Autism Educational Panel Event

Date: April 11th, 2018 from 1:00pm – 3:00pm
Location: UNO Homer Hitt Alumni Center Ballroom

**This event is open to the public. No cost is involved. Light refreshments will be served**

Event Organizer: Dr. Panagiotis Markopoulos, Ph.D., Counselor Education program at UNO, Department of Educational Leadership, Counseling and Foundations. Dr. Markopoulos received his Ph.D. in counselor education at the University of New Orleans and he is a clinical mental health counselor and a researcher. Dr. Markopoulos has received numerous national and international awards as it pertains to his research exploring the use of virtual reality (VR) technology in treatment of children diagnosed with autism.

Panelist I: Dr. Hanna Rue, Ph.D., BCBA-D. Dr. Rue, a licensed clinical psychologist in MA, is Head of Clinical Development for Autism Spectrum Therapies (AST). She oversees clinical standards and assists in the design and implementation of numerous research projects and staff training protocols. She obtained her doctorate in clinical psychology at the University of North Dakota. Prior to joining AST she played a leadership role at the National Autism Center and also served as a clinical director for the May Institute’s largest special education school. Dr. Rue also served as the Chairperson on the National Standards Project, phase 2.

Panelist II: Dr. Rebecca Mandal-Blasio, Ph.D., BCBA-D. Dr. Mandal-Blasio, a Louisiana native and a licensed psychology is the Clinical Director of Autism Spectrum Therapies (AST) in Louisiana. Dr. Mandal-Blasio received her Ph.D. in psychology from the University of Southern Mississippi and completed her pre-doctoral internship at the Kennedy Krieger Institute of Johns Hopkins School of Medicine. She is the former Director of the Northlake Resource Center on the Development Disabilities.
**Panelist III:** Dr. Bianca Puglia is a licensed professional counselor since 2006. She earned her Ph.D. in 2008 from Old Dominion University and her Master’s in 2001 from the University of New Orleans. In her private practice, Dr. Puglia works with a variety of clients including adults with autism. She has a particular interest in facilitating the social development of young adults with autism. Puglia Counseling Services LLC offers appointments in both, Orleans and St. Bernard Parishes.

**Panelist IV:** Ms. Angie Simonton is a clinical social worker in private practice in Madisonville, LA. She received her MSW from Tulane University and has been practicing close to 20 years. Her specialties and interests include Anxiety, Trauma, Mood Disorders, and Autism. She is open about having a child on the Spectrum and has a significant understanding of the challenges of providing adequate care for a child with autism in the Greater New Orleans area. Ms. Simonton is a strong advocate within the disabled community, the public-school system, school accommodations, Medicaid of Louisiana, community resources, and mental health treatment.

**Panelist V:** Mrs. Desiree Chevalier. Mrs. Chevalier is a California native with deep Louisiana roots. Mrs. Chevalier moved to New Orleans LA in 1981 to pursue her education at Xavier University. She is a 1st Grade teacher at Lusher Charter School, with extensive teaching knowledge and experience on children with autism. Over the years she has also taught Pre-K, 3rd, 4th, 5th, and 6th grades.

**Panelist VI:** Mrs. Danielle McAcy. Mrs. McAcy, a Louisiana native, is a mother of four children who have diagnosed with autism. Mrs. McAcy has been an autism advocate and active in the community for over a decade.