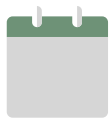


**THE CAROLINA AUTISM AND NEURODEVELOPMENT RESEARCH CENTER**

# DECEMBER NEWSLETTER

## CAN HEART RATE SERIES



**DECEMBER 5**

**3 - 4 PM**

Enjoy coffee and cookies & learn about heart rate. More info pg. 3!



## SPRING 2024 EVENTS RELEASED!



Check out pg. 7 for a list of our upcoming events in 2024.

## CAN HOLIDAY PARTY

**DECEMBER 13**

**5 - 8 PM**

All CAN members welcome! Join us to socialize over dinner and drinks. More info pg. 4!

**RSVP!**



## POSTDOC HIGHLIGHT

### DR. JULIA YURKOVIC-HARDING

See pg. 8 to learn more about Dr. Julia Yurkovic-Harding, a postdoctoral researcher in the Early Social Development (ESD) Lab.



# Happy December!

**Caitlin Hudac**  
CAN Steering Director  
[chudac@mailbox.sc.edu](mailto:chudac@mailbox.sc.edu)



Cheers,

*Caitlin*

## A MESSAGE FROM OUR STEERING DIRECTOR

CAN made quite an impact in 2023! Audrey created a great “year in review” on Page 5 - **thank you** for everyone who contributed science, ideas, and energy to support our community! Please keep sending us news and photos so we can feature you in the newsletter in on the website.

Moving ahead, I am hoping to use the newsletter to **improve the transparency of CAN** so that everyone feels welcomed and eager to contribute to our trifold goals of (1) research, (2) community outreach/engagement, and (3) training/workforce development. Do not hesitate to reach out if you have questions or ideas to help us maintain and accelerate our mission.

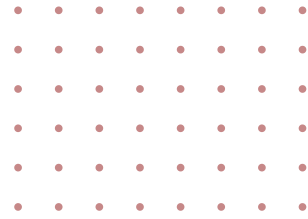


## Events to highlight

- **Jan 10 - Sips’n’Science:** We will host another Sips ‘n’ Science at Iron Hill Brewery on January 10 (see pg. 11). We hope to openly discuss challenges and success with science dissemination. Invite your lab teams!
- **Jan 18 - Postdoc planning (IMB):** We invite postdocs + faculty members to come discuss needs and upcoming programming for postdocs specifically. Will be hybrid to encourage folks that cannot make it in person, but we will journey to the Graduate for happy hour after! See pg. 12.
- **February 22 - Visiting scholar:** Learn about Dr. Veenstra-Vanderweele on pg. 13.
- **February 29 - Rare genetics celebration:** I am in early stages of organizing some sort of celebration for the rare genetics community. Let me know if you want to be involved in the planning. More details next month!

## Recap of November Executive meetings:

- Upcoming events include new science meeting time, holiday party, working on Spring 2024 flyers for labs (will send to PI mailboxes Dec)
- 1702 people (~45% w.NDD) are in our NDD Registry
- Financial future - generated a budget to support ongoing operating expenses for next 5 years. Continuing to discuss opportunities to extend
- Will continue to produce annual reports. May shift to generate at end of calendar year to align with when faculty create reports for their home departments.
- Pilot grants: we discussed the outcomes of pilot grant awards, their impact on CAN, and whether there is still a need (vs. saturation of awardees). Continuing this conversation at Dec EC meeting.



# HEART ACTIVITY SERIES



“—  
| **Heart Rate Measures of Infant Attention  
in Naturalistic Contexts: Methods and  
Implications for ASD Research** |  
—”

Learn from **Dr. Jessica Bradshaw** about infant heart rate measures and implications for ASD research.

 **Tuesday, December 5**

 **3 - 4 PM**


 **Institute for Mind & Brain  
#125**

**COFFEE & COOKIES!**



## Dr. Jessica Bradshaw

University of South Carolina  
Associate Professor  
Psychology | [ESD Lab](#)  
[Faculty Profile](#)

 [can@sc.edu](mailto:can@sc.edu)

 [go.sc.edu/can](http://go.sc.edu/can)

THE CAROLINA AUTISM AND  
NEURODEVELOPMENT RESEARCH CENTER

# CAN HOLIDAY PARTY

Join us for our  
annual CAN Holiday  
Party! Enjoy social time,  
dinner, and drinks.

