



JOHNS HOPKINS  
BLOOMBERG  
SCHOOL of PUBLIC HEALTH

# The Wendy Klag Center for Autism and Developmental Disabilities



Protecting Health, Saving Lives—*Millions at a Time*

The Wendy Klag Center for Autism and Developmental Disabilities is dedicated to the promotion of research and education regarding the **origins, detection, measurement and prevention** of conditions that affect behavioral, socioemotional and/or cognitive development, as well as evaluation of **services and policies** that support optimal development of affected children and their families.



# The Wendy Klag Memorial Fund (2006)

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August 23, 2006

## Wendy Jane Schagen Klag 1952-2006

Wendy Klag, the wife of Dean Michael J. Klag, died in the early hours of Wednesday, August 16, 2006 aboard the cruise ship Legend II near the Galapagos Islands. She was a devoted wife and mother, a woman whose life revolved around her children and family. They all recognize that whatever success any of them had was due to her advocacy and support. Her departure leaves a hole that will never be filled.

Wendy was born on May 20, 1952 in Paterson, N.J. and raised in nearby Glen Rock where she attended Central School and Glen Rock High School. She then went to Juniata College in Huntingdon, Pa. where she met her future husband whom she began dating in 1970. Wendy graduated with a degree in Sociology and a teaching certificate in secondary education.



# Developmental Disabilities Task Force Recommendations, October 2007

“Considerable expertise at Hopkins and KKI exists across a wide array of autism- and autism-spectrum disorders and other developmental disabilities. A striking hallmark among these institutions is the obvious good will among the researchers, as well as the strong and long-standing collaborations among faculty across the SPH, SOM and KKI. However, there is no “locus” of organization or regularized communications about autism research activities across the institutions (e.g., there is a seminar series that several faculty publicize on their own, but no systematic way to reach out to others or to involve new researchers.) Instead, such communications tend to be haphazard, limiting the ability of existing researchers to attract new faculty to the field.”





# Open Mike

BY MICHAEL J. KLAG

## Our Search for Answers

Wendy cried. I drove. Sarah sat in her car seat, confused by Mommy's tears.

Sarah and my wife, Wendy, had just spent the afternoon with a child psychiatrist. Because there were not enough seats in the room, I had been exiled to the waiting room ... to wait. In the car, Wendy told me that the psychiatrist had spent a long hour talking to her while 5-year-old Sarah squirmed in the chair next to her. When he was ready for Sarah, she had long since lost any inclination to pay attention or interact. At the end of the interview, his judgment was brief and to the point: Sarah was autistic. The sobbing started when Wendy got to that part of the story.

Being an academic, I went to the medical literature to understand the causes and the implications of the diagnosis. What I found was a paucity of well-designed studies about autism, at least by my standards as an epidemiologist. And there was an absolute lack of investigation into the risk of autism associated with environmental and lifestyle factors. That was 16 years ago. Since then the situation has improved. Sarah was on the leading edge of an explosion in the incidence of autism. More children will be diagnosed with autism this year than diagnosed with diabetes, HIV and cancer combined. That explosion inspired philanthropic and government funding that has fueled a concomitant increase in research.

*It's time that I wrote about my daughter Sarah.*

Spring, 2012





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**myautismteam**  
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News

## Autism Speaks Guest of Honor at United Nations

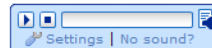


On November 19, Autism Speaks participated in a special event hosted by the Permanent Mission of Bangladesh to the United Nations. The meeting was to garner support for the UN Resolution that addresses socio-economic needs of individuals, families and societies affected by autism spectrum disorders, development disorders and associated disabilities.

Held in the ECOSOC Chamber at the U.N., attendees were treated to a special performance by students both with and without autism from The Child's School / Legacy High School Chorus.

The program was hosted Ambassador A.K. Abdul Momen from Bangladesh who gave an introductory statement calling for global backing of the new resolution and invited various international

SEARCH



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Related Items

- Tune-In Bob Wright to Appear on CNN's "Erin Burnett OutFront"**  
Autism Speaks Co-Founder Bob Wright will appear on CNN's "Erin Burnett OutFront" tonight at 7pm EST.
- Autism Speaks Applauds the Unanimous Passage of a New UN Resolution on Autism**  
The United Nations General Assembly unanimously passed a new resolution calling on governments to take urgent action to improve access to...
- U.N. Passes Unanimous Resolution Expressing 'Deep Concern' Over Long-Term Challenges for**



