

THE DSG News

PEOPLE WITH DOWN SYNDROME - VALUED AND INCLUDED

A P U B L I C A T I O N O F T H E D O W N S Y N D R O M E G U I L D O F D A L L A S

April 2010

Affiliate of the National
Down Syndrome Congress
and the National Down
Syndrome Society

Annual Family Picnic and Membership Meeting

Sunday, April 11, 2010
1:00 pm - 5:00 pm
(lunch will be served from
1:30 pm - 3:00 pm)
Park Lane Ranch
8787 Park Lane
Dallas, TX 75231
www.parklaneranch.com
(located just west of Abrams Road
on the north side of Park Lane)

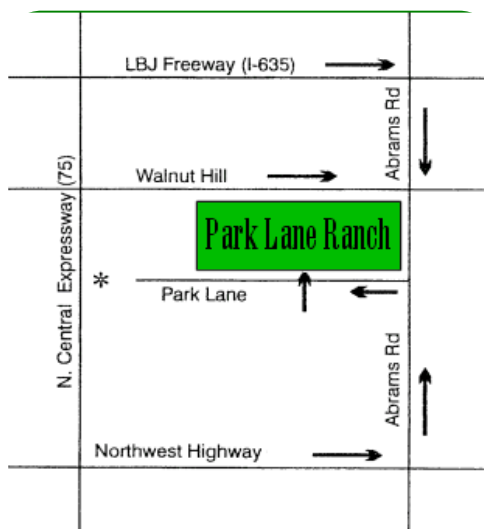
The Down Syndrome Guild Picnic is one of our most popular events! You will have the opportunity to visit with friends, old and new. At this year's event, there will be many activities - miniature golf, mini arcade, Bingo, arts and crafts, basketball hoop shot, batting cages and our favorite DJs from *Party All the Time Productions* will be there - fun for every member of



the family. All the activities and a buffet lunch are free for member families, and you may renew your DSG membership at the picnic. Dues for 2010-2011 are \$25 per family.

This gathering also serves as the Down Syndrome Guild's annual meeting, at which the members vote for the organization's new Board members and the Executive Committee for 2010-2011.

Although this event is free, you **must** make a reservation by e-mailing Jessica McCartney at dallasdsg@sbcglobal.net or by calling (214) 267-1374 *no later than Wednesday, April 7, 2010*. Include in your message the number of adults and children who will be attending.



By-Laws Update

A small committee of board members has been working to update our existing organizational By-laws. At the January Board of Directors meeting suggested changes were presented to the entire board. A motion was made, voted upon and passed unanimously to accept the proposed updates to the existing by-laws. As currently required by our by-laws, membership must approve changes. A vote will take place at the annual membership meeting and picnic on Sunday, April 11, 2010. Copies of existing by-laws and proposed changes can be found on the DSG website www.downsyndromedallas.org

GREAT WAY TO HONOR
LOVED ONES

Club 21
is a Down Syndrome
Guild program to honor a loved
one: matching the numeral of
the important chromosome that
affects our children.

La Asociación de síndrome de Down de Dallas siente mucho la pérdida de Kelsy Matthews, 4 de Agosto 2009 al 20 de Febrero 2010. Durante su corta vida, ella tocó tantas vidas. Les damos nuestro más sentido pésame a sus padres Patty y Andy y hno. mayor Keeton.

**Con cariñosos recuerdos para
Kelsy Matthews**

Angela & Mike O'Brien
Matt Angell
DSG Board of Directors & Staff
Becky Slakman
Jim & Janet Matthews
Jan McGlasson
Lynn & Steve Campbell
Colleen Petersen
William Everheart
Wendy Cone
April Nevill
Temple & Jennifer Weiss
Lisa Nace
The Ringle Family
Hemophilia Foundation of Arkansas
Cyril Home Care Pharmacy
Sandra Thrift
Molly Williams
Patricia Sullivan
Rick Phillips
David Ohlson
Emily Gonzalez
Robert & Beverly Thrift
Amye Wilson
Blake & Kim Hodge
Jill White

Karin & Bob Fancher
**Con cariñosos recuerdos para
Martin Pfeffer, padre de Becky
Slakman**
Angela & Mike O'Brien

Reading Matters: *Emergent Literacy: Early Reading and Writing Development*

Literacy has to do with a person's ability to read and write. Reading and writing are important to help function in school, on the job, and in society. Children with communication difficulties are more likely to struggle with literacy skills.

