



DSC Newsletter

Down Syndrome Community

March 2011 Issue

Our Goals:

- Build a caring, understanding, supportive community open to all individuals and families whose lives include a person with Down syndrome.
- Share and nurture a climate where every human being is recognized, their strengths appreciated, and their accomplishments respected and valued.
- Strengthen the network of individuals and groups working with issues affecting the lives of those with developmental disabilities and their families.

DSC Conference 2011 Is Here

By now you should have received the DSC Conference 2011 brochure either by e-mail or snail mail. If you didn't, there's a copy enclosed in this newsletter for your use. The conference will be held from 10 AM until 3 PM on Saturday, April 16th, at the Blackriver Training and Conference Center (800 Oakesdale Ave SW) in Renton, with check-in beginning at 9AM. (See brochure for driving directions.)

One subtle difference that you may notice from years' past is that although this is indeed the DSC Conference, most of our topics are applicable to any family, friend, teacher, therapist or care provider

working with people with **any** developmental disability. DSC is the host. So please share with your friends, schools, care providers and others, as appropriate. We appreciate your support in this effort.

Our Welcoming Program will help identify those in attendance who live close to one another and those in attendance whose children are close in age to one another. Perhaps you might meet others from your neighborhood

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We need volunteers for this year's Buddy Walk in October. The work begins now!



*Anyone can help.
Spread the word.*

Contact Lynne Palmisano
lyntoy1@aol.com
425-681-2957

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Adolescent Sexuality and Down Syndrome

Adolescents with Down syndrome have sexual interests similar to their peers. The emergence of sexual behavior in teens with Down syndrome may cause parents to be alarmed and fearful regarding their child's vulnerability.

Sexuality education in adolescents with Down syndrome is important and should include these major objectives (AAP Committee on Children with Disabilities, 1996):

Children should be taught how to

express physical affection in a manner that is appropriate for their chronologic age, not developmental age.

Children's behavior should conform to family and societal standards for privacy and personal modesty.

Children should be discouraged from inappropriate displays of affection in the community, such as hugging strangers.

Children should be taught the dif-

ference between acceptable behaviors in a private versus public setting.

Children should be taught they have the right to refuse inappropriate touching and how to refuse inappropriate touching, and they should be taught to tell their parents if they have been touched inappropriately.

Adapted from "Guidelines for Adolescents and Young Adults with Down Syndrome: Sexuality" at www.medscape.com

DSC Newsletter

From the President

Dear Members,

My son is growing up. I was watching him the other day, singing along with the Beatles' "Don't Let Me Down." I heard a fire in his voice and saw a passion in his performance, as if he could feel the adult emotions behind the song. I began to realize how much he has grown over the past year, how he is starting to look older, a little more like a teen. There are signs of changes happening. There are hormones at work. I see an even stronger desire for independence, an enthusiastic interest in girls, time spent primping at the bathroom mirror, an acute awareness of his Trisomy 21. I don't feel prepared to watch his innocence wane. But I can't stop him,

and he hasn't let me down yet.

The Down Syndrome Community is growing up. It's been an exciting winter for us. On the heels of our most successful Buddy Walk ever, we found ourselves with record attendance at both the Holiday Party in December, as well as the Sweetheart Dance in February. It's hard for me to catch my breath. Sometimes I don't feel up to the task, but the Board of Directors and you, the members, keep making it worthwhile.

Count on us to generate new services and opportunities, as we move toward a more powerful fulfillment of our mission. In April, our Annual Conference comes around again with a strong slate of speakers and possibilities for net-

working. This summer, look for our latest addition—a Lose the Training Wheels camp with our partners, Northwest Special Families.

Although change and growth is a little scary, we have to find ways to keep moving forward. If you have ideas, join us at our Annual Meeting/Country Kicker Dance and share them with us. If you have energy, passion or just a little extra time, consider volunteering at one of our events or on one of our committees, or even stepping up as a Board of Directors nominee. With your support we can continue to grow. With your support, we won't let you down.

—Sean King

“Count on us to generate new services and opportunities, as we move toward a more powerful fulfillment of our mission.”

Spreading the Word

Inclusion Resource

The Institute for Community Inclusion at UMass Boston supports the rights of children and adults with disabilities to participate in all aspects of the community. As practitioners, researchers, and teachers, we form partnerships with individuals, families, and communities. Together we advocate for personal choice, self-determination, and social and economic justice.