November 25, 2012

# Center for Autism & Developmental Disabilities Epidemiology (CADDE)



RESEARCH PUBLICATIONS FACT SHEET RESOURCES PEOPLE



Director, M. Daniele Fallin, PhD  
The Center for Autism and

CADDE's Partners



# CADDE: Center for Autism and Developmental Disabilities Epidemiology

- **Studies:**
  - SEED: national case-control study of 2-5 year olds
  - EARLI: national pregnancy cohort of women at risk for another child with an ASD
  - ADDM: National surveillance of ASD prevalence
  - Ancillary projects:
    - Epigenetic mechanisms in ASD
    - GWAS GxE for ASD





# CADDE: Center for Autism and Developmental Disabilities Epidemiology

- Themes:



- Both **genes and environment** play a role in ASD risk
- **Perinatal window** may be important for assessing environmental risks and gene-environment interactions
- **Epigenetic mechanisms** may interplay with genetic and environmental risks
- **Biomarkers** may be important for risk or for better identification and treatment



# Study to Explore Early Development

## National case-control study of autism spectrum disorders (ASDs)

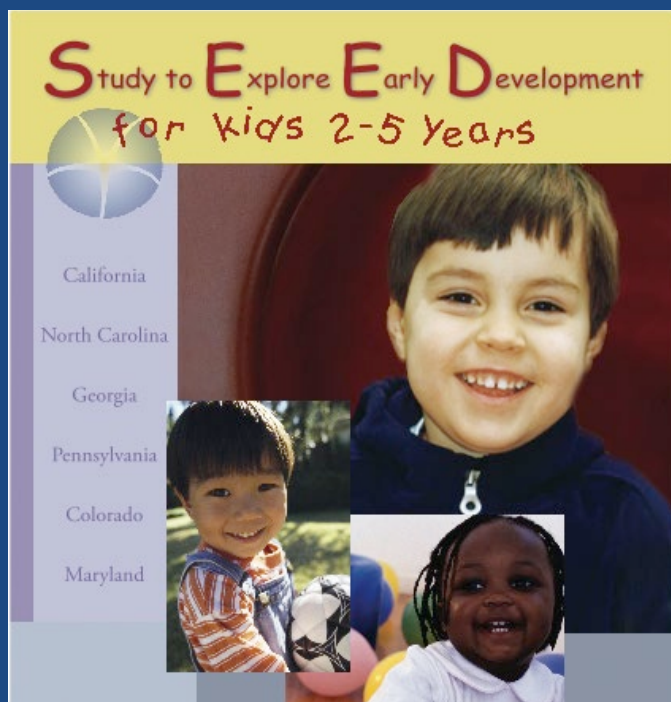
3 types of children enrolled:

ASD Cases

Other non-ASD developmental disorders

Controls: births in time/area identified through vital statistics

5400 children aged 2-5 years + parents = 16200 participants



Study to Explore Early Development  
for Kids 2-5 Years

California  
North Carolina  
Georgia  
Pennsylvania  
Colorado  
Maryland

The logo features a stylized globe icon and a list of states. Below the list are three photographs of smiling children: a young boy in a blue hoodie, a young boy in a striped shirt, and a young girl with braids.

Johns Hopkins University,  
Kennedy Krieger Institute,

**CARD**

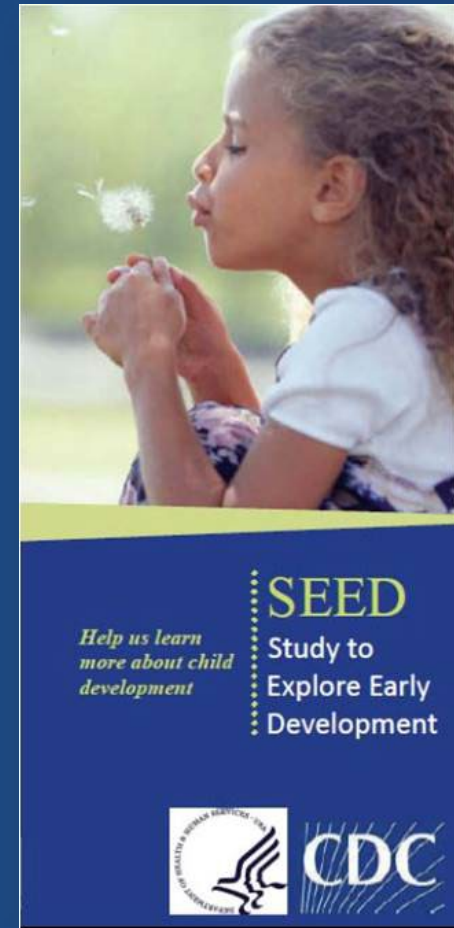
MD St. Dept of Education,

MD Dept of Health and Mental Hygiene



# Research Areas in SEED:

- Examine broader ASD phenotype
- Genetic features
- Infection and immune function, including autoimmunity
- Reproductive and hormonal features
- Gastrointestinal features
- Sociodemographic characteristics
- Substance use, hospitalizations and injuries, sleep disorders, occupational exposures and mercury exposure