Children start to learn language from the day they are born. As they grow and develop, their speech and language skills become increasingly more complex. They understand and use language to express their ideas, thoughts, and feelings, and to communicate with others. During early speech and language development, children learn skills that are important to the development of literacy (reading and writing). This stage is known as emergent literacy, begins at birth and continues through the preschool years. Children see and interact with print (e.g., books, magazines, grocery lists) in everyday situations (e.g., home, in preschool, and at daycare) well before they start elementary school. Parents can see their child's growing appreciation and enjoyment of print as he or she begins to recognize words that rhyme, scribble with crayons, point out logos and street signs, and name some letters of the alphabet. Gradually, children combine what they know about speaking and listening with what they know about print and become ready to learn to read and write.

Are Spoken Language and Literacy Connected?

Yes. The experiences with talking and listening gained during the preschool period prepare children to learn to read and write during the early elementary school years. This means that children who enter school with weaker verbal abilities are much more likely to experience difficulties learning literacy skills than those who do not. One spoken language skill that is strongly connected to early reading and writing is phonological awareness—the recognition

that words are made up of separate speech sounds, for example, that the word dog is composed of three sounds: d, aw, g. There are a variety of oral language activities that show children's natural development of phonological awareness, including rhyming (e.g., "cat-hat") and alliteration e.g., "big bears bounce on beds"), and isolating sounds ("Mom, f is the first sound in the word fish"). As children playfully engage in sound play, they eventually learn to segment words into their separate sounds, and "map" sounds onto printed letters, which allows them to begin to learn to read and write.

What Parents Can Do

You can help your child develop literacy skills during regular activities without adding extra time to your day. There are also things you can do during planned play and reading times. Show your children that reading and writing are a part of everyday life and can be fun and enjoyable. Activities or preschool children include the following:

- Talk to our child and name objects, people, and events in the everyday environment.
- Repeat your child's strings of sounds (e.g., "dadadada, bababa") and add to them.
- Talk to your child during daily routine activities such as bath or mealtime and respond to his or her questions.
- Draw your child's attention to print in everyday settings such as traffic signs, store logos, and food containers.
- Introduce new vocabulary words during holidays and special activities such as outings to the zoo, the park, and so on.
- Engage your child in singing, rhyming games, and nursery rhymes.
- Read picture and story books that focus on sounds, rhymes, and alliteration (words that start with the same sound, as found in Dr. Seuss books).
- Reread your child's favorite book(s).
- Focus your child's attention on books

by pointing to words and pictures as you read.

- Provide a variety of materials to encourage drawing and scribbling (e.g., crayons, paper, markers, finger paints).
- Encourage your child to describe or tell a story about his/her drawing and write down the words.

Transfer of HCS Case Management Services to MRAs

Information taken from the Texas Council for Developmental Disabilities. To sign up for their online-newsletter <http://www.txddc.state.tx.us/index.asp>

To help Texans prepare for the transfer of case management services under the Home and Community-Based Services (HCS) Waiver from service providers to local Mental Retardation Authorities (MRAs), the Department of Aging and Disability Services (DADS) has created a new Web site. This site, <http://www.dads.state.tx.us/hcscmtransition>, was designed as a resource for HCS providers; MRA staff; individuals served in the HCS program and their legally authorized representatives, family members and friends; advocates; and the general public.

After June 1, 2010, people who receive HCS program services will receive service coordination from their local MRA. All other HCS services will continue to be available through HCS providers. This transition will, among other things, provide an ally for consumers and families and increase their ability to choose or refuse specific services and supports as desired; request alternate services and providers; and appeal decisions about the services and supports they receive. It will also enhance local provider oversight and accountability while enabling service coordinators (formerly case managers) to maintain the integrity of their advocacy role on behalf of each service recipient.

Under the new process, there will be three required service planning tasks for each individual in the HCS program. The first is developing a Person-

Reprinted with permission from Emergent literacy: Early reading and writing development by F. P. Roth, D. R. Paul, and A-M. Pierotti. Available from the Web site of the American Speech-Language Hearing Association: <http://www.asha.org/public/speech/emergent-literacy.htm>. All rights reserved.

