

# NISONGER NEWS

OSU Nisonger Center

Volume 1, Issue 3



**In May, the Research Unit on Pediatric Psychopharmacology (RUPP) group will welcome Dr. Anastasia Alevriadou from Greece for a two-month sabbatical.**

## RUPP studying treatments for autism and ADHD

The OSU Research Unit on Pediatric Psychopharmacology (RUPP) is one of eight such units in the nation, competitively selected by NIMH. Its mission is to study the safety and effectiveness of pharmacological agents and other treatments (behavioral, nutritional, alternative) used to improve behavior in children and adolescents with autism spectrum disorders, attention-deficit/hyperactivity disorder (ADHD), and other childhood disorders.

Current staff members include psychologist Dr. Michael Aman, child/adolescent psychiatrists Dr. L. Eugene Arnold and Dr. Yaser Ramadan, pediatric nurse practitioner Susan Thompson, doctoral students Jill Hollway and Cristan Farmer, three autism coordinators (Kristy Siefker, Ashley Jones, Lindsay Brickner), an ADHD

coordinator (Lindsay Crowl), and 4 student assistants. Dr. Luc LeCavalier, Dr. Eric Butter, and Dr. James Mulick are additional part-time psychologist members. In May, Dr. Anastasia Alevriadou, Assistant Professor of Cognitive Psychology at University of West Macedonia in Greece, will spend a two-month sabbatical with the RUPP group.

The group is now enrolling participants in an NIMH-sponsored trial of zinc and amphetamine for children with ADHD. This 21-week study is designed to examine the safety and efficacy of zinc supplementation alone and as adjunct to medication in children/adolescents ages 6-14 with ADHD. It is also enrolling children/adolescents with autism and serious behavior problems (irritability, tantrums, aggression, mood swings, and/or self-injury) for a new study of

aripiprazole (Abilify) compared to placebo. Another new study, sponsored by Cure Autism Now, will compare memantine (Namenda) and placebo in children with autism spectrum disorders *and* coordination difficulties to see if memantine improves their motor skills.

Upcoming, they anticipate an open trial (no placebo) of the Daytrana patch for ADHD, a study testing an investigative medication for adults with autism, a trial of melatonin for sleep in children with autism, and a follow-up of risperidone and parent training effects.

For more information, visit the RUPP website at <http://psychmed.osu.edu>. **NN**

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## Addenda to Faculty and Staff Accomplishments *(from Issue 2, Fall 2006)*

### Recognitions

- Arnold: 1992 Psychiatrist of the Year, Psychiatric Society of Central Ohio
- Arnold: 1996 NIH Director's Award for work on NIMH Multimodal Treatment Study of Children with ADHD
- Arnold: 2002 Award of Excellence as researcher, teacher, clinician and administrator from Child and

Adolescent Psychiatrists of Central Ohio

### Publicity

On December 22 National Public Radio's "All Things Considered" broke the story of Misty Cargill, a young woman with mild mental retardation who thus far has been denied consideration for a life-saving kidney transplant operation. Dr. Steven Reiss, interviewed for

the story, reported the results of his study on 42 known cases of people with mental retardation who got kidney transplants. He concluded that when people with retardation do get transplants, they have results that are just as good, or better, than anyone else's.

"We had a 100-percent survival rate after one year, and 90 percent after three years," Reiss said. **NN**



## OSU Nisonger Center

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## The Ohio State University **Nisonger Center**

A University Center for Excellence in Developmental Disabilities

**“The mission of The Nisonger Center is to provide a comprehensive, integrated approach of training, service, technical assistance, applied research and dissemination of information in the field of mental retardation and developmental disabilities.”**

The Nisonger Center was founded in 1966 as an interdisciplinary program of the Ohio State University. The United States Administration on Developmental Disabilities has designated Nisonger Center a "University Center for Excellence in Developmental Disabilities (UCEDD)." Steven Reiss, PhD, Professor of Psychology and Psychiatry, has served as Director since 1991. For more information about The Nisonger Center, contact Maureen Meck at [meck.1@osu.edu](mailto:meck.1@osu.edu).

