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OMAHA
DOWN
SYNDROME
PARENTS
NETWORK



COMMITTED TO
ENHANCING LIVES



EXTRA EXTRA (21) READ ALL ABOUT IT

A newsletter from the **OMAHA DOWN SYNDROME PARENTS NETWORK**
Committed to enhancing the lives of individuals & families touched by Down syndrome

DSS PROGRAM

The Down Syndrome Specialist(DSS) breakfast was held on January 29 at ESU3 and over 25 DSS, Special Education Directors and Education Advocacy Committee members were in attendance. An informative discussion was held with the members sharing Best Practices, things they receive calls about, what they are doing in their school districts to assist their general education and special education teachers in instructing students with Down syndrome. The group had a number of suggestions for ODSPN in how to assist them in furthering the program and providing them with the resources they need. The next DSS will be held on April 30, 2010.



BOARD NEWS



The ODSPN Board is pleased to introduce three new chairpersons:
Roberta Tonjes: Medical Outreach
Rob Church: Fundraising/Buddy Walk
Jen Shannon: Parent Outreach

Positions are still open for Advocacy and Special Events. Please contact info@odspn.org for more information or for a Candidate Package.

The Medical Outreach Committee gave a presentation to a group of UNO Psychology Graduate students about working with students with Down syndrome and the school psychologists.



Look out, World!

Allen Machamer, son of Allison and Gary Machamer

**February
2010**

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Upcoming Events

Movie: The Toothfairy
Ages 5—12
Saturday, February 27
Noon
Marcus 20 Grand Maple

Parents Night Out
Saturday, March 6
6:30—9:00 p.m.
Lo Sole Mio
\$10 per couple
Childcare provided off-site

Pajamarama
Friday, March 19
6:00—8:00 p.m.
Barnes & Noble Oakview

Contact rsvp@odspn.org
For more details
on any of these events

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Members News

Welcome

Judy & Duane Thome
Michael

Nathan & Christina Hyatt
Violet

Sharon & Kevin O'Malley
Mary Clare

Irene Aguilar
Brian

Magali Tovar
Angel

Andrea & Sean Driscoll
Dalton

Michelle & Jshon Breeling
Jack

James Newman
Landon

Dawne Peterson
Daltyn

Tasha & Jeremy Hesman
Jaxson

Alisa & Rob Becke
Teegan

Lizet Lupian
Anthony

Anne & Sean Rich
Eisley

Sherri & Joe Harnisch
Macy

Heriberta Mayo-Cisneros & Orlando
Mejia
Jessica

STIPENDS

Are you planning on attending the NDSC Convention in Orlando, Florida? ODSPN has stipends available for up to \$250.00/family/year to attend training/conferences. Go to www.odspn.org and click on Forms.

Tips for Choosing A Dentist

Building a good rapport with the dentist early on will set the stage for good lifelong oral health habits. The tips below should help you determine which dental provider best meets your family's unique needs.

Find out if opportunities exist for education or desensitization visits. Many offices will allow you to visit prior to your scheduled appointment to meet the hygienist and dentist. Your loved one can observe the office, the chair they will sit in, some of the tools that will be used and the provider can describe what a visit entails.

Ask the dentist/hygienist if they have any experience working with people with Down syndrome. Dentists often participate in continuing education which includes training to serve patients with special needs. Check to see if your provider has any training or other patients with Down syndrome.

Inquire about bringing comforting items with you. Ask if it is okay to bring a favorite toy, game, blanket, movie to the appointment to alleviate stress.

Schedule the appointment so there will be no wait time. Time spent waiting can cause anxiety for ANY patient. Unexpected sounds, smells and people can create undue stress that carries into the dental chair. Explain to the scheduler that you prefer an appointment with little or no wait time.

Discuss current medications and other pertinent health history. Make sure your provider is aware of this important information as it may affect treatment.

Ask for consistency in who cleans and checks teeth and to be seen in the same room for visits. Individuals with Down syndrome may have difficulty with transitions and changes in environments. Maintaining the same room and provider can decrease the potential for anxiety.



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Letter from Mary McHale

Don't know about any of you, but I am tired of the snow, the cold weather, the boots, and everything that goes with it. As I was looking out the window after the 1st snowstorm in December, I noticed that a tree we had planted was bent and the branches were almost on the ground-covered with ice. This tree was planted after Daniel's 2nd heart surgery- in honor of his survival. Joe and I were saddened to think that because of the weather, the tree might not survive. We thought about trying to get the ice off of the branches (I know, it had been a long time indoors with this particular snowstorm). We went through many ideas on how to save the tree, but in the end, decided to let nature decide for us. And what a surprise, when the weather got a little bit warmer- the ice thawed from the branches and the tree became upright again.

