



30 June 2018

## Letter from the Director

***Welcome Ms. Lilliam Acosta-Sanchez – Outreach Manager for Autism BrainNet!***



Courtesy: Lilliam Acosta-Sanchez, MPH

Welcome to summer! I hope that all of our readers are enjoying well-earned vacations that afford time for fun and reflection.

As I've mentioned in previous messages, one of the essential elements in increasing the number of postmortem brain donations to Autism BrainNet is building awareness within the autism community. There are at least 3.5 million families affected by autism in the United States. Yet, a much smaller number subscribe to this Newsletter or are aware of the need for donated brain tissue to enable research into the causes and treatments of autism spectrum disorder.

The Simons Foundation has taken an important step forward by hiring a new Outreach Manager whose sole job will be to bring awareness of the need for brain donations to the autism community. Lilliam Acosta-Sanchez joined Autism BrainNet in June 2018.

[Please click here to read the rest of the director's letter.](#)

NEWS

## Spectrum on Autism BrainNet



Courtesy: Ethan Hill/Spectrum

[Spectrum](#) covered the journey of several Autism BrainNet donor families in a deep dive article on brain banks. Important research on the biology of autism is impossible without the incredible contribution of autism families. This article highlights how local agencies and Autism BrainNet nodes work compassionately together with families to safely secure a postmortem brain donation.

The article can be read [here](#).

## SCIENCE

### IAN Article on Anxiety and the Amygdala



Courtesy: Alison Singer

The [Interactive Autism Network \(IAN\)](#) published an informative article on the altered amygdala in autism.

The amygdala plays a central role in processing emotion, including anxiety. Alterations in the amygdala may lead to anxiety issues, challenges commonly faced by people with autism. Through the study of brain tissue donated to Autism BrainNet, researchers at UC Davis including Node Director Dr. Cyndi Schumann showed the atypical trajectory of development in the autistic amygdala.

You can read the article [here](#).

## WEBINAR

### ATN/AIR-P Webinar with Dr. Alycia Halladay

The [Autism Speaks Autism Treatment Network](#) and the [Autism Intervention Research Network on Physical Health](#) hosted a webinar on Autism BrainNet with Dr. Alycia Halladay of the Autism Science Foundation on May 30.



Courtesy: Alycia Halladay, PhD

During the webinar, Dr. Halladay highlighted the work of Autism BrainNet and findings from postmortem autism brain research. Some findings include the excess connections between brain cells, altered growth patterns, and sex differences found in autism brain tissue.

Please go [here](#) to watch a recording of the webinar on YouTube.

## COMMUNITY EVENTS

### Autism BrainNet Thanks you for Visiting!

The Autism BrainNet team thanks all the individuals and families that came out to events for the autism community this spring and signed up to learn more about the research done through tissue donated to Autism BrainNet.



Families came out and soaked up the California sun with Autism BrainNet at the Autism Speaks Walk Los Angeles in April.



Everyone enjoyed learning about the brain at the Autism Speaks Walk Denver in May.





Rain made playing with water beads all the more fun at the Autism BrainNet booth at the Autism Speaks Walk in North Jersey in May.



Autism BrainNet met some superheroes at the Autism Speaks Walk in South Jersey in June.



Two bright young minds joined ASF President Alison Singer to talk about Autism BrainNet with families at the Autism Speaks Walk in White Plains, NY in June.

Families stopped by the Autism BrainNet booth after their bike ride at the Go the Distance for Autism Ride in New Jersey in June.



Dr. Alycia Halladay from the Autism Science Foundation represented the Autism BrainNet at the American Association of Neuropathologists Annual Meeting in Louisville, KY, in June.

**Thank you so much for visiting Autism BrainNet!**

STAY CONNECTED



<https://autismbrainnet.org> | <https://takesbrains.org>