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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

NON-PROFIT ORG.

U.S. POSTAGE

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RICHARDSON, TX

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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](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

**March 6**  
IEP Clinic

**March 17**  
Dads' Group Happy Hour

**March 17**  
Teen Craft Day

**March 27**  
March for Respect

**March 27**  
Paint'n Fun for Adults

**April 11**  
Family Picnic

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

THE

# DSG News

PEOPLE WITH DOWN SYNDROME - VALUED AND INCLUDED

March 2010

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

## Save the Date - Annual Family Picnic and Membership Meeting

**S**unday, 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](http://www.parklaneranch.com)  
(located just west of Abrams Road  
on the north side of Park Lane)

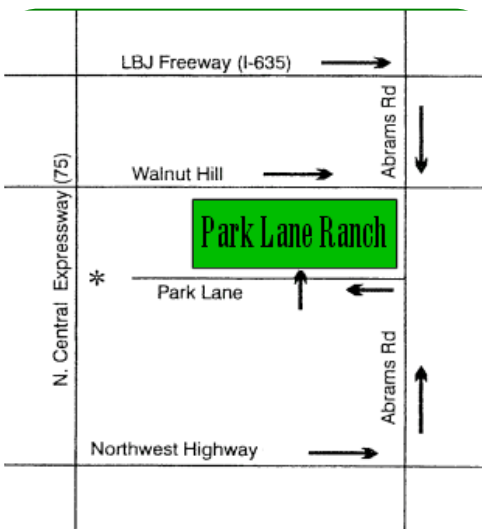
The Down Syndrome Guild Picnic is one of our most popular events! You will have the opportunity to visit with friends, old and new. At this year's event, there will be many activities - miniature golf, mini arcade, Bingo, arts and crafts, basketball hoop shot, batting cages and our favorite DJs from *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](mailto: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](http://www.downsyndromedallas.org)

## Don't Forget!

**T**he final IEP clinic  
Saturday, March 6, 2010  
10:00 am - 12:00 pm  
Region 10 Service Center  
904 Abrams Road  
Richardson, TX 75081

**Toilet Training- A Complete Program for Teaching Independence** by Gail Wayman, M.Ed., BCBA  
RSVP to [dallasdsg@sbcglobal.net](mailto:dallasdsg@sbcglobal.net) or 214-267-1374

## 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.

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: *Reading Comprehension*

by: Lynn Campbell

**K**eeping in mind that literacy development (understanding print as well as developing cognitively through increased conceptual language development) is a life-long endeavor, it is important to take a look at reading comprehension as an ongoing process. As a student learns to decode or say the words seen in print, his ability to understand and apply what he has read affects his continued development and overall functioning throughout his life.

The following information comes from *Reading Comprehension Strategies* by Regina G. Richards, an educational therapist whose agency provides treatment programs for students with language learning disabilities. This 2006 publication by LinguiSystems, Inc. discusses techniques to enhance understanding, organization, and retrieval of information.

Reading is a complex, integrative process. Efficient, accurate reading is composed of the following components: decoding, metacognition, meaning, and fluency. In addition to accurate decoding (sounding out or saying the words), the process of reading involves active working memory (the ability to hold the components in mind and manipulate them simultaneously) and accurate and deep comprehension, while maintaining fluency. Reading comprehension is intentional thinking that adds to meaning as a student reads the information. Effective reading comprehension is not a passive process. It needs to be active – an active process that engages the reader.

1. Reading must be purposeful. A student needs to know why he is reading a story or book. Is it to get more information about something he wants to learn? Will he be reading in order to do a hands-on project about what was read? Is he going to be writing, talking, or drawing about what he read in order to share the

information with someone else?

2. Students need to interact with the text. After reading sections, students need to be able to talk about it in a small group discussion, draw about what was read, or watch the teacher draw or write about the main points.

3. Students need to be thinking and reacting as they are reading. This is a strong key toward helping students enhance their comprehension. If true reading is going on, a student is stopping to apply what he has read to something he already knows. A student needs to be directed to stop and confirm what he is reading. Does it make sense? Can he put it in his own words? Can he predict what may happen next? A student has to have somewhere to file the information in his memory (previously-learned information) or it will be forgotten quickly.

4. To enhance meaning a student needs:

Deep comprehension – breadth (many words) and depth (all meanings of a word) of meaning. A rich vocabulary is the base of comprehension. Active involvement provides the key to vocabulary development. Adding gestures or movements helps trigger the brain's indexing system or in other words, helps the brain know where to store the information for later use. Movement helps the student stay connected to what he is learning.

Background knowledge – content and concepts need to be previewed

Inner dialogue – helping a student to learn to have an inner dialogue and make connections when he reads affects how well and how much he will remember.

