

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

*Return Service Requested*

(214) 267-1374

[www.downsyndromedallas.org](http://www.downsyndromedallas.org)

[dsged@sbcglobal.net](mailto:dsged@sbcglobal.net)

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR: BECKY SLAKMAN

PRESIDENT: KELLY DRABLOS

LAYOUT EDITOR: JESSICA MCCARTNEY

DOWN SYNDROME CLINIC EVERY FRIDAY

AT CHILDREN'S MEDICAL CENTER.

CALL (214) 456-2357

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DOWN SYNDROME GUILD OF DALLAS

*This month on the DSG calendar,  
Dallan and Addison enjoy digging for buried treasure!*



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](mailto: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

### September

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

### September 16

Dads Group Happy Hour

### September 22

Herb's Paint and Body/Down Syndrome Guild Golf Classic

### September 26

Young Adult Bowling Tournament

### October 10

Learning Together - *Focusing on Possibilities Fall Education Conference*

### November 8

Buddy Walk®

THE

# DSG News

PEOPLE WITH DOWN SYNDROME - VALUED AND INCLUDED

September 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 Herb's Paint and Body/Down Syndrome Guild Golf Classic

**T**uesday, September 22, 2009  
Canyon Creek Country Club  
625 W. Lookout Drive

Richardson, TX 75080

\$175 entry fee;

includes lunch and dinner

Once again we are partnering to raise funds that will allow the Down Syndrome Guild of Dallas to carry out its mission of providing accurate and current information, resources, and support for people with Down syndrome, their families, and the community. The DSG will receive all proceeds of the tournament. We are pleased to announce that Joe Trahan of WFAA-TV will again be the honorary chair of the golf tournament. This will be a tournament

you will not want to miss!

Herb's Paint & Body is a family of auto repair businesses founded in 1956. Herb Walne started his business with a Humble Gas Station located in Northeast Dallas. Herb soon added a full-service paint and body shop that has become an icon in and around the Dallas area. Today, customer service is still their number one concern, as well as giving back to the community. Currently, there are six full-service Herb's Paint & Body shops in the Dallas metro area.

There are many sponsorship opportunities available. Honor your child by becoming a hole sponsor for only **\$200**. If you or your company is interested in a sponsorship packet, please contact Becky Slakman at (214) 267-1374 or [dsGED@sbcglobal.net](mailto:dsGED@sbcglobal.net).

Not a golfer? Kari Hatfield, 2009 Golf Tournament Chair and her committee also have many ways for you to volunteer and be a part of the day. Please contact Teresa Sims-Ramirez at [teresa.sims-ramirez@bankofamerica.com](mailto:teresa.sims-ramirez@bankofamerica.com) if you are able to volunteer.

**\*\*New this year!** Golfers as well as non-tournament participants will have the opportunity to purchase drawing tickets for \$10 each or 6 for \$50.

## Down Syndrome Guild Fall Education Conference

**L**earning Together - Focusing on Possibilities

Saturday, October 10, 2009

Crowne Plaza Suites - Dallas

7800 Alpha Road

Dallas, TX 75240

9:00 am - 4:30 pm

Registration begins at 8:00 am

Parents and educators will come together for a day of learning how to increase student achievement. Join the Down Syndrome Guild for the 2009 Fall Education Conference and experience first class presenters full of information. A registration form is included in this issue of The DSG News and on the website.

Speaker bios and session descriptions can be found on the DSG website. For additional information, contact Becky Slakman by phone at (214) 267-1374 or by email at [dsGED@sbcglobal.net](mailto:dsGED@sbcglobal.net).

Note: The DSG has a small block of rooms reserved for attendees who wish to stay overnight before the conference. Call 1-888-444-0401 to make your reservation and receive a special \$99 rate.

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## 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.

*In honor of Luke O'Brien*

From: Christy Frazer

To: Mrs. Robert Marx

*In honor of Mrs. Artie Dell Webe.*

From: Mrs. & Mrs. Barry A.

Brooks

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](mailto:dsged@sbcglobal.net) or by phone at (214) 267-1374.

## Reading Matters

### *How Can I Improve My Child's Reading?*

By: Beverley B. Swanson (2001)

**T**his advice for parents details what they can do to help preschoolers become readers, and help school-age children improve their reading skills.