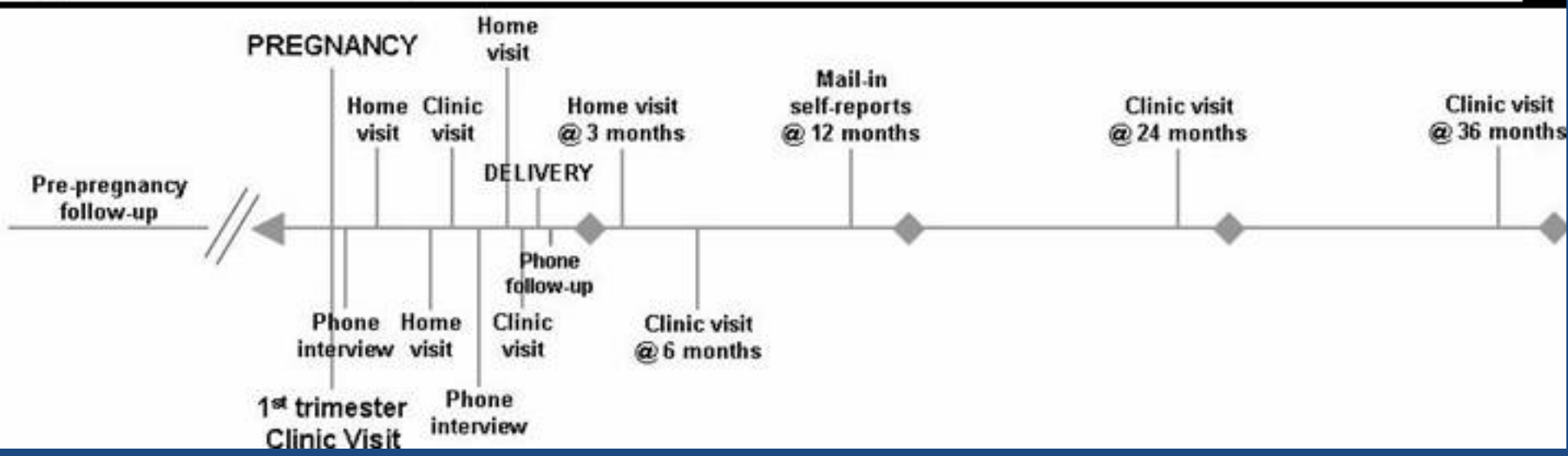


# EARLI

Early Autism Risk  
Longitudinal Investigation



Figure 6. EARLI Network core protocol data collection schedule



# Center for Autism and Developmental Disabilities Epidemiology (CADDE)



## Wendy Klag Center for Autism and Developmental Disabilities (WKC)

- Broader scope of public health
- Build a community of investigators and students with a common purpose



