



◆ **Down Syndrome** ◆
C O M M U N I T Y
n e w s l e t t e r

Building a caring, understanding and supportive community open to all individuals and families whose lives include a person with Down syndrome

2004 Sweetheart Dance A Great Success!

An estimated 90 people attended the third annual Sweetheart Dance in February. Held at the Highland Center in Bellevue, attendees received tickets at the door for a keepsake Polaroid, and found materials at nearby crafts tables to fashion a personalized cover for the photo.

Sweethearts young and old—singles, couples and families—all danced to the fluid grooves Foremost DJ spun from his broad collection of music. Children, teens, young men and women, parents and grandparents filled the dance floor. Midway through the evening, Pizza Hut delivered thirty-eight large pizzas, just enough to satisfy the hungry crowd.

The dance was the best attended ever. Girl Scout Cadettes, Troop 1761, from Burien helped set-up and take-down the tables and chairs, provided decorations, served pizza, and ran the photography corner. “That was their brainchild,” said Sean King, organizer of the dance. “It’s wonderful. People get this unexpected treasure to take home with them.” Regarding the troop’s help, he said, “I can’t thank them enough for all they’ve done. We can’t do this without support, and look at this place. It’s perfect.”

The Sweetheart Dance and Pizza Party is a free event open to everyone. The Down Syndrome Community provides the venue, music, food and beverages. Donations for pizza are accepted. The next Sweetheart Dance is scheduled for Saturday, February 12, 2005.

2004 Annual Meeting & Potluck

This year’s Annual Meeting and Potluck on May 8th drew a crowd of families for an evening of shared food, ice cream sundaes, door prizes, and sing-along fun. This is the first year we’ve used the Renton location of the Fairwood Community United Methodist Church for this event and we’re grateful to the church for allowing us the use of their gathering space.

A highlight of the evening is always recognition of our Board members and other volunteers who help throughout the year. This year the DSC thanked outgoing Board member, Linda Mason Kappes, for her many years of service to the DSC with an award and a gift certificate. Linda is a founding member of the group and has been



Linda and Kirk

– continued on Page 2

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2004 Annual Meeting & Potluck, Continued

editor of the newsletter for many years. Also recognized was Cadet Girl Scout Troop # 785 of Issaquah whose members have helped with many events in the last year. Certificates of recognition were given to Clara Link, photographer for the Living it Up! 2004 calendar, and her mother, Yvone, who provides the transportation and coordination for Clara.

The 2004 DSC Board of Directors election results were announced. The Down Syndrome Community welcomes two new Board members, Mangala Lonkar of Shoreline, and Barbara O'Kelly of Marysville. The DSC also welcomed back returning Board members Kirk Gillett, Lynn Chittenden, Sean King, and Carla Snyder, a powerhouse team in our organization. Each of these Board members has committed to a three-year term and their dedication to keeping our group organized and moving forward is much appreciated.

Rounding out the evening was a chance for many members to receive door prizes, including a gift certificate from Anthony's, and lots of toys and fun stuff donated by DSC member, Lynne Palmisano. Many enjoyed ice cream sundaes and we had the joint jumping as Skip Dirkes played the guitar and we sang along. Skip leads the sing around the campfire often at Camp Prime Time and the kids (and their parents) enjoyed this musical end to the evening. Thank you to Laurel Sturges and Carla Snyder for organizing such a fun event.



"Smile... It's Okay To Be You" by Karen Foster French
Illustrated by Susan E. Brudos / Published by The Place In The Woods
Available through www.amazon.com for \$6.50

"Smile" is a book with a lyrical rhythm and a heartwarming message for children and adults. When her son who has Down syndrome comes home from school tear stained after two children make fun of him, a mother gently reminds her child that it is okay to be different. By recounting her initial reaction to the news that he had Down syndrome, along with other moments when people misunderstood his condition, the mother reminds her son that people aren't perfect - differences can be confusing or even painful at first. But as events in his life have proven time and time again, people quickly come to realize that differences are more than okay - they are what makes each of us who we are. The mother, it seems, has done a wonderful job of passing this important lesson on to her son, for at the end of the story it is clear he's known it for a long time. He just needed a reminder.

