

THE

DSG News

PEOPLE WITH DOWN SYNDROME - VALUED AND INCLUDED

March 2009

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



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

2009 Down Syndrome Guild IEP Clinics *Behavior Intervention Plans*

The Down Syndrome Guild designed these workshops to provide families with information and tools to be prepared for the annual Individualized Education Plan (IEP) meeting required by school districts for every child who receives special education services. These workshops are *FREE* for Down Syndrome Guild of Dallas members and teachers. Space is limited and RSVP is required to Becky Slakman by phone at (214) 267-1374 or via e-mail at dsged@sbcglobal.net.

Behavior Intervention Plans
Saturday, March 7, 2009
10:00 am - 12:00 pm
Region 10 Service Center
904 Abrams Road
Richardson, TX 75081

Regan Roth Fitzgerald (M. Ed., BCBA and President of Behavior & Education Specialists of Texas, LLC) will speak on how to develop and implement an effective Behavior Intervention Plan (BIP) covering behavior issues such as running,

‘bolting’, non-compliance, etc. Attendees will learn about the four main functions of all behaviors and how they relate to the development of all parts of the BIP - from the functional assessment to positive intervention strategies. The speaker will take attendees step by step through the process and practice writing techniques and strategies for problem behaviors.

Please see page 4 for information about our April 2009 IEP Clinic, *It’s Fun to Have Fun, but You Have to Know How!*

Inclusion Solutions is Hot off the Press

The Down Syndrome Guild of Dallas is pleased to announce the publication of its first issue of *Inclusion Solutions*. Each issue of this informative publication will provide practical state of the art information to help educators better serve their students with Down syndrome in the general education classroom. In January, the DSG e-mailed the first issue of this quarterly publication to all parents of school age children who are members of the DSG as well as special education directors in Region 10 and many other

North Texas school districts. The hope is that parents will share this publication with teachers and that teachers will request their own copies. Anyone can also read the first issue of *Inclusion Solutions* on the Down Syndrome Guild website at www.downsyndromedallas.org. The second issue will come out in April, 2009. For more information and to request a subscription to this free publication, contact Becky Slakman at the DSG office by phone at (214) 267-1374 or via e-mail at dsged@sbcglobal.net.

Inside This Issue:

- Club 21.....2
- Executive Director’s Message.....2
- Dad’s Group Happy Hour2
- Save the Date - Annual Family Picnic and Membership Meeting.....3
- Dual Diagnosis – Down syndrome and Autism3
- Spring Break Activities3
- Simple Ways to Encourage Speech and Language Development.....4
- IEP Clinic - It’s Fun to Have Fun, but You Have to Know How!.....4
- From the Buddy Walk Chairperson5
- Apply Now to Have Your Child’s Photo in the 2010 Calendar5
- In the Community6-7
- From the DSG Library6
- Young Adult Cooking Class.....6
- Taking Care of Yourself7
- FYI - Medicaid Error7
- DSG Calendar of Events8

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.

To: Mr. & Mrs. Jerry Thompson
On behalf of the Thompson family.
From: Vicki, Ed, and Madi Bass

A gift to the Down Syndrome Guild to honor loved ones is a tangible way to recognize their lives, celebrate birthdays, anniversaries, graduations, new homes, or any number of occasions. A gift in memory of a friend or relative is a thoughtful and caring way to express sympathy while sharing concern for an important cause.

Interested in making a *Club 21* donation? Contact Becky Slakman by e-mail at dsged@sbcglobal.net or by phone at (214) 267-1374.

Executive Director's Message

By Becky Slakman

Last week was my two year anniversary as the Executive Director of the Down Syndrome Guild of Dallas. I looked back at the first message I ever wrote for this newsletter. I quoted the mission statement of the DSG. The mission statement is: *The Down Syndrome Guild of Dallas provides accurate and current information, resources, and support for people with Down syndrome, their families, and the community.*

Your DSG Board of Directors recently held the annual planning session. They spent the day reviewing current processes for getting the information and resources to you, our members, and evaluated current programs. Discussions included designing future resources and programs that will benefit our families. The board worked diligently all year to make sure that we are on task, focused, and following the strategic objectives planned for the year.

I am happy to inform you that we have achieved in large measure the strategic plan created by the Board for this year. The *Parent-to-Parent Committee* created a beautiful binder of information that we are delivering to all families of newborns. The *Options for Adults Committee* along with Cara Prentice, DSG Program Specialist, developed a *Resource Guide for Families of Adults with Down Syndrome*. The first *Inclusion Solutions* newsletter went out to Metroplex Special Education Directors. We have "touched" many educators in our area who are, for the first time, attending our IEP seminars and requesting educational resources. We have a beautiful new Down Syndrome Guild of Dallas brochure that explains who we are and what we do. We are updating our website which now includes a section specifically for

educators. The Board established a "future facilities" committee to discuss our building size, location, and future space needs. We are continually reevaluating our programs to see if we have met our desired goals. Attendance has increased at our informational programs as well as our social events.

