

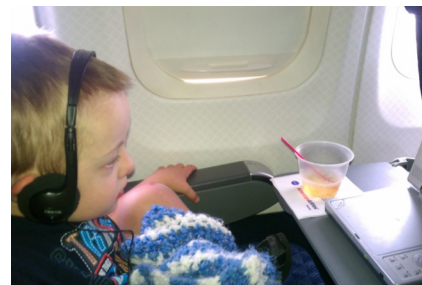
# EXTRA! EXTRA! 21

DOWN SYNDROME ALLIANCE OF THE MIDLANDS • JUNE 2012

## PRESIDENT'S LETTER

Hello Friends!

This year is really flying by! My own little Buddy turned 5 in April, and I just can't believe it. In some ways it seems like he's been with us forever, and in other ways it feels like he was just born yesterday. (His big sister Kayla is 10 and would tell you that he's been her crazy little brother "foreeevvveerrr!!") Either way, we can't imagine our lives without Allen and I'm so proud to be in the position to lead the Down Syndrome Alliance of the Midlands and support other parents the way we were when we were first diagnosed. On the flip side, I love the fact that I get to interact with teens and adults with Down syndrome and their families to get helpful tips and advice... it really is invaluable, and helps me know (even just a little bit) what to expect as Allen continues to grow. To that end, I hope that we will continue to see families in all stages of life as well as self-advocate adults attending our events and reaching out to one another. The more we interact the more we can support each other and feel a true sense of community. The Buddy Run was excellent for that - it was great to see so many different families that we often only see at the Buddy Walk in October!



Allen chilling out on his very first airplane ride to San Antonio!

If you have any ideas for outreach opportunities, multi-generational events, or social media interaction opportunities, we would love to hear them! It doesn't have to be a major event – simply sharing an experience you had at school or at the doctor's office where DSA might be able to help by expanding education or advocacy efforts in a certain arena would be incredibly helpful... everyone has different experiences, so the more you share the more we can help! Whether you mention your thoughts to a board member at an event, send an email to [info@dsamidlands.org](mailto:info@dsamidlands.org), post on the Facebook page, or join a committee, the more the merrier! We will also have a few board positions opening in January, so please reach out to Buffy if you have an interest.

I hope everyone is having an excellent year so far! By the time the next newsletter is published, the Buddy Walk will be upon us! I look forward to seeing everyone there!!

—Allison Machamer

## VICE PRESIDENT'S LETTER



Buffy accepts a check from the Rotary Club of Omaha

For 1 1/2 years now, I have had the pleasure of serving on the DSA Board as Vice President. Not only have I learned a lot about what the DSA does "behind the scenes" but also I have been able to meet people from other community organizations and help spread awareness about the Down Syndrome Alliance and our amazing kids. I am excited about the direction DSA is heading and proud to be a part of it. I encourage every parent to become actively involved in an organization that positively promotes DS awareness, educates the medical community with which we can be deeply intertwined, and reaches out to the parents that are in need of support, materials, and networking with other families.

If you are interested in being a member of the board or a committee member please email [info@dsamidlands.org](mailto:info@dsamidlands.org) to request an application.

—Buffy Beightol

## ***Welcome!***

Megan Boettger

~ Kaden ~

Frank Kirk & Dora Cortes

~ Kory & Kasey ~

Mindy Crowder

~ Jaxson ~

Beth & Alan Gard

~ Alijah ~

Molly & Brian O'Hara

~ Allyson ~

Brenda & Rusty Olsen

~ Madison ~

Andrea & David Ortegon

~ Ryan ~

Katie & John Walz

~ Ben ~

## ***Our Condolences***

It is with great sadness that DSA shares the news of the loss of one of our little family members.



Jack Wadzinski, beloved son of Cindy and David, passed away on May 17, 2012.

## **PARENT OUTREACH**

The Down Syndrome Super Moms have really stepped up when it comes to helping out our fellow moms. From attending funerals & services to setting up meal trains for our families in need, we are going above and beyond and I am so proud of the way we are supporting each other. It warms my heart to know that when any of us have to go through a difficult time, we will be held up by the love of our fellow moms.

We have welcomed so many new families into our Down Syndrome community recently. It feels like we have a new baby almost weekly. It's a Down Syndrome baby boom! The New Parent Orientations have been well attended and the families have learned a lot of information from the meetings.

The Mom's Appreciation Brunch was a HUGE success. There were 22 moms that attended. ALL of the moms there had a fabulous time. We really had a chance to celebrate ourselves and recognize each other for all the hard work us moms of special needs children do. There was tremendous support to keep this an annual thing.