*[nisonger.osu.edu](http://nisonger.osu.edu)*



**Grant (age 4) and Kate (age 8) enjoyed the fun at the Williams Syndrome Support Group on Jan. 27.**

## Ohio Williams Syndrome Support Group kickoff a success!

On Saturday, Jan. 27th, 2007, about 75 people with a connection to Williams syndrome met at the Childhood League Center in Columbus to make friends, share information and gain support. Children, teenagers and adults with Williams syndrome attended, ranging from age 3 to age 40, as well as parents, extended family and siblings. One family drove five hours from southern Kentucky because they had never met anyone else with the same syndrome as their 5-year-old daughter.

While the children and adults with Williams syndrome enjoyed dancing in the gym, the parents were sharing information and insights on living with a child with Williams syndrome. A **big thanks** goes to Sherry Feinstein, Katherine Zapata, Chrissie Hajek, Lori

Barhorst, Liz Hurley, Chelvi Ganesalingam and Jim Wiltz (photographer) for assisting and supervising the children. Thanks also to Steve Rosenzweig for creating a flash movie, which can be seen at the following website: <http://nisonger.osu.edu/williams.htm>

The Williams Syndrome Support Group will meet every three months, facilitated by Dr. Marilee Martens. Please let her know if you'd like to be involved in the next meeting at the end of April. (688-3112, [martens.22@osu.edu](mailto:martens.22@osu.edu))

Williams syndrome is a genetic disorder which results in intellectual disability, heart abnormalities, a friendly personality and a love of music.

For more information, please see their website:

**[www.williams-syndrome.org](http://www.williams-syndrome.org)**

\* \* \*

**Stay tuned:** The Nisonger Center will start a Williams Syndrome Clinic this year, along with Columbus Children's Hospital. The Clinic will offer comprehensive, multi-disciplinary evaluations and ongoing care for children and adults with Williams syndrome. We are co-sponsoring the Williams Syndrome Great Lakes Regional Conference in Columbus the weekend of Sept. 29th, 2007. In addition to internationally recognized experts, Drs. Margo Izzo and Tom Fish will present at this conference. **NN**

## ECE receives BETHA technology grant

Liz Harzoff, project coordinator, Dr. Jane Case-Smith, principle investigator, and Dr. Luc Le-cavalier received a \$35,000 technology grant for the Nisonger Early Childhood Education (ECE) program from the Battelle Endowment for Technology and Human Affairs (BETHA).

The ECE has purchased computers, adapted keyboards and specialized software for four classrooms and a fifth computer as a work station for teachers and OSU students to develop projects.

Teachers, therapist and students spent two days in the summer being trained on the

new equipment by Mary Jo Wendling, Director of the Nisonger Toy and Technology Library and Occupational Therapist for Dublin City Schools.

The need to provide access to communication tools for children with limited mobility and higher cognitive abilities motivated this project. Through the use of Intellitools Classroom Suite<sup>®</sup>, Two Switches for Success, and Mayer-Johnson software, Boardmaker<sup>®</sup>, the staff has been able to support the development of some of our more involved children. These children have been able to progress in their ability to commu-

nicate, make choices and be actively involved in classroom activities.

Staff and students have begun to explore more uses for the technology. Teachers have created their own books featuring the children in their classrooms. These books are used to work on communication and academic skills including the use of pronouns "he" and "she," counting, colors, recognition of the people in the classroom and identifying emotions.

The ECE program looks forward to sharing this information with other professionals, parents and university students.

**NN**



**Nisonger ECE students learn to use Intellitools<sup>®</sup> during circle time.**

## Program updates

Using a U3<sup>™</sup> assistive technology (AT) Smart Drive, the "Access Tomorrow" project will provide students with disabilities free AT applications that can be used on any computer. Dr. Margo Izzo's Special Education and Transition Program is working with IDEAL Group, Inc. The project is funded by a U.S. Department of Education Steppingstones Grant. U3 is a trademark of U3 LLC. **NN**

**T**ransition Corps (TC), an AmeriCorps program of The Nisonger Center, started the "planning year" of its new grant Oct. 1. TC provides services to youth with disabilities in three areas critical to successful transition from school to adult life: community service, community access training, and social skill development. AmeriCorps is known as the "domestic Peace Corps." **NN**

**T**he Next Chapter Book Club was featured in the November 2006 issue of *Exceptional Parent* (EP) Magazine (co-authors are Tom Fish and Vicki Graff) and in *Mental Retardation*, Vol. 44, No. 6, Dec. 2006, pp. 443-446 (co-authors are Thomas R. Fish, Paula Rabidoux, Jillian Ober, and Vicki L.W. Graff). A news story also appeared in the *Northwest Indiana Times* in February. **NN**

*The Next Chapter Book Club continues to expand and recently completed a training workshop in its 33rd city. The NCBC now operates more than 70 clubs in 13 states!*

## Mark your calendars for these upcoming events

**N**isonger new hires since May 2005 need to sign up for two mandated generic safety training programs:

- EOEP (Emergency Operations & Evacuation Plan)
- HAZCOM

Current Nisonger employees only need to take HAZCOM.

