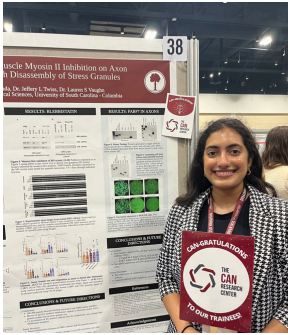


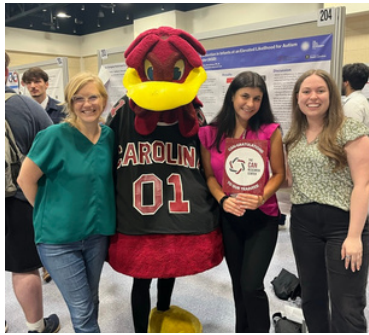
MAY NEWSLETTER

THE CAROLINA AUTISM AND NEURODEVELOPMENT RESEARCH CENTER

DISCOVER USC 2024



Riya Machimada (Twiss Lab)



Early Social Development (ESD) Lab

Over 50 undergraduate students in CAN-affiliated labs presented their research at Discover USC 2024! Check out the 25 award-winners on pg. 7.

IN THE COMMUNITY

In celebration of Autism Acceptance Month, the CAN Research Center hosted Autism's Got Talent, a virtual talent show for autistic kids and teens (learn more pg. 8)!



The CAN Research Center also sponsored and participated in Neurodiversity Among Us, hosted at the Institute for Mind and Brain

Neurodiversity Among Us, hosted at the Institute for Mind and Brain

participated in AutismConnect 2024, a large conference for families, providers, and anyone with a connection to autism. Check out pg. 10 to see all the places we went!

Learn about a research lab!

Learn about the Communication in Autism and Neurodevelopmental Disorders (CANDi) Lab, directed by Dr. Abigail Hogan, pg. 6

SAVE THE DATE

MAY 2

4:30 PM - 6:30 PM

CAN End-of-Semester Social

Join us at the Graduate Hotel to celebrate the end of the semester!

JUNE 11-12

12 - 5 PM

Summer Strategic Planning

Help the CAN Research Center plan the upcoming year at the Alumni Center!

AUGUST 14

9 AM - 5 PM

Fall Retreat

Join us at the annual Fall Retreat, which will feature talks, networking opportunities, and discussions about upcoming plans. Breakfast and lunch provided!

SEPTEMBER 5

Visiting Scientist Series

Dr. Jeremy Veenstra-VanderWeele, child and adolescent psychiatrist at Columbia University, will visit USC and host a seminar, small group meetings, and a trainee lunch.

We value your feedback!

All CAN members are invited to share feedback to help plan next year! [CAN End-of-Year Reflections](#)

A NOTE FROM OUR STEERING DIRECTOR



Caitlin Hudac
CAN Steering Director
chudac@mailbox.sc.edu

Cheers,

Caitlin

Happy May!

Congratulations for finishing another excellent academic year! It was lovely to see so many folks at our Research Roundup and hear cross-cutting questions. Looking forward to thinking more about socially anxious zebrafish! Here are some highlights we featured at the Roundup:

New and upcoming faculty hires:

Dr. Qun Lu (Chemistry), Drs. Yuexuan Wu, Shanghon Xie, Will Consagra (Statistics), and 4 new Presidential lines opening: PPN, Biology, Education, Psychology

CAN Science meetings:

- ~15-20 people joined each of our 16 morning virtual science meetings, representing 14 labs within CAN and 2 new collaborators
- Dr. Susan White visited to share her work on social skills interventions
- Over 70 CAN members joined our annual retreat and the SCAND meeting in Charleston

Research Accomplishments:

- 63 publications with average impact factor of 6.1
- 19 new grants awarded for a total of ~\$6.7M -- includes training grants to Rachel Hantman (Jane Roberts) and Tessa Djiko (Jessie Bradshaw)
- 30 grants under review currently for ~\$31M
- 50 DiscoverUSC posters were presented by CAN Trainees!