The Super Stars Calendar for 2013 is under way. This year we will be featuring families instead of just the individuals with Down syndrome. This is to show that our son or daughter is just a part of our family unit and we go about the day like any typical family.

## **MOMS TO PARTICIPATE IN WALK RITE**

For the moms coffee meeting on Saturday morning September 8<sup>th</sup>, we are going to do something a little different. Instead of meeting at Paradise Bakery as usual, we are going to get a 'DSA Team' formed to participate in Walk Rite for Rite Care for Munroe-Meyer at Zorinsky Lake. I think it's important for us to show our support to them for all they do for our families for FREE. Since registration for the walk starts at 9:30 and the walk starts at 10:30 that interferes with our moms coffee time. I figured we can just walk and talk there instead! I started a page on their site, you can sign up to walk with me and donate to them if you are so inclined. I think it will be a fun time and should be nice weather.

You can find our team here: <http://walkrite.kintera.org/omaha2012>

Go to: Register Here

Join an Existing Team: Down Syndrome Alliance of the Midlands

—Casie Schlueter

## **G.R.A.N.D.S.**

There was a fabulous turnout for the First Easter Egg Hunt in April! We'll continue to offer events for all DSA families, with the next one being our annual picnic on August 12th at Cimmarron Woods Park.

All grandparents are invited to join our bi-monthly meetings held at the Millard Public Library. We often book speakers to educate us on the issues our children and grandchildren are facing, but sometimes we meet simply for fun and support!

—Linda Lindeman

## FUNDRAISING

SUCCESS! Our 1<sup>st</sup> Annual Buddy Run was FANTASTIC and raised over \$2,600 for our organization. We couldn't have asked for better weather, a better turn-out, or a better location than we had for our Buddy Run. With about 250 participants who walked, ran, or pushed strollers – fun was had by all. Look for this event returning next year. Got an idea of how we can improve? Please send a note to [info@dsamidlands.org](mailto:info@dsamidlands.org).

Buddy Walk is just around the corner! The Buddy Walk will be held on Saturday morning, October 13<sup>th</sup> at the UNO campus. Mark your calendar now and plan to participate. Fundraising for this event can be done through your team, as an individual, or through your relationships in the community. Does your employer support non-profits? Why not mention Buddy Walk and The Down Syndrome Alliance of the Midlands (DSA)? All of our proceeds support our efforts with parent outreach, medical outreach, and advocacy.

—Dan Klein



Wesley & Jake  
"Like Family"

Denise Gehringer, a former Gross High dancer, was 28 when she gave birth to Jake, her fourth child, in September. Denise was the dance coach at Gross when Jessie Ortman Waldron joined the team. Denise's sons attended practice with her, so Jessie spent a good four years around Jake when he was a little guy. Then when Jessie was 28, she gave birth to Wesley, her fourth child, in September. Denise says all Gross High Dance alums are like family. Other DSA moms who were Gross High dancers are Laura Tosini Baum & Cris (Mill) Herek.

## SPECIAL EVENTS

Our teens had a great time at Papio Fun Park on May 19<sup>th</sup>. Laser tag and the go-carts were quite popular. It was hilarious to see our guys turn into secret agents in Laser Tag and channel their inner Dale Earnhardt on the go-cart track. It turned out to be a beautiful day and the staff was wonderful and quite accommodating. Amateur photographers are always welcome at the events as sometimes I get caught up in the fun and forget to take pictures... as is the case with Papio fun Park. If anyone did get some pictures from any of these events, we would love to see them... with your permission of course.

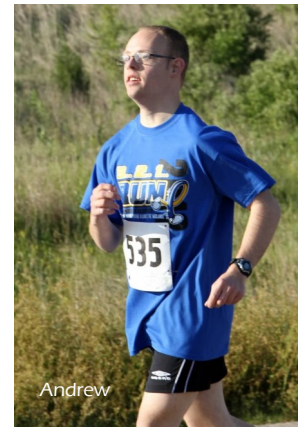
Several teens also enjoyed a trip to Fun Plex. How could you not have fun at our local ride and water park? P'shaw... Who needs to travel to Kansas City to have fun? Ok, I'm going a bit overboard, but it's really great to see the local attractions growing.

Tickets for The Stormchasers game on June 29<sup>th</sup> were snapped up so quickly we actually ordered 40 more to accommodate our waiting list. Twenty-seven families braved the heat to enjoy a game and fireworks.

