

Happy Holidays

The holidays are a time when it seems that everyone is just a little more happy, a little more kind and excitement fills the air. We look forward to the holidays as a time to connect with family and friends.

Sometimes the holidays become a time of stress and anxiety for parents and caregivers of individuals with disabilities. Too much stimulation can result in bad behavior, which increases stress in parents and those around us. How can stress be alleviated during the holidays, and how can we prepare our loved one with Down syndrome so that the holidays are joyful and fun for all? Following are a few tips:

- 1) Keep routines. Although this can be hard, try to keep the same bedtime and wake up time even if there is no school the next day.
- 2) Keep a calendar of events. Talk about upcoming events and what will be expected. Make a plan to help your child adjust to the circumstances that will be encompassed in each event.
- 3) Set limits and follow through with rewards and consequences.
- 4) Talk about rules in other households before you attend parties or other events. This will help parents and children be prepared to adapt and comply with the rules.
- 5) Be selective in accepting invitations. You don't have to attend every event during the season. When you accept an invitation, prepare friends or family by describing specific needs of your child and how you and the hosts can help them adapt.
- 6) If you are going on a trip, give your child a responsibility to help plan or get ready for the trip. This will help them to focus and not become overwhelmed.
- 7) Prepare for opening gifts. The excitement of opening multiple presents can be overwhelming. Consider opening

one gift at a time -- or only wrapping one or two gifts and leaving other gifts unwrapped. If your child becomes overwhelmed and leaves for awhile, let them have the time needed to decompress.....the presents will wait, and their enjoyment of the day will be greater if you are sensitive to their needs and patient with delays.

- 8) Be proactive. Look ahead to coming events. Knowing ahead of time what might develop can help you handle situations with patience and avoid some problems altogether.
- 9) Find a quiet time each day. Find the time to remove yourself and your family member from the hustle and bustle and just be together.
- 10) Don't forget your family. Amidst the shopping that needs to be done, food to cook, relatives and friends to visit, don't forget your family. Plan time for your own special traditions. If you don't have your own traditions, start some now. Plan to take one evening each week just for your family.

Remember that the holiday season is not just about the rush and thrill, it's also about loving each other and enjoying what each member of your family has to offer. Most of all love and have fun together.



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From the Board

The DSC Board is excited to be starting another year of activities and events. In early September you received a mailer that included our Calendar of Events for the year. Our membership year stretches from September to August. We've planned a wide variety of events for you in the coming year. We hope to see you at many of them. Thank you to all our members who help with these events.

Your DSC Board is also working to develop a new and improved web site. After launching our site and maintaining it for several years, past Board member David Williams has decided to step down. We hope to have a new web site up and running in the near future. Please watch the Yahoo Group email list for notices. (You can join this group by sending a blank email to: DownSyndromeCommunity-subscribe@yahoogroups.com.)

In addition to the events we sponsor a major project of our group is the calendar produced by the DSC. Our calendar has been sold nationally and photographs from it have been used in multiple publications. This calendar has become part of our advocacy and awareness campaign. For the past two years the DSC has distributed copies of our calendar, Living It Up!, to legislators during the legislative session. Our message is one of hope – look at all the members of the Down Syndrome Community who are participating in their communities working, learning, and giving back to the greater community. We want legislators to think of our family members when they are making policy decisions. Our message to them is one of hope.

You're welcome to join us at any Board meeting. We meet every other month. Please call one of us for directions.

Linda Michael, Secretary



I Have a Question

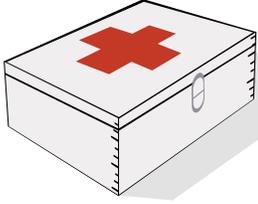
How do I survive the communication gap?

My beautiful five-year-old knows exactly what she wants and I try to figure it out before she throws a tantrum. She refuses to use Sign Language and refuses to use PEC's (picture exchange communication). She either gets what she wants by herself or screams at me. It isn't unusual for her to carry a gallon of milk and cup around the house looking for someone to pour it for her. My questions are: Will it get easier? Is anyone else frustrated?

