

# NATIONAL HOSA RECOGNIZED AT Autism Speaks and Cure Autism Now Leadership Conference



AUTISM SPEAKS  
It's time to listen.



Heeding repeated calls to serve the autism community as “one strong voice,” nearly 240 staff and volunteers of the newly combined Autism Speaks and Cure Autism Now, or CAN, joined forces in Washington, D.C. March 16-20 for their first combined leadership conference.

The gathering, which drew approximately 160 volunteers and 75 staff members from around the country and overseas, among them 80 from the former CAN operation, focused on integrating geographically far-flung teams to work together on the organization’s newly expanded walks, special events, scientific research and awareness efforts. The meeting was scheduled to conclude with a day on Capitol Hill and more than 100 visits with congressional representatives from 26 states.

As Autism Speaks President Mark Roithmayr put it during the gathering: “Look at us now. ... We are coast to coast, we are urban, we are suburban, we are rural. We are one strong voice fighting for one thing. It is about autism.”

The annual meeting comes just one year after the then newly-merged Autism Speaks and the National Alliance for Autism Research, or NAAR, met together for their first organizational leadership conference in the nation’s capital. And much of the celebrating during this several-day conference was over how much the two combined organizations have accomplished since last year.

When Autism Speaks and NAAR merged more than a year ago, “Many of you were no doubt wondering what was in store for you, what was in store for the Walk program, and what was in store for the cause that we are all so devoted to,” remarked Autism Speaks Co-founder Suzanne Wright during a March 16 awards dinner. “Well, a year later, I think we have our answer. It’s called success. You raised \$12 million last year, exceeding our goal by more than \$2 million. This is a tremendous accomplishment, and a testament to your commitment and also to the strategic rationale of combining our two strong organizations.”

### Awards for Outstanding Contributions

HOSA, which choose Autism Speaks as their National Service partner at their 2006 National Leadership Conference in June, was recognized for their commitment to those affected by Autism Spectrum Disorders. Receiving the award for National HOSA were Virginia State President Ashley Proffitt and HOSA’s Washington DC representation, George and Taryn Sifakis. Autism speaks and HOSA are excited about building on a great first year of partnership.

*“Look at us now.  
... We are coast to  
coast, we are urban,  
we are suburban, we  
are rural. We are one  
strong voice fighting  
for one thing. It is  
about autism.”*

*—As Autism Speaks President  
Mark Roithmayr*



National Alliance for Autism Research

*“Volunteers are  
the frontline  
and mainline of  
everything we do,”*

*—Autism Speaks  
Co-founder  
Bob Wright*

### Combining Forces for New Successes

Beyond celebrating the successes of last year, central to this year’s meeting was talk of how the “new” Autism Speaks will continue to grow, given the combined forces of the two largest autism advocacy organizations following the CAN merger.

Autism Speaks Co-founder Bob Wright used remarks during the March 16 awards dinner to point to the ways in which previous joint efforts between the two groups have already paid off. He cited, as an example, the combined work to pass the landmark Combating Autism Act in 2006. But Wright said much more needed to be done, particularly at a state level. “If elected officials talk about health, if they talk about children, but they don’t talk about autism,” he said, “they should be ashamed”

Wright reserved his highest praise for the volunteers who helped raised \$18 million in last year’s Autism Speaks-CAN walks, and called for an even greater contribution to the Autism Speaks revenue stream now that the walks group is one. “Volunteers are the frontline and mainline of everything we do,” he concluded.

In fact, the organization’s 70 walks this year are expected to raise over \$20 million in revenue, said Susan Gloor, national walk director, while Roithmayr said major gifts is budgeting for \$15.6 million. In total, the organization hopes to generate revenues of nearly \$55 million in 2007, more than half-way to the long-term goal of becoming a \$100-million-a-year organization.

Providing an enthusiastic spark for that effort was conference keynoter Neil Balter, Walk Now Phoenix Chair 2006 and founder of California Closets. In his presentation, he talked about how Autism Speaks would be driven by its local organizations, as was his former company, “It was the franchisees and their commitment level on the ground that grew that company,” he explained, adding: “Now is the time to go back, dig deep, get your friends and families involved. ... Remember, enthusiasm is contagious – catch it.”



From left to right are: Peter Bell, Executive Vice President - Programs & Services, Ashley Proffitt, Virginia HOSA State President, Mark Roithmayr, President, Taryn and George Sifakis, HOSA Washington DC Representation and Glenn Tringali, Executive Vice President - Fundraising & Operations.