Parents are more concerned about their child's progress in reading than in any other subject taught in school, and rightfully so.

In order for students to achieve in math, science, English, history, geography, and other subjects, reading skills must be developed to the point that most of them are automatic. Students cannot struggle with word recognition when they should be reading quickly for comprehension of a text.

Since reading is so important to success in school, parents can and should play a role in helping their children to become interested in reading and in encouraging their growth in reading skills.

#### **What can parents do to help their preschoolers in the learning-to-read process?**

Research shows that children learn about reading before they enter school. In fact, they learn in the best manner—through observation. Young children, for example, see people around them reading newspapers, books, maps, and signs.

Parents can do a lot to foster an understanding of print by talking with their preschoolers about signs in their environment and by letting their children know they enjoy reading themselves.

When reading to your preschooler, you should run your index finger under the line of print. This procedure is simple and helps children begin to notice words and that words have meaning. They also gain an awareness of the conventions of reading (e.g., one reads from left to right and from the top of the page to the

bottom; sentences are made up of words; and some sentences extend beyond a single line of print).

#### **What can I do for my school-age child who doesn't like to read?**

In the early elementary years, from first through third grades, children continue learning how to read. It is a complex process, difficult for some and easy for others. Care must be taken during these early years not to overemphasize the learning-to-read process.

Reading for pleasure and information develops reading interests and offers children the opportunity to practice their reading skills in meaningful ways. Parents of elementary-age children should provide reading materials in the home that arouse curiosity or extend their child's natural interest in the world around them.

By encouraging and modeling leisure-time reading in the home, parents take the most important step in fostering their child's reading development.

#### **How can reading research information be useful to me, as a parent?**

Current research in reading reveals three important considerations for parents and teachers:

- Children who read, and read widely, become better readers.
- Reading and writing are complementary skills.
- Parents are important to children both as role models and as supporters of their efforts.

#### **What does research say about ways parents can help their children with reading?**

The following suggestions have been

## 2009 Buddy Walk® – Start Planning Now!

**S**unday, November 8, 2009  
 Flag Pole Hill at White  
 Rock Lake

Activities begin at 11:00 am  
 Walk begins at 1:00 pm

Mark your calendar for the 2009 Buddy Walk® on Sunday, November 8th. We're pleased to partner once again with Park Place Volvo to host Dallas' biggest community awareness event in support of families of children with Down syndrome. The Buddy Walk® is an incredible day of celebration with family and friends to raise awareness, raise funds, and raise the hope of a better world for all people with Down syndrome.

Join us for a fun filled day that includes bounce houses, obstacle courses, slides, music, a petting zoo, food, and most of all friends - old and new.

### *Buddy Walk® Challenge*

The Buddy Walk helps us to raise funds to support the programs of the Down Syndrome Guild of Dallas, including educational seminars for the families of school age children, parent to parent support, options for adults, and social events for all ages. Our goal this year is to double the donations and sponsorships we had last year. We need your help!

It's easy to form a Buddy Walk® team by going to the DSG website at [www.downsyndromedallas.org](http://www.downsyndromedallas.org) and downloading team forms. Start organizing your team now to begin raising money and promoting our goals of awareness, acceptance and inclusion of people with Down syndrome!

### *Tips for Raising Money:*

Day 1: Start by sponsoring yourself for **\$25**

Day 2: Ask three family members to sponsor you for **\$25**

Day 3: Ask five friends to sponsor you for **\$20**

Day 4: Ask five co-workers to sponsor you for **\$10**

Day 5: Ask five neighbors to sponsor you for **\$10**

Day 6: Ask five people from your place of worship to sponsor you for **\$10**

Day 7: E-mail 15 people and ask for a **\$20** donation

Day 8: Ask five businesses you patronize for **\$25**

Day 9: Ask your company for a matching donation

You raised **\$775** plus a company match!