Community activities:

- We formed a Community Advisory Board with 8 community members
- CAN played a big part in several large-scale events: Disability Advocacy Day, Brain Bee, Neurodiversity Among Us, AutismConnect

SAVE THE DATES

SUMMER 2024

**JUNE
11-12**

Summer Strategic Planning

June 11 and 12, 12 - 5 PM
Alumni Center

Lunch & afternoon refreshments provided as we determine goals and objectives for the 2024-2025 academic year. All CAN members are welcomed (and encouraged) to attend - let Audrey know if you are coming! Some topics that will be discussed include:



Enhance USC's research capacity in ASD/NDDs

- 4 faculty hires (PPN, Psych, Education, Biology)
- Continue CAN Science – change time?
- Barrier – Physical space, distributed across campus
- Increase opportunities for trainees

Enhance multi-disciplinary approaches and cultivate innovative collaborations

- Continue to bring in visiting scholars
- Large-scale / ongoing funding: T32 in June 2024; Consider program project grants (FXS?)
- Increase efforts to advance diversity, equity, and inclusion
- Summer 2024 : Translational white paper?

**JUNE
10-14**

Rooster Tales Theater Camp

See pg. 9



**JUNE -
AUG**

Writing Workshops

Writing workshop opportunities will be available starting in June. More details will come by email soon.



FALL 2024

**AUG
14**

Fall Retreat

August 14, 9am - 5pm
Alumni Center

Science talks, networking, collaboration, and more!



**SEP
05**

Jeremy Veenstra-VanderWeele

September 5

Dr. Jeremy Veenstra-VanderWeele, child and adolescent psychiatrist at Columbia University, will visit USC to give a seminar and meet with faculty and students.



September

Elevator Pitch Workshop

October

Community Event
Trunk'or'Treat

November

Snacks & Science
Trainee Event

December

Holiday Party
Community Event

END-OF-SEMESTER CAN SOCIAL

The Graduate Hotel
1619 Pendleton St, Columbia, SC 29201

THURSDAY, MAY 2

4:30 - 6:30 PM

All CAN members are invited to
celebrate the end of the semester!



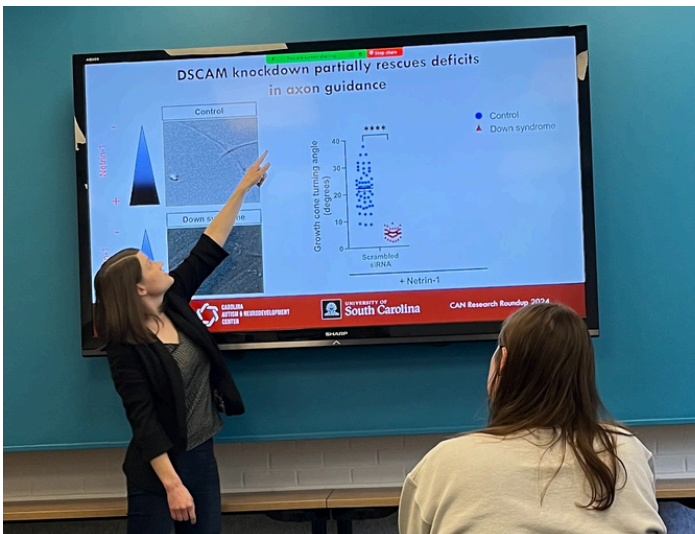
CAN RESEARCH ROUNDUP 2024

Our annual CAN Research Roundup featured flash talks from 12 labs and over 30 attendees!

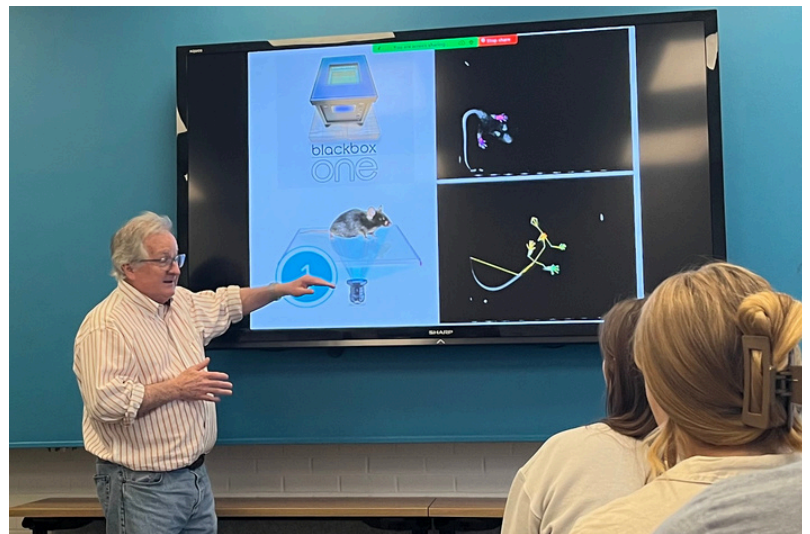
All faculty, students, postdoctoral researchers, and staff are invited to provide feedback for future opportunities and sign up for committees and our summer strategic planning meeting.



