



NBASLH

# Resound)))

A publication of the National Black Association for Speech-Language and Hearing

Summer 2016

## NBASLH

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## 'Aspies' Bring Their Unique Challenges to UH Professor

Byron Ross, assistant clinical professor in the University of Houston (UH) department of communication sciences and disorders, almost pursued a career in psychiatry.

"People always told me I was a good listener," he said. "The career surveys I took in school always suggested psychiatry as a career."

But there is a group of UH students who are glad he did not. The group doesn't have a name or a set number of members, but all in the group have one thing in common: all are on the autism spectrum disorder (ASD), specifically Asperger's syndrome. They meet with Ross once a week during the semester.

"I wanted our meetings to be a social skills therapy. I sent out an invitation to the 28 individuals who were associated with the Student Center for Disabilities," he said. "The ones who responded didn't want a 'social skills group.' They wanted someone to talk to."

The Asperger category of the spectrum describes individuals who are high functioning, with average to above average cognitive abilities and language function. Typically, they exhibit repetitive patterns of behavior, social communication struggles and interaction challenges. These can be mild or severe.

"Many in the group have adopted the term 'Aspies,' which has become a positive label to self-identify with," he said. "One article I've read suggested that some people with Asperger's syndrome consider themselves to be the evolution of the human brain. They've been taught not to lie, so they don't. They focus intently. They're passionate about topics."

Ross is careful not to call their weekly meetings "therapy." The meetings are not required. Students come when they can. The purpose is just to talk.

"Turning in assignments on time is an issue. For example, one student, who is very smart, felt he had to do one school project at a time, all the way through until it

was finished, before beginning another. This put him very behind," he said. "Other topics are roommates, girlfriends, becoming part of an organization — all big issues. We talk through strategies."

The weekly meetings are also part mentoring as Ross listens to their challenges with schoolwork or relationships. Like one student who spoke with Ross every Friday during one taxing semester.

"Talking about the problems I was dealing with and discussing possible causes and solutions clarified a lot of confusion and helped me put everything in perspective," he said. "With a thorough understanding of the ASD-related stress and its effects on academic success, Dr. Ross proved an invaluable resource for me in keeping my head above water during the school year."

Ross, whose research interest includes eye contact, or what he calls "flicker gaze," the sideways glance typical

of some with ASD, aims to teach his students in the manner in which they learn.

"One thing I teach is dynamic skills and static skills. Static skills are things like following a recipe. It never changes. This is their strength. Dynamic things, like conversations, are not their strength, because they change all the time," Ross said. "What I try to do is make dynamic situations static, like using something I've developed called a 'conversation rollercoaster.' It provides typical conversation greetings and what words to use to end conversations. Dynamic things become static."

The sessions culminate at the end of the semester with a celebratory meal. Ross says he's always proud of them.

**"People with autism do conventional things in unconventional ways."**

**Marisa Ramirez**

**Reference:** University of Houston Magazine, Fall 2015, <http://www.uh.edu/magazine/2015-fall/>



# NBASLH Convention 2017



NBASLH Expanding in Research & Clinical Practice

**N**BASLH *Expanding in Research and Clinical Practice* is NBASLH's 2017 Convention theme! This theme represents growth in membership, professional relevance and evidence-based practice. We had more than 300 attendees in 2016! We will continue that momentum by bringing you highlighted speakers that will educate and stimulate you with new perspectives in the field of communication science and disorders. June 30, 2016, marked the 39th Anniversary of NBASLH, and we are thrilled to host our Annual Convention in the exciting city of Atlanta, Georgia.

Where better to meet, educate and learn as colleagues than Atlanta, a city rich in history and prominence in the lives of African-Americans. The 2017 Convention will be an experience you do not want to miss! NBASLH is collaborating with the Hispanic Caucus to bring special sessions on pertinent issues in the field of bilingualism. The highlighted poster session and closing reception will be back! We encourage students, clinicians, and researchers to submit an abstract. The Call for Papers opens on August 1 and ends on November 11, 2016.

