

Panorama



Interview with BRAD Program Director at Americans for Medical Progress

This year marks a major milestone for **Biomedical Research Awareness Day (BRAD)**, an international outreach program founded by **Americans for Medical Progress (AMP)** to increase public understanding of the critical role animals play in biomedical research. On April 17th, BRAD celebrated its 10th anniversary – a decade of advocacy, education, and community building.

At the heart of **BRAD** is a mission to spotlight the importance of animal studies, including those involving nonhuman primates, and to demonstrate the biomedical research community's ongoing commitment to compassionate, high-quality animal care. The program also seeks to inspire the next generation by promoting careers in biomedical research, laboratory animal science, and veterinary care.

Tecniplast is proud to support BRAD as a platinum sponsor, helping to further their mission and champion the work being done to promote public awareness and education on the vital role of animal research.

To reflect on this milestone and share what's ahead for BRAD, we spoke with Logan France, BRAD Program Director at Americans for Medical Progress.



This year marks the 10th anniversary of BRAD—congratulations! Looking back over the past decade, what do you think have been the most meaningful milestones or changes in how the public understands the role of animals in biomedical research?

Thank you! In some ways, it's hard to believe 10 years have already gone by, but at the same time, **BRAD has become so woven into our laboratory animal community** that... To give a little background, I started BRAD through the Hayre Fellowship offered by Americans for Medical Progress, and while I hoped it would be something that could

continue annually, I had no idea if it would gain traction or support. With that, one of the most meaningful changes is program participation growth. It is truly amazing and inspiring to look back on the growth **from just 20 U.S.-based veterinary schools participating in the first BRAD to now over 310 BRAD events hosted around the world for the 10th annual celebration.** The way in which our research community has embraced BRAD shows the very real need for this type of program and platform that allows individuals and institutions to proudly advocate for the work they do with animals. Beyond our community, **we have veterinary technicians, K-12 classrooms, Future Farmers of America (FFA) groups,** and others who are bringing BRAD to their communities and sharing our message that animals play a critical role in biomedical research and medical advancements for humans and animals.

Another significant change since launching BRAD is the comfort level of individuals and institutions in speaking out about animal research. It was not long ago that staying under the radar was the status quo, and the overwhelming opinion was that we should not discuss our work because it makes us vulnerable, and people will not understand it. That view has drastically changed. **Time and time again we have found that it is possible to gain public support and understanding by being open and honest about animal research, answering questions from the public, and highlighting the tremendous advancements that are a direct result of working with animals.** I am immensely proud that this program has encouraged and allowed people to make this leap while giving them a BRAD community to be a part of.

How does the organization support institutions and individuals looking to host their own BRAD events? What advice would you give to someone planning their first one?

We work directly with individuals, institutions, organizations, and companies to provide as much support as they need when planning and executing their BRAD event. To start, every participant receives the **BRAD Event Planning Guide**, which is also available on our website. It is **full of ideas, activities, and logistical information and walks through all of the planning phases including event goals, format, planning timeline, audience engagement, and more.** This is a great place to start for someone who is hosting an event for the first time. Our website and social media channels have photos of BRAD events over the years that are tremendous sources of inspiration and show what a successful event can look like. Leading up to BRAD, we share planning tips and information and encourage all to view the live, **annual BRAD webinar, generously sponsored by Tecniplast each year and hosted on BRAD.** Registered BRAD participants receive their BRAD box of educational materials in late March. This includes posters, handouts, stickers, giveaway items, and more, all with educational messages about animal research. We design new items each year which can be incorporated into events, raffled off to attendees, displayed and distributed, and more. Beyond that, I am personally available to meet with anyone who would like assistance in planning their event. By discussing the specifics of their institution or goals for their BRAD celebration, I help them design and develop an event that meets their needs. **Every BRAD event is different, and we are there to support them all – big or small.**

As BRAD continues to expand internationally, what are some of your goals for the future of the program?

Having seen how impactful BRAD events are for communities, continued program growth is always a key goal. The more events we host, the more widely our message is shared - and now more than ever, we must all be strong advocating for science and the critical role of animal research. We have seen steady increases in BRAD participation year after year, and I look forward to that momentum continuing. There truly is a ripple effect from every BRAD event.

While most of the BRAD events are hosted in April, they can be celebrated any time of the year. **This year, we expanded BRAD from a single day to an entire week of activities.** Similarly, I hope to incorporate more opportunities throughout the year that keep our community engaged in advocacy and education around animal research.

We've translated several of our materials into other languages, including Mandarin and French, and I'm excited to continue expanding the availability of our resources in languages beyond English.

With such a passionate and dedicated community behind BRAD, the sky's the limit—I can't wait to see how we continue to grow, innovate, and inspire in the years to come.

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