

# Heart Strings



Our children and adults with Down syndrome  
are the heart of our organization and our most precious gifts.

Volume 17 September-October 2014



## UPCOMING EVENTS

**September 27th BUDDY WALK** Smothers Park. 11:00a.m. to 1:30p.m.

More information in this issue

**October 17th Fall Family Fun Night.** Trunnell's 6:00p.m.-9:00p.m.

This was so much fun last year we are doing it again! Games, mazes, hayride, pumpkin patch, hot dog roast, etc. RSVP no later than 12th to Carla at [info@gradsa.org](mailto:info@gradsa.org) or 270-925-0195

**October 26th Dad's Night Out** Buffalo Wild Wings 6:00 p.m.—8:00 p.m.

Please RSVP by October 21st to Carla at [info@gradsa.org](mailto:info@gradsa.org) or 270-925-0195

**November 1st Halloween Hoe Down with Special Olympics** 6:00p.m.-9:00p.m.

OMS Cafeteria. Plan to have a good time. Costumes are welcome and may have a contest

**November 13th Massage Therapy Class.** Presented by Donna Kealin Learn the basics

6:00p.m. at Logsdon Center. RSVP by November 10th to Carla at [info@gradsa.org](mailto:info@gradsa.org) or 270-925-0195

**December 6th GRADSA Christmas Party at Bellevue Baptist Church.** 6:00 p.m.

Our Annual Christmas Party is always a nice and fun event. Sure hope to have a great turnout. We have moved venues this year! RSVP by Dec. 1st to Carla at [info@gradsa.org](mailto:info@gradsa.org) or 270-925-0195

**December 13th Parents Night Out** 6:00p.m.-8:30p.m. Logsdon Center

We will have food, movies and games. RSVP no later than December 9th to Carla at [info@gradsa.org](mailto:info@gradsa.org) or 270-925-0195

**Are you on Facebook?** Like GRADSA at [www.facebook.com/GRADSA](http://www.facebook.com/GRADSA)

**PLEASE** send your updated emails, phone numbers, etc. to Carla at [info@gradsa.org](mailto:info@gradsa.org) or 270-925-0195. A lot of our information is sent by email so let's get connected!

**Mail Chimp** We will soon be sending all emails thru Mail Chimp so please do not delete them.

**GRADSA** has a new website. Still have changes and things to add but check it out!

## Comments from Carla...

### Hello Everyone...

Summer vacation is over and school is back in session, sure hope everyone has had a good transition. Our Yard Party at WBKR was a huge success. Thanks so much to everyone that helped or came and showed their support. We had a wonderful turnout at the Back To School Swim Party. Special thanks to Gary and Jonathon Estes for cooking. It was delicious. Check out the pictures inside. We are now in full mode Buddy Walk. It is going to be a great time and I cannot wait to see everyone. This is the only time I see some of our families so it is always special. Please read all the information inside this issue on Buddy Walk. Some will be repeat information but there is new information too. Check out the section on Kroger's as this has potential to be a great fundraiser for GRADSA! We are excited to introduce a new family in this issue. I hope everyone is doing well and please call me if you need anything at all.

## New Family...

GRADSA is excited to welcome the Wilson Family.

Krystaylnn and Job Wilson have a sweet little girl with Down syndrome. Her name is Ellianna and she is 8 months old. Ellianna has a 2 year old sister named Annika. Aren't they both beautiful names? The Wilson's live in Henderson. Krystalynn is a teacher and Job works at Rosedale Services. We look forward to getting to know this family better. Ellianna is gorgeous!



## Kroger's Community Rewards...

Kroger Cares Reloadable gift-cards are being replaced with Kroger Community Rewards. This is a wonderful change and if everyone will register it can produce big rewards for GRADSA. All you have to do is have a Kroger's reward card which I think 95% of us do. Go to [www.kroger.com/communityrewards](http://www.kroger.com/communityrewards). If you already have an online account just enter your user id and password then you will type in Green and one of your options will be Green River Area Down Syndrome Association. Click it and submit. If you do not have an online account simply register then search for Green and when Green River Area Down Syndrome Association comes up, click it and submit. If your information for your rewards card is not current you can update it at [www.kroger.com](http://www.kroger.com) or call 1-800-krogers, option #3. You will have to go in on a yearly basis to update your organization or GRADSA will no longer receive rewards from your card. This is a wonderful and very easy fundraiser for GRADSA. Please register your card and share with friends and family. If you have any questions or need any help please contact Carla at [info@gradsa.org](mailto:info@gradsa.org) or 270-925-0195. Go get on those computers and register your card NOW! GRADSA thanks you in advance.

