

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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**PEERS® Parent-Assisted Social Skills Group for Teens with Autism to Be Offered at CARD Centers Nationwide**

*Beginning in March 2016, Center for Autism and Related Disorders (CARD) will offer PEERS® for Adolescents at several of its treatment centers across the country.*

LOS ANGELES (Feb. 01, 2016) - Leading autism treatment provider, Center for Autism and Related Disorders (CARD), today announced the implementation of a manualized, social skills training intervention for teens with autism spectrum disorder (ASD). The Program for the Education and Enrichment of Relational Skills (PEERS®), originally developed at UCLA by Dr. Elizabeth Laugeson and Dr. Fred Frankel, will be available beginning in March 2016 at participating CARD centers. The PEERS® program is a 14-week, evidence-based, parent-assisted social skills intervention for motivated middle school and high school teens with ASD. The program will consist of 90-minute sessions provided once a week. PEERS® will be open to both CARD patients and teens with ASD in the community. Dates and times for the program will vary by location.

“Individuals with autism have difficulty developing social skills intrinsically,” said Doreen Granpeesheh, Ph.D., BCBA-D, CEO and Founder of CARD. “As children with autism approach adolescence, the nuances of social interactions get more demanding; therefore, it is crucial to implement social skills interventions, like the PEERS® program, that teach teens with autism how to make and maintain friendships before they reach adulthood.”

The PEERS® program teaches teens a variety of social skills, including: how to use appropriate conversational skills; how to find common interests by trading information; how to appropriately use humor; how to enter and exit a conversation between peers; how to handle rejection, teasing and bullying; how to handle rumors and gossip; how to be a good host during get-togethers; how to make phone calls to friends; how to choose appropriate friends; how to be a good sport; how to handle arguments and disagreements with people; and how to change a bad reputation. Parents will attend separate sessions at the same time and will learn: how to assist their teen in making and keeping friends; how to help expand their teen’s social network; and how to provide their teen with feedback through coaching during weekly socialization homework assignments.

“This is an opportunity for us to share one of the cutting edge evidence-based treatments we’re developing at UCLA with CARD, one of the nations leading service providers for people with

neurodevelopmental disorders. This exciting collaboration has the potential to make a meaningful difference in the lives of people with developmental disabilities.”- Elizabeth Laugeson, Psy.D., Founder and Director of the UCLA PEERS® Clinic.

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) estimates that one in every 68 children in America is diagnosed with ASD, with one in 42 boys and one in 189 girls diagnosed. This is more than a 30 percent increase since the 2008 report. The increase in ASD diagnoses and the lack of resources available to families in many communities leave parents struggling to access the services that are crucial to their child’s development.

CARD provides a variety of services worldwide using the evidence-based principles of applied behavior analysis (ABA) to treat the delays and challenges commonly associated with ASD. As a leader in the field of autism treatment, CARD strives to meet the needs of families and is proud to collaborate with the UCLA PEERS® Clinic to offer PEERS® for Adolescents at CARD centers across the United States. Families interested in more information about the PEERS® Program offered at participating CARD centers may call (855) 345-2273.

#### **About Center for Autism and Related Disorders (CARD)**

CARD treats individuals of all ages who are diagnosed with autism spectrum disorder (ASD) at treatment centers around the globe. CARD was founded in 1990 by leading autism expert and clinical psychologist Doreen Granpeesheh, PhD, BCBA-D. CARD treats individuals with ASD using the principles of applied behavior analysis (ABA), which is empirically proven to be the most effective method for treating individuals with ASD and recommended by the American Academy of Pediatrics and the US Surgeon General. CARD employs a dedicated team of nearly 2,000 individuals across the nation and internationally. For more information, visit [www.centerforautism.com](http://www.centerforautism.com) or call (855) 345-2273.

#### **About the UCLA PEERS® Clinic**

The Program for the Education and Enrichment of Relational Skills (PEERS®) was originally developed at UCLA by Dr. Elizabeth Laugeson, Founder and Director of the UCLA PEERS® Clinic, and Dr. Fred Frankel in 2005 and has expanded to locations across the United States and the world. PEERS® is a manualized, social skills training intervention for youth with social challenges. It has a strong evidence-base for use with adolescents and young adults with autism spectrum disorder, but is also appropriate for preschoolers, adolescents, and young adults with ADHD, anxiety, depression, and other socioemotional problems.

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