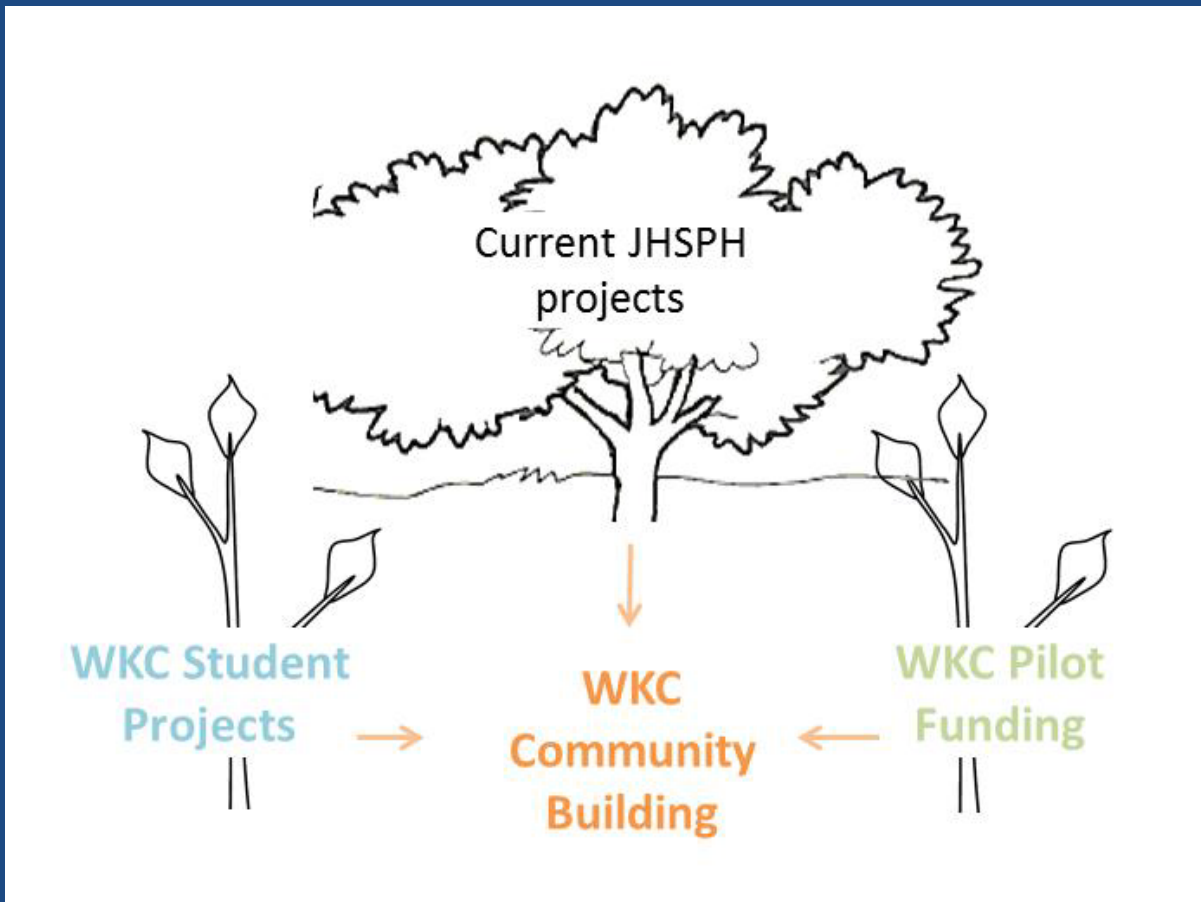


# WKC Activities

- **Fund new and innovative faculty and student projects** that will generate pilot data that can be leveraged into larger research projects (Due March 22, 2013)
- **Enhance external funding competitiveness** for new initiatives by, in addition to providing pilot funding support, coordinating resources and information regarding existing work and capacity at JHSPH and other Johns Hopkins University divisions, and KKI
- **Promote educational opportunities** through support of new courses, practicum experiences, and dissemination of research assistant positions to ultimately build a larger cadre of public health professionals with expertise in autism and developmental disabilities