Ms. Richards says, "Reading is to the mind what exercise is to the body." True reading is decoding while maintaining fluency as well as understanding and interacting with the text.

## Executive Director's Message

By Becky Slakman

As I write this message, I realize that this week is my third year anniversary as Executive Director of the Down Syndrome Guild of Dallas. Also, a little over three years ago the board of directors implemented a three year strategic plan that concludes this May. It was a very ambitious plan and you will be happy to know that the goals and objectives set forth will be complete by the proposed deadlines. It is easy to look back and reflect on the great things that this organization has accomplished. Most recently we moved to a new location almost twice the size of our first location. Our programming for all age groups continues to grow. We have increased participation by both parents and educators at our Fall Conference and IEP Clinics. Our partnerships with area school districts have grown. We continue to create awareness about Down syndrome and the Down Syndrome Guild of Dallas in our community by participating in

information fairs. We reach out to new parents to provide support. Our monthly adult socials are well attended. Our website continues to be updated; our logo is branded on all DSG materials.

***To accomplish great things, we must not only act, but also dream; not only plan, but also believe.***

~ *Anatole France*

Our monthly newsletter continues to keep our families informed. Fundraising has increased. I am very thankful to the many volunteers that made all that I mentioned above possible.

In a few weeks, your board of directors will gather to prepare and focus on the strategic direction we will pursue for the next three years. Ideas implemented come directly from the requests of our families. Please continue to reach out to me or one of our board members when you become aware of a helpful resource or have a program idea that you would like for us to provide.

I look forward to sharing our future plans and goals with you.

## Paint 'n Fun for Adults with Down Syndrome

Saturday, March 27, 2010  
4:00pm-6:00pm

Quiggly's Clayhouse

1344 East Belt Line Road

Richardson, Texas 75081

Located at the southwest corner of East Belt Line Road and Plano Road

(in the same shopping center as Staples)

Adults 19 and older are invited to get your creative on as we paint pottery at Quiggly's Clayhouse. You can choose from simple ceramic figurines, or pick something more challenging. The folks at Quiggly's will then glaze and fire everything into finished ceramics! Create a wonderful gift for a friend or family member, or just make a keepsake for yourself. The cost is only \$10.00 per person. RSVP to Jessica McCartney at [dallasdsg@sbcglobal.net](mailto:dallasdsg@sbcglobal.net) or call 214-267-1374.

## Down Syndrome Guild Lending Library

The DSG has spent years building an extensive resource library for our members. If you haven't used the library lately, you may be missing that little piece of information that could make a big difference in the life of your son or daughter.

With the recent move into our new office, the library is even easier to access, with a small sitting area to relax while you peruse. Topics include inclusion, sexuality, support for siblings, life-long literacy, peer

education and support, and potty training, just to name a few. We also have professional journals, and brochures and pamphlets from local and national resources. We welcome you to come check out our new office; and while you are there, sit and browse through our books.

## Spring Break Game and Craft Day for Teens age 12-16

**W**ednesday,  
March 17, 2010  
2:00 pm-3:30 pm

The Down Syndrome Guild of  
Dallas office  
1702 N. Collins Suite 170  
Richardson, TX 75080  
(entrance is on the east side of  
building)

Teens age 12-16 are invited to join us for a fun day of games and crafts as we meet old friends and new. Come check out our new office space and play Connect 4, Twister, and other games sure to get the fun going. Space is limited so please RSVP to Jessica McCartney at [dallasdsg@sbcglobal.net](mailto:dallasdsg@sbcglobal.net) or 214-267-1374.

## Tom Thumb Rewards

**S**hop at Tom Thumb and donate to the DSG!

Just get a Tom Thumb Rewards card, and have our number credited with your purchase. Our donation number is 2768.



## 10 Tips for Ending the School Year

This article was reprinted from the *Special Ed Advocate*.  
For additional information go to [www.wrightslaw.com](http://www.wrightslaw.com)

### 1. Visit the new school or classroom.

Will your child make a major transition next fall? Will your child be moving from preschool to kindergarten, from elementary to middle school, or from middle school to high school? Plan to take your child to visit the new school or classroom before the first day of school.

### 2. Review your child's IEP and progress.

Did your child make progress this school year? Did the school properly implement the IEP? Does the IEP adequately address your child's needs? Do your child's Goals prepare your child for further education, employment, and independent living?

### 3. Ask for an IEP Team Meeting if necessary.

Did you answer "No" to any of the questions above? Ask for an IEP Team Meeting to resolve these concerns. Do not let another year go by with an inappropriate IEP.

### 4. Prepare for the IEP Team Meeting.

Prepare a list of your child's present levels of performance. The list includes your child's strengths and the areas that are challenging. Look carefully at this list and you will better understand what your child needs. Add these needs to your list of present levels of performance. You can also add Goals, Related Services, Assistive Technology, and anything else that your list justifies as an educational need.