## We Are More Alike Than Different Awareness Grant...

GRADSA is thrilled we have received a grant from Owensboro Health for a "We Are More Alike Than Different" awareness project. The National Down Syndrome Society started this campaign and we have their permission to use it also plus use their logo which you will see on the Buddy Walk shirts this year. Hopefully everyone received a letter in the mail and/or by email but if not the information is below:

As part of this grant we will be making videos of individuals with Down syndrome focusing on their participation in everyday activities. This could include a sport, hobby, musical instrument, employment, or many other activities you can think of. We are looking to also involve friends, peer tutors, teachers, family, or anyone that has made an impact on your child's abilities.

If you believe your child would be a good candidate for this project then please submit a letter stating what you would like the video to be focused on and who would be included in the video. We will review all submissions, and please understand this is not a contest. Several factors will be included in the final selection including location, scheduling and our adherence to the guidelines of the grant. Per the grant we will feature at least 1 individual in each county that we serve, and we want to cover as many different activities and abilities as we can. If you have any questions please feel free to contact Carla for more information.

Please send all letters to GRADSA, PO Box 2031, Owensboro, KY 42302. You may also email them to [info@gradsa.org](mailto:info@gradsa.org). **All submissions must be received no later than September 14<sup>th</sup>, 2014.**

## Special Thanks...

The GRADSA Board and especially our Committee Chairs would like to thank everyone that has stepped up and joined the Programs, Fundraising or Buddy Walk Committee. We appreciate your help so much. We would love to have more committee volunteers. If anyone else is interested in helping please contact Carla at 270-925-0195 or [info@gradsa.org](mailto:info@gradsa.org)

# GRADSA's 17th Annual Buddy Walk...

GRADSA is so excited for our 17th Annual Buddy Walk. Hopefully everyone received their packet in the mail. It had a brochure and a donation form. There will also be a donation form in this newsletter. The last day to order shirts and be guaranteed your size was September 5th. A special thanks to everyone that registered and ordered their shirts on the GRADSA website. This has been an easy transition and it has made our job much easier. You can still register on the website if you wish and then you will not have to register the day of the event. Go to [www.gradsa.org](http://www.gradsa.org) and click on Buddy Walk. You will then see the start of the registration process.

**GRADSA is honored to announce our partnership with Independence Bank. You can pick up registration forms at any location. Be sure to check out the GRADSA display in the foyer of the main branch!**

## Activities 11:00 a.m.—1:00 p.m.

Lunch will be provided with grilled bologna sandwiches, hot dogs, pizza, chips, cookies and drinks. There will be games, face painting, balloon twisters, inflatables and a silent auction. Make sure you don't miss performances by our individuals with Down syndrome!

## OPENING CEREMONIES at 1:00 p.m.

2014 Ambassadors will be Jonah Edge and Sheri Storm. Every child and adult with Down syndrome will be greeted and given a gift by our ambassadors. Jonah and Sheri will also lead the walk and carry the banner. Awards will be presented for team prizes along with Top 3 individuals with most buddies and Top 3 individuals to raise the most money.

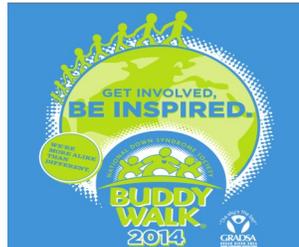
## SILENT AUCTION

We request that family, friends and businesses put a basket together to donate for the Buddy Walk Silent Auction. Themed baskets (UK, Golf, Game Night, etc.) are welcome and appreciated. Please contact Carla at 270-925-0195 or Sherry at 270-302-1739 if you are able to donate a basket. Thanks to Sherry Cook for heading up the Silent Auction.

## T-SHIRTS

T-Shirts will be \$15 this year, any walker with one donation of \$15 or more will get a shirt. To be guaranteed your size, t-shirt orders must have been ordered by September 5th. See picture of t-shirts below. We do have a little different design this year. Hope everyone likes them.

