

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

September-October 2017

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

Buddy Walk® Frequently Asked Questions



Sunday, October 29, 2017
AT&T Plaza at Victory Park
2500 Victory Avenue
Dallas, TX 75219

11:00 am – 3:00 pm

Walk begins at 1:00 pm

Registration and giving now open at
<http://2017dsgbuddywalk.kintera.org>

Make plans to lace up your favorite shoes, put the wagon in the car, and dress in your festively colored t-shirt as the Down Syndrome Guild of Dallas invites you to walk with us on **Sunday, October 29, 2017**. The Buddy Walk® is an emotional and powerful day for all of us as we celebrate the many abilities of people with Down syndrome. With over 5,000 participants and new supporters added each year, we know you and your team are bound to have a few questions. While we've tried to answer our most frequently asked questions here, please feel free to contact the DSG office at

any time at 214.267.1374 or samantha@downsyndromedallas.org if you have any additional questions.

Q. Who has to register for the Buddy Walk®? **A. EVERY** participant, regardless of age, must register online or in person the day of the event and pay all necessary fees in order to participate and be eligible to receive a commemorative Buddy Walk® t-shirt (subject to availability). *Online registration closes at midnight on Friday, October 20, and early registration is highly encouraged.*

Q. When/where can I pick up my t-shirts? **A.** Team captains are responsible for picking up and distributing all commemorative Buddy Walk® t-shirts to their team members. Team captains must schedule a time on Saturday, October 21 or Monday, October 23 - Thursday, October 26, by contacting Samantha at 214.267.1374 or samantha@downsyndromedallas.org to pick up t-shirts. Additional instructions will also be sent to all team captains via e-mail. *Please note that only registered participants raising or donating the appropriate fees are eligible to receive a t-shirt. All sizes will be pulled from our database, so please make sure all your team members have registered and entered in their sizes. No t-shirts for pre-registered participants will be*

available for pick up at the walk.

Q. Where can I park? Where can my team meet? **A.** A map of the event area, including parking and team tailgating, can be found at 2017dsgbuddywalk.kintera.org. All spaces are on a first come, first served basis. *Tents, chairs, and coolers are allowed in the team tailgate area; however, grills and open flames are not allowed.*

Q. Will food be available for purchase? **A:** Yes, we are pleased to offer participants expanded entertainment and new dining options this year. It'll be a culinary treat for everyone with a variety of tasty snacks and lunch options. Be sure to come hungry! A complete listing of dining options are available on our website at 2017dsgbuddywalk.kintera.org, and a portion of food truck sales will also be donated back to the DSG.

Invite everyone you know to join us on **Sunday, October 29**, at AT&T Plaza at Victory Park as we celebrate the Down syndrome community in North Texas. Make a direct impact in the lives of people with Down syndrome with your fundraising efforts at 2017dsgbuddywalk.kintera.org. It'll be a fun day as we show our support for each other with a bit of Texas spirit!

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 Kaylee Stephenson.

*From: Primrose School of NE
Flower Mound*

In memory of Creola

LaNell Phelps.
From: Billie Reise

In memory of Jill Barney.

From: Louis Eisinger

Happy 50th Wedding Anniversary to Howard & Rita Wasserman!

*From: Brian & Marilyn Griffin,
Robert Stein, Arlene Lechner,
Shirley Eis, Howard Sterenstein,
Susan Weiss, Carol Johnsen,
Raymond Sabin, Kelly Pubins,
and Sheila Rosenberg*

Interested in making a *Club 21* donation? Contact Jennifer Ford at (214) 267-1374 ext. 1 or e-mail jennifer@downsyndromedallas.org.

Executive Director's Message *By Jennifer Ford*

It's hard to believe that the fall season is almost upon us. The lazy, carefree days of summer have officially gone, and most of us have resumed our regularly scheduled routines. For some of us that familiarity is a welcome return. For others, it may be a little more overwhelming with the start of a new school year, new teachers, new goals, or other transitions. If you are feeling more like the latter, I would encourage you to register for the Down Syndrome Guild *Learning Together, Focusing on Possibilities* Fall Conference on **September 9, 2017**. Our Education Committee has lined up some amazing presenters this year who will speak on reading, transition planning, behavior, inclusion strategies, and so much more. Complete details on all the sessions and registration information can be found on our website at <http://downsyndromedallas.org/fall-conference>.