Down Syndrome Community Calendar

- July 15 LAUNCH Meeting – Keeping Kids Safe
Highland Community Center, Bellevue
- July 17 A Day of Sailing, Leschi Marina
Contact Laurel Sturges, 425-226-6335
- July 31 Saturday Club for Kids, TBA
Contact Lynn Chittenden 425-222-7770
- August 8 Calendar Kick-Off Party, TBA
Contact Denise Medgard 425-271-3926
- August 19 LAUNCH Meeting - Focus Group
Highland Community Center, Bellevue
- August 26 Mariners Night
- Sept. 10-12 Camp Prime Time
Contact Rajeev Lonkar 206-362-5963
- Sept. 17 Board Meeting (open to all members) 7 PM
Fairwood Community United Methodist, Renton
Contact Linda Michael 206-241-0353
- Sept. 19 Back to School BBQ Potluck
Crossroads Park, Bellevue
Contact Lynn Chittenden 425-222-7770
- October 10 8th Annual Buddy Walk 1-4PM
Seattle Center Fisher Pavilion Rooftop
- October 21 LAUNCH – Focus on Education
Friendships in School
Highland Community Center, Bellevue
- October 30 Saturday Club for Kids, Jubilee Farms, Carnation
Contact Lynn Chittenden 425-222-7770
- November 6 Harvest Party/Country Dance, Location TBA
- November 12 Board Meeting (open to all members) 7 PM.
Fairwood Community United Methodist, Renton
Contact Linda Michael 206-241-0353
- November 18 LAUNCH Meeting - Topic TBA
Highland Community Center, Bellevue
- December 11 Annual Holiday Party - Location TBA

Other Upcoming Events

- August 14 Megarama Day, Whidbey Island
Contact Louise Avery Lavery@seeseattle.org
- November 22 King County Legislative Forum
Doubletree Guest Suites, Tukwila

Help Wanted!

Newsletter Editor

The Down Syndrome Community needs a newsletter editor. After many years in the position, Linda Mason Kappes has stepped down. If you enjoy gathering information, coordinating with others, and being involved, this is the job for you.

Please contact Sean King,
seanking@hotmail.com, 206-524-6124
or Linda Michael,
ljmichael@cypressmail.com, 206-818-3652
if you would like to learn more.

Buddy Walk Volunteers

The Buddy Walk needs you! Please contact one of the committee members if you can help. We need:

Sponsors – to help with the costs of the t-shirts, publicity, and meal.

Raffle prizes – the better the prizes the more tickets we'll sell!

People to sell raffle tickets – 5000 tickets is a lot of tickets!

Publicity – distribute posters or flyers, post info on web sites, help spread the word.

Volunteers -- need help the day of with set up, clean up, manning tables, etc.

Greeters – teens or young adults to pass out programs and welcome Walkers.

Contacts:

Kirk Gillett, Co-Chair, 360-668-7377
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Event Volunteers

The DSC has lots of events throughout the year. Can you help with the mailings, set up, clean up or any other part of planning one of our great activities? Contact a Board member to learn more! (see list on page 2)

2005 DSC Calendar

2005 DSCiCalendar

Living it Up!

The Down Syndrome Community is proud to present our **2005 calendar, *Living it Up!***



© Bruce Savadow

Clara Link taking pictures, on location, for the 2005 DSC calendar.