All CAN Research members invited! Partners and  
children welcome and encouraged to attend.

DEC | 13<sup>th</sup> | 5 - 8 PM

**HUNTER GATHERER BREWERY AT THE HANGAR LOFTS**  
1402 JIM HAMILTON BLVD, COLUMBIA, SC 29205

**RSVP: [HTTPS://REDCAP.LINK/FL7NQX6T](https://redcap.link/fl7nqx6t)**

# CAN RESEARCH CENTER HIGHLIGHTS

***A YEAR IN REVIEW***

***2023***

## ***R01 GRANT AWARDS***

Four of our faculty members received their first R01 grant!

**Dr. Kristy Welshhans**

**Dr. Abigail Hogan**

**Dr. Jessica Bradshaw**

**Dr. Caitlin Hudac**

## ***COMMUNITY EVENTS***



**CAN tabled at 18 events in 2023. Check out where we were!**

SCSM Accessibility Mornings (Jan, Feb, March, July, Oct)

EdVenture Sensory Nights (Feb, Oct)

SC Philharmonic Sensory Friendly Concert (Feb)

Columbia Fireflies Sensory Safe Sunday (April)

Disability Advocacy Day (March)

SPARK in the Park Autism Resource Fair: Charleston (April)

Soda City (June, Oct)

Men's Health Fair, Sumter (June)

Women's Health Fair, Sumter (July)

SC State Fair Sensory Friendly Morning (Oct)

Trunk or Treat (Oct)

Buddy Walk, Columbia (Oct)

## ***OUR BIGGEST EVENTS***

**SCAND Conference**

**Research Roundup**

**Autism's Got Talent!**

**CAN Fall Retreat**



## ***VISITING SCHOLARS***

**Dr. Trudy Mackay**

**Dr. Susan White - Virtual**

## ***TRAINEE EVENTS***

The CAN Trainee Committee hosted three events!

**Publishing Panel**

**CV Workshop & Panel**

**Meet the Researchers!**

# The CAN CAB: Community Advisory Board

**First meeting: December 1, 2023**

**We have officially launched our CAN CAB!  
At this first meeting, we discussed:**

- **CAB Membership** to ensure representation from across communities
- **CAB Goals:** Our goal for this Board is to hear input about the alignment of (1) our research and community outreach activities with (2) the needs and values of the community.
- **Member Ideas and Open Discussion Topics:**
  - Ideas for supporting CAN in broad distribution of open research projects and resources, e.g., linking with Facebook support groups
  - CAN should consider acquiring video or written testimonials from families and individuals to increase visibility and build stronger partnerships with the community
  - CAB members requested we spread the word about the need for more “adopters” for Families Helping Families this holiday season. Gifts are due 12/16!  
<https://fhfmidlands.org/>

In coming weeks, we will introduce you to our board members. We currently have **9 members** that include parents, clinicians/ practitioners, state/policy representation , and self-advocates.

Do you have an agenda item for an upcoming CAB meeting?  
Contact organizers: Jessie Bradshaw & Caitlin Hudac

# Carolina Autism and Neurodevelopment (CAN) Research Center

## *SPRING 2024 EVENTS*

### SCIENCE & TRAINING EVENTS

**Jan. 10**

"Sips 'n' Science": Roundtable discussion of scientific dissemination

**Jan. 18**

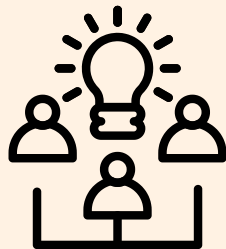
Postdoc training discussion and happy hour

**Early Feb.**

ADIS Training

**Feb. 22**

Visiting Scholar: Dr. Jeremy Veenstra-Vanderweele, Columbia University



### COMMUNITY-FOCUSED EVENTS

**Feb. 29**

Rare Genetics Day: Celebration of people with rare genetic disorders

**March 4**

Disability Advocacy Day @ the SC State House

**Early March**

Brain Bee @ USC: High school competition about the brain

**April 6**

Neurodiversity Family Event @ USC

**April 20**

Autism's Got Talent!: A talent show for kids on the spectrum

**April 23**

Autism CONNECT with DDSN, Columbia, SC



### STATEWIDE INVOLVEMENT

**Jan. 26 or Feb. 2**

"PAACT" (Palmetto Accelerator for Autism Collaboration & Taskgroup)