In addition to the *Learning Together, Focusing on Possibilities* Fall Conference, the fall is also home to one of the Down Syndrome Guild's largest events of the year, the Buddy Walk®. We are so excited to be returning to AT&T Plaza at Victory Park on Sunday, **October 29, 2017**, for this year's event. The Buddy Walk® is a family favorite with something for everyone. Activities such as bounce houses, face painting, rock climbing wall, carnival games, balloon artists, and more open at 11:00 am with a one mile awareness walk beginning at 1:00 pm. This event is for the entire family and features food trucks and a team tailgating area to network and connect with other families and participants. Registration is going on now at <http://2017dsgbuddywalk>.

kintera.org. Every participant must be registered in order to attend. Commemorative Buddy Walk® t-shirts will be guaranteed for all participants raising \$25 or more until **October 6, 2017**. After this date, t-shirts will be based on availability. We also encourage teams to get in on the fun by fundraising for the cause. 99% of the funds raised by the Down Syndrome Guild of Dallas Buddy Walk® stay local and help fund programs and services such as new parent resources, educational workshops and events, social opportunities for self advocates and their family members, and more. Prizes will also be awarded to our top fundraisers and largest teams with other contests and team challenges leading up to the event.

Another exciting fundraising opportunity that I'd like to highlight is North Texas Giving Day. North Texas Giving Day is an online giving event for people across the nation to come together to raise as much money as possible for North Texas nonprofits on one day. Donations of \$25 to \$50,000 made between 6:00 am and midnight on **September 14, 2017**, through <https://northtexasgivingday.org/>, will be multiplied by \$2.5 million in bonus funds and prizes. Every nonprofit receiving a donation on this day receives a portion of the bonus funds, which increases the value of every dollar donated. This allows us to make your money go even further in enhancing the lives of people with Down syndrome in North Texas.

Happy fall! We hope to see you at one of the many exciting activities and events planned for this season.

Cookies, Cocoa and Crafts with Santa for Families with Children Ages 0-12 Years Old

Saturday, December 9 2017

10:00 am - 12:00 pm

Fellowship Dallas

9330 N Central Expy

Dallas, TX 75231

DSG Member Cost: \$10 each for siblings; parents and child with Down syndrome is free

The Down Syndrome Guild invites families of children with Down syndrome ages 0-12 to join us for everyone's favorite holiday activities! This year, children will have the opportunity to decorate cookies, create a craft, stir up their own hot chocolate and more! And of course the whole family

will be able to take a picture with Santa and Mrs. Claus!

Space is limited and registration is required. Online registration is now open at www.downsyndrome.org. Registration closes Friday, December 1, 2017. Have questions? Please contact Samantha Escherich at 214.267.1374 or samantha@downsyndromedallas.org.

Please note that this event is valued at over \$25 per person and offered to DSG Members for a reduced rate of \$10 per sibling. Parents and children with Down syndrome are no additional charge.

The Annual DSG Self Advocate Gala was Full of Friends, Laughter, and Lots of Dancing



Parents' Night Out

Friday, October 6, 2017

7:00 pm - 10:00 pm

Maggiano's Little Italy

205 N Park Center

Dallas, TX 75225

DSG Member Cost: \$20

per couple

Time for you and your significant other to have a night out and enjoy time with other parents. Couples will join together for a fun evening at *Maggiano's Little Italy* sharing a meal together and getting to know new friends and catching up with old friends. Child care is not provided; therefore, please plan accordingly.

Space is limited and registration is required. Online registration is now open at www.downsyndrome.org. Registration closes Friday, September 29, 2017. Have questions? Please contact Samantha Escherich at 214.267.1374 or samantha@downsyndromedallas.org.

Please note that this event is valued at over \$80 per couple and offered to DSG Members for a reduced rate of \$20 per couple.

Supper Club for Self Advocates Ages 18 and Older

Friday, October 6, 2017
7:00 pm - 10:00 pm
Maggiano's Little Italy
205 N Park Center
Dallas, TX 75225
DSG Member Cost: \$10

Like to eat? Enjoy social time with friends? Well come to supper club! Supper club is in no way exclusive and is open to all DSG adults with Down syndrome ages 18 and older. We will be enjoying dinner, games, and time together with new friends and old!

Space is limited and registration is required. Online registration is now open at www.downsyndromedallas.org/adults. Registration closes Friday, September 29, 2017. Have questions? Please contact Samantha Escherich at 214.267.1374 or samantha@downsyndromedallas.org.

Please note that this event is valued at over \$40 per person and offered to DSG Members for a reduced rate of \$10 per person.

