

Subject: College Autism Network November News and Notes

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From: College Autism Network

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College Autism Network News and Notes

November 2023

ANOTHER SUCCESSFUL COLLEGE AUTISM SUMMIT IN THE BOOKS



We admit it. We were a little worried about the surge in registrations in the final weeks of planning this year's Summit. But in the end, things worked out! Why? Because the people who attend the Summit make up one of the friendliest conference audiences you can find. And this year, with attendance hitting 309, we saw that constantly. We started with four valuable preconference experiences: The Employment Symposium, Building Blocks for New Programs, the first Summit Student Engagement workshop, and our first Breakfast of Champions for program leaders.

Newsletter Highlights

Another Successful College
Autism Summit!

CAN Announces Winners of
Annual Awards

Would You Like to Host the
2024 Summit? Thought So.

University of Maryland
Receives Transformative
Gift for ND Programs

Architectural Digest Takes
on Sensory-Friendly
Residence Hall Construction

Program Directors' List is
Looking for You

Next CANVAS Meeting is
Friday, November 10 at 3
pm ET

Your Undergraduate
Students Can Participate in
the 2023 PEACES Study
Today

Our keynote speaker, poet and activist Russell Lehman delivered a moving talk on both life as an autistic person and strategies for supporting the autistic people in your life. We hosted 39 breakout sessions, two breakfasts, three lunches and a happy hour reception. We overheard countless conversations in between and during these. We gave out awards (see next article). We recommended restaurants. We found lost things.

But most of all, we connected with others who share a commitment to this work. Our 40 undergraduate students, our 35 graduate students, our employers, exhibitors, sponsors, coaches, consultants and campus and independent program professionals all played a part in making this our best Summit ever. Many thanks to the Planning Team, to our sponsors, to the Frist Center at Vanderbilt University, and to all of you who made the trek to Nashville.

Didn't make it this year? Don't worry! We'll be back. In fact, we're considering a change in location since we've sadly outgrown Vanderbilt's Student Life Center. See the item below for more information. Wherever we end up--you are welcome to join this amazing community.

Want to help plan the 2024 Summit? Come on! It'll be fun! Just complete this brief [questionnaire](#). We'll be in touch.

CAN ANNOUNCES AWARD WINNERS



At this year's Summit, we were pleased to announce the recipients of this year's CAN Awards.

CAN Contributor of the Year:

Laurie Ackles, Executive Director, the Washington Neurodiversity Project. Laurie has been a stellar supporter



of the College Autism Network for several years, providing expertise and encouragement for multiple initiatives, all while building an exemplary program at the Rochester Institute of Technology

Outstanding Research on Autism in Higher Education:

Dr. Jodi Duke, Dr. Grace Francis and Dr. Morgan Strimel, George Mason University. This team of researchers has paved new roads in the understanding of the autistic experience on college campuses, particularly around identity development and mental health.

Outstanding Autism Support Program:

College Program for Students with Autism Spectrum Disorder, Marshall University. Marshall's program is one of the country's oldest and best-established. In addition to serving students effectively, they have supported the development of other programs, offering support and expertise when asked.

Outstanding Neurodiversity Workplace Initiative:

Wells Fargo's Neurodiversity Program. In the rapidly expanding world of neurodiversity hiring initiatives, Wells Fargo's stands out for its commitment to centering neurodivergent voices in the planning and implementation of its hiring efforts, and for its focus on continued coaching of both ND candidates and their neurotypical colleagues to ensure continued employment success.

WHERE IN THE WORLD WILL THE 2024 COLLEGE AUTISM SUMMIT BE HELD?



Good question! We are seeking a new host site for our signature event, and maybe it's your institution or city. Here's what we need:

- A conference venue (hotel, campus conference center) that can accommodate 300-400 attendees (plenary sessions, meals and 5-6 breakout rooms)
- Hotel rooms for the same number (preferably in a single hotel) within walking distance of the meeting space
- A location within 40 minutes of a large or mid-sized airport
- Institutional sponsorship or cost-sharing at the Platinum level (\$10,000). This can include in-kind support of venue costs as a campus host. Other costs are covered by the College Autism Network through registration fees and sponsorships.

The Summit is typically held in the fall, and we hope to find a three-day stretch between September 20 and November 10.

Interested? Please fill out this [short form](#) by November 15 indicating an interest in further discussion (no obligation-- just a conversation). Or you can [email Lee](#) if you have questions.