**March 22**

Research conference (SCAND) in Charleston, SC:

**April 3 - 4**

National CONVERGE Autism Summit, in Greenville SC

# POST-DOCTORAL RESEARCHER

## SPOTLIGHT



## DR JULIA YURKOVIC-HARDING

Dr. Julia Yurkovic-Harding is a post-doctoral research in the Early Social Development (ESD) Lab, led by Associate Professor of Psychology Dr. Jessica Bradshaw. She has a dual Ph.D. in Psychology and Cognitive Science from Indiana.



### RESEARCH FOCUS

Dr. Julia Yurkovic-Harding aims to understand the mechanisms that allow infants to engage in reciprocal social interactions and how these skills may predict later social behavior.

She uses a combination of wearable eye trackers and heart rate monitors to quantify how moment-by-moment visual attention, action, and physiology underly social behaviors in real time.

### RESEARCH

*Congrats!*

### ACCOMPLISHMENT

Dr. Yurkovic-Harding is rounding the corner on her first-ever grant submission (an F32 postdoc training grant)! It's been fun to think about the work she's done so far and to make a clear plan of the work she wants to continue doing with Dr. Jessica Bradshaw and Dr. John Richards.

### FAVORITE HOBBIES

Dr. Yurkovic-Harding enjoys:

- Reading books and listening to podcasts
- Quilting - a new hobby!
- Rollerblading, playing boardgames, and solving mystery games with her husband
- Caring for her 20 plants



### FUN FACT

Dr. Yurkovic-Harding completed her first and last triathlon, a half ironman, in 2016.





# DECEMBER HIGHLIGHTS

What have our labs been up to over the past month?

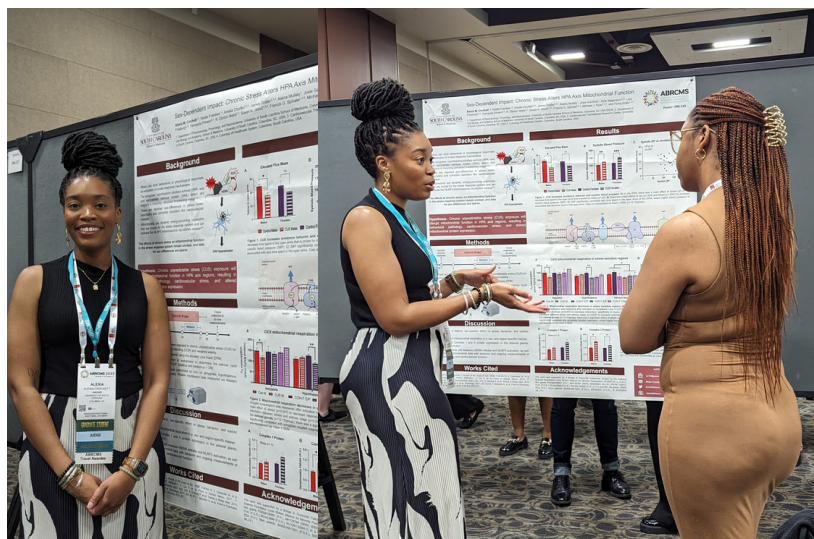
## The Community-Oriented Lab for Behavioral and Autism Interventions (COLAB)



- The COLAB published a paper on irritability (a type of emotion dysregulation) in autistic toddlers: Irritability as a dimensional risk factor in autistic and non-autistic preschoolers.
- The COLAB presented at the Association for Behavioral and Cognitive Therapies (ABCT) in Seattle, WA, on a collaborative effort to characterize changes that early interventionists are making to a social communication intervention during an effectiveness-implementation trial:

## The Hollis Lab

- Dr. Fiona Hollis and graduate student Alexia Crockett attended the Annual Biomedical Research Conference for Minoritized Scientists (ABRCMS) in Phoenix, AZ.
- Alexia received a travel award from ABRCMS for her abstract, *Sex Dependent Impact: Chronic Stress Alters HPA Axis*



Alexia Crockett presenting her research poster at ABRCMS

**SFARI Updates:** The Simons Foundation Autism Research Initiative (SFARI) has revised their plan for grant applications.

