

National autism conference set at FGCU

Registration is now open for parents, educators and physicians interested in attending a national conference on autism, "The Road to Best Practice in Autism," to be held on Saturday, April 19, 8 a.m. to 4 p.m., in the Student Union Ballroom at Florida Gulf Coast University. National experts in the research and study of autism and autism spectrum disorders will address a variety of topics such as the causes of autism, evaluation and treatment, early identification and intervention, treatments for symptoms associated with autism, arrangement of long-term finance for persons with disabilities, sexuality, and more. The program is free and open to the public.

Autism is a complex, lifelong developmental disability that is sometimes referred to as an "equal opportunity disorder" as it strikes families of all races, education levels and family incomes. It affects a child's social growth and behavior, sensory, communication and learning. At this time, autism is not curable but it is treatable. 1 in 150 children in the United States is affected by autism according to the Centers for Disease Control.

"We're very pleased to partner with Florida Gulf Coast University to present such an in depth look at autism as well as offer a symposium with essential topics. The conference will offer pertinent information for professionals in the medical and educational fields as well as parents and caregivers, and all those affected by and/or interested in the study of autism," said conference Chairman Armando Galella, executive director of Eden Florida, a non-profit agency that offers lifespan services for children and adults with autism.

Keynote presenters include Robert L. Hendren, D.O., and Peter Mundy, Ph.D., professors at the University of California, Davis campus and the M.I.N.D. Institute, an international, multidisciplinary research organization, committed to excellence, collaboration and hope, striving to understand the causes and develop better treatments and ultimately cures for neurodevelopmental disorders.

Hendren is president of the American Academy of Child and Adolescent Psychiatry,

a professor of Psychiatry, executive director of the M.I.N.D. Institute and chief physician of the Child and Adolescent Psychiatry program, at UC Davis.

Mundy is professor of Neurodevelopmental Disorders and Education at the School of Education as well as the director of education research at the M.I.N.D. Institute in the department of Child & Adolescent Psychiatry, UC Davis.

Other conference presenters include Peter Gerhardt, Ed.D., and Patrick McGreevy, Ph. D., BCBA.

Gerhardt is president and chairman of the Scientific Council for Organization for Autism Research, a consultant and author or co-author of articles and book chapters on the needs of adults with autism spectrum disorder, the school-to-work-transition process and analysis and intervention of problematic behavior.

McGreevy is a board certified behavior analyst with an international private practice serving children and adults with autism and other developmental disabilities. He is an adjunct professor with the Florida Institute of Technology teaching applied behavior analysis. His area of expertise is verbal behavior and intervention for self-injurious behavior and aggression.

Other speakers, regional and area professionals working with autism, will speak on a broad range of topics related to autism will be featured during break-out and panel discussions.

The conference is sponsored by Florida Gulf Coast University and the College of Education and the College of Arts and Sciences, Physicians Regional Medical Center, Eden Florida, The Children's Hospital of Southwest Florida, WINK-TV and Parent & Child Magazine/The News Press, Agency with Persons with Disabilities - Area 8. The Road to Best Practice in Autism conference is free and open to the public. Reservations are required. Lunch is available from Jason's Deli for \$5 but must be ordered in advance by phone.

To register or for more information, please visit www.fgcu.edu/events/promisingpathways by April 10, or call (239) 992-4680, ext. 202. ■



Hendren



Mundy



McGreevy

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