

MARCH 2025 NEWSLETTER



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Hear takeaways from our Elevator Pitch Workshop and get updates on some new faculty hires!

Page 3: Spring 2025 events

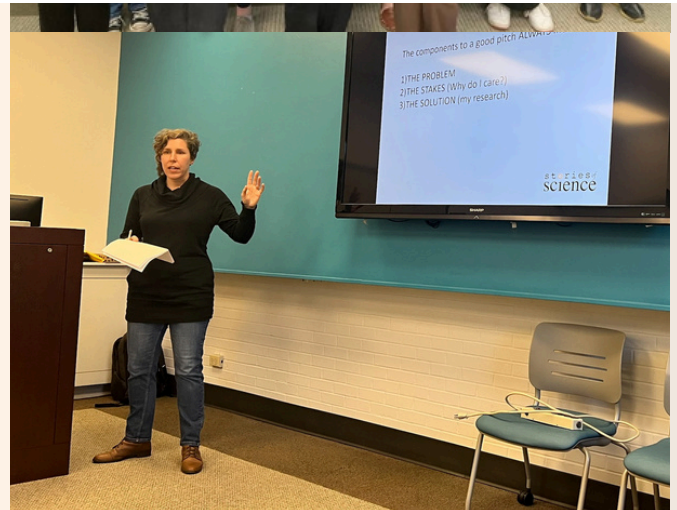
See all of the upcoming USC and community events that CAN is attending. Let Sydney know if you want to join for ANY event!

Pages 4-10: Information flyers for upcoming events

Find more information on our community partners' events. Questions? Email us!



THANK YOU! To Dr. Lisa Cantrell and everyone who attended her Elevator Pitch Workshop. See takeaways on the next page!



MARCH IS DEVELOPMENTAL DISABILITY AWARENESS MONTH!

March is Developmental Disability Awareness Month. CAN recognizes the importance of this campaign and aims to support the inclusion, leadership, and empowerment of people with developmental disabilities to fully participate in all aspects of life. Learn more from the [National Association of Councils on Developmental Disabilities](#).



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

Cheers,

Caitlin

Happy March! As we near spring break and a very busy autism awareness month (see events on next page!), I have already started reflecting on the progress we have made over the last year -- learning from visiting scholars, professional development activities, and our renewed CAN Pilot grants. I am excited to learn more about research findings across the state this month at the (sold-out!) annual SCAND symposium at Furman University March 7. As we continue to reflect on our progress, I look forward to conversations with CAN members to learn more about what we should do to maintain our momentum towards addressing real-world needs for families.

As a highlight of last month, we brought Dr. Lisa Cantrell to campus to help us practice storytelling techniques - specifically, the 60-second “Elevator Pitch” that tells the story about our research. We developed, workshopped, and edited our “EP” making sure to emphasize the problem we are trying to solve, why other people should care, and how we accomplish our research.

Some takeaways from attendees:

- *I need multiple elevator pitches!*
- *This process can be iterative -- it can be done over time.*
- *I've never considered putting a story or anecdote into my scientific research story.*

Trainees ONLY: Our next CAN Trainee Committee event is on 3/21 1-2pm @ the Graduate Hotel: Come discuss “Navigating the Hard Stuff” !
ALL: What kinds of professional development training would you like to see next?

Highlights from the Executive committee

We reviewed and made plans for our upcoming schedule -- importantly: please RSVP for events with **Dr. Sandy Magnaña (3/20-21)!**

We discussed upcoming faculty hires: **Social Work** (offer pending). Several faculty have accepted offers and will be joining us in the Fall: Dr. Zack Sha in **Psychology** and Dr. Chad Rose in **Special Education!**

Spring 2025 Events



MARCH

3/7: SCAND

An informal gathering of scientists studying autism and neurodevelopmental disorders in the state of South Carolina. This year's meeting is in-person in Greenville, SC. More info pg. 4!

3/8: Disability Celebration Day

Join CAN at the South Carolina State Museum for Disability Celebration Day! This free event is open to all ages and includes sensory-friendly planetarium shows, hands-on exhibits and more! Learn more on pg. 5!

3/18: Disability Advocacy Day

Join us at the Statehouse for a statewide grassroots initiative led by advocacy groups, aims to inform our governor and legislators about the realities, struggles, and needs of individuals with disabilities and their families. **RESCHEDULED FOR 3/18**. More info pg. 6!

3/19-3/20: Visiting Scholar Series

Dr. Sandra Magana will be visiting us from the University of Texas at Austin to give a seminar titled "Cultural Tailoring of Autism Interventions for Latino Families", a Lunch and Learn, meet with faculty and trainees, and learn about CAN. Details on page 7!

3/21: Trainee Event: Navigating the Hard Stuff

Trainees only! Share your struggles and coping strategies with other trainees during this informal event at The Graduate. More info page 8!

3/22: SPARK in the Park

CAN will be attending this Autism Research Fair in Central Creek Park in Goose Creek, SC. Learn more on page 9!

APRIL

4/2 AutismConnect 2025

A **FREE** conference for self-advocates, families, caregivers, providers, ANYONE interested in learning more about autism and available resources! Informational flyer included on page 10!

4/5 Neurodiversity Among Us

Save the date! An event to celebrate kids with autism and neurodevelopmental disorders will take place at 1800 Gervais Street on April 5th with a "Be Your Own Superhero" theme. Stay tuned for event details!

4/25 Discover USC

Discover USC brings the university's research and scholarly community together in a new way, unifying celebrations of undergraduate and graduate student, postdoctoral and medical scholar innovation and scholarship into a single full-day extravaganza. More information to come!