### 5. Say "Thank You" to those who helped.

Did your child have a great school year? Was this success due to a wonderful teacher, a helpful classroom aide, or a thoughtful bus driver? Say "thank you" to those who helped your child succeed. Look at what made this a good year for your child. Add that information to the list of your child's present levels of performance.

### 6. Give your information list to the IEP Team before the meeting.

Do not surprise other members of the IEP Team. At least one week before the meeting, give a copy of your list to each member of the IEP Team. Take extra copies to the meeting for anyone who forgets to bring their copy. Your IEP Team Meeting will go faster and smoother if everyone has your list ahead of time.

### 7. Ask for a copy of any information that has been given to other members of the IEP Team.

You do not want to be surprised. Ask for copies of all information the IEP Team will discuss. You cannot be a full team member if you are left out of the loop. Ask for things like copies of teacher reports, evaluation reports, and group achievement testing.

### 8. Ask the IEP Team to address Extended School Year (ESY).

If there is disagreement about whether your child needs an ESY, you will need enough time to resolve this with one of the due process procedures available.

### 9. Find out what summer educational resources are available for your child.

An ESY is not the same as summer school. Summer School is usually a generic program that is not designed to meet your child's individual needs. An ESY program is intended to meet the specific educational needs of your child as identified in his or her IEP. Make sure you know what services the school is offering!

### 10. Determine whether your child needs a new evaluation.

Does your child need new evaluations? Are you unsure whether your child has made adequate progress? Achievement testing at the beginning and end of every year will give objective answers about your child's progress. (See Chapter 8, Your Child's Evaluation, in *Wrightslaw: From Emotions to Advocacy*, 2nd Edition

## The Benefits of College

Reprinted with permission from [www.ThinkCollege.net](http://www.ThinkCollege.net)

Leaving high school is an exciting and tense time for students and their families. When considering what will happen next, the possibility of college is often in the mix. As family members of individuals with intellectual disabilities, we may not know of the possibilities or be hesitant to encourage sons and daughters to consider attending college classes, at least initially. We weigh the risks against the benefits and end up with all kinds of questions about safety, supports, funding, transportation, and courses. While these are important questions to ask, such thoughts may create more concern than creativity, leading us to quickly lose sight of the many benefits of going to college. "No one ever said that my daughter could go to college. They just assumed that she'd go to the vocational program with all of the other students with cognitive disabilities. This is a brand new way of thinking."

The benefits of attending college for some individuals with intellectual disabilities can be measured in their growth in a number of areas, including academic and personal skill building, independence, self-advocacy, and self-confidence and new friendships. For individuals with disabilities, this growth is also reflected in increased self-esteem, when they begin to see themselves as enjoying what their same age peers without disabilities are experiencing. Being part of campus life, taking classes (whether auditing or for credit), joining student organizations, and learning to navigate a world of high expectations leads to the development of skills and confidence needed for successful adulthood. We know that people who have had both access to the general curriculum and high expectations are more likely to be employed as adults. Keeping college in the mix of possibilities as our sons and daughters explore which

steps to take after high school says that we believe in their potential for success.

"It took me a while to really see that college was a possibility for my son but once I talked to another mother, I saw it could happen. I learned that there were people and resources that could help me, guide me. It wasn't quite as scary knowing that I wouldn't be alone in this." So, let's begin by saying, "Why not college?" Hearing ourselves say these words may sound awkward at first, but after awhile we will become accustomed to having college as a possibility. Then, when we hear our sons and daughters talk about going to college, we will start saying, "Yes, our son will be going to college next year. Let's figure out how to make it happen!"

More than ever before students with intellectual disabilities are attending college over the past decade. For more information, watch for future articles about transition, college and other post-secondary opportunities.

## Dad's Group Happy Hour

Wednesday, March 17, 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](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.

## HEROES Camp

June 21st- August 6th  
First United Methodist Church  
of Richardson  
For ages 3-21

HEROES camps were first held during the summer of 2005 when a group of Special Education teachers and parents saw the need for a summer program that would give their students an opportunity to learn valuable life skills in a safe, fun and loving environment.

The mission of HEROES is to create social, recreational and vocational programs designed to meet the unique needs of individuals with disabilities.