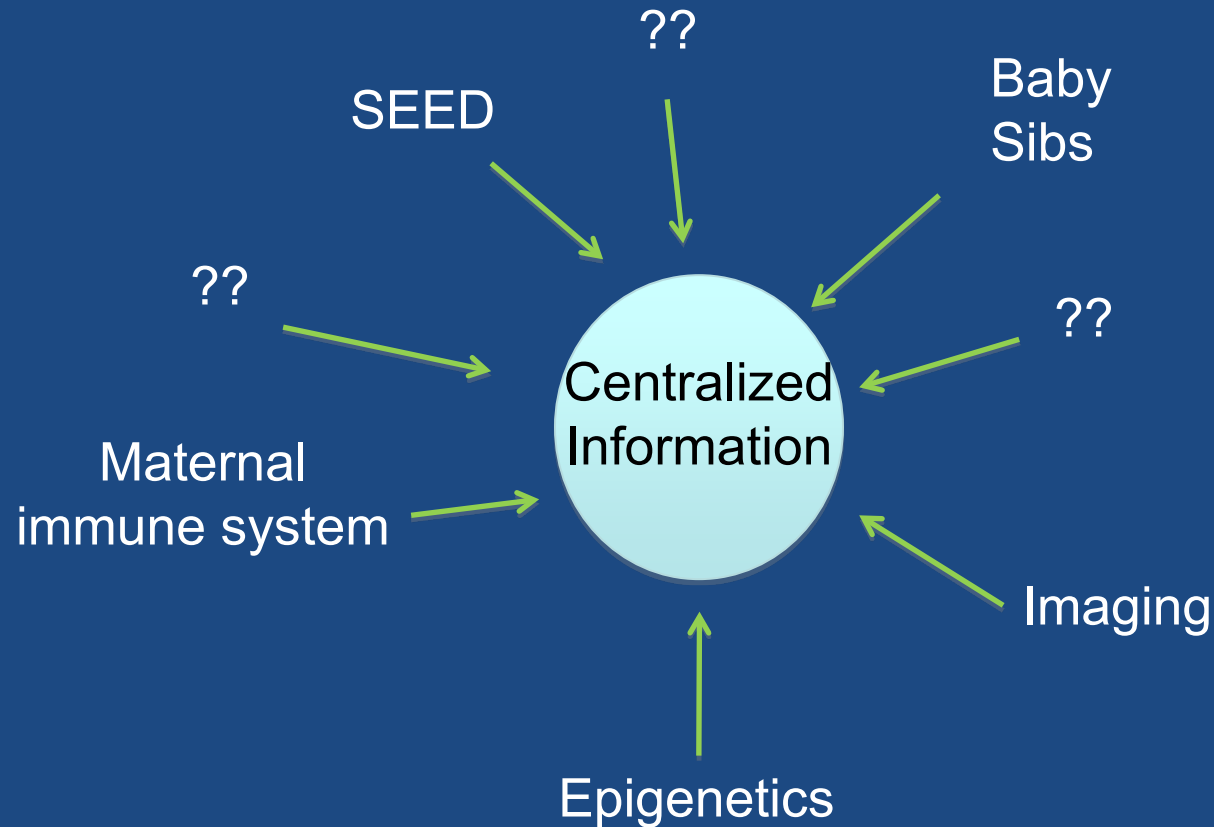


The Wendy Klag Center will build upon existing strengths at the JHSPH beginning with 3 component activities:



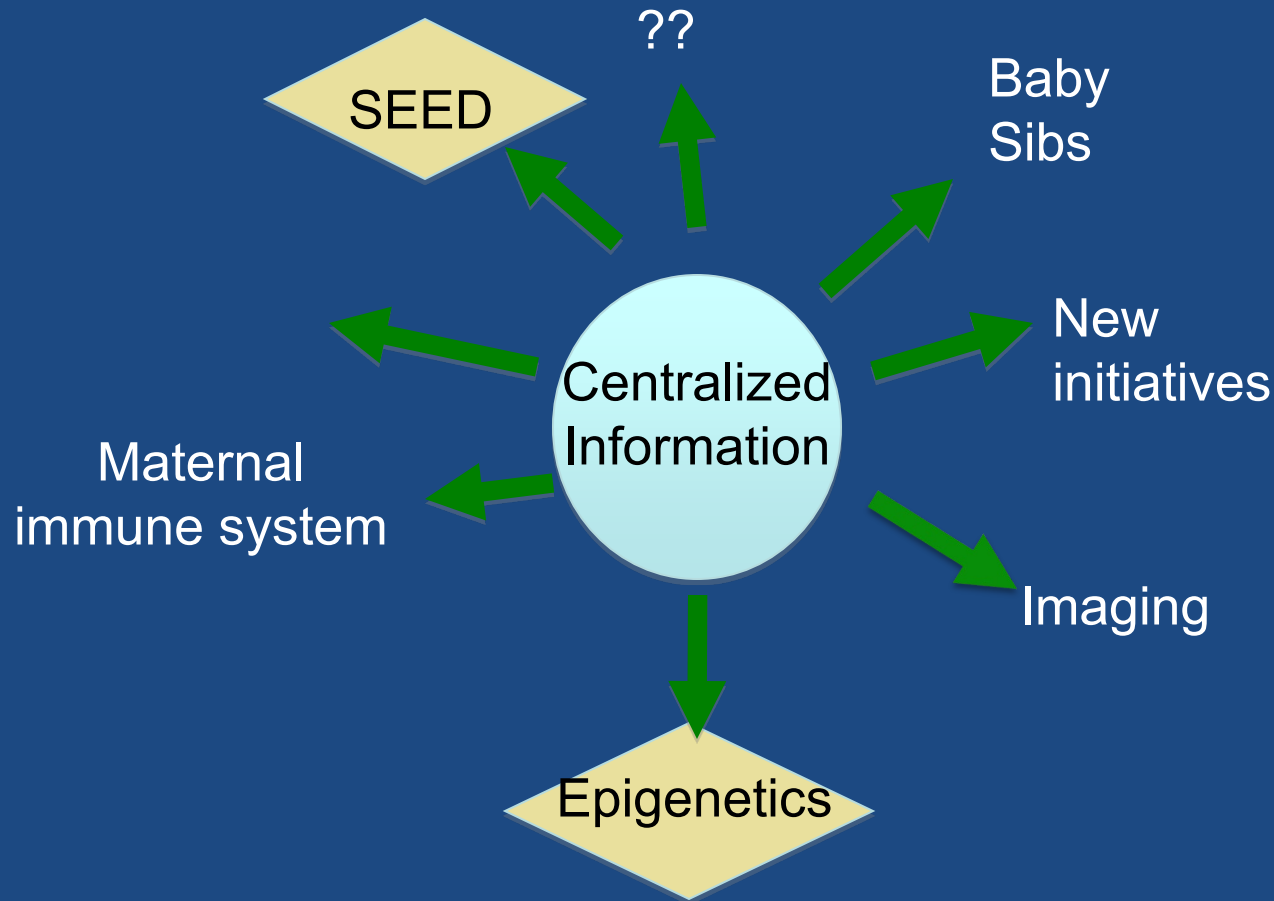
# Building Community

What is already going on across campuses?