The blue shirts will be for family and friends while the green will be for our VIP's.



## TEAMS

This year we will be having teams. We welcome teams from families, schools, friends or businesses. You can form a team for a certain individual with Down syndrome or for GRADSA as a whole. We will be recognizing Most Creative Name, Most Creative Banner, Largest Team, Best Spirit, Most Creative T-shirt should you decide to design your own and Most Money Raised. All teams should register and log donations online. Please call Haylee Hay at 270-922-1321 or Renea Estes at 270-791-8838 to learn more.

## Online Giving

GRADSA is excited that we have a new website and you will now be able to donate online. Go to [www.gradsa.org](http://www.gradsa.org) and click on DONATE! Please know that you do not have to make a donation to join the festivities and walk with us.

**All donations** must be turned in by 5:00 p.m. Friday night, September 26th or 10:00 p.m. if made online to be counted towards totals for recognition.

**We will have** our volunteer meeting on September 18th at the Logsdon Center at 6:00p.m. We need all of our volunteers to be there if at all possible. If you have any questions please call Ashleigh Bottoms at 270-993-7372. Thanks to Ashleigh Bottoms and Jessica Gorman for being our Volunteer Coordinators.

**We will have** pre-pickup for t-shirts on September 24th and September 25th at the Logsdon Center from 5:00 p.m.—7:00 p.m. If you pre-ordered then you are welcome to pick your up. If you did not pre-order then you can purchase yours at Buddy Walk.

If you have any questions contact Carla at [info@gradsa.org](mailto:info@gradsa.org) or 270-925-0195.



## Congress Weighing Tax-Free Disability Savings Account . . . Disability Scoop 07/25/14

A long-stagnant bill that would establish a new way for people with disabilities to save money without jeopardizing their government benefits is starting to make its way through Congress. The legislation known as the Achieving a Better Life Experience, or ABLÉ, Act would allow people with disabilities to create special accounts where they could save up to \$100,000 without risking eligibility for benefits like Social Security. What's more, under the plan, individuals would not lose Medicaid coverage no matter how much money is deposited in the proposed accounts. A U.S. Senate hearing Wednesday marked the first step in Congress for the bill which has been under consideration since 2006. Under the proposal, individuals with disabilities would be able to create ABLÉ accounts at any financial institution. Modeled after the popular 529 college savings plans, funds deposited in ABLÉ accounts could be used to pay for education, health care, transportation, housing and other expenses. Interest earned on savings within the accounts would be tax-free. In testimony before the Senate panel, Sara Wolff, 31, who has Down syndrome, said that passing the ABLÉ Act would change her life. Under current law, Wolff and many others with disabilities cannot have more than \$2,000 at any given time without forfeiting government benefits. As a result, Wolff said she works two jobs but is careful not to earn more than \$700 a month even though she's capable of far more. "Just because I have Down syndrome, that shouldn't hold me back from achieving my full potential in life. I can work a full-time job, be a productive member of society and pay taxes — but because of these outdated laws placed on individuals with disabilities, people like me are held back in life," said the Moscow, Pa. resident who has amassed more than 250,000 signatures on an online petition calling on Congress to pass the bill. With widespread support from lawmakers in both political parties and the disability community, backers say they expect the ABLÉ Act to be fast-tracked and hope to have a bill on President Barack Obama's desk by the end of September. "This is really the most popular piece of legislation in Congress right now," said Sara Weir, vice president of advocacy at the National Down Syndrome Society, who indicated the bill has 366 co-sponsors in the U.S. House of Representatives and 74 in the Senate. Next up, the House Ways and Means Committee is expected to consider the ABLÉ Act before sending it for a vote in the full House and Senate. Weir said advocates are already in talks with financial institutions who are eager to begin offering the new accounts should the ABLÉ Act become law. "No other bill in Congress has this level of bipartisan, bicameral support," said Sen. Bob Casey, D-Pa., the legislation's lead sponsor. "We want all 535 members of Congress behind this important legislation, and we need to build on our momentum in order to get the bill passed when we return from the August recess."

