

**The DoD Autism Research Program Recognizes
WORLD AUTISM AWARENESS DAY
April 2, 2009**



"Children are like snowflakes, each one different, each one needing a different biomedical intervention. What makes treating autism difficult is that each combination to unlock each person affected is so unique."
Shelley Reynolds, Autism Research Program (ARP) Integration Panel Member and Unlocking Autism



"When my son was diagnosed with an autism spectrum disorder (ASD) in 1996, the only reference point my wife and I had about autism was the movie "Rain Man." The developmental pediatrician who delivered the news told us that autism was rare, lifelong, and essentially not treatable. She was not interested in hearing about his regression during the prior year, gastrointestinal problems he was experiencing, or the terrible sleep problems that made all of us function sub-optimally. In a matter of minutes, all our dreams were shattered; we were given no reason to believe that he would ever live a life filled with graduations, friendships, or even independence. The one thing the doctor couldn't take away was the intense love and determination we had for our son."

Peter Bell, ARP Integration Panel Member and Autism Speaks



"I had a perfectly normal baby. He hit all his developmental landmarks but after his first birthday he seemed to be sick all of the time, with infection after infection. He stopped eating and was no longer happy and playful. By 17 months he had stopped talking, interacting, or even looking at us anymore; he was in his own little world. At four years old, he had no language, was not potty trained...My baby had been stolen away from us."

Lyn Redwood, ARP Integration Panel Member and the Autism Research Institute



"I can think of nothing more devastating than discovering that your child has a serious developmental disorder, except the news that there is no research going on into the disorder that has robbed your child of his future." That is the situation that Portia Iversen of Autism Speaks and her husband found themselves in after their son was diagnosed with autism at the age of 21 months. In 2007, the Department of Defense Office of Congressionally Directed Medical Research Programs (CDMRP) announced a new program that would focus on autism research.
"I was honored to be chosen to serve as a consumer reviewer for the first round of the CDMRP-ARP grants."
Portia Iversen, FY07 ARP Consumer Reviewer and Autism Speaks

ARP Vision: Improve the lives of individuals with autism spectrum disorders now

ARP Mission: Promote innovative research that advances the understanding of autism spectrum disorders and leads to improved treatment outcomes