In the spirit of history, we are planning a special tour of the Museum of Civil and Human Rights for NBASLH attendees. In addition, we want to show Atlanta that NBASLH Cares! This year, we are planning an outreach activity with local youth. Stay tuned for more details on how you can help in the months to come.

We look forward to seeing old colleagues and meeting new ones at Convention! Check our Facebook page: [www.facebook.com/NBASLH](http://www.facebook.com/NBASLH), follow us on twitter @NBASLH and check your email for exciting details on events to come at Convention 2017!

## DO YOU HAVE



## TO SHARE?

Members are encouraged to submit items for consideration and publication in the **Resound**)))))) Topics include articles of interest to the membership and areas that pertain to speech-language pathologists or audiologists. Share your good news and accomplishments!

If you have a story, announcement or event you would like to place in the **Resound**)))))) please send your information to [nbaslh@nbaslh.org](mailto:nbaslh@nbaslh.org).

# UNIVERSITY NEWS

## Nova Southeastern University Affiliate Chapter Donating Books to 2016 NBASLH Cares



While visiting and teaching at NSU, Dr. Tommie Robinson, Jr. (former NBASLH Chair) donates books to Nova Southeastern University's Affiliate Chapter of NBASLH for NBASLH Cares.



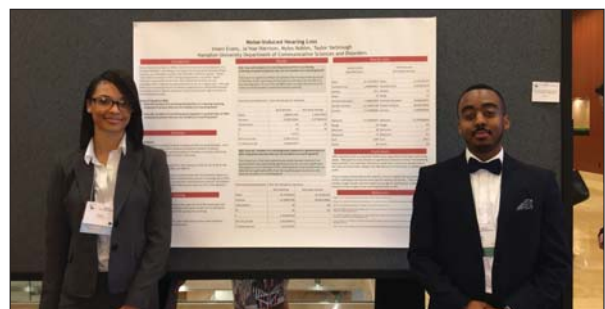
Isabelle Rene, student representative for Nova Southeastern University's Affiliate Chapter of NBASLH with final boxes of donated books. Nova Southeastern University's Affiliate Chapter of NBASLH donated six boxes totaling 575 individual books to NBASLH Cares for NAACP Portsmouth's Literacy campaign.

## University of North Carolina at Greensboro



The University of North Carolina at Greensboro Department of Communication Sciences and Disorders 2016 Graduate class at the NBASLH Convention. These students graduated on May 4, 2016 with a Master of Arts in speech-language pathology! Pictured from left to right, Charnelle McClellan, Monique Goring, Maida Bermúdez Bosch, Helena Marie Andrews Cannon, Anne Venable, Danelle Blue, Milca Bellegarde.

## Hampton University



Taylor Yarbrough and Myles Nobles, students from Hampton University, presenting their poster *Noise Induced Hearing Loss in a University Marching Band* at the 2016 Convention.



# UNIVERSITY NEWS

## University of Cincinnati



Dr. Rachel Williams, NBASLH Chair (right), presents Ms. Moody a certificate for presenting the Donn Bailey Lecture Series.

Students from the University of Cincinnati (UC) had the amazing privilege of attending the NBASLH Convention this past April. A group of seven students and members of the UC student organization Multicultural Concerns in Communication Sciences and Disorders (MC2) were in attendance. Three of our students, Abbey Falcone, Sarah Kuhn and Tiffany Moody presented research at the Convention, under the mentorship of Dr. Amy Hobek, on topics covering dialectal features of children who are speakers of African American English and a new bilingual book

project. Tiffany Moody was the recipient of the Donn F. Bailey lecture series award and had the opportunity to open the Convention by presenting the results of her year-long research study. Overall, the Convention was a wonderful learning opportunity for our group of undergraduate students. We attended various sessions of interest, and are excited for our future within the field of Communication Disorders.

