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Yerkes researcher selected as a 2017 CIFAR Azrieli Global Scholar

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ATLANTA – Yerkes National Primate Research Center researcher Brian Dias, PhD, has been named a 2017 CIFAR Azrieli Global Scholar. He is one of only 15 early career researchers to receive this prestigious two-year appointment, which includes \$100,000 in research support.

CIFAR established the Global Scholar program in 2016 to support researchers within five years of their first academic appointment, helping them build research networks and develop leadership skills. This year's scholars come from the United States, Canada, Ghana, India and Italy, and their research interests range from solar cell technology, understanding the norms that govern cooperation and machine learning to black holes and identifying the biological imprint of stress across generations.

"One of CIFAR's highest priorities is to nurture the careers of the next generation of emerging research leaders," says CIFAR President and CEO Alan Bernstein, PhD. "The future of research depends on young people, and their energy and innovative thinking is key to developing new approaches for the challenges facing our world today. We are thrilled to provide opportunities for these emerging research leaders."

Dias and the other CIFAR Azrieli Global Scholars will join close to 400 of the world's best researchers who are addressing some of the most interesting and important questions facing the world today. In addition to receiving \$100,000 in research support, the Global Scholars will become part of one of CIFAR's 12 research programs for two years. Scholars have the opportunity to be mentored by the world's top researchers and forge new collaborations with CIFAR fellows and other CIFAR Azrieli Global Scholars.

"I am deeply humbled and grateful to be selected as a CIFAR Azrieli Global Scholar," says Dias. With the diversity of disciplines and nationalities represented, it is an honor to be included in this cohort of Global Scholars. I look forward to directly contributing to the Child and Brain Development program at CIFAR, while also forging collaborative efforts across programs," he continues.

In addition to his Yerkes position, Dias is an Assistant Professor in the Emory School of Medicine Department of Psychiatry and a faculty member of the Emory Tibet Science Initiative, and he teaches Neuroscience to Tibetan Buddhist monastics. His current research seeks to understand how stress or trauma impacts mammalian neurobiology, physiology and reproductive biology, and how parental legacies of stress or trauma influence offspring. Armed with this understanding, Dias and his team aim to devise treatment interventions to lessen the effects of stress or trauma in both ancestral and descendant populations.

As part of the CIFAR Azrieli Global Scholars program, Dias will have the opportunity to work beyond academic boundaries and exchange ideas about his research and other topics with leading knowledge users across sectors, including policy-makers, business leaders and practitioners who may benefit from engaging with these outstanding young researchers.

"Brian is one of Emory's brightest and most innovative young scientists, and this recognition by CIFAR reflects his world-class talent and the international impact of his discoveries related to brain development and mental health," says Larry Young, PhD, chief of the Yerkes Research Center's Division of Behavioral Neuroscience and Psychiatric Disorders and William P. Timmie professor in the Emory School of Medicine Department of Psychiatry. "We are very fortunate to have Brian launch his exciting research program here at Yerkes," Young continues.

The CIFAR Azrieli Global Scholars program is made possible by the generous support of the Azrieli Foundation, which funds scientific and medical research, higher education, youth empowerment and school perseverance, Holocaust education, music and the arts, architecture and quality of life initiatives for people with developmental disabilities.

“We are delighted to partner in the CIFAR Azrieli Global Scholars program,” said Naomi Azrieli, chair and CEO of the Azrieli Foundation. “The Azrieli Foundation is committed to increasing scientific knowledge and understanding, and we’re honored to be able to help advance the work of these brilliant young scholars.”

The Love Family Leadership Development Fund also provides support for the program.

About CIFAR

CIFAR creates knowledge that is transforming our world. The Institute brings together outstanding researchers to work in global networks that address some of the most important questions our world faces today. Our research is focused on improving human health, transforming technology, building strong societies and sustaining the Earth. Our networks help support the growth of research leaders and are catalysts for change in business, government and society. Established in 1982, CIFAR is a Canadian-based, global research organization, comprised of nearly 400 fellows, scholars and advisors from more than 130 institutions in 17 countries. CIFAR is generously supported by the governments of Canada, British Columbia, Alberta, Ontario and Quebec, Canadian and international partners, as well as individuals, foundations and corporations.

About Yerkes National Primate Research Center

Established in 1930, the Yerkes National Primate Research Center is a leader among the seven National Institutes of Health-funded National Primate Research Centers (NPRCs), a resource to researchers worldwide, a source of inspiration for scientific leaders of tomorrow and a provider of and advocate for quality animal care. For more than eight decades, the Yerkes Research Center has been dedicated to discovering causes, preventions, treatments and cures that will help people across generations and the world live longer, healthier lives. Today, the Yerkes Research Center is making breakthrough discoveries with our research, which is grounded in scientific integrity, expert knowledge, respect for colleagues, an open exchange of ideas and compassionate, quality animal care.

In the fields of microbiology and immunology, infectious diseases, pharmacology and drug discovery, transplantation, neurologic and psychiatric diseases, as well as behavioral, cognitive and developmental neuroscience, the basic science researchers conduct at Yerkes advances vaccine development for infectious and non-infectious diseases, paves the way for earlier diagnosis of and new treatments for life-changing illnesses, such as Alzheimer’s and Parkinson’s diseases, defines the basic neurobiology and genetics of social behavior to support developing new therapies for autism spectrum and other disorders as well as drug addiction, and teaches us how interactions between genetics and the environment shape who we are.