision to discuss the work being done here at the Seaver Autism Center. Please visit <http://tiny.cc/encomunidadinterview> to watch!



News from Seaver Fellows

► POSTDOCTORAL RECOGNITION AWARD

Dr. Teresa Tavassoli, Seaver Postdoctoral Fellow, was recently awarded the Icahn School of Medicine at Mount Sinai Postdoctoral Recognition Award. This award recognizes postdoctoral fellows who have competed for and won major national fellowships in the past year for their postdoctoral training at Mount Sinai. Congratulations to Dr. Tavassoli!

► BRAIN AWARENESS WEEK

Aslihan Dincer, Seaver Graduate Fellow, recently participated in Brain Awareness Week, a global campaign started by the Dana Foundation to increase public awareness of brain education and research. Mount Sinai hosted many brain-related events including exhibitions, lectures, demonstrations at li-

braries and community centers, classroom workshops, and more. As a Brainy NYC volunteer, Ms. Dincer participated in the “Build a Brain” table at the annual Brain Awareness Fair hosted by the Mount Sinai Neuroscience Outreach Program, as well as the “Poison and the Brain” workshop in the Sackler Educational Laboratory at the American Museum of Natural History. During this workshop Ms. Dincer was responsible for demonstrating hands-on activities designed to model different functions of the nervous system. Dr. Ting Wang, Assistant Professor of Psychiatry at the Seaver Autism Center, also participated in the Brain Awareness Fair’s “Ask the Experts” booth. Thanks to Ms. Dincer and Dr. Wang for participating in these exciting events!

Associates Committee *Continued from page 1*

researchers, as well as invitations to exclusive events. If you are interested in learning more, please email jessica.brownfeld@mssm.edu or call 212-241-0349.



Joseph Buxbaum, PhD



Michelle Gorenstein-Holtzman, PsyD



Alex Kolevzon, MD



Alison Singer, MBA

Study by Seaver Researchers Named to Simons Foundation's Top 10 of 2013

A recent study by researchers at the Seaver Autism Center, "Identification of small exonic CNV from whole-exome sequence data and application to autism spectrum disorder" (Poultney C.S. *et al. Am. J. Hum. Genet.* **93**, 607-619, 2013), was named on the top ten "annual list of the most influential papers in the autism field" by the Simons Foundation Autism Research Initiative.

This study identifies a new class of genetic mutations in autism and draws a possible link between the genetic abnormalities attributed to autism and dysregulation of the mechanism by which unused neural

connections are pruned during development. This information builds upon prior discoveries involving researchers at the Seaver Center, which identified three different types of genetic mutation that con-

tribute to autism risk: *de novo* mutations; recessive, X-linked mutations; and, in this study, small chromosomal abnormalities.

To learn more and to read this paper, please visit <http://tiny.cc/CNVstudy>.



seaver autism center for research & treatment @ mount sinai

SAVE THE DATE

Sunday, November 16, 2014

PRESENTS THE 18TH ANNUAL

Seaver Autism Center

Advances in Autism Conference

COURSE DIRECTOR
JOSEPH BUXBAUM, PHD

CONFERENCE BROCHURE TO FOLLOW

For more information
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Mount
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The Seaver Center for
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Icahn School of Medicine
at Mount Sinai



- **THE SEAVER AUTISM CENTER NEWSLETTER** brings you timely updates about new developments related to research and treatment of autism spectrum disorders, as well as activities at the Seaver Autism Center. To be placed on our mailing list, please contact SeaverCenterEditor@mssm.edu or The Seaver Autism Center, Icahn School of Medicine at Mount Sinai, One Gustave L. Levy Place, Box 1668, New York, NY 10029. Our phone number is 212.241.0961 and our web site is www.SeaverAutismCenter.org.
- **SEAVER IS CONTINUING TO GO GREEN!** Please send your email address to seavercentereditor@mssm.edu to receive this newsletter electronically.



Distinguished Lecturer Series

The most recent Distinguished Lecturer Series was held in January 2014, and Dr. Christina Hultman (Karolinska Institute, Sweden) presented on “Swedish National Samples in Psychiatric Epidemiology and Psychiatric Genetics” with Sven Sandin (Karolinska Institute) and Oscar Svantesson (Karolinska Institute). Immediately following the lecture, which was open to professionals and the public, was a reception with attendees, families, and Seaver researchers. If you would like to be receive notifications for upcoming lectures and seminars, please email seavercentereditor@mssm.edu.



International collaborators (L-R): Avi Reichenberg, PhD, Professor of Psychiatry and Preventive Medicine at Mount Sinai; Christina Hultman, PhD, Professor of Medical Epidemiology and Biostatistics at Karolinska Institute; Joseph Buxbaum, PhD, Director of the Seaver Autism Center; Sven Sandin, MSc, Statistician in the Department of Medical Epidemiology and Biostatistics at Karolinska Institute; Dorothy Grice, MD, Professor of Psychiatry at Mount Sinai; Oscar Svantesson, MSc, Software Developer in the Department of Medical Epidemiology and Biostatistics at Karolinska Institute]



Sven Sandin, MSc



Joseph Buxbaum, PhD, Director of the Seaver Autism Center, with Distinguished Lecturer Christina Hultman, PhD



Oscar Svantesson, MSc