Directed Plan (PDP) to explore the individual's goals, desires and supports needed to achieve the outcomes desired by the individual or legally authorized representative (LAR) and to ensure the individual's health and safety. Then an Individual Plan of Care (IPC) will be developed which specifies HCS services to be provided, as well as non-waiver services to be accessed. Finally an Implementation Plan (IP) will be developed by the program provider, with input from the individual or LAR, and approved by DADS. It will detail strategies the provider will use to deliver the HCS services and training the individual may need as indicated in the PDP and the IPC.

The transition Web site contains Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs) such as an explanation of responsibilities for HCS providers and MRA service coordinators, the new service delivery model based on Person-Directed Planning and details about how monitoring and oversight will occur. The FAQs, at <http://www.dads.state.tx.us/hcscmtransition/faqs.html>, include a recent section on questions that DADS received from individuals and families regarding these changes. The Web site and FAQs will be updated throughout this transition period. DADS is also preparing a program handbook that will include an overview of service planning, information regarding person-directed planning, and operational details surrounding required processes.

Dad's Group Happy Hour

Wednesday, April 21, 2010
6:30 pm - 8:30 pm
The Londoner
14930 Midway Road
Addison, TX 75001
phone: (972) 458-2444

Join co-chairs, Chris McKee and Doug Dureau, for drinks and conversation. Feel free to invite other Down Syndrome Guild dads who might enjoy attending. RSVP to Becky Slakman at (214) 267-1374 or via e-mail at dsged@sbcglobal.net. Not able to join this time, but would like to be added to the list to receive information for future events? Let Becky know that as well.

New Year Giving Opportunity

Resolve to renew your membership and your commitment to the DSG

by Jane Friou, Fund Development Chair

It's four months into 2010, but the Down Syndrome Guild is just getting ready to start our new year. Every June, the DSG begins a new fiscal year, and we kick it off with a membership drive. You will soon be receiving your DSG membership renewal application and a request for annual dues of \$25. Because membership dues cover less than 10% of the DSG's programs, we are asking you to consider an additional gift this May. Your investment in the DSG's new year will help ensure that we can continue our services to the Dallas community. Thank you for giving generously!

Supports, Modifications & Accommodations for Students with Disabilities

For many students who have a disability the key to their success at school lies in having appropriate adaptations, accommodations, and modifications made in the classroom and in extra-curricular and non-academic activities. Adaptations, modifications and accommodations need to be individualized and provided for each student, based upon their needs, personal learning styles and interests. Then, as they experience success, motivation and learning will increase, and overall student outcomes improve.

Modifications and Accommodations

The terms modifications and accommodations are often used interchangeably. However, there is a distinct difference. "A modification indicates that what is being taught, the content, is modified. The student is expected to learn something different than the general education standard (e.g., TEKS). The instructional level or general education benchmarks or number of key concepts to be mastered are changed. An accommodation indicates changes to how the content is: 1) taught, 2) made accessible, and/or, 3) assessed. Accommodations do not change what the student is expected to master. The objectives of the course remain intact." (TEA Division of IDEA Coordination) IEP teams should discuss what specific modifications and accommodations a student needs and include them in the IEP.

Different Types of Supports

- special education
- related services
- supplementary aids and services, including
 - equipment such as assistive technology
 - supports for school personnel

- testing accommodations

Special Education

By definition, special education is "specially designed instruction" (§300.39). And IDEA defines that term as follows: (3) Specially designed instruction means adapting, as appropriate to the needs of an eligible child under this part, the content, methodology, or delivery of instruction— (i) To address the unique needs of the child that result from the child's disability; and (ii) To ensure access of the child to the general curriculum, so that the child can meet the educational standards within the jurisdiction of the public agency that apply to all children. [§300.39(b)(3)] Thus, special education involves adapting the "content, methodology, or delivery of instruction."

Because adapting the content, methodology, and/or delivery of instruction is an essential element in special education and an extremely valuable support for students, it's equally essential to know as much as possible about how instruction can be adapted.