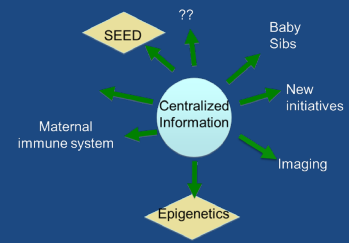


# Building Community

A centralized information resource can contribute to efficiency, facilitate new projects, more cross-fertilization



# Advantages of a Centralized Resource



- Increase awareness of the impressive network of ASD- and DD-related research already ongoing across campuses
- Facilitate resource and information sharing where possible
  - e.g.: Protocols; phlebotomy; biosamples; databasing; community / school contacts
- Initiate new collaborations
  - New projects / papers
  - New funding
- Centralized information will reduce burden on each investigator



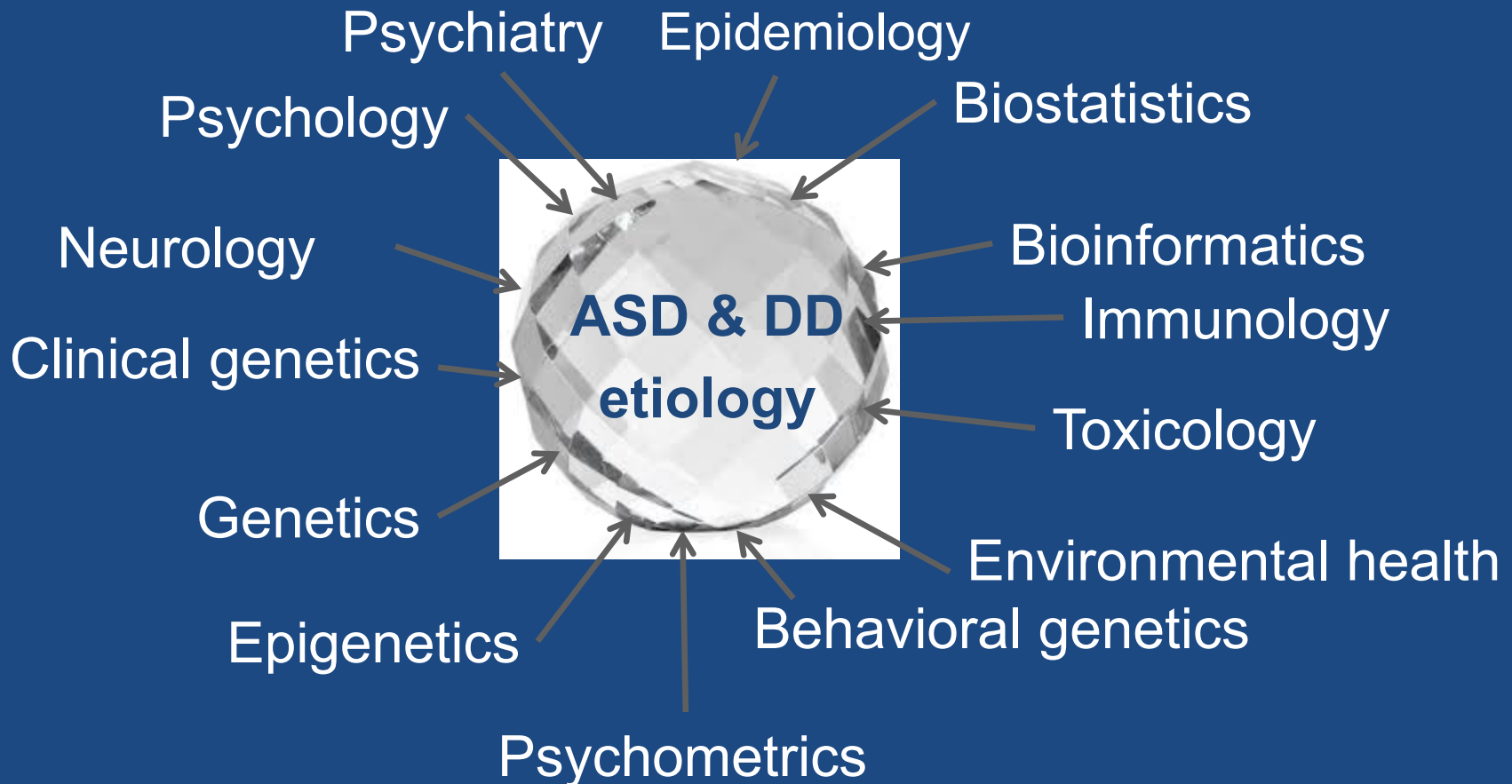


# WKC Activities (continued)

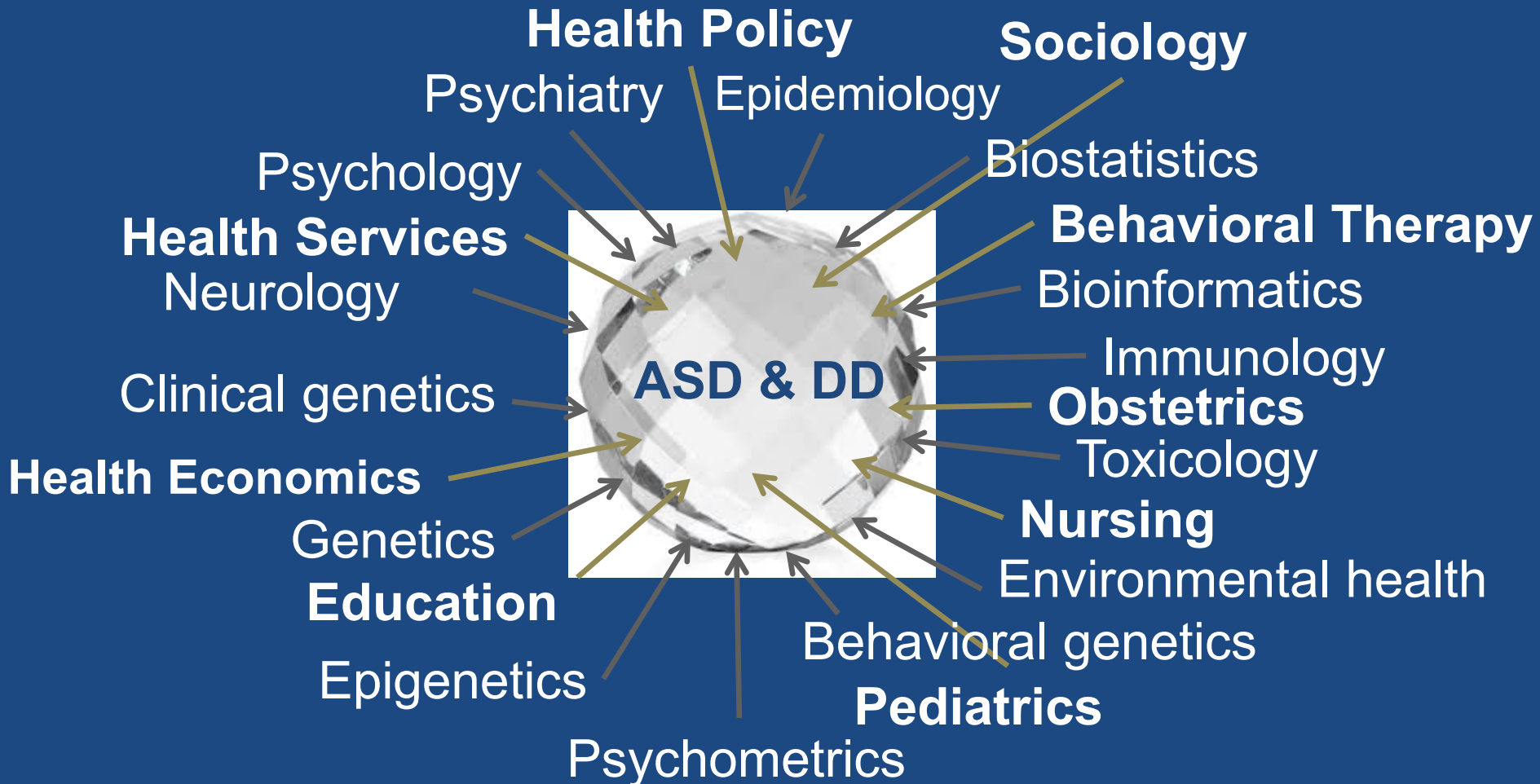
- **Provide a forum** for speakers and working groups focused on autism and developmental disabilities
- **Serve as a liaison** for intra-university, local, and state partnerships
- **Stimulate and energize current faculty and students** in the adoption of a multi-pronged approach that builds upon the school's multidisciplinary strengths
- **Attract new faculty and students** with interest in ASD and DD to JHSPH