End-of-Year CAN Reflections Form



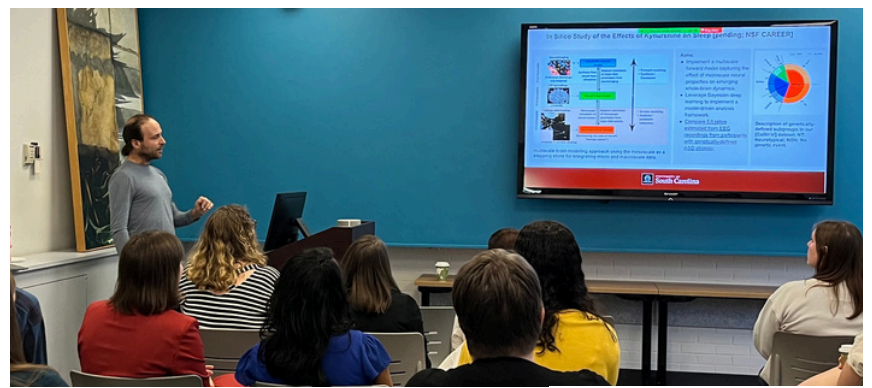
Dr. Kristy Welshans



Dr. Jeff Twiss



Dr. Michelle Brown, Anna Leah Davis, Ella DuBard (STARR Lab)



Dr. Christian O'Reilly

LAB SPOTLIGHT

Communication in Autism and Neurodevelopmental Disorders (CANDi) Lab



Abigail Hogan, PhD

Director, CANDi Lab
Assistant Professor,
Communication Sciences
& Disorders

Our Goal

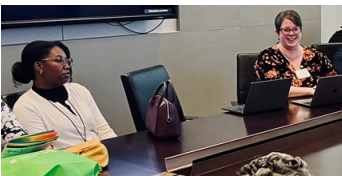
To gain a better understanding of **how, when, and why anxiety develops in young autistic children and FMR1-associated conditions (e.g., fragile X syndrome)**, and how that anxiety impacts broader abilities like **communication to help inform the development of future treatments** that address anxiety symptoms and communication skills more holistically as opposed to treating one or the other.



CANDi Lab Members

COMMUNITY

This April, the CANDi lab engaged with hundreds of families and providers at AutismConnect 2024 and the SC Philharmonic Sensory Friendly Family Concert!



Dr. Abigail Hogan presents at AutismConnect



SC Philharmonic tabling

RESEARCH

Childhood Anxiety in Autism Spectrum Disorder and Fragile X Syndrome

Recruiting children ages 7-11 with:

- Fragile X syndrome
- Autism
- No developmental concerns



Assessment room

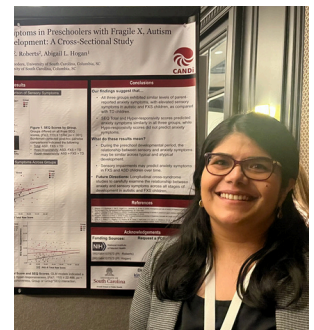
Families receive developmental and behavioral feedback and \$200 for completing behavioral assessments, parent-report questionnaires, and interviews.

CONFERENCES

Upcoming Conferences

International Society for Autism Research (INSAR)
(May 15th - May 18th)

National Fragile X Foundation
(July 25th - July 28th)



Dr. Kim Sarmukadam,
CANDi Lab Postdoc
(Gatlinburg Conference)

Discover USC 2024

Over 50

undergraduate students in CAN-affiliated labs presented research at Discover USC 2024!

Congratulations to Award winners!

