

THCFC Luncheon

In honor of Autism Awareness Month, THCFC entertained over 200 central Texas community leaders at an April luncheon at the Austin Country Club.

An anonymous \$100,000 matching donation to the Thoughtful Fund was announced, taking TH closer to our goal of raising enough money for the Fund so that one day every child can receive appropriate medical treatment, regardless of their family's ability to pay.

Darlene Allensworth and Christine Haynes spoke movingly about what their children were like before and after treatment at TH. Lunch guests also heard about the latest research, and some short films were presented.

We at TH hope to see increased support from this community of inspiring leaders for our research program and for the Thoughtful Fund.

Changing the Course

Dr. Bryan Jepson's new book, *Changing the Course of Autism; A Scientific Approach for Parents and Physicians*, serves two purposes: first, it presents all current research in one place for physicians and other scientists and professionals. Given this comprehensive picture, they can quickly see the case that our children are medically ill, and need treatment.

The book's second purpose is to explain to parents why they need to participate in treatment. Co-author Jane Johnson comments, "When I'm tired or overwhelmed and don't feel like administering vitamin injections or cooking GF/CF, knowing



why these things work, why they're important, keeps me on track and motivated."

Mainstream science, i.e., studies published in peer-reviewed medical journals, is the proper source of autism treatment as practiced at TH. The Jepson-Johnson book lists sixty pages of these references, as well as including a user-friendly glossary and index.

"I wrote the book because parents come to my office and tell me that their doctor says there's no science to support autism treatment," said Jepson. "I want to give parents the information they need to disprove that, once and for all. I believe that most physicians are really willing to help if they have information that meets a certain scientific standard. This book serves that purpose."

The book can be ordered now on the Thoughtful House website, and will be in bookstores in July.

Genetic Study

The latest "autism genes" hunt, by the Autism Genome Project Consortium (AGPC), involved the most comprehensive genome scan to date, but provided no support for the investigators' hypothesis that "liability to autism is due, in large part, to oligogenic inheritance in which combinations of susceptibility alleles contribute," (i.e., autism is the result of many genes).

Published in *Nature Genetics* (March 2007), the paper lists 135 authors, including 24 lead investigators

The AGPC collected genetic samples and data from 1,168 families, each with at least two affected siblings. This design heightened the sensitivity of the analysis to detect genetic causation effects and therefore maximized the possibility of a favorable result.

The most striking conclusion, in light of the huge resources and favorable conditions, was that their result was "little different than the result one might expect from taking a randomized group of unaffected families" (Mark Blaxill). The AGPC findings also failed to provide any support for any previously identified genetic regions of interest.

The theory that "autism is one of the most heritable complex disorders, with compelling evidence for genetic factors and little or no support for environmental influence" has failed repeated tests (Veenstra-Vanderweele, et al. *Annu Rev Genomics Hum Genet*, 2004).

Clearly, the time has come to direct valuable resources to focus on examining the role of the environment in this disorder, away from the increasingly redundant genetic model.

CARD News

- Dr. Granpeesheh is running for the Board of Directors of ASA
- Thirty-five senators and congressmen attended the opening of the new Phoenix office
- Featured on Univision's morning show