Got to thinking that this might also be applied to individuals with disabilities. Some individuals have challenges at birth- whether it is heart, GI issues, hearing, etc. Some individuals have challenges later on in life- it might be repeated surgeries, unexpected hospitalizations, or an additional diagnosis. Some individuals have challenges with school and the curriculum. And through it all, we, as parents, worry, try to do our best, find out the information that we need, and our children get through that particular challenge and move onto the next step in their lives. Our children are a great example of persistence and perseverance and continue to move forward and strive in the most challenging of circumstances. Guess we need to trust that in spite of different issues (whether it is medical issues or school issues), our children may bend and bow, but they don't break.

This year has already started with changes- more snow than in past years, more snow days than in past years. Another change will be the transition of my last year as President of ODSPN. It has been an honor and privilege to be a part of this organization from the beginning, but it is time for a new President and new leadership for the board. The ODSPN board has begun this transition process and will ensure that this transition will not affect any activities and events for ODSPN. As Martha Stewart has said in the past, "Change—its' a good thing." It will be a change for us as Daniel will be attending Middle School this fall and Joe and I will step into that next part of his, and our, lives.

Thank You

The George and Cathy Miedl Family suggested donations to ODSPN in lieu of gifts for the Baptism of their son, Gage. The Miedls bestowed this same gift to ODSPN five years ago for the Baptism of their daughter, Gianna.

Jim and Monica Hughes selected ODSPN to receive donations in memory of Catherine Hughes. ODSPN is sorry for their loss and appreciates being the beneficiary of these donations, which will be used to fund the Welcome bags at local hospitals.

Ally Henry donated her Christmas money in honor of Mary Eyth. ODSPN appreciates her generosity.

ODSPN appreciates the help of the Marian High School students who volunteered at the Play-Daze event.

Omaha Chiropractic and Acupuncture has chosen ODSPN as the beneficiary of its charitable work for 2010. Dr. Jill Foster is offering monthly promotions that have already and will continue to raise funds for ODSPN. Contact Omaha Chiropractic and Acupuncture at omahachiropractic@yahoo.com for more information.

Congratulations

Kathy Mc Clellan was named the Ollie Webb Center's "Parent to Parent of the Year" for 2009.

Members News

Happy Birthday

January

Jarett Ayers
Ethan Bifaro
Alex Casey
Christian Cramer
Joey Drwal
Jayden Goodoien
Annabelle Livingston
Erika Lundquist
Elizabeth Nietzel
Anna O'Connor
Ben Plato
Abby Plato
Ranae Proskovec
Evan Rutherford
Olivia Scherr
Ian Smith
Chuck Stitt
Henry Wood
Nicklaus Wright
Dylan Zephier

February

Addison Adams
Jordan Burtzel
Amie Jo Duncan
Thomas Gonzalez
Ashlie Hite
Jordon Hughes
Anna Jackson
Ty Jorge
Charlotte Joseph
Harper Kawa
Jimmy Keen
Daniel Kirchner
Katie Northouse
Gabriel Stark
Benjamin Tuccitto

Get Well Soon

Aidan Seipold
Will Stoneburner

OMAHA DOWN SYNDROME PARENTS NETWORK

Committed to enhancing the lives of individuals
& families touched by Down syndrome

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Our mission is to enhance the quality of life for all individuals with Down syndrome by providing resources and support to those individuals, their families, professionals and the community. Our Vision includes:

- Providing access for individuals of all ages and their families to a wide range of opportunities and resources that meet their needs.
- Full participation of the membership, the community and professionals working together to build resources that inform and support one another.
- An effective coalition with the educational community providing a choice of opportunities for high quality education for individuals with Down syndrome.
- A professional community providing services and advice based on current and accurate information available and acting as advocates for family and individuals with Down syndrome.

Spring Activities

Challenger Little League

This baseball league is exclusively for players with special needs. These needs can be mental and/or physical disabilities. Our 3 different "little league" divisions begin at age 6 and work up to 21 or high school graduation - whichever comes first. Our unique and older 4th division is the Alumni which takes over from there and has no age limit. This is not competitive baseball - no score is kept, no tournaments, no umpires. Go to <http://www.challengerlittleleague.org>. **Registrations due February 28.**

Omaha All-Stars Basketball

Sponsored by Great Plains PVA and the Ollie Webb Center for youth ages 6 to 21 with a variety of developmental disabilities. Participation builds self-confidence, encourages teamwork, and improves physical fitness. Leagues are 7 to 8 weeks long. Registration begins in March. Contact the Ollie Webb Center for registration forms.

Drama Classes at The Rose

Saturday Morning Spring Classes run March 20—May 8. Special tuition rates are available for children ages 8—13 with Down syndrome. Contact the Box Office at 345-4849 or info@rosetheater.org.

TOPSoccer

Bellevue Soccer Club TOPSoccer early registration is due **March 1**. Go to <http://www.bscneb.org/page/show/85093-topsoccer> for registration forms.

The Omaha FC TOPSoccer, which plays indoors at the Omaha Sports Complex, is currently registering players for Spring. Go to <http://www.omahafc.com/soccerTops.htm> for registration forms.

All Play Miracle League Baseball

Register now for the summer season that begins in May.