



# News Release

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

## Marking new territory in autism research: St. Boniface Hospital and Ben-Gurion University

*Family honours daughter and son with a \$300,000 donation enabling the project*

**WINNIPEG – October 2, 2018** – A new line of research to better classify autism spectrum disorder (ASD) is off the ground thanks to a \$300,000 donation from the Dyck family, through The Kali Dyck Foundation.

The Dyck family, owners of Winnipeg-based agribusiness BrettYoung Seeds, have firsthand experience with ASD. Chad, one of two sons in the family, is autistic. Daughter Kali had a special bond with Chad until her tragic death in an automobile accident in 2011. The family established The Kali Dyck Foundation in 2017 to honour her memory.

This project is one of a set of *Research Without Borders* interdisciplinary collaborations between research teams at St. Boniface Hospital and Ben-Gurion University in Beer-Sheva, Israel.

“Today, diagnoses of ASD are based on behavior assessments that really don’t distinguish between different subtypes of the disorder,” says Dr. Harold Aukema, Principal Investigator, Nutrition and Lipid Mediators with the Canadian Centre for Agri-Food Research at St. Boniface Hospital’s Albrechtsen Research Centre.

“We know there are excellent biomarkers for various human traits that are both easily measured in blood samples and vary according to various biological conditions. If ASD subtypes can be identified through their unique blood-marker profiles, then medicine has a useful new system to research, diagnose and treat these disorders.”

A 2018 Public Health Agency of Canada report estimates one in every 66 Canadian children and youth aged five to 17 has autism spectrum disorder.

Jackie Dyck said the family is thrilled to support a project with great potential to increase understanding of autism.

“Kali believed strongly in helping people with developmental disabilities. We can’t imagine a worthier way to honour Kali’s ideals than to fund this research.”

The donation is not only generous but forward-looking, said Vince Barletta, President and CEO of St. Boniface Hospital Foundation.

“When donors support research at St. Boniface Hospital, they’re investing in a better future for those who face some of today’s most debilitating conditions and diseases. We thank the Dyck family for this tremendous gift.”

**About the St. Boniface Hospital Foundation**

St. Boniface Hospital Foundation was founded in 1971 and is the primary fundraising organization for St. Boniface Hospital. The Foundation is dedicated to making possible the many innovations in health research and patient care taking place at the Hospital. St. Boniface Hospital is a leader in patient care excellence, delivered with genuine compassion. Research at St. Boniface Hospital is where medical discoveries are made; science is translated into practices that improve human health; and today’s best minds are shaping tomorrow’s advances in health care.

**About The Kali Dyck Foundation**

The Foundation was established in memory of Kali Dyck. Kali believed strongly in helping people that are disadvantaged, especially those with mental challenges. She volunteered with many organizations that supported special needs and was working towards a career to do the same. The Foundation endeavours to provide financial support to charities and organizations that support the ideals Kali personified.

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