The above accomplishments demonstrate that we are indeed meeting the mission of the DSG. I am grateful to work with such a committed group of volunteers to see that our organization remains "mission driven" to provide you with the best services and programs possible. Please honor the efforts of our Board and staff by taking part in opportunities the DSG has to offer.

I hope to see you at our Annual Family Picnic and Membership Meeting on Sunday, May 3, 2009. We will once again be at Park Lane Ranch. Look for details and reservation instructions on page 3 of this newsletter.

Dad's Group Happy Hour

Wednesday, March 18, 2009
6:30 pm - 8:30 pm
The Londoner
14930 Midway Road
Addison, TX 75001
phone: (972) 458-2444

Join Down Syndrome Guild dads, Chris McKee and Doug Dureau, for drinks and conversation. Feel free to invite other dads who might enjoy attending. RSVP to Becky Slakman at (214) 267-1374 or dsged@sbcglobal.net.

If you are not able to attend this time but would like to be added to the e-mail list for future events, let Becky know.

Save the Date - Annual Family Picnic and Membership Meeting

Sunday, May 3, 2009
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, petting barnyard, basketball hoop shot, and batting cages - 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 2009-2010 are \$25 per family.

Although this event is free, you must make a reservation by e-mailing Becky Slakman at dsged@sbcglobal.net or by calling (214) 267-1374 no later than Wednesday, April 29, 2009. Include in your message the number of adults and children who will be attending

Spring Break Activities

Amazing Spring Break at Amazing Jake's

Wednesday March 11, 2009

6:00 pm - 9:30 pm

Amazing Jake's Food & Fun

831 North Central Expressway

Plano, TX 75075

(East side of Collin Creek Mall)

The Down Syndrome Guild is excited to offer a new social activity for young adults ages 19 years old and older. Our self-advocates will join students from Northwestern University in Evanston, Illinois, who are coming to Dallas for their spring break. It will be a night full of fun, food and new friends – an amazing good time!

Amazing Jake's has more than 90,000 square feet of fun activities. The cost for this event is only \$5.00 – which covers unlimited pizza, pasta, potato bar, dessert, drinks - and all the rides, rock wall climbing, mini golf,

bumper cars, movie theater, and laser tag. Also included is a limited number of points to play the arcade games.

RSVP is required – contact Becky Slakman by phone at (214) 267-1374 or by e-mail at dsged@sbcglobal.net.

Be Creative During Spring Break

Monday, March 16, 2009

1:00 pm - 3:00 pm

DSG Office

701 N. Central Expressway, Suite 5-I

Richardson, TX 75080

Students with Down syndrome – ages 8 to 16 years old - are invited to begin Spring Break at the DSG. Join Girl Scout Troop 224 for arts and crafts. Each participant will go home with his or her very own masterpiece.

Sign up quickly because space is limited to 12 students. RSVP to Becky Slakman by phone at (214) 267-1374 or by e-mail at dsged@sbcglobal.net.

Dual Diagnosis – Down syndrome and Autism

Saturday, March 28, 2009
10:00 am - 12:00 pm

Down Syndrome Guild
of Dallas Office

701 N. Central Expwy, Suite 5-I

Richardson, TX 75080

The Down Syndrome Guild of Dallas held its first informal meeting in January with parents who believe their child has a dual diagnosis of Down syndrome and Autism. Attending the meeting were parents who have children between the ages of 1 year and 32 years old. They shared information on behaviors, therapies, diet, medications, doctors, and schools.

If you have any concerns about your child's development or behaviors, please join us at this meeting. RSVP to Becky Slakman by phone at (214) 267-1374 or by e-mail at dsged@sbcglobal.net.

Simple Ways to Encourage Speech and Language Development

By Julie R. Liberman

Communication milestones are often met in some children with ease; however, at times, delays are noted. Specialists, such as speech-language pathologists, can assist when a communication delay has been identified. Speech delays include issues with sound pronunciation (articulation), as well as fluency (stuttering) or voice concerns. Language delays refer to difficulties with expressive and/or receptive language. Expressive language is what is said by a communicator, (i.e., "output"), whereas receptive language refers to what the individual is able to understand (i.e., "input"). There are several simple things parents and caregivers can do to facilitate communication development for their children. Here are just a few ideas!