As a national and international leader, ICI strives to create a world where all people with disabilities are welcome and fully included in valued roles wherever they go, whether a school, workplace, volunteer group, home, or any other part of the community.

www.communityinclusion.org

Donate Your Vehicle?

In February, we were contacted by Ken Bassik of Charitable Auto Resources (CARS). They told us a vehicle had been donated to our cause. CARS picked up the vehicle, took care of the paperwork, sold it at auction and sent the proceeds to the DSC.

CARS takes care of everything. You save yourself the hassle and expense of selling it on your own or haggling over trade-in value. You're entitled to a tax deduction. You can have your car towed away at no charge. And you can feel great about helping a worthy cause like ours.

Start the process online at www.charitableautoresources.com or call CARS at 877-537-5277.

Think College!

The benefits of attending college for individuals with intellectual disabilities can be measured by their growth in a number of areas, including academic and personal skill building, independence, self-advocacy, and self-confidence, and new friendships. This growth is also reflected in increased self-esteem, when they begin to see themselves as enjoying what their same age peers without disabilities are experiencing.

Keeping college in the mix of possibilities as our sons and daughters explore which steps to take after high school says that we believe in their potential for success.

Think College! has a searchable database of college options.

www.thinkcollege.net.

Self-Advocate's Corner

Notes from Jennifer Mullis,
DSC Self-Advocate

As I said in the last newsletter, I am in the Adult Living Program at my school. Over the next several newsletters I'll tell you some of the things we do. Today I'll talk about our exercise program.

On Mondays I go to the senior center (even though I'm not a senior!). We do line dancing which

is moving to the music and we do it in lines.

On Tuesdays I go to the gym to work out on the bicycle and treadmill. I also work on my back.

On Wednesdays we do group fitness at the Boy's and Girl's Club. when we are there we use the Kinect Program. It is really fun.

On some Thursdays we go to the swimming pool. I do laps in the

deep end. I do the butterfly stroke and the back stroke. On other weeks, we do bridge fitness which is sometimes is dance, sometimes Aikido, and sometimes yoga.

We walk to many of our community activities. We also go to the park and play basketball.

All these exercises are good for my body.

—Jennifer Mullis

“...we do bridge fitness which sometimes is dance, sometimes Aikido, and sometimes yoga.”

Board of Directors Nominations Open

Do you know somebody who would like to serve on the DSC Board of Directors? Elections are coming in April, so it's time to nominate that special volunteer to serve a three-year stint to help directly with the evolution of our organization.

Board of Directors nominations are due by April 1st, 2011. This article serves as official notice to membership of the commencement of the nominations period for open positions on the DSC Board of Directors as required by the DSC bylaws.

Country Kicker Dance & Potluck

*Come kick up your heels at a down home potluck & western-themed dance during our Annual Meeting. Everyone please bring a main dish **plus** a salad or side. Dessert and drinks provided by DSC.*



More exciting info to come!

Saturday, May 14, 5-8pm
Highland Center, Bellevue

2010 Holiday Party and 2011 Sweetheart Dance

The **2010 Holiday Party** in December was attended by almost 150 people, who shared an amazing potluck meal in a fun, holiday setting, replete with a giant Christmas tree. Santa made a visit and handed out gifts to all the kids (and a lot of adults, too.) Our very own DSC deejay Curtis Thelin kept lively music rolling throughout the evening. Pies and other goodies capped off the comforting family event.

In February, we held our **10th Annual Sweetheart Dance and Pizza Party**. Again, we set a new attendance record, as over 170

people of all ages made their way to the Highland Community Center in Bellevue.

The super-festive atmosphere included many door prizes as well as our Second Annual Sweetheart Dance Silent Dessert Auction. Partygoers chipped in generously for pizza—enough to cover the cost of pizza delivery for the first time in ten years. The Silent Dessert Auction raised over \$600 for the DSC general fund, and included a brunch for two and a San Juan getaway alongside the homemade goodies from Board members and professional desserts

from chefs and bakers throughout the Seattle area.

Tom Ellis donated his services to deliver free, professional Sweetheart Photos. Visit him at **tomellisphoto.com**. Deejay services and dance lighting were provided by Foremost DJ. Visit them at **foremostdj.com**. Linda Michael, her son Brian and Marcie Mineard were in charge of the awesome decorations. Brandii and Georgia Hope served as stellar general purpose volunteers.