### *Tips for Building a Team:*

Start with people that are closest to you:

1. Family Members
2. Friends
3. Neighbors
4. Business Associates
5. Others in the community (your hairdresser, doctor, etc)

### *Easy Steps for Donating Online:*

1. [www.downsyndromedallas.org](http://www.downsyndromedallas.org)
2. Click on "donate now" in the top right corner
3. Complete the contact information
4. Scroll down to gift information
5. Drop down to Buddy Walk®
6. Write the name of team for which you are donating in the "comment box"

Corporate sponsorships are also an important part of our effort - if you, your company, or anyone you know is interested in sponsoring the Buddy Walk®, please contact us at (214) 267-1374 or [dsged@sbcglobal.net](mailto:dsged@sbcglobal.net) for a sponsorship packet. There are several sponsorship levels from which to choose – and one is right for you!

## Young Adult Bowling Tournament

**S**aturday, September 26, 2009  
 AMF at Central and  
 Campbell

2101 N. Central Expressway  
 Richardson, TX 75080

1:00 pm - 3:00 pm

Ages 16 and up

Mary Beth de Haas, a Senior Girl Scout, is hosting a bowling tournament for the Down Syndrome Guild of Dallas as her Gold Award project. Please come out and have a fantastic time bowling for the afternoon. There is no charge for this event.

RSVP to Becky Slakman by phone at (214) 267-1374 or by e-mail at [dsged@sbcglobal.net](mailto:dsged@sbcglobal.net) no later than September 10, 2009

## A Note from Michelle M. Guppy

Parent, author and advocate

**W**e've got work to do folks. Below is an excerpt from an essay written by Lou Brown - professor, advocate and inclusion guru (the full essay can be found at [http://www.tash.org/WWA/WWA\\_history.html](http://www.tash.org/WWA/WWA_history.html)). Mind you, it was written in 1990, and is referring to 20 years prior to that. It is now 2009....

Finally, if we have learned anything at all over the past 20 years, it is that there are some aspects of a person's life that we have no right to compromise.

- We cannot negotiate the size of an institution—no one should live in one.
- We cannot function on a committee to determine who does and who does not get medical treatment everyone does.
- We cannot debate who should get an inclusive education—all must.

Just because we are overwhelmed, frustrated and at a loss for something to do, we cannot tolerate shocks, slaps, pinches, or any other obnoxious violation of dignity. Let the moderates, compromisers, and data worshippers go elsewhere. Let [advocates] be value based, unbending, tough, aggressive, assertive, graceful, compassionate, and effective.

To contact Michelle Guppy visit her on the web at [www.soulsupporter.com](http://www.soulsupporter.com).

## Sibling Workshop

**D**own Syndrome Guild of Dallas  
701 N. Central Expressway,  
Suite 5-I

Richardson, TX 75080

Siblings ages 8 -11 years of age  
(maximum 12 participants)

Fee: DSG Members \$30 for 6 week  
session; Non-members \$55

Registration deadline: September 8

Mail your registration payment to the DSG office or call (214) 267-1374 with your credit card information

### **PARENT WORKSHOP:**

Thursday, September 17, 2009

7:00 pm - 8:30 pm

Attendance by a parent is required for sibling participation.

### **SIBLING WORKSHOPS:**

Sundays at 2:00 pm - 3:30 pm

Dates:

September 20, 2009

September 27, 2009

October 4, 2009

October 11, 2009

October 25, 2009

### **PARENT WRAP-UP:**

Sunday, October 25, 2009

3:30 pm - 4:00 pm

(after final day of workshop)

DSG parents often express concern about the other children in the family. They wonder about the sibling's understanding of Down syndrome, and they are sometimes unsure of how to

explain Down syndrome to them. There is anxiety about what effect having a sibling with Down syndrome will have on their other children's developing personality, and how they will feel about their experience.

The Down Syndrome Guild will be hosting a Sibling Workshop this fall to address these and other issues. We will have a Parent Workshop to kick off the Sibling Workshop. The Sibling Workshop will be fun as well as educational and will consist of activities, role play and games designed for children ages 8 – 11 years of age.

### **WORKSHOP FACILITATORS:**

Debbie Clark, LCSW, LMFT - Social Worker, Down Syndrome Clinic

Becky Slakman, DSG Executive Director

Debbie Clark, LCSW, LMFT is a licensed clinical social worker and a licensed marriage and family therapist. She has worked with children and families for 34 years. She has been a staff member in the Down Syndrome Clinic at Children's Medical Center since the clinic opened in 1993. In addition, she has a private counseling practice in the Lakewood area.