PSYCHOLOGY AND NEUROSCIENCE

1st Place

Natalie Deal (Bradshaw)
Jaelyn Souza (Bradshaw)
Jiya Desai (Hollis)
Alaina Mullaly (Hollis)
Emma Mason (Twiss)
Charles Grant (Pocivavsek)
Rebecca Bork (Wilson)
Taylor Childress (Wood)

2nd Place

Evelyn Leary (Roberts)
Rebecca Carden, Madeline Lucas (Foster)
Dillon Burr, Pranav Malladi (Foster)
Ashlan Cheever, Janae Hersey (Hudac)
Rijul Bhardwaj (Bradshaw)
Jack Otterson (Smith)
Hannah Brennen (Hollis)
Gabrielle Wood (Hollis)
Archana Ramesh (Hollis)

BIOLOGY AND BIOMEDICAL SCIENCES

1st Place

Ashley Loomis (Twiss)
Josephine Gardiner (Welshhans)

2nd Place

Riya Machimada (Twiss)
Marie-Claire Honoree (Twiss)
Ashutosh Arora, Liz Iglesias (Twiss)

GRADUATE STUDENTS

Courtney Wright, Biomedical Science (Pocivavsek)
Kareem Chambers, Biological Sciences (Welshhans)

HEALTH SCIENCES

2nd Place

Tanvi Giridhar (Hogan)

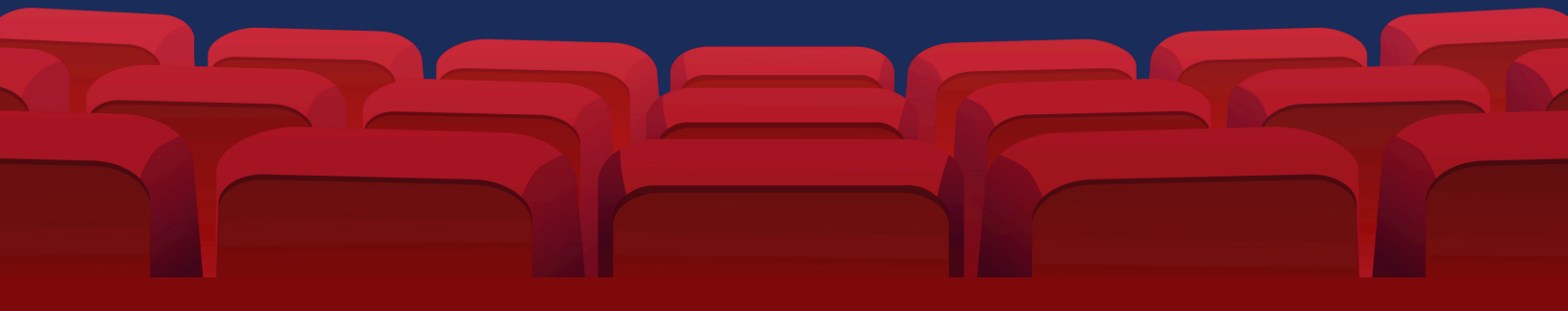




AUTISM'S GOT TALENT!

The CAN Research Center and the Early Social Development (ESD) Lab hosted the 3rd annual Autism's Got Talent, a virtual talent show for autistic kids, teens, and young adults!

Featuring 35 performers!



Rooster Tales

A summer theater camp for autistic kids & teens!

Congratulations to Peter Duffy, Caitlin Hudac, and Sarah Edmunds for receiving a SC Arts Commission Grant!

In addition, CAN will be co-sponsoring this event to make sure it is a free opportunity for autistic students!

For CAN Trainees

Opportunities to volunteer!
Contact [Caitlin Hudac](#).

Clinical graduate students
have an opportunity for
consultation and
intervention hours
(Contact [Sarah Edmunds](#)).



For Rooster Tale Theater Camp Students

June 10-14, 2024 | 9 AM -12 PM

10-15 students

Inclusive of accommodation needs
Geared for students aged 10-14 years

**FREE TUITION -
SPONSORED BY CAN**

Sign up here:

<https://tinyurl.com/3pz8hmm5>

CAN *in the* Community

This April, the CAN Research Center tabled at:

- Neurodiversity Among Us, a family event hosted by Akoma Cares
- AutismConnect 2024, a large conference for providers, families, and anyone with a connection to autism
- Sensory Safe Sunday Fireflies baseball game
- SC Philharmonic Family Sensory Concert: A Work of Heart



AutismConnect 2024



Fireflies Sensory Safe Sunday



SC Philharmonic Sensory Concert: A Work of Heart



Neurodiversity Among Us