Thanks to everyone who came out to these events. You make it all worthwhile.



If you're looking for your Sweetheart Photo, you can find a link online at our website, downsyndrome-community.org

Newsletter Title

2011 DSC Conference

(Continued from page 1)

or, even if further afield, the family of one or more potential new friends for your child. Perhaps you can form a connection which can be continued during the sandwich and salad luncheon buffet provided by Alki Bakery and hopefully well beyond.

As we break out into presentation sessions, we are fortunate to have local experts talking about things that are of interest to each of us with a family member who has a developmental disability. Conference topics offer food for thought for parents/providers of children of all ages. They will stimulate discussion and perhaps answer the questions you haven't thought to ask yet.

Sherry McNary is coming to us from the Washington Initiative for Supported Employment (W.i.S.e.). She is the Project Manager for *My Home, My Life*. She will talk to us about housing options and supporting family network groups. Some of her clients will accompany her to tell us their stories.

Robbie Rigby works at Region 4, State Operated Living Alternatives (SOLA), Department of Social and Health Services, Division of Developmental Disabilities. She will be addressing sexuality and social skills. Her presentation is applicable to all ages, as she can recommend things that we can do when

our children are very young that will help avoid encountering some problems when they become older.

Lydia Harrison, Owner and Director of Island Educational Services, will co-present with **Holly Patton**, Parent to Parent Coordinator of the Arc of Kitsap and Jefferson Counties. Both have been teachers and served in a myriad of capacities involving special education. Between them they have decades working with children, young adults and their families in the areas of special education and supportive environments. They will be focusing their presentation on developing and maintaining friendships from childhood through adulthood.

Ruth Sanderson, is an RN serving as the Education and Training Manager for the Western and Central Washington State Chapter of the Alzheimer's Association. She will address Alzheimer's and other types of dementia as they affect people with intellectual and developmental disabilities.

The DSC Library will be there to check out and return books and media from the Heidi Heir Memorial Library. It contains a wealth of information on disabilities, Down syndrome, special education, therapies, curricula, and teaching strategies, as well as books to share with siblings and young children.

An information table will contain

handouts from other non-profit organizations providing information about their offerings.

Please register early. First it helps the planners. Additionally, though the Blackriver Training and Conference Center in Renton is spacious, it does have limited capacity. The registration fee of \$20 for DSC members and \$25 for non-members includes lunch. If this conference is one that you should attend but simply can't afford, register anyway and request a stipend. We want you there. We don't yet have interactive on-line registration; however, you can e-mail your registration information to anne@oldmillmicro.com and pay via PayPal on the *donation button* of the DSC website: downsyndromecommunity.org indicating "conference" as the purpose. Alternatively, you can mail your registration form with check enclosed to DSC, c/o Anne Mullis, 5276 Old Mill Road, Bainbridge Island, WA 98110. A third option would be to either e-mail anne@oldmillmicro.com or telephonically provide your registration information to Anne at (206) 842-9027 and bring check, cash, or credit card to the conference site.

We're excited to offer this year's DSC conference to the community and hope that you are able to join us.

—Anne Mullis



Guests register at the DSC 2010 conference

"...local experts talking about things that are of interest to each of us with a family member who has a developmental disability."



Margaret Lee Thompson at DSC Conference 2010

March 2011 Issue

We're More Alike Than Different

It's the theme of the NDSC Down syndrome awareness campaign.

From the NDSC:

"As resources mount we will bring that message to doctors, teachers, employers and your neighbors. It's a simple, compelling and, ultimately, essential message delivered by self-advocates—their stories told in their voices.

Each time our message appears on TV or in newspapers, the world will be reminded that people with Down syndrome are more like everybody else than different.

That they love to dance, bowl, have pets and jobs. That they cope with everyday challenges and dream big dreams. That like all people, they deserve respect and a

fair break."

At the website you can view an interactive presentation and video designed for sharing this positive message with others. You can also find the print and video public service announcements there.

www.ndscenter.org/morealike/flash/



The DSC's *Heidi Heier Memorial Sharing Library* will be at the Conference and the Country Kicker Dance.