Along with featuring individuals that are members of the DSC and stars in their own right, involvement from the general community can be seen throughout the monthly photographs of the 2005 calendar. That involvement included, but was not limited to, a backstage meet and greet arranged by the calendar committee with The Wiggles while they were playing a concert in Everett, Washington. Not only did the band give us permission to use their image for the calendar, they welcomed Clara taking their picture, and they've asked to be contacted when the calendars are available so they can purchase some. The photograph shown at the right, taken by Clara Link, is featured in the calendar and spotlights two young members of the Down Syndrome Community, Silas Palmisano and Aidan Watts. This is only one of thirteen photographs featured in the calendar showcasing our member's interests, dreams, and lives.



2005 Calendar Living it Up!

Order Form

Mail completed order form to:
DSC Calendar, 12931~168th Ave. S.E.,
Renton, WA 98059
with a check or money order
made payable to **Down Syndrome Community**

Name: _____

Mailing Address: _____

Quantity: _____ @ \$10.00 ea. Sub Total: \$ _____

Shipping & Handling: _____ @ \$1.50 ea. \$ _____

Grand Total: \$ _____

Calendars ordered will be shipped after the first week in August 2004.

An “Angel” in the School: Ex-NFL Player Scores Big With Special Needs Kids

By Carole Beers, Journal Reporter, June 17 2004

KIRKLAND -- How are playing for the NFL and schooling special-needs children alike?

Ask Michael Bush, the 6-foot-6, 210-pound former San Francisco 49ers wide receiver and one-time WSU basketball and football star.

The laid-back, yet potentially intimidating athlete is serving as a special education paraeducator at Lakeview Elementary, and is loving it -- both the sweet moments of peace and connecting with troubled kids, and the times of getting physical to prevent angry children from hurting themselves or others.

Bush, 25, also is having a salutary effect on regular kids, who gaze admiringly at him as he passes them in the hall or helps shoot baskets at recess.

“I love being with kids,” said Bush, taking a break from shepherding students to class from recess one blustery day. “I have a whole lot of cousins, and I’ve been blessed to play sports ... They don’t get a lot of men helpers and para-educators for special needs kids. so I was glad to do this.”

Modest words from a big man making a big difference.

Bush said his athletic background has helped because you need discipline to stay on track; patience in getting ideas across, and an ability to work as part of a team, helping the main teacher.

The path to Lakeview

It was last February when Bush -- having been injured playing football first with the 49ers, then more recently with the Detroit Fury arena-football team -- returned to Seattle to be with his girlfriend and their 11-month-old child, and near his brother. While browsing the Internet and looking for jobs, he saw one offered by the Lake Washington School District, and submitted an application.

He went in for an interview and was accepted virtually on the spot.

“I like helping, and just being with kids,” he said. “I like the people here, and the school itself. When I came here it just seemed the best. The people were great, the place seemed great. I’ve just been so happy to be here.”

The path to Lakeview

It was also last February when Lakeview Special Education teacher Tari Stotesbery and her para-educators were particularly stressed. Some key assistants had left, and Tari was treating bruises and bite marks from the more aggressive students. Back pain also reminded her of the toll her work was taking on her.

“I went home and told God, ‘If you want me to do this, send me some help,’” Stotesbery said. “He sent me Michael Bush. God doesn’t do things part way. Michael is not just an incredible helper, calming and kind, but also a former NFL player who has strength and speed combined with intuition about how to work with people. Plus he has a strong faith.”

She and others wonder, what were the chances a fast, powerful yet gentle-giant-of-a-football player would drop in to help them?

Bush also views his placement as a push from higher powers.

“I feel blessed, and I wanted to give back,” he said quietly, keeping an eye on, then corralling, one of the class’s hyperkinetic special ed boys as he was running by. “I don’t know why, I just came here.”

The father of a toddler himself, Bush worked with disabled kids while studying human development and playing sports at Washington State University. He also has led basketball camps for adults as well as young people, and was working at one in Pittsburgh over Memorial Day weekend.

