



January 22, 2014

Dear AAIDD Colleagues and Friends,

I hope the new year finds you well. Albert Einstein once said “Life is like riding a bicycle. To keep your balance, you must keep moving.” Today I am writing to update you about ways in which AAIDD is moving forward and maintaining its balance.

New action plans from the SIGs, Action Groups, and Divisions have recently been submitted, and it is great to see several with renewed energy and focus. I encourage every member to get involved with at least one community within AAIDD, whether it be a Chapter, Region, SIG, Action Group, or Division. So many leaders of the Association have shared that finding a “home” within the Association was key to their long-term involvement. That old maxim “what you put into it is what you get out it” certainly applies to AAIDD. The many local and interest-based communities of AAIDD offer members multiple opportunities to make a contribution, make a difference, and make their membership more meaningful.

Based on the success of the Supports Intensity Scale (SIS) and other AAIDD products, wise investment strategies by prior Boards, a string of successful annual conferences, stable membership, and excellent financial management by AAIDD administrators, the Association’s balance sheet was well in the black at the end of 2013. In its 137-year history the financial health of the Association has arguably never been better than it is today. Of course, AAIDD is a nonprofit organization, and a healthy surplus of funds is not an *ends* in and of itself, but rather a *means* to further the mission of the Association. It was this spirit that prompted the Board to set aside a portion of this year’s surplus to establish a separate research and development fund (R&D Fund). The purpose of the R&D fund is to assure that resources are available to support future revisions or updates of existing projects (e.g., the SIS) as well as future products that, upon completion, (a) make a contribution to the field of ID/DD and (b) generate revenues that are sufficient to offset the Association’s investment.

In other news, if you haven’t accessed the AAIDD website recently, you will be pleased to see that the overhaul of the website is finally complete. Also, the search for the new editor for *AJIDD* is underway, and the search committee hopes to begin interviewing candidates in February. I’m pleased to report that the *Diagnostic Adaptive Behavior Scale* (DABS), the *Supports Intensity Scale for Children* (SIS-C), and a refreshed *Supports Intensity Scale for Adults* (SIS-A) are close to completion. These new products should be available to members in 2015, if not earlier. And last but not least, President-elect Amy Hewitt has put together a great conference

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planning team and the 2014 conference in Orlando is coming together nicely. Be on the lookout for an engaging promotional video and additional details in the coming months.

Of course, ultimately it is the membership that keeps AAIDD moving forward. Thank you for choosing to be a member of AAIDD, and please feel free to contact me should you have any suggestions on ways to further advance the mission that drives our collective efforts.

My very best regards,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "James R. Thompson".

James R. Thompson, PhD, FAAIDD
President, AAIDD Board of Directors

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