Birth to 2 Years

- Encourage vowel-like and consonant-vowel sounds such as "ma," "da," and "ba."
- Reinforce attempts by maintaining eye contact, responding with speech, and imitating vocalizations using different patterns and emphasis, such as raising voice pitch to indicate a question.
- Teach child to imitate your actions, including clapping hands, blowing kisses, and playing simple, familiar finger games such as peek-a-boo and the itsy-bitsy-spider.
- Talk as you bathe, feed, and dress your child to give labels for actions and items.
- Consistently label familiar words, such as colors, numbers, and names of familiar people.
- Combine gestures with familiar words, such as waving when saying hi or goodbye.
- Introduce animal sounds (The cow says, moo. A duck says, quack,

quack!)

- When reading to your child, use books that have large colorful pictures and are not too detailed, and encourage naming and pointing to familiar objects/items/activities on the pages.

2 to 4 Years

- Use clear, simple speech that is easy for your child to model.
- Repeat what your child says to indicate that you understand, and then expand on what was said. (i.e., "Want juice? I have juice. I have apple juice. Do you want apple juice?")
- Make a book of favorite or familiar people/places by using photos (or cut out pictures from magazines).
- Help your child understand and ask questions by asking simple questions that require more than just a yes/no answer (i.e., Where are you going? What are you doing?)
- Ask questions that require a choice: "Do you want an apple or an orange?"
- Expand vocabulary by naming objects/items/activities and explaining their functions. For example, "There are my eyes. I use my eyes to see."
- Target describing skills by placing familiar objects in a container. Have your child remove the object and tell you what it is called and how to use it.

4 to 6 Years

- When your child starts a conversation, give your full attention whenever possible, and make sure that you have your child's attention before you speak.
- Acknowledge, encourage, and praise all attempts to speak.
- Pause briefly after speaking. This gives your child a chance to

continue the conversation.

- Continue to build vocabulary by introducing a new word with its definition, or use it in a context that is easily understood.
- Use specific vocabulary, such as sequencing words (first, middle, and last), positional words (right, left, behind, under, etc.) and opposites (up/down, on/off, in/out).
- Offer clues to allow your child to identify what you are describing: "We use it to brush our teeth." (toothpaste and/or toothbrush). "It is a yellow fruit with a peel." (banana).
- Teach your child to follow multi-step directions, i.e., "Go to your room, and bring me your shoes."

Julie R. Liberman, M.A., CCC-SLP, is the owner of Speech TX and will present at the 2009 April IEP Clinic.

IEP Clinic - It's Fun to Have Fun, but You Have to Know How!

Saturday, April 4, 2009
10:00 am - 12:00 pm
Region 10 Service Center
904 Abrams Road
Richardson, TX 75081

Julie Liberman (M.A., CCC-SLP and owner of Speech TX) will present strategies for facilitating friendships.

Topics include:

- Importance of play
- Typical development of play skills
- Different theories for teaching how to play and improve social skills
- Incorporating these skills into IEP goals and objectives

From the Buddy Walk Chairperson

Thanks to everyone for making the 2008 Buddy Walk a success! Sponsored by the Down Syndrome Guild of Dallas, Park Place Volvo, and Hillwood Development Group, this year's Buddy Walk brought together nearly 3000 people to promote awareness and inclusion of people with Down syndrome in the Dallas community.

Families and friends celebrated our fundraising efforts by enjoying the various Buddy Walk festivities. The bounce houses, rock climbing wall, train rides, obstacle course, face painting booths, and playground were filled with laughter and so many smiling faces. David Chicken performed to an enthusiastic crowd, many of whom joined him onstage for a song or two. The Notre Dame Signing Choir entertained everyone with their performance. Our Sponsor and Resource Tents offered fun and information to Buddy Walk attendees.

Once again, Flag Pole Hill provided an excellent location for our teams. We were blessed with a beautiful, sunny November day allowing everyone to enjoy the one-mile walk. The festive atmosphere was exhilarating as teams prepared for the walk in their coordinating shirts and signs honoring loved ones. The view was awe-inspiring as we set out with decorated wagons, strollers, and scooters. The crowd seemed endless as everyone marched by. It was especially exciting to meet and welcome new families to the event. Their interest and enthusiasm was contagious. Walkers danced across the finish line to the tunes of the Party All the Time Disc Jockey.