Related Services

One look at IDEA's definition of related services in §300.34 and it's clear that these services are supportive in nature, although not in the same way that adapting the curriculum is. Related services support a student's special education and are provided when necessary for that student to benefit from special education services. IDEA Section §300.34 - Related services. (a) General. Related services means transportation and such developmental, corrective, and other supportive services as are required to assist a child with a disability to benefit from special education, and include:

- speech-language pathology and

audiology services

- interpreting services
- psychological services
- physical and occupational therapy
- recreation, including therapeutic recreation
- early identification and assessment of disabilities in children
- counseling services, including rehabilitation counseling
- orientation and mobility services
- medical services for diagnostic or evaluation purposes
- school health services and school nurse services
- social work services in schools
- parent counseling and training

This is not an exhaustive list of possible related services. There are others (not named here or in the law) that states and schools routinely make available under the umbrella of related services. The IEP team decides which related services a student needs and specifies them in the student's IEP. For detailed information about related services visit: <http://www.nichcy.org/EducateChildren/IEP/Pages/RelatedServices.aspx>.

Supplementary Aids and Services

"Supplementary aids and services means aids, services and other supports that are provided in regular education classes, other education-related settings, and in extra-curricular and nonacademic settings, to enable children with disabilities to be educated with nondisabled children to the maximum extent appropriate (IDEA Section §300.42) Some examples of these other supports and services, called supplementary aids and services are:

- team teaching/co-teaching
- direct instruction
- helping teacher
- special materials/equipment
- collaboration/consultation among

staff, parents, and/or other professionals.

The IEP team is the group that decides which supplementary aids and services a student needs to support his or her access to and participation in the school environment. Team members should discuss the student's needs, the curriculum, and school routine, and openly explore all options to make sure the right supports for a student are included. If the IEP team decides that a student would benefit from supplemental aids and services, this information should be included in the IEP.

Supports for School Staff

Supports are also available for those who work with the student, if needed to implement the student's IEP. Supports for school staff should be reviewed by the IEP team and if need, written into the IEP. Some of these supports might

include:

- staff development/training
- getting help from another staff member or administrative person,
- having an educational assistant in the classroom, or
- getting special equipment or teaching materials.

Modifications to State or District-Wide Assessments

IDEA requires that students who have a disability take part in state or district-wide assessments. The IEP team decides which test is appropriate for a student and can decide that a particular test is not appropriate. In this case, the IEP must include:

- an explanation of why that test is not suitable for the student, and
- how the student will be assessed instead

For more information about testing guidelines in Texas visit: <http://www.texasprojectfirst.org/TAKS.html>

Conclusion

Regardless of a student's needs, many or few, he/she should be educated alongside peers who do not have a disability to the maximum extent appropriate. Just because a student may need supports, modifications and accommodations, it does not mean he/she should be removed from the general education setting. To quote Senator Bill Frist, "The great power of IDEA is that it brings people with disabilities into the heart of our communities and our schools, where we learn that disability does not divide us, but binds us together."

Adapted from the article "Supports, Modifications, & Accommodations" by NICHCY

Introductory Yoga Session for Children and Adults with Down Syndrome

Saturday, April 10, 2010
Down Syndrome Guild Office
1702 N. Collins Blvd.
Richardson, TX 75080
(Parking and entrance is on the east side of building)

Ages 5-10 at 1:00pm
Ages 11-15 at 2:00pm
Ages 16-19 at 3:00pm
Ages 20- and older at 4:00pm

Yoga is an innovative approach used to facilitate focus, concentration, body awareness, and self-regulating skills. Yoga benefits children with disabilities as well as those who are typically developing as they stretch, strengthen their muscles, and release stored up tension. Kids with Down syndrome, autism and other disabilities find calm and balance through yoga classes. Therapeutic yoga is said to compliment occupational, physical, and speech therapy as it targets sensory needs,

works on body alignment as well as sounds. In her classes, Lynne focuses on yoga as it gives children the opportunity to build confidence, self-regulate, control self stimulating behavior, and have a better focus and concentration.

Lynne Silberman, in collaboration with the Down Syndrome Guild is offering a free introductory yoga class for members of the DSG. Silberman, 25, who has worked with children with disabilities since she was 16, believes that yoga is uniquely suited for connecting with these children. One of just a handful of practitioners in the Dallas-Fort Worth area licensed by the Florida-based group Yoga for the Special Child, she sees it as a way of improving attention span, balance and strength as well as confidence and self-control. Lynne has worked with children with disabilities in a variety of different environments including hospitals, inclusive classrooms, as well as pediatric

therapy clinics. She is a graduate of the University of Arizona and is currently working towards her Masters in Mental Health Counseling.

