

Heart Strings



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

Volume 2 2011

UPCOMING EVENTS

- May 7** GRADSA Annual Spring Fling
First General Baptist Church
620 Maple Avenue
11:00 a.m.—2:00 p.m.
- April 26** *Tumbleweed Restaurant
All Day Fundraiser
- Spring** Be ready for Education Fair
- June 27** Beef O Brady's—4 p.m. to close
10% of all sales goes to GRADSA
- DSAW** October 8th—Moreland Park

GRADSA needs your HELP!!!
Please contact Carla at 270-925-0195 or info@gradsa.org. to let us know of any workshops/events that you would like to see available .
Your voice is *greatly appreciated.*

*Tumbleweed Fundraiser

Free child's meal with each adult purchase from 4-close plus a children's pavilion with activities. Come have fun and help GRADSA.

Must have voucher for 10% to go to GRADSA.

Contact Carla for your copy of a voucher or cut out on page 4 of this newsletter. There are 4 vouchers so please share with family and friends.

Comments from Carla...

Hello Everyone...

I can't believe it is already April, where does the time go? The Valentines Dance was so much fun, I can't wait for the next dance. A big thanks to everyone that helped make it a success . I think we should partner with Special Olympics for more events in the future. I hope you enjoy the pictures of the dance inside the newsletter.

I did receive a couple email addresses from families since requesting them in the last newsletter but I feel certain there are a lot I still do not have. If you have an email contact and not currently on the GRADSA email list please forward to me so you will receive all updated info. I would still love to receive stories, pictures, suggestions, etc. for upcoming newsletters.

We just started the planning of DSAW 2011. We hope it will be a great success and look forward to everyone participating and helping.

As always Thank You so much for allowing me to be a part of GRADSA.

Resources...

Down Syndrome Foundation of Orange County has a number of free online resources available. Register for free access to download math worksheets www.dsfo.org. Email info@dsfo.org to request an Everyday Math Activity handout, Early Number Cheat Sheet or lost of math-related resources. To read more about math research or for ideas on working with your child at any age, visit www.downsed.org and review DownsEd International's number Skills series.

www.caseylifeskills.org - Free and easy to use tools to help young people prepare for adulthood. The life skills assessments provide instant feedback. Customized learning plans provide a clear outline of next steps, and the accompanying teaching resources are available for free or at a minimal cost.

www.oneplaceforspecialneeds.org - Easy to find resources for special needs.

Available online for free—Down Syndrome Education International's *See and Learn* programs
www.see-and-learn.org

Convenient, ready-to-use kits

Ready-to-use *See and Learn* kits offer the convenience of pre-made guides, checklists, picture and word cards, reading books and other teaching materials in a plastic storage box. The resources are printed in full, high quality color, with materials printed on card and cut ready for use straight out of the box. Three kits are available:

See and Learn First Word Pictures - the first step in the *See and Learn Language and Reading* program teaches the first 60 words using pictures and matching and selecting activities

See and Learn First Written Words - the second step in the *See and Learn Language and Reading* program uses reading as a support to language development introducing 16 written words and 34 two key word phrases

See and Learn More Word Pictures - the second step in the *See and Learn Language*

DE-FANG YOUR PHONE—Don't trust yourself to stick to the "No phone" rule on a day-to-day basis? Using your phone's internal GPS, these apps can detect when you're driving and automatically block calls, texts and e-mails. Three to check out:

Drive Safe.ly—Download free at drivesafe.ly/download

ZoomSafer—2.95 a month

iZUP—49.95 a year or 4.95 a month

What's APPening?

Have you checked out Itunes lately? They have all kinds of special needs apps. You can get ABC's, surprise animations, sound effects, games, flash cards, etc. Check it out. A lot of their apps can be downloaded to smart phones and mp3 players that are not Apple.

Tips for overcoming writing disabilities...