None of this would have been possible without the efforts of our Team Captains. We had over 56 teams coordinate fundraising this year, raising more than \$140,000. Neighborhood picnics, garage sales, e-mail appeals, car washes, and bake sales were just a few of the activities coordinated by Team Captains. Their astonishing work must be commended!!!! Our top teams included:

1. Jesuit Rangers
2. Southern Enterprises, Inc—
Talor Milstein
3. Rockin' Trekkers Self-Advocate Team

Online donations were popular once again this year. Please remember that online giving is available year-round on our website. This has proved to be an easy way to honor a loved one or special occasion with a gift to the Down Syndrome Guild of Dallas. I encourage you to visit our website to view the slideshow of the Buddy Walk. It will bring a smile and a tear to your face.

Our sincere appreciation and thanks goes to our valued Sponsors. Their participation builds great awareness throughout the Dallas community. I hope you will thank them personally, as you use their products or services during the year.

It was a joy and privilege to work with our *Buddy Walk Committee* Members and Volunteers. Their dedication for the Buddy Walk is unwavering! Their hard work and caring ways can be seen in each detail of the Buddy Walk's activities.

As ambassadors for the Down syndrome community, we are blessed to have the opportunity to impact so many in North Texas. My sincere hope is that

the energy and enthusiasm from one day can positively influence our neighbors by allowing them to embrace our families as they are each and every day, so continue to proudly wear your Buddy Walk t-shirt.

Thank you for making the Buddy Walk a success enabling the Down Syndrome Guild of Dallas to continue its various programs. We hope to see you at the 2009 Buddy Walk on November 8, 2009, at Flag Pole Hill. It's never too early to start gathering your team!

- Terri McKinney,
2008 Buddy Walk Chairperson

Apply Now to Have Your Child's Photo in the 2010 Calendar

It's time to start planning for the 2010 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, 2009.

In the...

March for Respect

Take a step in the right direction. Join people from the Dallas-Fort Worth Metroplex on Saturday, March 29, 2009, in the Dallas West End to show your respect for citizens with developmental disabilities. The event features a rally, a short walk, activities and games—it's an incredibly uplifting way to start off the day!

Activities begin at 9:00 am and the "march" begins at 11:00 am. Registration is FREE! Call (972) 323-1220 and ask for Stacy Rogers for more information.

Free Workshop with Kathie Snow

Friday, May 1, 2009

8:00 am - 4:00 pm

Hallmark Center II Auditorium
16001 North Dallas Parkway
Addison TX 75001

"Life-Changing!" "Thought-Provoking!" "Revolutionary!"

These are some of the words people have used to describe Kathie Snow's presentations. Kathie has fun during her presentations—and you will, too! Personal stories, humor, questioning conventional wisdom, and new ways of thinking are all included. Don't miss this high-energy, exciting, skill-building event that will promote new, different, and positive outcomes and enable us to help create a better world for all.

From the DSG Library

Seeing the Charade—What We Need to Do and Undo to Make Friendships Happen

- Carol Tashie, Susan Shapiro-Barnard, and Zach Rossetti, *Inclusive Solutions: Nottingham UK, 2006.*

I pulled this delightful book off the shelf of the Down Syndrome Guild library to share with you simply because I saw Carol Tashie's name on it. She always has something good to offer. This one is a jewel. The book is a group projects and includes some hilarious drawings.

An example of the nuggets inside is a section called "Circle of Courage." In it the authors describe a behavior specialist's experience of going to a school to help with a specific student. After observing the student all day, the specialist sat down with the eager teachers who were expecting a precise behavior plan. Instead she drew a circle

and divided it into four equal quadrants. One in each of the quadrants she wrote:

- Spirit of belonging
- Spirit of mastery
- Spirit of independence
- Spirit of generosity

She asked the group to discuss the student in terms of each of these four areas of human basic needs. Where in her life does she have a feeling of belonging, a feeling of being really good at something, a feeling of making her own decisions, and of having an opportunity to give? When those needs are met the behaviors will straighten themselves out.

The circle suggests that all people have these four basic needs, and these needs are not just desired but are basic to the human spirit to live fulfilled independent lives.

- Nancy Davenport, editor of "The DSG News"

Young Adult Cooking Class



Young adult DSG members enjoyed cooking four different items at their cooking class on January 24, 2009. Thank you to Jennifer Hood and her volunteers for this event.

Taking Care of Yourself

Raising a child with special needs can be overwhelming. If you are not careful, special education can consume your life. Many parents drive themselves until they are exhausted and burned out.

Pace yourself. Listen to tapes about time management. Use a schedule to gain control of your life. Spend time with friends or family to re-charge your batteries and regain a healthy perspective.