The DSG and Ms. Silberman will offer more yoga classes at a discounted rate, set up in 6 week sessions based on the level of interest shown from this introductory offer. **Space is limited**, please RSVP to Becky Slakman at 214-267-1374 or dallasdsg@sbcglobal.net.

If you are unable to attend the introductory session but are interested in the six week session please let us know.

Advocacy 101-

An informative meeting everyone will want to attend

*With Mike Bright,
Executive Director of the
Arc of Texas*

Thursday, April 29th
6:30 pm- 8:30 pm
Arapaho United Methodist
Church
1400 W. Arapaho Rd.
Richardson, TX 75080
(Northeast Corner of Arapaho and
Coit, use east parking lot entrance)

The Arc of Texas Governmental Affairs Department monitors local, state, and national issues that impact the lives of people with intellectual and developmental disabilities. They work closely with legislators, government agencies, and school systems in an effort to improve the quality of supports and services for people with disabilities. Their goal goes beyond simply changing the laws. They are working to change attitudes. Since their founding in 1950, The Arc has been instrumental in the creation of virtually every program, service, right, and benefit now available to the hundreds of thousands of Texans with intellectual and other developmental disabilities.

(continued on page 7)

One Thing

From [the www.disabilityisnatural.com](http://www.disabilityisnatural.com) E-Newsletter by Kathie Snow

It can all feel overwhelming. If you're a parent, teacher, service provider, or play another role in the life of a child or adult with a disability—and especially if you're a person with a disability—it seems there's too much on our plates!

Inclusion, education, assistive technology, behavior, employment, supports, modifications, mobility, communication, and living accommodations are some of the issues we probably face every day. With so much to deal with, we may try to simply maintain the status quo—doing more is just too much. We may try to do it all, and experience little or no success. Finally, some of our best, most well-intentioned efforts may not have much impact on a person's life.

Sometimes, however, doing one thing can change the course of a person's destiny—and one thing can lead to another. Let's consider a few examples.

- Having higher expectations for the person can result in the person meeting those expectations.
- Changing how you think about, talk to, react to, and/or behave with another can generate changes in the other's behavior, and lead to an improved relationship and other great results.
- Listening—really listening—to the person, with your ears, your eyes, and your heart, and respecting what the person communicates, can generate life-changing outcomes.
- If a person has to be pushed in a wheelchair or he uses a walker, but he cannot self-transfer or move how and when he wants, he needs the independent mobility of a power chair. This one action can lead to greater inclusion, a job, interdependence, and more. Similar outcomes are probable when we ensure a person with speech difficulties has a communication device. Everyone needs freedom of speech and freedom to move!
- Allowing a child with a disability to

use a computer for writing, instead of trying to force handwriting skills, can enable her to succeed in a general ed classroom. Ditto, allowing the child to use the computer or other devices for math, reading, etc. (And the same is true for adults.)

- Making environmental changes, like rearranging a classroom, a bedroom, or other place; modifying “rules;” simplifying tasks; providing adapted materials and/or assistive technology; and other adjustments can result in greater interdependence, inclusion, and success.

- Helping an adult with a disability learn how to get her own job—instead of making her dependent on employment specialists—can foster greater self-confidence and self-reliance.

- Providing opportunities for a child or adult with a disability to be more responsible can lead to—you got it—the person becoming more responsible. A child can help with chores, an adult can volunteer to help others, and people of any age can be expected to make more of their own decisions and live with (and learn from) the consequences.

- Encouraging a person with a disability to participate in an ordinary, inclusive dance class, drama club, sports activity, etc., can lead to friendships, which can lead to a network of natural supports, which can lead to a job and/or inclusion in other areas of life, which can lead to a person living the life of his dreams.

The short list above can get you started—keep thinking and brainstorm with others. Do that one thing. Then do the next one thing, and the next, and so on. One thing—just one thing done with tender, loving care—can be the seed that sprouts a garden of life-changing possibilities!

