

From: **AUTISM SPEAKS**

Rubenstein Communications, Inc.
Jane Rubinstein – 212.843.8287; jrubinstein@rubenstein.com



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

AUTISM SPEAKS ANNOUNCES THE DENNIS WEATHERSTONE PRE-DOCTORAL FELLOWSHIP PROGRAM

Established With \$3,750,000 Grant from the Stavros Niarchos Foundation

NEW YORK, NY (January 8, 2009) – Autism Speaks, the nation’s largest organization dedicated to funding and facilitating autism research, today announced receipt of a grant of \$3,750,000 from the Stavros Niarchos Foundation to establish the Dennis Weatherstone Pre-Doctoral Fellowship Program at Autism Speaks. The Program will attract young, talented scientists into the field of autism research, funding up to eight fellows annually, on a competitive basis.

Weatherstone Fellows will work directly with mentors who are leaders in the field of autism research. The Program fills a need to increase the number of promising young scientists who will make autism research their chosen field. The first Weatherstone Fellows will be selected in 2009.

“The support of organizations such as the Stavros Niarchos Foundation is critical to our efforts to advance innovative autism research and the urgent search for answers,” said Mark Roithmayr, president of Autism Speaks. “Together with our new partners from the Foundation, we are dedicated to encouraging and incentivizing the next generation of scientists to continue this pursuit.”

The Stavros Niarchos Foundation chose to name the Program for Dennis Weatherstone, who had a long association with the Foundation, serving as its first chairman from 1996 until his passing in 2008. Mr. Weatherstone, a native of London, England and long time resident of Darien Conn., had a long and distinguished career in the financial services industry. Mr. Weatherstone was the former head of J.P. Morgan and was once described as “one of the world’s greatest bankers.” He became the company’s chairman in 1980. In 1990, he assumed the role of Chairman and CEO, a position he held until his retirement in 1994. He was knighted by Queen Elizabeth II in 1990 in recognition of his achievements and service.

“It is with great pleasure that the Stavros Niarchos Foundation has made this substantial grant to Autism Speaks in memory of our Chairman and good friend, Dennis Weatherstone,” stated Philip S. Niarchos, Spyros S. Niarchos, and Andreas C. Dracopoulos, co-presidents of the Foundation on behalf of the Board of Directors. “He was a wise, yet humble and keenly sensitive man who understood fully the benefits of education and medical research. The promise of the young researchers who will be supported through these funds and the benefits of their work to those affected by this disorder are fitting and lasting tributes to his memory.”

“My family and I are grateful to the Stavros Niarchos Foundation and Autism Speaks for this wonderful tribute to my late husband, Dennis,” said Marion Weatherstone. “He would be pleased to know that this fellowship program, established in his name, will move us closer to understanding autism and, ultimately, curing it.”

The Stavros Niarchos Foundation, a major international philanthropic organization, supports charitable activities in health and medicine; education, the arts and culture; and social welfare. Special attention is given to programs for children and the elderly. This program will fund fellows over a decade or longer, and is a significant step in addressing the urgency felt in the scientific and family communities as the prevalence of the disorder rises, now impacting 1 in 150 children, and as awareness of the toll the disorder takes on individuals and families grows.

“We believe the return-on-investment in encouraging scientists to enter the field of autism research is unlimited, and will yield results and answers over the lifetime of their work,” concluded Dr. Geri Dawson, Chief Science Officer, Autism Speaks. “We know there are no simple answers to the cause or treatment of this disorder and these fellowships are a critical component of the multi-faceted approach we know is needed.”

About Autism

Autism is a complex brain disorder that inhibits a person's ability to communicate and develop social relationships, and is often accompanied by behavioral challenges. Autism spectrum disorders are diagnosed in one in 150 children in the United States, affecting four times as many boys as girls. The prevalence of autism has increased tenfold in the last decade. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention have called autism a national public health crisis whose cause and cure remain unknown.

About Autism Speaks

Autism Speaks is dedicated to increasing awareness of autism spectrum disorders, to funding research into the causes, prevention and treatments for autism, and to advocating for the needs of individuals with autism and their families. It was founded in February 2005 by Suzanne and Bob Wright, the grandparents of a child with autism. Bob Wright is Senior Advisor at Lee Equity Partners and served as vice chairman, General Electric, and chief executive officer of NBC and NBC Universal for more than twenty years. Autism Speaks merged with the Autism Coalition for Research and Education (ACRE), the National Alliance for Autism Research (NAAR) and Cure Autism Now (CAN), bringing together the nation's leading autism advocacy organizations. To learn more about Autism Speaks, please visit www.autismspeaks.org

About Stavros Niarchos Foundation

The Stavros Niarchos Foundation is a major international philanthropic organization established by the family of the late Stavros Niarchos. Mr. Niarchos, born and raised in Greece, was best known for his successful ship building and shipping enterprises, although he was active in a wide range of business activities. For years he was known to have the largest private fleet in the world, with more than eighty super tankers. The Stavros Niarchos Foundation, founded in 1996, supports charitable activities in four primary areas: arts and culture; education; health and medicine; and social welfare. Special attention is given to programs for children and the elderly. Since its inception the Stavros Niarchos Foundation has provided total grant commitments of \$361,254,582 with 1,647 grants in Greece and in 85 additional nations around the world to various not-

for-profit organizations. To learn more about the Stavros Niarchos Foundation, please visit www.snf.org

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Alternative headline 2 for financial press

**AUTISM SPEAKS ANNOUNCES THE DENNIS WEATHERSTONE
PRE-DOCTORAL FELLOWSHIP PROGRAM
IN MEMORY OF FORMER CHAIR OF JP MORGAN AND *THE STAVROS NIARCHOS
FOUNDATION***

Alternative headline 3 for CT press

**AUTISM SPEAKS ANNOUNCES PRE-DOCTORAL FELLOWSHIP PROGRAM
IN MEMORY OF DARIEN RESIDENT DENNIS WEATHERSTONE
*CREATED WITH \$3,750,000 GRANT FROM THE STAVROS NIARCHOS FOUNDATION***