"I Have A Question" is a new feature of the newsletter. Please submit answers to the above question to a member of the newsletter committee and answers will be included in a future issue. If you have a question you'd like to submit for answers, please submit the question to the newsletter committee.

Disaster Preparedness for People with Disabilities

In the past few months we have seen images of natural disasters and hopefully, have all felt the need to prepare in case of disaster.



We've heard many times, that it is no longer a case of "IF", but we should focus on "WHEN". The American Red Cross has specific information for individuals with disabilities, families and other caregivers. There are resources available to help with preparation. The following internet address will give you access to this valuable information:

www.redcross.org/services/disaster/beprepared/disability.html

"Disaster Preparedness for People with Disabilities has been designed to help people who have physical, visual, auditory, or cognitive disabilities to prepare for natural disasters and their consequences..."

...This information is for anyone who has a disability or anyone who works with, lives with, or assists a person with a disability. It contains information that can help you organize a personal disaster plan and includes plans for the care of service animals and/or pets during a disaster. It is designed with checklists and extra space for you or your helper to use to organize information that will help you prepare for a disaster." (excerpt from the Red Cross web-site)

M-Bar-C



Megarama Day VIII was held on August 13th at the M-Bar-C Ranch.

Thanks to Miss Kitty and everyone at the M-Bar-C for a great time.



Back to School Barbecue and Social



The annual Down Syndrome Community Back-to-School Barbecue and Family get together was held on Sunday, September 18, 2005. This annual event is co-sponsored by LAUNCH (Leadership-Advocacy-Understanding and Networking for a Community of Hope) each year to give DSC and LAUNCH members the opportunity to catch up after a busy summer and re-align themselves for the busy school year ahead.

This year's picnic was held at Crossroads International Park in Bellevue. We had beautiful weather to enjoy the park where Bellevue's Sister Cities around the world are acknowledged. Several impromptu Frisbee and baseball games were started on the lawn, along with a very serious game of bocce, overseen by Brian Michael. Those on a faster track took to the pathways on scooters and bicycles.





Thanks to those that came to the picnic this year, and to those that organized the event. We hope to see you all at next year's picnic, or at another of the many DSC & LAUNCH events planned throughout the year.



Coming Events

December

- 10 Holiday Party**
New location
Bellevue Community College
Contact Kirk Gillett, 360-668-7377
or Nick Kappes, 425-712-7060



January

- 13 Board Meeting**
Lonkar Residence
Contact Linda Michael, 206-241-0353
- 20 LAUNCH / DSC**
Speaker Series: Transition
Highland Center, Bellevue
Contact
Linda Chittenden, 425-222-7770
or Linda Michael, 206-241-0353

February

- 16 LAUNCH / DSC**
Highland Center, Bellevue
Contact
Linda Chittenden, 425-222-7770
or JoAnne Thelin, 206-431-9777
- 18 Sweetheart Dance and
Pizza Party**
Highland Center, Bellevue
Contact Sean King, 425-228-3391

16th Annual Legislators' Forum on Developmental Disabilities for King County

Monday November 21, 2005

6:30pm check-in

Program starts at 7:00pm

Doubletree Guest Suites

Tukwila (Southcenter)

Welcome speech by King County Executive Ron Sims

All interested persons are welcome! There is no charge.

Questions? Call Cathy Murahashi, 425-643-4048

or email: muracat2@aol.com

Sponsored by the King County Board for Developmental Disabilities and the King County Parent Coalition
(a program of the Arc of King County)

In the Spotlight



Congratulations!
Joy West & Stephen Wood were married in September. Joy is Sam's aunt and an active part of the DSC. Joy and Stephen generously requested donations to the DSC and/or Queen Anne Helpline in lieu of gifts at their wedding. Our thanks and best wishes as you begin your life together.



Kyle Saunders – of Kirkland progressed from Cub Scouts to Boy Scouts in June 2005.