To register or for more information, contact the DSG office at (214) 267-1374 or [dsged@sbcglobal.net](mailto:dsged@sbcglobal.net).

## Donation Thanks

**T**he Down Syndrome Guild of Dallas thanks *Lennox International, K & L Gates LLP & Brinks* for naming the Down Syndrome Guild of Dallas the beneficiary of recent "Casual Friday" fundraisers. Employees pay a designated amount to wear jeans

to work on a specific day. This is an easy way to raise funds for the Down Syndrome Guild and create awareness about Down syndrome. If you would like to more information about bringing this initiative to your employer contact Becky Slakman at (214) 267-1374.

beneficial to many parents:

- Provide a good role model — read yourself and read often to your child.
- Provide varied reading material — some for reading enjoyment and some with information about hobbies and interests.
- Encourage activities that require reading — for example, cooking (reading a recipe), constructing a kite (reading directions), or identifying an interesting bird's nest or a shell collected at the beach (using a reference book).
- Establish a reading time, even if it is only ten minutes a day.
- Write notes to your school-age child; encourage written responses.
- Ask your child to bring a library book home to read to a younger sibling.
- Establish one evening a week for reading (instead of television viewing).
- Encourage your child in all reading efforts.

*Excerpted from: Swanson, B. B. (2001). How Can I Improve My Child's Reading? Parent Brochure. ACCESS ERIC. Article reprinted from <http://www.readingrockets.org/article/161>.*

## Executive Director's Message by Becky Slakman

*"Coming together is a beginning. Keeping together is progress. Working together is success." ~Henry Ford*

September is the time we are all beginning new routines. A new school year has begun and recreational opportunities are starting. Transitions are often challenging. Hopefully all is going smoothly. You have been reading about our Fall Conference, Learning Together, Focusing on Possibilities for a couple of months now, please plan on attending and inviting members of your student's educational team. Seminars offered will provide you, your student, and educators the necessary tools to succeed in academic settings as well as those in the community in general.

September also brings change and new beginnings to the Down Syndrome Guild. It is with very mixed emotions that I let you know that Jennifer Ford, my Administrative Professional, has accepted a Special Education teaching position in the Castleberry Independent School District. I have enjoyed every minute working with Jennifer for the past two and a half years and I know

that you join me in wishing her well as she begins her new career path. I welcome and look forward to working with Jessica McCartney who recently began working at the Down Syndrome Guild. She joins the DSG after several years working in non-profit settings. I look forward to introducing you to Jessica in the near future. If you are in the area, pop in and say hello. We love visitors!

In addition to our Fall Conference, the Down Syndrome Guild is gearing up for our busy season including our annual Herb's Paint & Body/Down Syndrome Guild Golf Classic will be in September and our 9th annual Buddy Walk is in November.

In these times of economic uncertainty, a simple way to make an investment in the future of the Down Syndrome Guild's continuing to offer information and resources to our families is to participate in these events. Gather a foursome to play golf. Not a golfer? Buy a drawing ticket, form a Buddy Walk team, and ask friends and family to join you by seeking donors and walking with you. I hope to see you often!

## Mommy & Me Class

**W**ednesdays, September 16 - December 16, 2009  
(no class November 25)

10:00 am - 11:30 am

Aaron Family Jewish

Community Center

7900 Northaven Road

Dallas, TX 75230

The Down Syndrome Guild invites moms of toddlers with Down syndrome ages 1 – 3 years old to this fun learning experience. The class will be taught by Cynthia Casper, a certified *Music Together* instructor. Cynthia is a master teacher with a degree in Early Childhood Education, who has over 20 years experience teaching preschool children. Mornings will include music, art, free play, movement activities, informal parenting discussions, as well as joining together with other toddlers for an outdoor playground experience.

No fee for Down Syndrome Guild members but space is limited to the first 12 toddlers to register. You must commit to the entire semester.

To register, call or e-mail Becky Slakman at (214) 267-1374 or [dsged@sbcglobal.net](mailto:dsged@sbcglobal.net).