***Parents, we encourage you to join us for our Parents' Night Out just down the hall from our Adult Supper Club. Complete details can be found on page 3 of this publication.**

Ambassador Spotlight - Seth



Seth is five years old and a recent graduate of the Rise School of Dallas. He loves animals, dribbling basketballs, and enjoys all types of water activities. Seth also has a strong bond with his sister, Lorelei, who also attends the Rise School. When the Down Syndrome Guild visited the siblings at school earlier in the year, it was apparent that the two of them had a strong connection as they enjoyed reading, dressing up, and dancing with one another.

Like the Down Syndrome Guild, the Parma family has a vision that all people with Down syndrome would be valued and included. As a family, they strive to make sure that Seth is a valued and included member of the community. He actively participates in activities through the family's church and recently finished his third season playing on an inclusive soccer team through the YMCA. As Seth transitions from the Rise School to kindergarten this fall, this vision remains prominent as the Parma's plan and prepare for the new opportunities that lie ahead.

The Parma's are always eager to educate both themselves and the community about people with Down syndrome and their many capabilities. This summer, the family

had the opportunity to attend the NDSC Convention in Sacramento, CA, through the DSG. You can read more about their experiences from Sacramento in their own words on page 6, but their application was particularly moving to our committee when Seth's dad, Kevin, wrote about how the family "took any void that fear could fill and replaced it with facts". He continued with "we knew that fear would only hinder us



and, more importantly, hinder our son's development." "We promised ourselves that we would seek out information and pay it forward by sharing it with others." And, this is exactly what they have done. The Parma's are one of the first family's to sign up for the Fall Conference or other seminars offered by the DSG. They are constantly networking with other families to share their experiences and helping make the road a little less rocky for the next generation.

The Down Syndrome Guild is so proud of the entire Parma family for continuing to advocate for people with Down syndrome and sharing their knowledge with the community. We are certain that Seth will continue to have a positive impact on the community, and we are honored to recognize him as our Self Advocate Ambassador for September 2017.

Ambassador Spotlight - McKenzi



Down syndrome everywhere they go, opening doors for conversations and learning opportunities that her parents never expected. Her bold personality is evident from the moment you meet McKenzi, and her parents expressed how much her presence is a truly a present.

McKenzi and her parents have been involved with the Down Syndrome Guild and have actively participated in the Buddy

McKenzi is three years old and described by her parents as an example of a true blessing in their lives. McKenzi faced a few challenges at birth, but the holes in her heart chambers have now closed and her eyesight has improved significantly. McKenzi has an infectious smile that could light up any room and a very tight bond with her family. Some might even say she has daddy wrapped around her finger. McKenzi loves the water as well as dancing. When she's not busy playing with mom and dad, you might also find McKenzi watching her favorite television show, Sesame Street. Miss McKenzi also has a thirst for knowledge. She loves books, being read to, and pretending to read to others.

Although McKenzi has an extra chromosome, her parents see the future as limitless for their daughter. The possibilities for people with Down syndrome are endless and the same is true for McKenzi. Her parents indicated that she is often the face of



Walk® since 2014. They have a passion for giving back to the community and have raised over \$2,600 in support of Down Syndrome Guild initiatives and programming for families. They are always open to sharing their experiences with other families and how McKenzi has positively impacted their lives.

Although McKenzi is only three years old, she has already made a big impact on her family and the community as a whole. Her parents envision a bright future for their daughter and all people with Down syndrome. This is one of the many reasons why the Down Syndrome Guild of Dallas is honored to have McKenzi represent our organization as the Self Advocate Ambassador for October 2017.

Holiday Giving and Gifts Party for Teens and Adults Ages 13+

Saturday, December 9, 2017
6:00 pm - 9:00 pm
Down Syndrome Guild
1702 N. Collins Blvd. Suite 170
Richardson, TX 75080
DSG Member Cost: \$10
per person

Remember the saying, it is better to give than to receive? Well this holiday, teens and adults ages 13+ are invited to the newest form of a holiday party! Self-advocates will wear their tackiest holiday apparel and join us for dinner and a service project! The night will also include many holiday treats, such as a festive movie and holiday cookies.

Space is limited and registration is required. Online registration is now open at www.downsyndromedallas.org/adults. Registration closes Friday, December 1, 2017. Have questions? Please contact Samantha Escherich at 214.267.1374 or samantha@downsyndromedallas.org.

Please note that this event is valued at over \$25 per person and offered to DSG Members for a reduced rate of \$10 per person.

2017 National Down Syndrome Congress (NDSC) Convention Recap from the Parma Family

So Our Son Has Down syndrome.....