This summer, he will pursue sports jobs--possibly in Europe--but says he will continue working with students here next year. He plans to get more training in working with youngsters in the future. Born in Riverside, Calif., he enrolled at Washington State University as a freshman. In only two seasons of WSU football, he caught 94 passes for 1,658 yards and 16 touchdowns. And in four seasons of WSU basketball, Bush closed his career with 1,052 points, 456 rebounds and 148 steals, starting in 77 games. As a junior, averaging 15.9 points a game, he earned Honorable Mention All Pac-10 honors.

He signed as a 49ers wide receiver in March 2003, but was released in July of that year because of an injury, subsequently playing in Detroit before relocating to Seattle and looking for work with kids.

Some new rewards

Distressed youngsters in Stotesbery’s special ed class, where Bush assists, often refuse the help of others and ask only for “Michael.”

One girl who lives with the continual pain of juvenile rheumatoid arthritis and must change her position every 15 minutes, often refuses to move when asked. But she will readily accept guidance and cues to move from Bush.

Bush invents games to make her required resting fun. One such game is “Elevator,” which gets her lying on or up from a prone foam wedge. He merely holds it vertically next to her, asks her to play elevator, then physically lays down the cushion with her lying against it.

Angel in the School, Continued

Sandy Marrs, a speech pathologist for Lake Washington School District, has been amazed by Bush's unusually calming, positive influence at Lakeview -- and not only on extreme-needs children.

"There was this one boy with only slight learning disabilities wandering in circles, looking at the ground, at recess," Marrs said. "Michael was playing with a small basketball, and looked over and gave this boy a big smile, as if to say, 'I see you; you're cool.' That boy just lit up and began playing purposefully. And the other kids see that and accept these children, too.

"Everyone looks up to Michael."

Stotesbery feels the same way. She calls Bush's coming a kind of reward, or "The Miracle of Michael." With a twinkle she adds, "It's no accident he's named Michael. That's the name of one of the Archangels."

Bush is grateful, too. He says he gets joy being a calming influence, and seeing changes in behavior -- no matter how slight, or how long in coming.

"You don't see a lot of improvement in some of these kids," said Bush. "When you do see it, a little counts for a lot. That's my reward."

The salary is well below that of a professional athlete, but he tries not to focus on that.

"I just focus on having fun, and helping others," he said. "Being around kids brings out your childlike side and makes you happy."

Odds 'n Ends

Membership Update

Please help us keep the information in the Membership Directory up to date. Current mailing or email addresses save time and money as we share notices of upcoming events and other information. Send updates to Linda Michael at ljmichael@cypressmail.com or 206-241-0353. Please notify Linda if you would prefer to receive your newsletter and flyers via email.

Statement of Policy and Disclaimer

This newsletter reports items of interest relating to Down syndrome and will provide a forum for others. The Down Syndrome Community does not promote or recommend any therapy, product or treatment. The contents of the newsletter are for informational purposes only.

Down Syndrome Community is online!

Check out our website at www.downsyndromecommunity.org. Also, if you would prefer to receive our newsletter and DSC flyers via email contact Linda Michael at ljmichael@cypressmail.com

Albertsons Community Partner Cards

As part of the Albertsons Community Partners Program, The Down Syndrome Community continues to receive a rebate from Albertsons on every dollar we spend there each quarter. Thank you to all of you who have been using your cards. It's so easy! Just show your Community Partners card at the checkout stand and the DSC will receive between 2% - 5% of our total purchases. Ask your friends & neighbors if they would like a card to help support the Down Syndrome Community. For cards contact Sean King at 206-524-6124 or seanking@hotmail.com.

DSC Yahoo Group

The Down Syndrome Community has an email announcement group through Yahoo Groups. Through this group information is shared about upcoming DSC events, as well as other events of interest, resources, and legislative news. You can join this group by sending a blank email to: DownSyndromeCommunity-subscribe@yahoogroups.com.

If you have a Yahoo Profile, you can edit your group membership at any time -- update your email address, change from individual emails to digest, or search the archives for past messages. Please consider setting up a Profile.