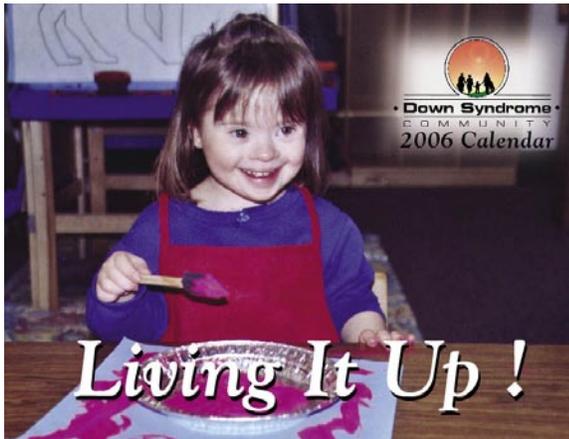
If you have an event that you'd like to share, please submit a photograph and short article to a member of the Newsletter committee and it will be included in a future issue.

Events could include: births, awards, accomplishments, or any other event you'd like to share.

Great Gift Idea 2006 Living It Up! Calendar

This calendar is a production of the Down Syndrome Community with photographs by Clara Link, a talented artist who also has Down syndrome. The calendar features photos of members of the Down Syndrome Community living it up!

All proceeds from the sale of the calendar benefit the Down Syndrome Community.



2006 Order Form
Mail completed order form to:
DSC Calendar
12931 - 168th Ave. SE, Renton, WA 98059
with a check or money order payable to
Down Syndrome Community

Name: _____

Mailing Address: _____

Quantity: _____ @ \$10.00 each Sub Total: \$ _____

Shipping &
Handling: @ \$1.50 each Sub Total: \$ _____

Grand Total: \$ _____

HELP WANTED

Living It Up! the Down Syndrome Community Calendar Needs YOU!

The Down Syndrome Community is beginning work on the 2007 Down Syndrome Community Calendar - Living It Up! This marks our fourth year!

During the three years since the creation of the calendar, it has evolved into a nationally recognized publication with regular acknowledgment in local newspapers, television news, national support group literature, scholastic textbooks, and even a manual for voters of Washington State.

Along with other mothers and members of the Down Syndrome Community, I presented the idea of a calendar to the Board of Directors in 2003 and we have had the Board's wholehearted support and encouragement every step of the way. Since that time we've continued to work toward our goals and deadlines, and we've created a process and a product we can be very proud of. Due to professional and personal restrictions, I have decided to take a backseat on the project.

In order to continue this valuable advocacy tool that enables so many of our members to shine, we need a few dedicated individuals to make the process happen. I plan to remain on the calendar committee to support newcomers and to ensure a seamless transition to keep this important project on course. I will also continue to fill calendar orders, which has become a full-time job in itself. Please contact me at 425-271-3926 to discuss what you can do to help continue the calendar.

Denise Medgard



MEMBERSHIP

Renewal

New Member

Date _____

Name _____

Address _____

City, State, Zip _____

Home Phone _____ Work Phone _____

Email Address _____

School District _____ County _____

Name of person with Down Syndrome _____ Male / Female

Age _____ Birth date _____ Enrolled in DD System YES NO

Your relationship to person with DS _____

Implicit in your sharing your child's birth date with the Down Syndrome Community is your permission to give this data to King County Division of Developmental Disabilities for the purpose of receiving grant money.

Do we have your permission to give out your name and number to other members who may want to contact you? Yes / No

Annual Membership Dues: (Due in September)

\$15.00 (Individual) Additional donation (tax deductible) \$50.00 \$100.00 Other

\$25.00 (Family)

Unable to pay dues but would like to remain on the mailing list.

Please remove my name from the mailing list.

Please send DSC newsletter and info via email ONLY. *Please enter email address above.*

Please make check payable to **Down Syndrome Community** and send it with this form to:

Down Syndrome Community, c/o Sean King, Treasurer, 14509 – 201st Ave SE, Renton, WA 98059