## White House Gala Honors Special Olympics . . . Disability Scoop 08/01/14

Katy Perry and Stevie Wonder were just a few of the celebrities on hand at a White House gala honoring Special Olympics. The Thursday evening event hosted by the president and first lady saluted the nearly 50-year-old organization that promotes athletics and inclusion for people with intellectual disabilities around the world. Guests including Kareem Abdul Jabbar, Andy Roddick, Maria Shriver and Special Olympics athletes from as far away as Namibia dined in the East Room and were treated to a concert from pop star Perry, who attended with her mom. "It is not often that you get Dikembe Mutombo, Steve Case, Stevie Wonder all in the same room," President Barack Obama said. "In fact, that may be the first time that they were ever in the same sentence." Obama called out Loretta Claiborne, a Special Olympian who has run 26 marathons and spoken before the United Nations General Assembly, who Obama said compared arms with his wife, Michelle, earlier that evening. The president also spoke about Tim Harris who has competed in several sports through Special Olympics and owns an Albuquerque, N.M. restaurant called Tim's Place where the most popular item is the hug he offers his customers. Obama then invited Harris to the podium for a hug of his own. "It makes a lot of sense that the Special Olympics began here in America — a nation founded on the principle of human equality, on the promise of life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness for everybody, not just for some," Obama said. "A few organizations exemplify that principle and that promise better than this one so I want to thank all of you for being a part of the Special Olympics." The White House event comes as Los Angeles readies to host the 2015 Special Olympics World Games. The Obamas will serve as honorary chairs of the international games.



**Congratulations to Chris Hagan. Chris will be going to the 2015 Special Olympic World Games in Los Angeles. Chris will be competing in swim competition. Good Luck Chris and have a great time!**

# Back to School Swim Party 2014...

Everyone seemed to have a great time!



# Happy Birthday!!!

## September

02 Jeff Rhinerson  
 04 Mitchell Hensley  
 09 Isaac Ramsey  
 10 David Fogle  
 11 Kelsey Dueker  
 11 Ashley Pinkston  
 13 Raven Paulson  
 16 Kaleb warman  
 18 Eli Rose  
 18 Alyssa Toerne  
 20 Ruby Galindo  
 21 Denise Howard  
 21 Paige Roberts  
 26 Elias Jorge  
 27 Trevor Brown

## October

01 Eric Winevarger  
 14 Blake Lamb  
 28 Kenneth James  
 28 Isabella Rose Rearden

## November

08 Ana Lilia Sedillo  
 10 Matthew Huston  
 10 Elijah Hale  
 18 Ben Pace  
 25 Joey McAtee  
 30 Steven Ballard

“This is the day which the  
 Lord has made:  
 Let us rejoice and be  
 glad in it.”  
 Psalm 118:24

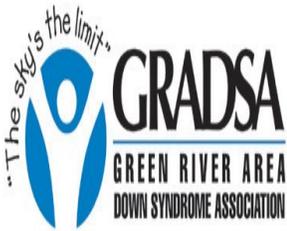
# Happy Birthday!

## Hometown Cuties First Day of School...

				
David Leonard	Landon Ashby	Matthew Huston with sister Haley	Mitchell Hensley	Paige Jackson

### Fazoli's Birthday Club:

Fazoli's, 5060 Frederica St., is treating individuals with Down Syndrome to a free meal to celebrate their special day. Children ages 12 and under can choose a kid's meal while teens and adults have their choice of a small spaghetti with marinara or meat sauce. To receive your free meal, show this column to the cashier during the month of your Birthday.



**MISSION STATEMENT**

GRADSA'S mission is to enable families enriched with the Down syndrome connection to share resources, build friendships and advocate together for the future of individuals with Down syndrome.

**SERVICES**

GRADSA is an affiliate of the National Down Syndrome Society and the National Down Syndrome Congress. GRADSA is a non-profit 501(c)3 organization that provides its members with a bi-monthly newsletter, educational workshops, social activities, a website, a parent outreach program and a hospital outreach program. There are no membership fees to join.

**POLICY STATEMENT**

GRADSA does not endorse any specific therapy, treatment or educational setting. We provide a variety of information and viewpoints. However, each family must make an individual choice.

**PRINTING OF ARTICLES**

GRADSA welcomes articles from parents, professionals and other interested parties. Material for consideration should be sent to Carla Renfrow at [info@gradsa.org](mailto:info@gradsa.org). Articles written for *Heart-Strings* may be reproduced if credit is given to the original author and GRADSA.

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