

ALLEN INSTITUTE FOR BRAIN SCIENCE HOSTS WILLIAMS SYNDROME SYMPOSIUM

Williams Syndrome Association Convenes Leading Scientists to Identify Promising Avenues for Advancing Research on Williams-Beuren Syndrome

SEATTLE, Wash.—October 14, 2010—The Allen Institute for Brain Science (www.alleninstitute.org) and the Williams Syndrome Association (WSA) will hold the WSA's bi-annual symposium, "Neurodevelopment & Cognition in Williams-Beuren Syndrome: Understanding Genetics & Pathophysiology to Inform Treatment," at the Allen Institute's headquarters in Seattle on October 14th & 15th, 2010.

The symposium will focus on research surrounding Williams-Beuren Syndrome, also known as Williams Syndrome, and brings together an illustrious group of expert scientists charged with looking to the future of the field. Discussions will center on the background and current studies of Williams Syndrome, themes from studies of other neuro-developmental disorders, and therapeutics.

"We're pleased to be hosting the Williams Syndrome Association symposium at the Allen Institute and facilitating these discussions," said Elaine Jones, chief operating officer at the Allen Institute. "On the heels of our first annual Allen Institute for Brain Science Symposium, we understand the value of convening great scientific minds to delve into important conversations about the state of current research and what can and should be done to help push it forward."

Williams Syndrome is a genetic condition that is characterized by medical problems including cardiovascular disease, developmental delays and learning disabilities, occurring side-by-side with striking verbal abilities, highly social personalities and an affinity for music. It occurs in approximately 1 in 10,000 births worldwide, and affects an estimated 30,000 people in the United States.

The symposium program is intended to spark creative discussions exploring promising avenues for research surrounding Williams Syndrome. The Williams Syndrome Association is the most comprehensive resource for people and families living with Williams Syndrome, as well as their doctors, researchers and educators.

"Our mission is to help people with Williams Syndrome reach their highest attainable goals," said Terry Monkaba, executive director at the WSA. "Our bi-annual symposium is critical in fostering cross-disciplinary dialogue among scientists in the field and in helping us to define the most important areas for our future grantmaking. We're extremely grateful that the Allen Institute is graciously hosting our conference."

The meeting will feature a series of presentations by and discussions among a diverse group of leading scientists, including:

PRESENTERS

- **Lucy Osborne**, University of Toronto
- **Uta Franke**, Stanford University
- **Carolyn Mervis**, University of Louisville
- **Helen Tager-Flusberg**, Boston University
- **Karen Berman**, National Institutes of Health
- **Barbara Pober**, Massachusetts General Hospital
- **John D. Gabrieli**, Massachusetts Institute of Technology
- **Andreas Meyer-Lindenberg**, Central Institute of Mental Health
- **Mike Oldham**, University of California, San Francisco
- **Stephen Warren**, Emory University

- **Jacqueline N. Crawley**, National Institutes of Health
- **John Rubenstein**, University of California, San Francisco
- **Morgan Sheng**, Genentech
- **Mriganka Sur**, Massachusetts Institute of Technology
- **Honjun Song**, Johns Hopkins University
- **Fen-Biao Gao**, University of Massachusetts Medical School
- **Mustafa Sahin**, Children's Hospital Boston
- **Randi Hagerman**, University of California, Davis

EXPERT DISCUSSANTS

- **Ursula Bellugi**, Salk Institute
- **Elisabeth Dykens**, Vanderbilt University
- **Jeff Golden**, Children's Hospital of Philadelphia
- **Annette Karmiloff-Smith**, Birkbeck, University of London
- **Alice Kau**, Eunice Kennedy Shriver National Institute of Child Health and Human Development (NICHD)
- **Julie Korenberg**, University of Utah
- **Barbara Landau**, Johns Hopkins University
- **Ed Lein**, Allen Institute for Brain Science
- **Marilee Martens**, Ohio State University
- **Colleen Morris**, University of Nevada
- **Allan Reiss**, Stanford University
- **John Spiro**, Simons Foundation Autism Research Initiative
- **May Tassabehji**, University of Manchester
- **Paul Wang**, Seaside Therapeutics
- **Hongkui Zeng**, Allen Institute for Brain Science

More information about Williams Syndrome can be found at www.williams-syndrome.org.

###

About the Allen Institute for Brain Science

Launched in 2003, the Seattle-based Allen Institute for Brain Science is an independent, 501(c)(3) nonprofit medical research organization dedicated to advancing brain research. Started with \$100 million in seed money from philanthropist Paul G. Allen, the Institute takes on projects at the leading edge of science—far-reaching projects at the intersection of biology and technology. The resulting data create publicly available resources that fuel discovery for countless other researchers worldwide. The Institute's data and tools are available on the Web at www.alleninstitute.org.

About the Williams Syndrome Association

The Williams Syndrome Association (WSA) is devoted exclusively to improving the lives of individuals with Williams syndrome. The association strives to locate individuals with the syndrome and their families and disseminate timely and accurate medical and educational information. It provides members with support through yearly regional conferences and social gatherings, quarterly newsletters and biennial conventions. The Williams Syndrome Association actively supports research into educational, behavioral, social and medical aspects of the syndrome.

###

Media Contact:

Aaron Blank, for the Allen Institute for Brain Science
 (206) 343-1543, (425) 736-5456 (mobile), aaronblank@feareygroup.com