Undergraduate students at the University of Cincinnati are heavily involved with our local NSSLHA chapter as well as MC2. MC2 is an organization that meets monthly to discuss cultural issues within the field of speech-language pathology and audiology and aims to broaden the knowledge of our field beyond the scope of what is taught in the classroom. Different speakers attend our meetings to present on their experiences in the field, with a specific focus on multiculturalism. In addition to our monthly meetings, MC2

is active in the Cincinnati community, serving the Seven Hills Neighborhood House, and participating in other service events such as a citywide beautification project titled Clean up Cincy. Our mission is to educate students in topics beyond the realm of our coursework, include real-life, career-focused experiences from professionals in the field and ultimately better prepare ourselves and fellow peers for the diverse set of situations we will experience as clinicians. With the new knowledge we gained from attending the NBASLH Convention we have a fresh set of ideas for discussions at our monthly meetings and are excited to encourage deeper student involvement at NBASLH in the future!

### Here is our 2016-2017 MC2 Executive Board:

- President: Kylee Loebick
- Vice President: Jade K. Clark
- Secretary: Lucy Durepos
- Treasurer: Jenna Riehle
- Membership-Service Chair: Noelle Brown
- Advisor: Carney Sotito, PhD CCC-SLP



Cin-Students - University of Cincinnati students with their mentor, Dr. Hobek at the 2016 NBASLH Convention.

## Old Dominion University



Students from the Old Dominion University affiliate of NBASLH at the 2016 Convention.

## University of Central Florida



Former student of the University of Central Florida, Nana Odeneho Kwafo Akoto III, is now king, or “nana,” for life of the Akwamu Traditional Council in Ghana, Africa, partly due to the mentoring and guidance that he received from Dr. Kenyatta O. Rivers, associate professor of communication sciences and disorders.

Although he received his degree in health sciences administration, Nana Odeneho Kwafo Akoto III, known as “Bernard Aboagye Owiredu”, while he attended UCF, frequently sought out the mentoring and guidance of Dr. Rivers before, during and after he was a student. Prior to being called to his royal duty, he worked as a health service administrator at Tema General Hospital in the seaport city of Tema.

The queen mother selected Nana Odeneho Kwafo Akoto III for the position, based on his royal lineage and accomplishments, which include his degree from UCF and a successful career. As king, he oversees more than 60 divisional and sub-chiefs of varying levels from approximately 46 towns. He succeeds his grand uncle, Nana Odeneho Kwafo Akoto II, to the throne.

## NBASLH Member News

**Dr. Martine Elie** was recently honored at the International Gala for Autism. The gala was hosted by the international school for autism to recognize individuals doing work in the area of Autism. Representatives from Chile, Dominican Republic, Haiti and Puerto Rico talked about the programs their countries offer as well as the progress being made. Dr. Elie was not only representing Howard but Haiti as well. She was additionally awarded the NBASLH Scholar Mentor Award at the Annual NBASLH Convention as well as the Distinguished Alumni Award at the Howard University 2016 COSD Awards Reception in May.

**The** Communication Sciences and Disorders Advisory Committee at Longwood University recently recognized **Dr. Robert Mayo**, professor at the University of North Carolina – Greensboro with the Friends of the Communication Sciences and Disorders Award. Dr. Mayo has taught the cranio-facial anomalies course for Longwood since the program's inception in 2006. His vast experience and expertise, in combination with his high quality instruction, ensures the students have a solid foundation of knowledge to enter the field. Dr. Lissa Power-deFur, Longwood's CSD Program Director, commented that the faculty and advisory committee greatly appreciate Dr. Mayo's contributions to the establishment and success of a new CSD graduate program, sharing his content expertise and the wisdom he has gained as a program administrator and faculty member over the years.

**Kay T. Payne, PhD**, professor at Howard University, was recognized during a special ceremony on Saturday, March 5 in Geneva, NY. The William Smith College Alumnae Association presented Payne with its highest honor - the Alumna Achievement Award. The declaration cited Payne's commitment to ensuring equity in standardized tests, her important contributions to the field of communication disorders through her keen insight into the intersection of culture and language, and the important difference she has made in the history of her alma mater. Dr. Payne is the 16th recipient of this prestigious honor.