Please bring CDs, DVDs or other media related to living with Down syndrome to share with others, or contact Sean for pickup: 425-228-3391, president@downsyndromecommunity.org

Buddy Walk and the National Down Syndrome Society

Our licensing agreement with the NDSS requires that a portion of the contributions we collect at the Puget Sound Buddy Walk go to

the national organization. Since it's likely you helped us raise funds and/or donated funds yourself, we thought you might be interested

to read this thank you letter that explains how the NDSS uses our contribution.

Dear Lynne,

On behalf of the Board of Directors of the National Down Syndrome Society, we are sincerely appreciative of your contribution from your 2010 Buddy Walk. We congratulate you on your successful event and are grateful for your efforts in promoting understanding and awareness of individuals with Down syndrome in your community. 2010 was a great year in the Buddy Walk Program – we reached over 260 communities with Walks across the nation and around the world.

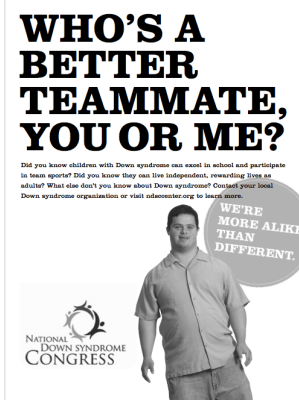
Your contribution, along with the contributions from other Buddy Walk events, is applied to the NDSS National Policy Center to support critical initiatives that enhance the quality of life for people with Down syndrome and their families. The work of the Policy Center is guided by its dynamic legislative agenda, which includes a wide range of issues and touches every stage of life. These issues include education, healthcare, research, employment and independent living.

...Thank you for your energy, enthusiasm and determination in making the Buddy Walk a local and nationally recognized event. NDSS is proud of the growth of the Buddy Walk program and is grateful to you for helping to make it a tremendous success!

Sincerely,

Jon Colman, President, and Rebecca Switalski, National Buddy Walk Director

www.buddywalk.org www.ndss.org



An example of the "We're More Alike Than Different" campaign materials

"...the Buddy Walk Program...reached over 260 communities with Walks across the nation and around the world."



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The Down Syndrome Community is a registered 501(c)(3) non-profit organization whose mission is to improve the lives of individuals with Down syndrome and their families by focusing on education, communication and advocacy. Our service area includes the entire Puget Sound region and Western Washington. Our members include a wide cross section of families and professionals across the United States.

You can find more information and make a tax-deductible donation through PayPal by visiting our website at www.downsyndromecommunity.org

Upcoming Events

World Down Syndrome Day

March 21, 2011

www.worlddownsyndromeday.org & www.ds-int.org

DSC Conference 2011

April 16, 2011, 9am-3pm, Blackriver Conference Center
800 Oakesdale Ave SW, Renton, WA 98057

Contact: Anne Mullis, 206-842-9027, anne@oldmillmicro.com

Sharing Library Event

Country Western Dance and Annual Meeting

Saturday, May 14, 5-8pm Highland Community Center

Potluck and dancing for cowpokes of all ages

Sharing Library Event

Megarama Day

Saturday, August 20, M-Bar-C Ranch, Whidbey Island

Fun-filled western adventure at the scenic M-Bar-C Ranch

Register at www.MegaramaDay.com

15th Annual Buddy Walk of Puget Sound

October 2011, Seattle Center

Contact: Lynne Palmisano, 425-681-2957, lyntoy1@aol.com

Sharing Library Event

Board of Directors

Sean King, President
president@downsyndromecommunity.org

Louise Avery, Vice President,
Community Relations Liaison
dsc_relations@comcast.net

Carla Snyder, Secretary

Curtis Thelin, Treasurer
treasurer@downsyndromecommunity.org

Anne Mullis, Recording Secretary,
Conference Committee Chair

Nick Kappes,
Finance Committee Chair

Lynne Palmisano,
Buddy Walk Chair

Dan Hartung

Sue Hartung

Jennifer Mullis,
Self Advocate

Scott Rutledge

Laurel Sturges

Board Meetings

Board meetings are open to all members. Please let Sean know you are coming: president@downsyndromecommunity.org, 425-228-3391.

May 3, 7-9pm, Pacific Market Center

September 6, 7-9pm, Pacific Market Center

November 1, 7-9pm, Pacific Market Center