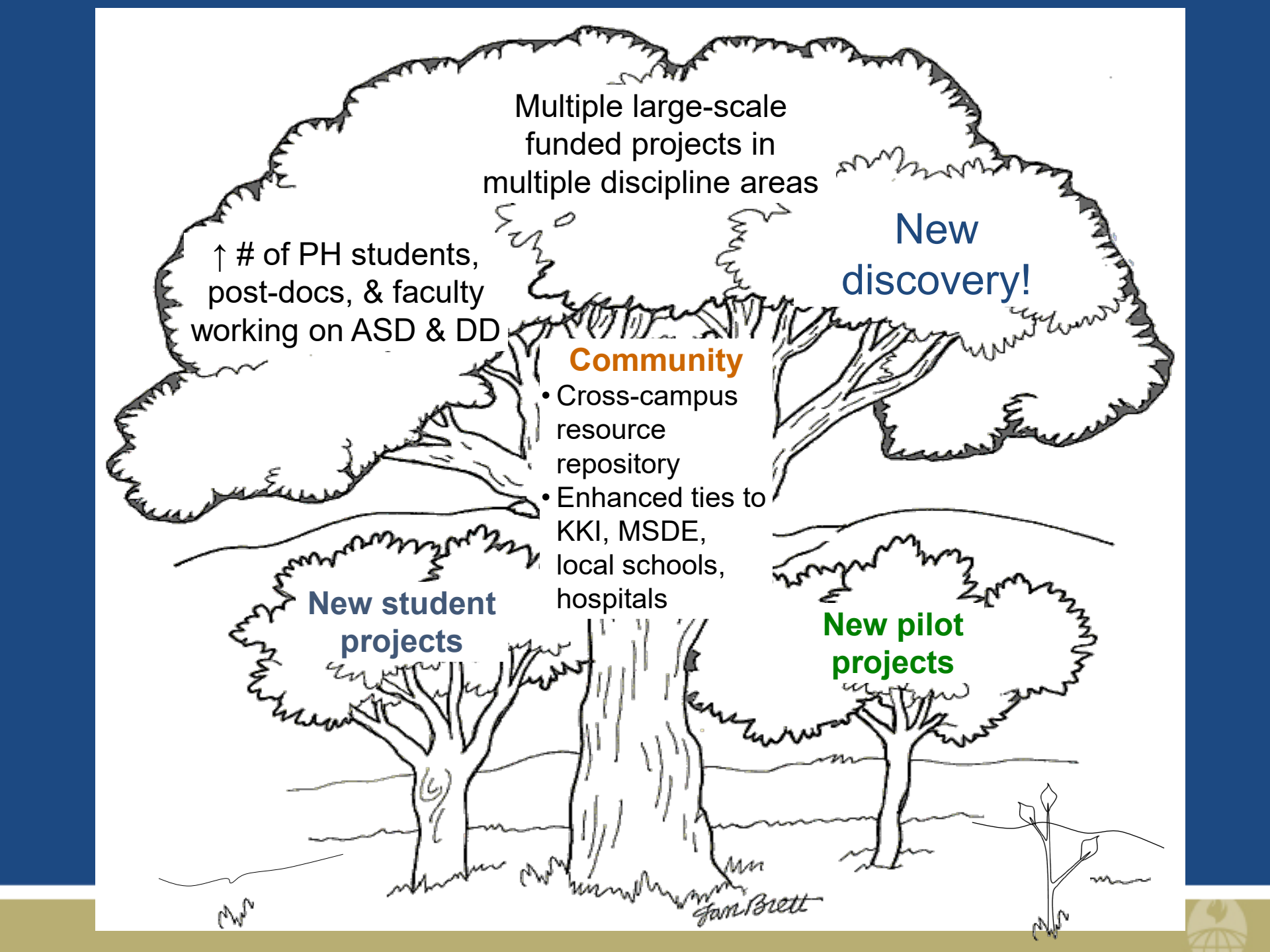


# Identifying And Characterizing The Causes Of ASDs and DDs Requires Many Perspectives



# Understanding And Acting On ASDs and DDs From Cause, Prevention, Treatment, And Service Provision Requires Even More Perspectives





Multiple large-scale  
funded projects in  
multiple discipline areas

↑ # of PH students,  
post-docs, & faculty  
working on ASD & DD

**New  
discovery!**

**Community**

- Cross-campus resource repository
- Enhanced ties to KKI, MSDE, local schools, hospitals

**New student projects**

**New pilot projects**

Jan Brett



# Organization

**Director, Dani Fallin**  
**Associate Director, Janet DiPietro**

**To be followed by:**  
**Additional Assoc Directors**  
**Core Faculty**  
**Affiliated Faculty**





# In conclusion...

Promote discovery, programs and policies that improve the lives of children and their families

- Energize current faculty
- Benefit recruitment
- Guide student interest
- Stimulate intra-university, state and local liaisons
- Provide forum for internal and external speakers
- Enhance funding competitiveness
  - Pilot data
  - Expanded resources/environment

