

## **NLMFF Featured Grantee Elizabeth Torres, Ph.D., Rutgers University**

Hello, my name is Elizabeth Torres and I'm a tenured professor at Rutgers University. I hold a split appointment across the Psychology department, the Rutgers Center for Cognitive Science and the Biomedicine, Imaging, and Modeling Center of the Computer Science Department. In 2014, I received a Career Development Award from the Nancy Lurie Marks Family Foundation.

This generous award allowed me to launch a very broad and comprehensive research program in autism with a focus on agency and spontaneous emergency and nurturing of autonomy of the nervous system. Because of this award, I was also able to write two books on digital biomarkers and also one involving several researchers from all over the world that enabled us to put together an important landmark issue on sensory motor integration in autism, particularly in the non-speaking community.

In addition to that, this award and the work that came from it allowed me to attain four US patents and for using in Europe as well so that we can expand the basic research into commercialization and clinical use. The award also allowed me to create a space for community interaction and attain a grant from the state of New Jersey funded by the New Jersey Governor's Council for the medical research and treatment of autism. This is a New Jersey Autism Center of Excellence which I now direct until 2023. During my tenure, I have been able to create a new model, a community center model, that puts the patient first and brings feedback from the community directly to inform and to steer the research, the education, and the services in autism in New Jersey.

In the future, my lab plans to expand our research program to include metabolomics and genomics and the microbiome. We are taking the first steps towards that and developing new computational models and to work with data in those fields. Once again, I want to thank the Nancy Lurie Marks Family Foundation for their generosity which made possible our research program and our endeavor in autism. Thank you.