- **Due Jan 10, 2024:** Bridge to Independence (BTI) Award program is for early-career scientists (i.e., postdocs). It is similar to a K99/R00 mechanism
- **Due June 18, 2024:** There will be only one call for Pilot Awards (RAF to open early Spring '24). These grants are meant for exploratory, biologically-grounded work that is relevant to ASD. Proposals may test:
  - New mechanisms
  - Employ new technology or analytics
  - Innovative approaches to phenotyping/stratification
- **Due Sept 12, 2024: Calling developmental neurobiologists:** SFARI anticipates a RFA (due 9/12/24) to bridge early neurodevelopment and emerging neural circuits.
- **Due 5/1/24:** The Shenoy Undergraduate Research Fellowship in Neuroscience (SURFiN) program is for undergraduate students from diverse and/or historically underrepresented backgrounds to gain in-person research experience in existing SFARI labs.
- Other updates:
  - The Human Cognitive and Behavioral Science (HCBS) RFA is paused for 2024.

**Klingenstein Philanthropies** is committed to helping people by supporting breakthrough research in neuroscience, and by funding programs that improve the lives of children, especially in the fields of mental health, medicine, and education. The current, open funding opportunities within the philanthropies are:



### **Esther A. & Joseph Klingenstein (EAJK) Fund:**

- The Klingenstein-Simons Neuroscience Fellowship
  - Is for early career investigators engaged in basic or clinical neuroscience research.
  - Awards are \$300,000.

### **Klingenstein Third Generation (KTG) Foundation:**

- KTG Foundation Fellowship
  - Supports postdoctoral candidates investigating child and adolescent ADHD and depression.
  - Awards are \$100,000.
  - Applications are due January 10, 2024, and awards are announced in late March 2024.
- Transformation of Mental Health Care
  - Is focused on improving access to high quality mental health care for children and adolescents, especially those from low-income families and under-resourced communities, or other marginalized populations that may have limited supports and resources.
  - Awards are \$200,000.
  - Applications are due January 15, 2024, and awards are announced in early April 2024.

## Faculty:

Consider applying to mentor a USC med student! The Student Opportunities for Academic Achievement Through Research (SOAR) program is accepting applications (due 1/15/24).

# THE CAROLINA AUTISM AND NEURODEVELOPMENT (CAN) RESEARCH CENTER

## SIPS 'N' SCIENCE

Join us on Wednesday, 1/10, for  
a roundtable discussion of  
scientific dissemination.



Wednesday, Jan. 10



4 - 6 PM



Iron Hill Brewery  
945 Sabal St.  
Columbia, SC 29201

Contact [can@sc.edu](mailto:can@sc.edu) with any questions!



CAROLINA  
AUTISM & NEURODEVELOPMENT  
CENTER



UNIVERSITY OF  
South Carolina

THE CAROLINA AUTISM AND NEURODEVELOPMENT  
(CAN) RESEARCH CENTER

# POSTDOCTORAL PLANNING MEETING

All CAN postdoctoral researchers and advising faculty are invited to attend our first planning meeting.

This is an opportunity to meet other postdocs, learn about upcoming opportunities, and share input about beneficial training and experiences.



**Thursday, Jan. 18**



**3:30 - 5 PM** *Happy Hour at the Graduate to follow!*

**Coffee &  
cookies  
provided!**



**Institute for Mind and  
Brain, #125**

1800 Gervais St., Columbia, SC

**HYBRID EVENT**



**THE CAROLINA AUTISM & NEURODEVELOPMENT RESEARCH CENTER**

**VISITING RESEARCH SCIENTIST SEMINAR SERIES**

**DR. JEREMY VEENSTRA-VANDERWEELE**

***COLUMBIA UNIVERSITY***

***FEBRUARY 22***

**Ruane Professor of Child and  
Adolescent Psychiatry**

**Director, Division of Child & Adolescent  
Psychiatry**

Dr. Veenstra-Vanderweele is a child and adolescent psychiatrist. He uses molecular and translational neuroscience research to discover new treatments for autism spectrum disorder and pediatric obsessive-compulsive disorder.



**CAROLINA  
AUTISM & NEURODEVELOPMENT  
CENTER**



**UNIVERSITY OF  
South Carolina**