### Note these other events:

- Ohio Transition Weekend, March 16-17, 2007, Marriott Airport Hotel, Columbus
- 6th Annual Graduate & Postgraduate Research Day, March 29, 2007
- Autism Society of America-Association for Persons in Supported Environments conference, May 10-11, 2007, Hyatt on Capitol Square, Columbus

For more information about the Ohio Transition Weekend and the ASA-APSE conference, contact Tom Fish at 292-7550 or fish.1@osu.edu.

See other news and events lists online at OneSource; you need your OSU Medical Center ID to log on. **NN**



**Send notices of upcoming events to NISONGERNEWS editor Vicki Graff by email at [graff.42@osu.edu](mailto:graff.42@osu.edu). Each quarterly issue will appear approximately 4-6 weeks from the end of the calendar quarter (May, August, November, and February).**

# NISONGERNEWS

## Welcome new hires! (October, November, December)



**Lindsay Brickner** started working as a part-time research assistant on Jan. 11. She is one of three autism coordinators in the Research Unit on Pediatric Psychopharmacology (RUPP).

**Jessica Masalsky** started working with BSS on Oct. 4 as a Child Behavior Support Specialist. She previously worked in the Boston area as a teacher for people with autism. Her MS in Applied Behavior Analysis is from Northeastern University; her BA in Linguistics and Cognitive Science is from Brandeis University. Jessica participated in an International Students Conference and Cooperating Programs in the Americas at the University of Havana, Cuba. She is fluent in Spanish and has volunteered as an English tutor.



**Anthony Lordo, DDS,** has opened a private general dentistry office at 6649 North High St. in Worthington. The office works with all insurance plans and is a Delta Premier Provider. For the past 10 years Dr. Lordo has only practiced at Nisonger and in Mansfield, Ohio. He is offering \$100.00 off any dental treatment for the rest of winter quarter or free bleaching to any new patient with a complete exam and dental hygiene cleaning.

Dr. Lordo says, "We treat all patients like family."

Please call Shirley at 614-885-4754 for an appointment and visit the website at [www.DrLordo.com](http://www.DrLordo.com).

**Maureen Meck** became the new Nisonger Administrator on Dec. 1. She was previously Administrator for the Prior Health Sciences Library and Center for Knowledge Management, and before that OSU's Dept. of Ophthalmology. Maureen holds a BS degree in Human Ecology from OSU.

Maureen has been married for 28 years to Chuck, who's a Lab Supervisor at Doctors Hospital West. They have two sons, Jack and Jeff, and two grandsons, Steven and Andrew, both age 10.

Maureen learned how to quilt about three years ago and tries to spend her spare time sewing and quilting. During the summer, she and Chuck enjoy spending weekends boating and fishing on Lake Erie near the Bass Islands. Her other interests are golf, snorkeling, opera and classical music.

Maureen celebrated her 25th anniversary at OSU last July and looks forward to spending the rest of her University career in the Nisonger Center!

**James Wiltz** became Director of Evaluations on Nov. 15. Jim earned a BA in Psychology and German from Indiana University. After three years working in a group home with people with MR/DD, Jim spent one year as a research assistant at the Nisonger Center. He received an MA and a PhD in Clinical and MR/DD Psychology from OSU. After a year working in the Dept. of Clinical Services at an ICF/MR in Kentucky, Jim returned to the Nisonger Center. He is married and has one daughter.

### Other staff news...

**Jennifer Gallaway** with Adult Behavioral Support Services had a baby girl on Nov. 3rd. Ari Elizabeth weighed 8 lbs., 6 oz.

### Farewell departing staff...

**Alexa Murray**, formerly a research associate in the Special Education and Transition Program, left on Dec. 1 to become Education Resource Specialist at the College of Education's Ohio Resource Center.