For registration information contact Vicky Templeton at [vickylt27@gmail.com](mailto:vickylt27@gmail.com) or at 214-537-4636

## March for Respect

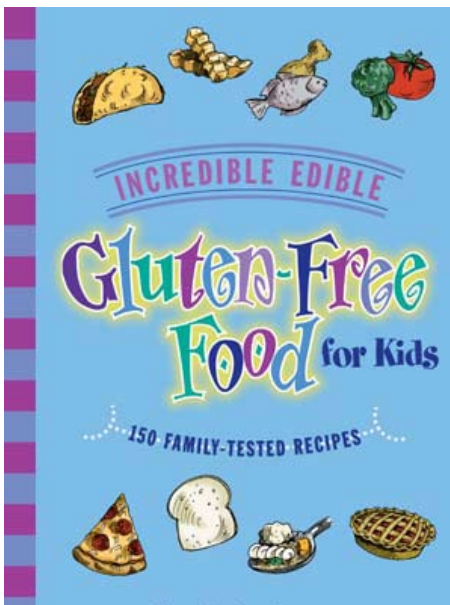
Saturday, March 27, 2010  
Dallas West End  
Activities begin at 9 a.m.  
The March begins at 11 a.m.

The March for Respect is a one-mile walk through downtown Dallas created to show all Texans with developmental disabilities that they are not alone, they can achieve and that there's a whole city of people who care for them greatly. The March for Respect makes a difference.

Visit [www.marchforrespect.org](http://www.marchforrespect.org) for more information.

## Gluten-Free Cookbook

By Sheri L. Sanderson



Readers can choose from a wide array of recipes that cover every meal of the day, as well as snack-time. From breakfast muffins to Pineapple Upside-Down Cake, from Beef Stroganoff to Broccoli with Cheese Sauce, and from Quick Lunch Pizza to Hawaiian Punch, there are many dishes that should entice any child (or adult). Numerous recipes take 30 minutes or less to make and are so easy parents can involve their child in the preparation. Teaching a child to cook gluten-free "gives the child ownership of his diet as well as reducing the desire to cheat," advises the author, a mother who cooks gluten-free for her child.

In addition to food recipes, there are tips for cooking substitution, entertaining, a list of resources, as well as a detailed trouble-shooting chart for the gluten-free baker. Sanderson also offers advice on how to deal with situations outside the home that may compromise a child's diet, such as peer-pressure and day care.

To order visit:

[www.woodbinehouse.com](http://www.woodbinehouse.com)

## DSG Dance Class



## Office of Disability Employment Policy Listening Tour

In January, the U.S. Department of Labor's (DOL) Office of Disability Employment Policy (ODEP) and its Federal partners held a series of six Listening Sessions across the country on disability employment. Each Listening Session was an opportunity for members of the public to provide input to senior Federal officials on their ideas for more effective ways to employ women, Veterans and minorities with disabilities. The ODEP and its Federal partners were specifically seeking input in three topic areas, namely: (1) More effective ways to increase the employment of women, Veterans and minorities with disabilities; (2) Identification of Federal and state systems that are effectively collaborating to achieve successful employment outcomes for people with disabilities; and (3) Three top focus issues for the Federal government to support an increase in labor force participation for people with disabilities.

The Down Syndrome Guild contributed to the Listening Session by bringing forth the following issues and solutions which we believe are important to support successful employment for individuals with Down syndrome:

1. Supplemental Security Income (SSI) benefits currently are \$637 a month. This amount increases with cost of living. For any amount earned over \$85 dollars, half is calculated. That amount is subtracted from \$637. If it totals over \$637 there are no \$ benefits.

**Solution:** Maintain the current level of SSI, but don't decrease the amount until total income reaches poverty level whatever that is.

2. \$2000 is the maximum for value of assets a person with disabilities can have at any one time without losing benefits. This amount was established in 1989 and has not been changed since.

**Solution:** Increase maximum to \$10,000 and have cost of living increase

with it like the SSI payment.

3. 401k's are counted as savings and thus part of the \$2000 maximum value of assets. 401k's need to be an exception, so people are encouraged to save for retirement. As it stands now, they are being forced to be totally dependent on the government when they retire even though they had a job their entire lives. Many corporations are insisting that all their employees have 401k even if they are being paid minimum wage.

**Solution:** 401k should not be considered assets. It's called a Tolerance.

Other contributors included Dew Dixon of The Arc of Dallas and Linda Holloway, Chairperson and Associate Professor for the Department of Rehabilitation, Social Work &

Addictions at the University of North Texas. Their comments included the need for funding for "soft skills" training in order to keep and maintain a job, increased funding for follow along support, eliminating the sub-minimum wage certificate (this is used for job enclaves and workshops), support for programs such as Project Search which provide intern opportunities for employees, more outreach to prospective employers, and more consistent policies.

The DSG will continue to follow the developments of the ODEP, and advocate for the increased support of people with Down syndrome in the workplace.

## New Year Giving Opportunity

*Resolve to renew your membership and your commitment to the DSG*

*by Jane Friou, Fund Development Chair*

It's three 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!

## 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](http://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.