MAY

5/7 Research Roundup

Join CAN faculty and trainees (undergraduate and graduate students, staff, post-docs) in an event to showcase our research and learn from one another! Review posters from throughout the year and listen to flashtalks from faculty and trainees. More details to come!

5/8-5/10 Commencement

Congratulations CAN grads! We are SO proud and excited for you!

SCAND SYMPOSIUM 2025

3/7/2025



Keynote Speaker:
Ben Philpot, PhD

Symposium 2025 will be held **in-person** at **Furman University** in Greenville, SC. This research conference is **free**.

For information on registration, keynote speaker, and poster submissions:





Disability Celebration Day

March 8, 2025 | 9 a.m. - 3 p.m.

You're invited to Disability Celebration Day at the South Carolina State Museum
 This is a special day to celebrate those with disabilities with fun and exciting activities



ZotArtz Community Art Creation featuring accessible art tools



Sensory Room offering a dedicated Quiet Space



Silent Disco provided by The Children's Museum of the LowCountry



Hands-On History and Astronomy Zones



Sensory-friendly planetarium and 4D theater shows



And Lots More!



ASL Interpretation provided at shows

Attendance and activities are free for participants. There is an additional cost of \$5 for each planetarium and 4D Theater show

Register online at scmuseum.org



Disability Advocacy Day

Wednesday, March 18th | 9am - 12pm

South Carolina State House North Grounds



*Legislate for Change,
Advocate for All!*

The South Carolina Partnership of Disability Organizations (SCPDO) will be hosting the Annual Disability Advocacy Day event on Wednesday, March 18, 2025.

Join us at 9 a.m. on the North grounds of the South Carolina State House to unite to impact change and celebrate the contributions made by people of all abilities.



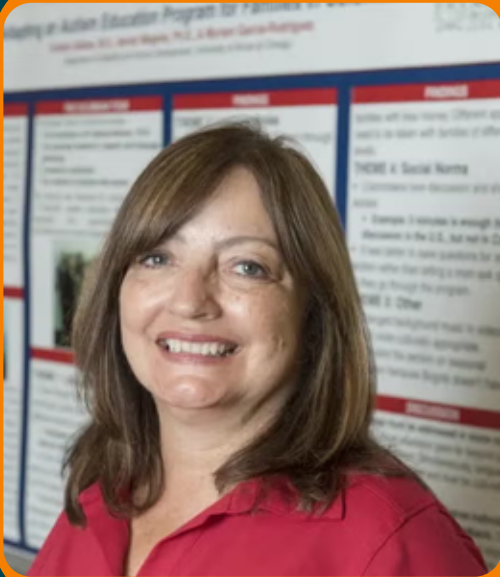
Events include a walk, a rally, and speeches by community partners, self-advocates, and others. Be sure to make appointments to speak with your legislators about the issues that mean the most to you. Let your voice be heard!

Visit scpdo.org to learn more about Disability Advocacy Day and how you can get involved!



CAN Visiting Scholar Series

DR. SANDRA MAGAÑA



Dr. Magaña, Prof. in Autism and Neurodevelopmental Disabilities, is visiting from the University of Texas at Austin as part of CAN's Visiting Scholar Series. She also serves as the Executive Director of the Texas Center for Disability Studies.

Dr. Magaña's research focuses on the cultural context of families who care for persons with disabilities across the life course. Her current research includes investigating racial and ethnic disparities among children with autism and developmental disabilities and developing culturally relevant interventions to address these disparities.

MARCH 19

- **"Recruiting Minority Populations"**

Lunch and Learn

12-1:30, 1800 Gervais St.

- **"Cultural Tailoring of Autism Interventions for Latino Families"**

Seminar | 3:00-4:00

Hamilton 322

MARCH 20

- **Community-Engaged Research Workgroup**

Meeting | 9:00-10:00

1800 Gervais St.

Open to faculty and trainees interested in community-engaged research!

RSVP HERE:





CAROLINA
AUTISM & NEURODEVELOPMENT
RESEARCH CENTER

Join the CAN Trainee Committee for:

Navigating the Hard stuff



Share vulnerabilities and coping strategies amongst peers in an open, discussion-style setting. **Trainees* only!**

*Undergraduate & graduate students, postdocs, and staff



March 21



1-2PM



The Graduate
1619 Pendleton St.

Register and submit questions here!



3RD ANNUAL

SPARK in the Park

Autism Research Fair



Saturday
March 22, 2025



Festival from
11am - 1pm



Central Creek Park
Goose Creek, SC



Check out SPARK in the Park 2024 on Live 5 News!

Contact Us:



sparkautism@musc.edu



843-714-1352



ALL-ABILITIES PARK / RESOURCES / GIVEAWAYS / FOOD TRUCKS





South Carolina
Department of Disabilities
and Special Needs



THE
CAN
CENTER



SOUTH CAROLINA
Developmental Disabilities Council

AUTISM CONNECT

APRIL 2, 2025

CHECK-IN BEGINS AT 8AM | SESSIONS FROM 9-3PM

Bringing together the autism community for a day filled with connections, support, and understanding!

Location:

Brookland Banquet & Conference Center
1066 Sunset Blvd, West Columbia SC 29169

**Exhibitor tiers
start at \$50**

Half-price for nonprofits

CALL FOR EXHIBITORS & PRESENTERS

- Continuing Education.
- A limited number of exhibitor tables and sponsorship opportunities.
- Connect directly with families and other providers.
- Extend your reach beyond your current audience.
- Share best practices, research, and knowledge with professionals and caregivers at AutismConnect.
- **Deadline for presenters/exhibitors is January 31, 2025.**

**To register, scan QR code or
visit the AutismConnect webpage:**

<https://ddsn.sc.gov/ddsn-divisions/autism/autismconnect>

SCAN TO REGISTER