President's Message

By Kelly Drablos

My term is almost over as President of the Down Syndrome Guild of Dallas and it has been a pleasure to serve this organization in that capacity for almost two years. We have achieved a great deal and grown in many ways, but most importantly our focus on our mission has remained constant and heartfelt. We now have excellent, experienced staff in place at our new larger and more professional office location. Programming is expanding consistently without sacrificing effectiveness. Our relationships with school district personnel are stronger than ever. Our board is more varied and we are seeking even greater diversity. Our vision of "people with Down syndrome, valued and included" is understood and embraced by our membership and we stand ready to share our dreams with our communities.

There are still many challenges to face and an abundance of work to be done. Greater membership participation will be needed to achieve all that we desire to accomplish. Our strength has always resided in the commitment and passion of our members. Please join us in the most proactive way possible for you, and be a part of our further progress.

On a personnel note, it has been an honor to work with our executive director, Becky Slakman. We are much blessed by her kind heart and gentle, determined, industrious leadership. Cara Prentice and Jessica McCartney are terrific additions to our staff with excellent skills and experience. Our current board is vibrant and involved and has matured beyond group think to openly share differences of opinion

with grace and respect.

I leave the board with many happy memories, friendships that will last, new information and perspectives, and pride in the progress we have made. Change is hard and we have emerged stronger for the effort to grow and become more. I look forward to co-chairing the 2010 Buddy Walk Committee with Anne O'Brien and will continue my 25 year association with this organization with enthusiasm. God bless all of us in this mission!

Apply Now to Have Your Child's Photo in the 2011 Calendar

It's time to start planning for the 2011 Down Syndrome Guild calendar, featuring photos of the children of some of our members. Each year the calendar sales represent a significant share of the DSG fundraising efforts, but more important the calendar allows the faces of our beautiful children to be out in the community year-round.

If you are interested in applying for the possibility of having your child's picture in the calendar, go to our website at www.downsyndromedallas.org and find the application and requirements. If you do not have web access, call the DSG office at (214) 267-1374 and ask for the information and a form be mailed to you. Return the information requested to the DSG office no later than Wednesday, April 15, 2010.

(continued from page 6)

Join the Down Syndrome Guild in welcoming Mike Bright, executive director of The Arc of Texas as he guides us through effect means of advocating for people with Down syndrome. The training will prepare participants to engage the legislative process on behalf of their family members and others with disabilities in their communities. Participants will learn about their legislators, how ideas for legislation become laws, how the budget process works, and how they can influence the legislative process at the state and local level. We will also learn about key issues impacting Texans with disabilities and will develop strategies that can generate support for key issues between now and the beginning of the 2011 legislative session.

The very idea of advocacy, especially at the legislative level can indeed be daunting; however, this does not mean we should leave the work to someone else. The Down Syndrome Guild believes that people with disabilities and their families are by far the best voices for change. Your personal stories are what will truly make a difference. Please attend and learn how to make your voice heard! RSVP to Jessica McCartney at 214-267-1374 or dallasdsg@sbcglobal.net.

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RICHARDSON, TX 75080

Return Service Requested

(214) 267-1374

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PRESIDENT: KELLY DRABLOS

LAYOUT EDITOR: JESSICA MCCARTNEY

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AT CHILDREN'S MEDICAL CENTER.

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8

DOWN SYNDROME GUILD OF DALLAS



MISSION STATEMENT: THE DOWN SYNDROME GUILD OF DALLAS PROVIDES ACCURATE AND CURRENT INFORMATION, RESOURCES AND SUPPORT FOR PEOPLE WITH DOWN SYNDROME, THEIR FAMILIES AND THE COMMUNITY.

ARE YOU MOVING? DON'T FORGET TO PROVIDE US WITH YOUR CHANGE OF ADDRESS BY CALLING THE OFFICE OR BY E-MAIL AT DALLASDSG@SBCGLOBAL.NET.

THE PUBLICATION OF *THE DSG NEWS* IS MADE POSSIBLE BY THE GENEROSITY OF THE CHARLES H. PHIPPS FAMILY FOUNDATION.

Down Syndrome Guild Calendar of Events

April 10
Yoga Class

April 11
Family Picnic

April 21
Dads' Group Happy Hour

April 29
Advocacy 101
Training by Mike Bright,
Executive Director of
The Arc of Texas.