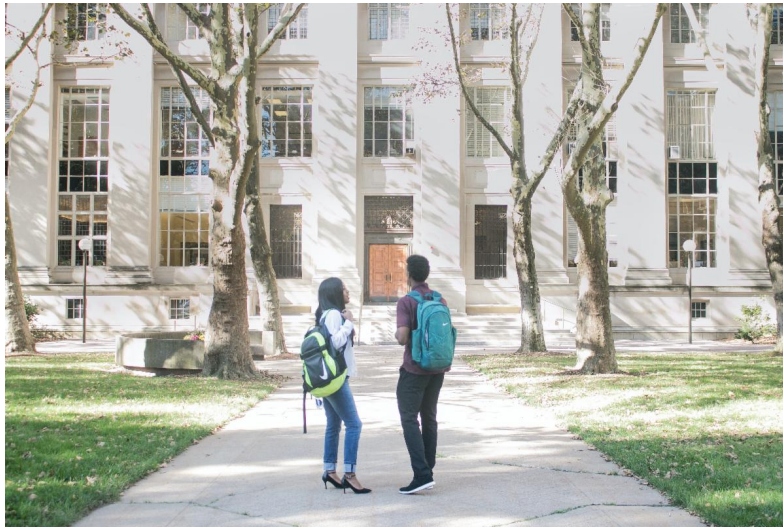
UNIVERSITY OF MARYLAND RECEIVES TRANSFORMATIVE GIFT



Our Terrapin friends are living the dream: a million dollar gift to support neurodiversity programs on the College Park campus. The gift, from an alumnus who is the father of a neurodivergent 17-year old daughter, is a testament to the good work already being done at Maryland. Congratulations to CAN member Kathy Dow-Burger, professor and founder/coordinator of the SIGNA program and the good folks she works with.

[Read more](#) about this generous alum and what Kathy and her colleagues plan to do with this gift.

ARCHITECTURAL DIGEST RUNS ARTICLE ON CREATING A SENSORY-FRIENDLY RESIDENCE HALL



This is a [great article](#) to print out and save for the next discussion you find yourself in about a new residence hall, or one about to be renovated. Your colleagues will (probably) thank you.

PROGRAM DIRECTORS' LIST IS LOOKING FOR YOU



Are you the director or leader of an autism support program looking for connections with others in similar roles? Join our Program Directors' listserv. You'll get special announcements about events, and invitations to our monthly Zoom conversations. To be added to the list, email [Lee](#).

**NEXT CANVAS MEETING IS FRIDAY, NOVEMBER 10
AT 3PM ET**



Please join the CANVAS (CAN Virtual Association of Scholars) for its next presentation on Friday, November 10 at 3 pm ET. Sandra Thom-Jones will present "Is Academia a Good Career for Autistics?" In a first-of-its-kind study, this project collected detailed reflections from autistic people working in academia on their thoughts, experiences, triumphs and challenges. A total of 37 autistic academics from around the globe participated in the study over a 12-month period. This presentation provides an overview of their reflections on the positives and negatives of academia as a career choice for autistic people. It also shares their recommendations for autistic people considering a career in academia.

Meeting Agenda: [Sign up to indicate you will be in attendance here](#)

Meeting Link: <https://ncsu.zoom.us/j/97700125594>

**YOUR UNDERGRADUATE STUDENTS CAN PARTICIPATE
IN THE 2023 PEACES STUDY TODAY**



Calling all in the CAN community! The Postsecondary Education: Autistic Collegians' Experiences of Success (PEACES) study has returned to gather further insights about how undergraduate autistic college students in the United States make sense of their success. Last year's data collection efforts enlisted the perspectives of 430 students, among the largest studies of its kind of U.S. autistic college students' experiences! [Here is a Fast Fact of Wave 1 findings.](#)

Once again we are enlisting autistic undergraduate college student participants in the United States to discuss their experiences around and interpretations of success. **Please spread the word to eligible students in your networks.** Students will be screened for eligibility and then be directed to a roughly 30-minute survey; they are then eligible for a \$25 gift card following successful survey completion. Survey link: <https://bit.ly/3EzGiVu>

Feel free to utilize the graphic above in sharing this opportunity with students that may be interested!

This study is led by CAN leadership team members Dr. Bradley E. Cox (Michigan State University) and Dr. Brett Ranon Nachman (University of Arkansas). Please email CED.PEACES@msu.edu with any questions.

This newsletter is published monthly by the [College Autism Network](#), an independent 501(c)3 organization supporting the success of autistic college students and the professionals who work with them. Want to share an article? Feature an upcoming event? Post a job opportunity in autism support services? Our monthly newsletter reaches over 2000 self-advocates and professionals. Send it [to Lee](#) and we'll share it.

Was someone nice enough to forward this newsletter to you? We're happy to add you to our mailing list to receive it directly. [Send us a note.](#)

If you appreciate our work, please consider [joining CAN](#) to receive additional information and discounts on some of our resources and to support our work. Individual and organizational memberships are available.

The [College Autism Network](#) is supported in part by the [Frist Center for Autism and Innovation](#) at Vanderbilt University.

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