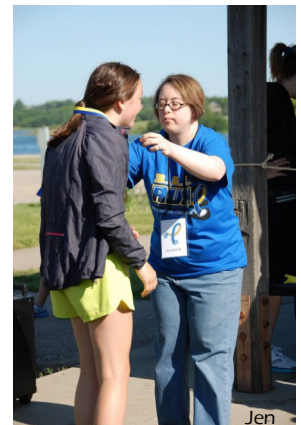
For our younger kids, July 14<sup>th</sup> is movie day! We will have tickets for a matinee showing of Ice Age 4: Continental Drift.

There are more events throughout this summer and the rest of the year so keep an eye on the Friday news and our newsletters for upcoming events. I also welcome any ideas for other events if you find these don't suit your fancy. I would love to hear from you.

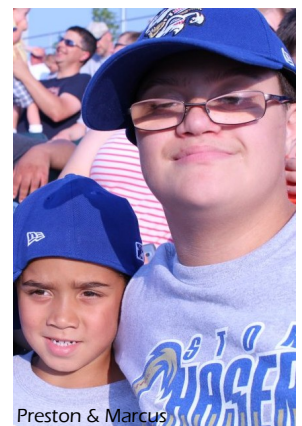
—Katie Sharp



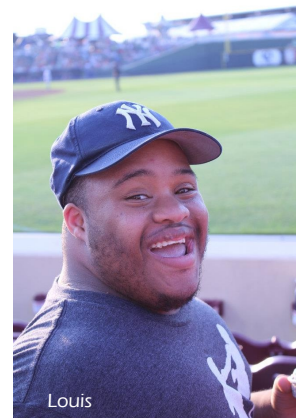
Andrew



Jen



Preston & Marcus

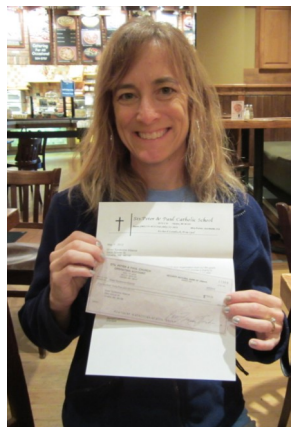


Louis



## Thank You!

The 15 2012 8th grade students at Peter and Paul donated \$530 to DSA. The money was raised at bake sales held throughout the year.



*Lori Eyth presents the check from the students.*

Tricia Nobis organized the Jump into June fundraiser at Orange Leaf. DSA received a donation of \$80.00 after family and friends gathered to enjoy sweet treats and great company.

## Happy Birthday!

### April

Marcus Amua-Sekyi  
Chase Carlon  
Nathalie Castro  
Ethan Costello  
Clayton Dilsaver  
Grace Greenwood  
Arslan Hasanov  
Edgar Jacinto  
Cassie Lacy  
Allen Machamer  
Taylor Marshall  
Connor Meng  
Abigail Nisley  
Mary Clare O'Malley  
Brandon Pollard  
Beth Quiring  
Vollen Schlueter  
Kellee Snethen  
Will Stoneburner



### May

Heather Mahlock  
Jordan Andrews  
Aaron Arcos  
Max Boustead  
Eliana Carnazzo  
Kristina Cook  
Mariana Garcia  
Daniel Holm  
Emily Jaeger  
Kohen Koch  
Ellie Kuecker  
Stefi Kuhlers  
Bailee Mathews  
Alex Mejia  
Samuel Moses  
Monica Sobczyk  
Jesse Soto  
Grant Switzer  
Mason Wessendorf

### June

Justin Bainbridge  
Claire Baum  
Bailey Beightol  
Evan Bittner  
Carrissa Caskey  
Howie Delp  
Elizabeth Fear  
Sergio Garcia  
Anne Goodrich  
Beth Hamm  
Bella Hayden  
Haley Heese  
Ben Herek  
Troy Kostal  
Louis Matthews  
Elizabeth Million  
Derek Rivard  
Kevin Sieczkowski  
Jerus Sime

## MEDICAL OUTREACH



*A big thank you to the Moms & Tots who prepared the packets to mail to local medical professionals!*

In June DSA mailed prenatal diagnosis publications to over 200 local OB/GYNs and Pediatricians. As a direct result of this mailing, the NICU department at Children's Hospital requested 50 copies of our booklet "What is Down Syndrome? Prenatal Guide for Parents" in English and 25 copies in Spanish.

Our 2012 Edition of the New Parents Guide was distributed, along with a copy of *Gifts: Mothers Reflect on How Children with Down Syndrome Enrich Their Lives* for English-speaking families and *Bebes con sindrome de Down: Nueva Guia para padres* for Spanish-speaking families, to social workers in Omaha Metro hospitals. More contacts will be made over the summer. The New Parents Guide was also placed with the Airman Family Readiness Center to be distributed to military families new to our community.

—Roberta Tonjes