

## **2009 Friends of the Life Span Institute graduate research awards to Zimmerman and Hu**

Tuesday, November 17, 2009

Emily Zimmerman and Xiaoyi (Kimberly) Hu are the winners of the fifth annual Friends of the Life Span Institute Graduate Research Assistant Awards at the University of Kansas.

The awards were established by the Friends of the Life Span in 2005 to support the research and professional development of outstanding graduate research assistants affiliated with Life Span Institute projects. Each of the two winners has been awarded \$1500.

Emily Zimmerman received the award for an advanced student in the dissertation stage of his or her work. Zimmerman is a fourth-year doctoral student studying developmental speech physiology and neuroscience.

As a graduate research assistant in KU's Communication Neuroscience Laboratories, Zimmerman has contributed to the National Institutes of Health supported NTrainer research project. She has been involved in data collection, software tools and statistical methods to handle repeated measures in multivariate data sets. Zimmerman has also trained and helped set up several clinical NTrainer trial sites with various preterm infant populations.

Zimmerman is interested in working with the preterm infant population and developing therapeutic multimodal sensory stimulation paradigms to reduce poor neurodevelopmental outcomes. Zimmerman has proven her abilities in research, the classroom and clinically as a speech pathologist. She has authored and co-authored several peer-reviewed papers, has given several presentations and has received numerous awards and scholarships. She was recently awarded the prestigious 2009 American Speech-Language-Hearing Association Foundation New Century Research Scholarship which carries a stipend award of \$10,000.

Zimmerman works closely with several Life Span researchers, notably, Steven Barlow and Nancy Brady.

Xiaoyi Hu has received the award for a promising graduate student in the early stages of graduate school. Hu has completed two and half years of her graduate education in the Special Education program.

Her career goal is to become a leading researcher in the area of family support, family quality of life and inclusive education for children with developmental disabilities in China.

Hu's dissertation will include two research areas. The first is international transcultural translation research by applying and adapting U.S. inclusive education policy and

practices into Chinese context. The second is developing and implementing family support practices in rural Chinese families who have children with developmental disabilities. She has served as a graduate research assistant for the Beach Center on Disability since 2007. Hu has demonstrated her abilities in research, teaching and services, especially for families with children and adults with disabilities. She works closely with Life Span Institute researchers Ann Turnbull and Rud Turnbull, among others.

The awards selection committee was comprised of Friends members Amy McCart (committee chair), Sunny Foster, Bruce Wetherby and Ed Zamarripa. The committee members were extremely impressed by the high caliber of the award applicants. The Friends of the Life Span Institute have awarded nine Graduate Research Assistant Awards to date.