



Media Contact: Jennifer Smith
(949) 267-0456
jennifer.smith@uci.edu

The Center for Autism & Neurodevelopmental Disorders Receives HealthCare Foundation for Orange County Grant

*Center Uses Funds to Establish Outreach Program to Help
Families Challenged by Autism Spectrum Disorder*

SANTA ANA, Calif. – January 20, 2016 – Backed by a grant from a prominent Orange County foundation, The Center for Autism & Neurodevelopmental Disorders has created a community outreach program that helps families challenged by Autism Spectrum Disorder.

The \$15,000 grant from the HealthCare Foundation for Orange County enabled the center to host a series of events for Latino families of The Center for Autism that focused on parent and caregiver experience, successes, challenges and family impact.

“With this grant we have been able to reach greater numbers of families who need the critical educational resources we offer,” said Catherine Brock, M.A., executive director of The Center for Autism & Neurodevelopmental Disorders. “The parents, siblings, children and volunteers have had such an overwhelmingly positive response to the community outreach program and we hope to continue offering more events with the help of the HealthCare Foundation for Orange County grants.”

Dr. Hyun Park, a pediatrician at The Center for Autism, presented an “Autism 101” basics lecture in Spanish at the community outreach event.

“I am very excited to see the families meeting each other and sharing their stories and experiences. I am glad that parents realize that they are not alone in this long and difficult journey. Now they found a community of Latino families with similar challenges,” said Dr. Park. “This event compliments the treatment of autism by empowering parents, siblings and patients with opportunities for social interaction and education.”

In addition to helping families recognize signs of Autism Spectrum Disorder, the community outreach program guides them through the process of seeking professional treatment and counseling. The Center offers classes



in both English and Spanish in an effort to reach as many impacted families in Orange County as possible.

"The family event at The Center for Autism really taught us so much about our son and gave us amazing resources and tips for some of the challenges we've faced," said Heidy Samayoa, a parent that attended the outreach program's first event. "It was great to have these families come together to support one another."

The Center for Autism works collaboratively with Autism Speaks who provides resources, grants, and community support. Autism Speaks Project Manager Gaby Hurtado also facilitated a session at the event.

"My greatest joy is when I'm in the company of the children and families who are being served by our network," said Hurtado. "Thanks to the HealthCare Foundation for Orange County we can offer resources to underserved communities and help families to build strong, positive and collaborative relationships as they learn about Autism Spectrum Disorder."

The HealthCare Foundation for Orange County provides grants for organizations focused on improving child, adolescent and family health through increased access to prevention and primary care services.

For more information, please visit www.thecenter4autism.org.

About The Center for Autism & Neurodevelopmental Disorders

Founded in 2001 (originally as For OC Kids), The Center is home to a team of experts in the field of autism and neurodevelopmental disorders. Since its opening, The Center has been a leader in clinical services, research, education, and outreach, serving clients from birth through 22 years old.

In late 2012, a catalytic investment by the Thompson Family Foundation and the Children and Families Commission of Orange County provided \$14.8 million to expand The Center for Autism & Neurodevelopmental Disorders.

The Center was established to provide help and hope to children, adolescents, young adults and their families challenged by autism spectrum and other neurodevelopmental disorders through excellent clinical care, innovative research, quality education, and community engagement. For more information, please visit www.thecenter4autism.org.

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