Here are some tips for taking care of yourself and your family:

- Set aside time with your partner. Use e-mail or voicemail to stay in touch.
- Schedule one-on-one time with each child. Write the child's name by a date on the calendar. Let the child pick the place and activity.
- Master the art of the short escape. Visit a local attraction for an afternoon or a local resort for a weekend. Short escapes will help you unwind.
- Nurture friendships. Make time to go to the movies, have meals, exercise, or take walks with friends.
- Ask friends for help. Tell friends or family when you need help with child-care and errands.
- Find another parent whom you can contact when you are worried and need encouragement.
- Share child-care with another family. Pick times each week when you can help the family and when they can help you. You will each have someone to contact when you need a break.
- Help others. If you spend one hour

a month helping others, this will help you keep your problems in perspective. You will know that you are not alone.

- Set aside a block of time to do special education tasks (i.e., making phone calls and filing documents). If you stick to a schedule, special education will not consume your life.
- Simplify. Get rid of clutter. Your home will be more relaxing and peaceful.
- Take the phone off the hook. When you need quiet time, turn your phone off for a few hours.
- Take care of your health. Schedule and keep appointments with doctors. If you feel anxious or depressed, see a mental health professional.

Thank you to Peter W. D. Wright and Pamela Darr Wright at Wrightslaw. Contact them at www.wrightslaw.com.

FYI - Medicaid Error

Medicaid briefly established a policy affecting how many therapies a child could receive in a day. Some providers sent out letters to families informing them that their children could only receive one type of therapy a day. Of course this could create havoc for children, parents, and therapists. The latest report states "the policy has been rescinded and will no longer be in effect." If anyone is being told that their child cannot receive speech and OT on the same day, tell them that is no longer state policy.

...Community

*About the Author of **Disability is Natural and Other Revolutionary Common Sense***

Kathie Snow is a parent of two young adults - one happens to have a disability and is a successful college student. Kathie's presentations, articles, books and products ignite positive and long-lasting changes in the lives of people with disabilities and their families.

Since 1991, Kathie has presented hundreds of keynotes and workshops, for parents of children with disabilities, adults with disabilities, service providers, educators, and others. In addition to her books, she publishes a free monthly E-newsletter, and her website www.disabilityisnatural.com features innovative articles and a variety of products that promote new ways of thinking about disability. Kathie is enthusiastic, positive, and passionate about ensuring children and adults with disabilities live real lives, fully included in their homes, schools, workplaces, and communities.

Registration is required in advance and due by Friday, April 24, 2009. A registration flyer is available on the DSG website at www.downsyndromedallas.org for you download and e-mail to Bank of America Disability North Texas Chapter 2009 or call Kim Harsha at (469) 201-8094.

701 N. CENTRAL EXPRESSWAY
BUILDING 5-I
RICHARDSON, TX 75080

Return Service Requested

(214) 267-1374

www.downsyndromedallas.org

dsged@sbcglobal.net

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR: BECKY SLAKMAN

PRESIDENT: KELLY DRABLOS

DSG LAYOUT EDITOR: JENNIFER FORD

DOWN SYNDROME CLINIC EVERY FRIDAY

AT CHILDREN'S MEDICAL CENTER.

CALL (214) 456-2357

NON-PROFIT ORG.

U.S. POSTAGE

PAID

RICHARDSON, TX

PERMIT NO. 65

Disclaimer: The Down Syndrome Guild of Dallas (the DSG) assumes no specific or implied liability with respect to the interpretation, use, misuse or subsequent communication of editorial content or information contained in this publication. The opinions, beliefs and viewpoints expressed herein are those of the individual authors and contributors and do not necessarily represent those of the DSG, its directors, members or the editor of this publication. The content of all *The DSG News* is provided as a public service for informational purpose only and is not a substitute for medical or professional advice. *The DSG News* does not endorse any particular therapy, institution or professional system. The information herein is presented as is, without warranty of any kind express or implied. Submissions to *The DSG News* are edited to ensure usage of 'people first' language.

8

DOWN SYNDROME GUILD OF DALLAS

This month in the DSG calendar, Gage, Joseph, Brandt, Grace, Allison, Aiden, Lauren, and Tad declare it's time for soccer.



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

March

Mom's Escape - Visit the website for details about the March outing.

March 7

IEP Clinic – Behavior Intervention Plans

March 11

Self Advocates to Amazing Jakes

March 16

Arts & Crafts

March 18

DADS Group Happy Hour

March 28

Parenting Group for Dual Diagnosis Autism / DS

April 4

IEP Clinic - *It's Fun to Have Fun*

April 15

Deadline to Apply for Children's Pictures to be in DSG Calendar

May 3

Annual Family Picnic & Membership Meeting