Linda Michael, membership

Contribute to Down Syndrome Community

Contribute to the Down Syndrome Community through your employers United Way/Combined Campaigns. It's easy to do, even though the Down Syndrome Community is not listed in their catalogues. Just write in 'Down Syndrome Community' and the dollar amount you would like to contribute on the forms distributed to you during these campaigns. The campaigns will do the research through the State of Washington to identify us as a registered non-profit organization, and then direct the appropriate funds to us. Thank you for your financial support of the Down Syndrome Community.

One, Two, Three . . . I'M DIVING IN! DSC's First-Ever Pool Parties Make a SPLASH!

This year the Down Syndrome Community introduced a new event to our membership -- pool parties at three different venues. To gather members in different neighborhoods, we held pool parties in three locations on three different dates; eastside at the Bellevue Aquatic Center on April 24th, southend at the Renton Pool at Lindberg High on May 1st, and northend at Mountlake Terrace Recreation Pavilion on May 15th. That way you could attend one or all three. Those who came had a great time playing and splashing in the water. I would like to thank our coordinators, Laurel Sturges, Denise Medgard and Linda Kappes, for their time and effort in planning these events.

At each party there was a time to swim and a time to visit, socialize and get to know other families. I only attended the northend pool party, which had a great turnout of 25 families or more than 60 people. In the photo at right, Aneeta Lonkar plays with some of the pool's flotation toys.

While the kids played in the pool, some parents were able to visit. The room that we rented at the Mountlake Terrace pool had glass windows so parents could keep an eye on their kids while they swam. We had a steady diet of cookies and chips and I believe someone brought a pizza, which was devoured in seconds by all the hungry swimmers.



These pool parties are a great event to invite family, friends and neighbors. Spencer Gillett invited his Cub Scout den and Mike Edwards (Spencer's Scoutmaster), came with three of his kids and they had a great time. In photo at left, Mike plays with Spencer and his daughter Kelley.



We're going to do this again in 2005, with two pool parties scheduled, one on March 5th at the Mountlake Terrace Recreational Pavilion and the other on July 23rd at the new outdoor pool in Renton. The Renton pool has waterslides and lots of fun things for the entire family. The dates of these events may change depending upon pool availability, so be sure to watch your mailbox or e-mail for flyers concerning these events. Make an effort to have your child invite a friend or a neighbor. -- Submitted by Kirk Gillett



Great raffle prizes including:
A 7 day Holland America Cruise
Alaska Airlines Tickets
Westin Hotel Stay
Autographed Jamie Moyer Jersey
Autographed Ichiro Baseball

**The Down Syndrome Community presents
the 2004 Buddy Walk of Seattle!**

Sunday, October 10, 2004

1:00 - 4:00 p.m.

Seattle Center Fisher Pavilion Rooftop

*Celebrate Down Syndrome Awareness Month.
Bring your friends and family. Enjoy music, food,
activities, clowns, raffle prizes, and more.*

Co-sponsored by



For more information contact: buddywalkseattle@yahoo.com
Kirk Gillett • 360-668-7377 • Kirk.Gillett@verizon.net
Linda Michael • 206-241-0353 • ljmichael@cypressmail.com

M E M B E R S H I P

Yes! I want to be a member of the Down Syndrome Community.

Your check helps defray the cost of publishing this newsletter and sponsoring social events. *Thank You!*

Enclosed is my check for: \$15.00 Other \$ _____

(Please make checks payable to *Down Syndrome Community*)

Renewal New Member


Name _____ Phone _____

Address _____

Name and birthdate of child with DS _____

- I can not help financially, but please keep me on the mailing list.
- To help defray costs, please send me the Down Syndrome Community newsletter electronically via email only.
Email address _____
- Please add me to the DSC Email announcement list on Yahoo.
Email address _____

Mailing Address:
Down Syndrome Community
c/o Sean King, Treasurer
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Seattle, WA 98105

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