## Research Impact

For 30 years, research done by Down Syndrome Education International has repeatedly delivered practical outcomes for people with Down syndrome. From pre-school reading to teenage life, their work has focused on understanding the precise nature of the difficulties experienced by people with Down syndrome and what can be done to help. This has led to evidence-based interventions and teaching strategies that today inform progress for many thousands of people around the world.

Key findings of the organization's research over the past 30 years include:

**Visual learning strengths:** Children with Down syndrome find learning from listening more challenging due to hearing and verbal processing difficulties, and this leads to delays in speech, language and cognitive development. Using visual teaching methods, such as signing and reading can lessen the impact of these difficulties and reduce the delays

in speech, language and cognitive development. Children with Down syndrome use visual reading strategies for longer (at higher reading ages) than their typically developing peers.

**Reading development:** Most children with Down syndrome can learn to read and should start in their pre-school years. Early sight word reading is a particular strength for preschool children with Down syndrome. In school years, reading continues to be a strength for children with Down syndrome.

**Speech, language and communication:** Teaching children with Down syndrome to read leads to permanent improvements in their speech, language and short-term memory skills. The specific delays in developing expressive grammar are linked to delays in developing spoken vocabularies.

**Educational placements:** Children with Down syndrome who are fully included in mainstream schools have

better speech and language skills, are more likely to be reading and writing, and to have more mature social behavior.

**Memory skills:** Memory training can improve short-term memory – both visual and verbal short-term memory when provided in inclusive classrooms alongside literacy instruction.

**Number skills:** In school years, learning to understand numbers can be a specific difficulty and the children's number performance is usually about two years behind their literacy skills. Early understanding of counting is, however, as good as in non-verbal mental age matched peers so more research is needed to identify the problems with later number skills. Using visual/multi-sensory teaching methods can assist children with Down syndrome to understand the number system and to calculate.

For more information by Gillian Bird and Sue Buckley, contact [www.downsed.org](http://www.downsed.org).

## Young Adult Spa Day & Lose the Training Wheels Bike Camp



Ladies of the Down Syndrome Guild took a day for themselves in June.



Matthew Kwasniak learns how to ride a "2 wheeler" at the Lose the Training Wheels bike camp.

## HandholdAdaptive: Mobile Technology for Differently Enabled iPrompts™ [www.handholdadaptive.com](http://www.handholdadaptive.com)

**N**ow available for the iPhone and iPod Touch. iPrompts™ is a customizable prompting tool for use with individuals that may benefit from having structure and visual aids throughout the day. The application is designed especially for parents, special educators, and therapists to use with developmentally challenged and language-impaired individuals, like people with Autism, Down syndrome, Fragile X syndrome, and apraxia of speech. iPrompts™ also benefits kids who just need more structure, including kids with Attention Deficit Disorder (ADD) and Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD), and even typical, pre-verbal toddlers!

The application provides several

useful prompting tools to help individuals transition from one activity to the next, understand upcoming events, make choices, and focus on the task at hand. Visit the website at [www.handholdadaptive.com](http://www.handholdadaptive.com) today to watch a video tutorial!

**Picture Schedules:** Allows caregivers to create sequences of pictures, guiding those they care for through activities of any sort. Captions can be edited for each image, allowing users to create SOCIAL STORIES. Caregivers can also create simple FIRST THIS, THEN THAT picture prompts using only two images. Choose from hundreds of stock photos and illustrations provided by iPrompts™, or take pictures “on the fly” using the iPhone’s built-in camera.

**Visual Countdown Timer:** Displays an image of the caregiver’s choice along with a graphical countdown timer (set to any duration). Useful for demonstrating how much time is left before the next pictures activity begins.

**Choice Prompts:** Lets caregivers select any two images which may be offered as a choice, empowering those who cannot vocalize their preferences. When rotated horizontally, the Choice Prompt and Picture Schedule features enlarge and orient images for display to individuals needing visual support.

**Image Library:** Includes hundreds of useful illustrations and digital pictures across numerous categories. Additional categories and pictures can be created and supplied by users.

## Christmas in July



*Self Advocates and volunteers wrapped 750 pairs of socks for the clients of the Visiting Nurse Association holiday gift program as part of our commitment to giving back to our community.*

## Dad's Group Happy Hour

**W**ednesday, September 16, 2009  
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](mailto: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.