



I am very delighted and pleased to welcome you all.

It is an honor to have the opportunity to be among such a distinguished gathering of scientists, council members, public and staff who have visibly demonstrated their zeal and commitment to the cause of autism treatment and research.

It has been my great pleasure to serve on the Governor's Council of Research and Treatment of Autism, and set in motion this meeting which will lay the framework for future gatherings of the research community. I must thank the Council and Council members for their leadership and vision as we move forward with new and exciting initiatives. Present are fellow members, Liz Bell Dr Susan Evans and Dr. Linda Meyer. I have a very special thanks to the planning committee for all their work in bring this meeting from mere idea to fruition. I would be remiss not to acknowledge the unbelievably hard work of NJ Governor's Council for Medical Research and Treatment of Autism Executive Assistant, Linda BoClair. This meeting would not have been possible without her help and talent.

I hope you will find this day enjoyable and an opportunity to learn more about the work of your colleagues and of the Council. For you to be able to continue your good works, as in most things in life, it takes revenues. For those who are not aware the funding mechanism, which enables the Council to provide the grant dollars to you, is very interesting. I thought I would share it with you. The mechanism is that of a one dollar surcharge on moving violations in the State of New Jersey. This puts the flow of dollars outside of the traditional State budget and is therefore reliant on the ill advised habits of drivers on New Jersey roadways, as opposed to more traditional revenue sources.

The revenues for this Council have been remarkably consistent over the years. This may say more about how hard it is to change bad driving habits than anything else, yet, this has afforded the autism community in New Jersey an unprecedented opportunity to shape and encourage the highest caliber of research found anywhere in the country, as evidenced here in this gathering.

As a council we are keenly aware of the inherent fragility of the monetary situation in a difficult economy and want to present to the Governor, as well as the legislature, a report on the State of the State of Governor's Council funded autism research from the past few years. We are your staunchest advocates. We also want the research community in New Jersey to work toward greater sharing of ideas, and will continue to encourage this as we move forward. This meeting is an opportunity for you all to engage and discuss, as well as foment your creativity.

We fervently believe in you and your work and want to give you the voice your work deserves with an interest in showing that you have been successful in your endeavors and shine light on those projects which have been able to maximize their efforts and have gone on to bring revenues beyond the Governor's Council dollars to the State of New Jersey.

You have chosen to work in the field of autism research for various reasons. Perhaps the Governor Council has even had a hand in that decision making process. I represent those of us for whom there was no choice in joining this fight. We are the parents of all the children and adults living everyday with autism. For us there is not respite nor break nor rest... save that of sleep and perhaps even dreams. We live, and obsess and love every aspect of our precious children. We hope against hope and are filled with the sense of urgency that unanswerable questions gives rise. We look to you to make sense of what is so hard to understand.

As we advocate, for our loved ones, we must write our own narrative. We must chart our own course. You, the scientific community are not only our collaborators in fellowship, you are our compass. We look to you to guide our decisions, we entreat you to continue to work tirelessly on our behalf. We are inundated by the deluge of media and modern technology which brings us all the information of an impatient planet without filter or regard for truth. You work to give us that truth. You must go where the scientific method takes you. You must follow the observations of your craft. You are the arbiters of what we know and we put full faith in your capable hands.

We have set you upon a course yet you must lead us to the answers we so desperately seek.

Together we are stepping into the future. We trust that the future will yield all the answers that have been thus far elusive.

We are brimming with confidence regarding the future of autism research and we are here to help tell your story. We wish you a successful meeting. Thank you very much for your presence! In closing, I will leave you with one quote from Margaret Mead..."Never doubt that a small group of caring dedicated people can change the world...In fact, it is the only thing that ever has." I encourage you all to participate actively in the interesting discussions over the course of the day. I wish everyone a successful and fruitful meeting.

Thank you.

B. Madeleine Goldfarb

Noah's Ark Institute