And so did a lot of people at the 2017 NDSC Convention in Sacramento. What a comforting and beautiful place to see people with Down syndrome, their families, friends, and advocates taking over a town with smiles and “hellos” from other families and locals alike. We were also inspired and encouraged by the many self-advocates/business owners represented in the exhibit hall telling their stories or selling their products. Even though it is a way off for us, we loved seeing all the booths for college programs. Seth is still saying “want to go to camp” because he had so much fun at Kid’s Camp with his peers and siblings. We thought we knew all about our son before this, but...

We Didn't Know Anything

We feel like we know our son better after attending the Convention. We understand how he learns and processes things through a behavioral, physical, and biological way. We learned how technology can be used. We heard about medical studies that are promising from energetic and inspired people that are working on these on a daily basis. We were able to listen and share with others how they had gone through different situations and struggles – laughter, tears, and all. All of this because DSG was willing to...

Please Get Us Out of House

One of the funniest stories we heard summarized the need to go out and seek information. The story was about a young girl complaining to her parents that her sibling with Down syndrome didn’t have to wash the dishes because they didn’t think he was capable. After many times of telling them she knew

he could do it, they asked her how she was so convinced this was possible. “Because I have him do it when you are gone” was her answer! Sometimes we need to hear things and pledge that...

We Won't Be Quiet About It

We would both exit different sessions eager to discuss what we had learned and how we could instantly incorporate it into raising both of our children (one with Down syndrome and the other typically developing). We promised to take knowledge from the Convention and spread it throughout our community. There is not enough space to detail everything we learned, but we would point out these highlights:

- Learn how your child processes information and create situations where you play to their strengths
- Look for technology that can be used to improve functioning and supplement memory and skill
- Listen for advances in the link between Alzheimer’s and Down syndrome
- Learn how to contribute to biobanking and/or studies that lead to effectiveness and speed of medical trials
- Learn how to involve any siblings or future advocates by providing age appropriate information and a preferred course of action for care and advocacy. They will likely have the longest contact with them.

- Listen for underlying health issues and treatments. We learned about orthodontic treatment for obstructive sleep apnea, which we had never heard of before.

We plan to work with the DSG to disseminate any information, presentations, etc. from the Convention as allowed by copyright.

We Wanted to Go to the DSG Conference, Now We Want to Go Home

We are excited that the 2018 NDSC Convention will be right here in Dallas next year. We intend to pay it forward and help make the event a success. We are so thankful for this opportunity that the DSG provided, and the fact that they have literally been with us from day one in the hospital and have never left our side. I’ll leave by paraphrasing my wife: “When I look at Seth, I do not see Down syndrome; I see a sweet, curious boy who is more like his peers than not. We’re celebrating Down syndrome... and hoping that others learn to see him that way, too.”





DOWN SYNDROME GUILD
OF DALLAS

GRUPO DE FAMILIAS UNIDAS

**REUNION DE
GRUPO DE
FAMILIAS UNIDAS**
3-5 PM

**7 DE OCTUBRE -
La intervención
temprana**

**GRUPO DE
FAMILIAS UNIDAS**

Ven a conocer y
reunirte con otros
padres que tienen
hijos con
syndrome de Down

Las reuniones son
en Español!

Toda la familia es
bienvenida

Familias Hispanas
Unidas para ayudar
a nuestros hijos

**DOWN SYNDROME
GUILD OF DALLAS**

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SUITE 170
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WWW.DOWNSYNDROMEDALLAS.ORG

WWW.FACEBOOK.COM/DALLASDSG

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.

VISION STATEMENT: PEOPLE WITH DOWN SYNDROME - VALUED AND INCLUDED.

DOWN SYNDROME CLINIC EVERY THURSDAY AND FRIDAY AT CHILDREN'S MEDICAL CENTER.

CALL (214) 456-2357

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Down Syndrome Guild Calendar of Events



September

September 9 - *Learning, Together, Focusing on Possibilities* Fall Conference

September 12 - Elvis' Entourage Texas Rangers Game

Fitness Class for Self Advocates Ages 18+ Begins

Mommy & Me for New Parents Ages 0-4 Begins

September 14 - North Texas Giving Day

September 16 - Art Class for Youth Ages 5-12 Begins

Yoga for Teens Ages 13-17 Begins

Dads' Night Out

September 17 - New Parent Meeting for Families with Children Ages 0-2

October

October 6 - Parents' Night Out

Supper Club for Self Advocates Ages 18 and Older

October 7 - Reunion de Familias Unidas

October 29 - Buddy Walk®

