Brock University 50 1964-2014

Press Release

MEDIA ADVISORY

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University Marketing &Communications
905-688-5550 x4687

Brock University experts available on World Autism Awareness Day (April 2)

April 2, 2013 is a historic day in Canada. This is the first time that the country will recognize the United Nations' World Autism Awareness Day.

Autism is the most common neurological disorder affecting children and one of the most common developmental disabilities affecting Canadians in general, according to Autism Society Canada.

The National Epidemiologic Database for the Study of Autism in Canada (NEDSAC) says that the numbers of Canadian children being diagnosed with autism spectrum disorders is increasing, at an estimated prevalence rate of one per 94 children.

Brock University has two experts who can be interviewed on various aspects of autism:

* **Maurice Feldman** has developed a scale for parents to monitor the behavioral development of infants who might be at biological risk for autism spectrum disorder (ASD). Identifying ASD as early as possible – and starting intensive therapy right away – is crucial for a child's long-term success. Feldman can discuss early signs of ASD, how parents can use "simple and natural strategies" to promote more typical development in vulnerable infants, predicting which children may develop ASD and interventions for children with ASD.

* **Maureen Connolly** co-ordinates Brock University's Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD) Summer Movement Camp for children as young as three to adults in their early 20s. The camp also provides an opportunity for undergraduate and graduate students to interact with the children. Connolly can talk about designing physical activities and learning opportunities for children with ASD based on their patterns of movement and interpreting the behaviours of children with ASD.

To arrange interviews, contact: Cathy Majtenyi, research communications/media relations specialist, 905-688-5550 x5789; cell: 905-321-0566 or cmajtenyi@brocku.ca

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