Many children with disabilities struggle with writing assignments in school. Whether the difficulty lies with the physical act of writing (holding a pencil, using a keyboard, forming letters), writing mechanics (grammar and spelling) or getting thoughts onto paper, writing can become a painful task for students with disabilities. Web tools can be a great way of beginning to address some of these issues. Here are some suggestions:

- Write stories and create animated movies using [Kerpoof](#). Pre-designed sets and strips can be used as story-starters, or design your own stories. Studies have shown that storytelling is an essential element of building language skills and can help students improve their writing.
- Use public domain images and photos on Flickr to create story projects. Use pictures to tell a story, make up a story based on a picture, or upload their own photos (more appropriate for older students) to tell a story. Current Flickr storytelling projects include [telling a story in 5 frames](#), [telling the story of a photo in 6 words](#), and [using a photo as the basis for a creative writing activity](#). Check them out for inspiration!
- Create individual blogs where you post stories, responses to assigned prompts and other high interest writing. Ask friends to use the comments sections for feedback. This also gives you an online writing portfolio so you can look back at your writing over the year. [Fifth Grade Web Writers](#) is a great example of this use of a blog. Studies have shown that teenage bloggers write more (both in and out of school) than their peers without blogs.
- If you struggle with writing mechanics, try suggesting a contextual spellchecker. For many with learning disabilities, a traditional spellchecker is not sufficient as it doesn't identify misused words, or words that are spelled correctly but not used in the correct context (their, there and they're is a good example). [Microsoft Word 2007](#) features a built-in contextual spellchecker, and other free versions exist online.
- Edit your documents using a text-to-speech program. Hearing your writing read aloud can help pick out errors and misused words. Full-featured [text-to-speech](#) software programs are available, and several free (and very basic) versions can be found online. Both PCs and Macs also have simple text-to-speech capabilities built in to their operating systems.

OUR COMMUNITY in the Messenger-Inquirer...

World Down Syndrome Day

World Down Syndrome Day takes place on 21 March every year. This date (21/3) represents the 3 copies of chromosome 21, which is unique to people with Down syndrome. The aims of World Down Syndrome Day are to promote awareness and understanding, seek international support, and to achieve dignity, equal rights and a better life for people with Down syndrome everywhere.

Sponsored by:

GRADSA

(Green River Area Down Syndrome Association)

PO Box 2031, Owensboro, KY 42302

270-925-0195

info@gradsa.org

www.gradsa.org



DSAW DOWN SYNDROME AWARENESS WALK

October 8th, 2011 Moreland Park
11am-2pm



Chapel Estes
of Owensboro

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.



Clayton Eddings
of Madisonville

Vouchers below are for the Tumbleweed Fundraiser. Hope to see you all there...

Present this coupon on
Tuesday, April 26, 2011
at the Owensboro
TUMBLEWEED
5257 Frederica Street
and the Owensboro GRADSA
will receive
10%
of the proceeds from your meal.
TUMBLEWEED®
SOUTHWEST GRILL
1 coupon per check. Not valid with other offer.

Present this coupon on
Tuesday, April 26, 2011
at the Owensboro
TUMBLEWEED
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COMING UP...

Last year several local non profits teamed up to do a fundraiser for WHAS Crusade for Children (<http://www.whascrusade.org/>). In case you are not familiar with them, their mission is to change the lives of children with special needs in Kentucky and Indiana. They have been very generous in their support of local charities that have requested funds through their annual grant process, including Wendell Foster's Campus, Western Kentucky Assistive Technology Center, Dream Riders, Kentucky Autism Program-Owensboro, CASA, and Two Rivers Buddy Ball. They look favorably upon organizations that host fundraisers to support their efforts, thus the reason we began this collaboration last year.

Several downtown businesses have agreed to let WHAS use their parking lots and charge for parking. Each organization provides 6 volunteers to cover three 2-hour shifts. WFC coordinates the fundraiser, so all you have to do is provide a few volunteers, show up and collect money...it's that easy! If you have not applied for a grant before, this would be a great opportunity to make GRADSA's name visible to the Crusade prior to the next funding cycle.

Please contact Carla ASAP at 925-0195 or iinfo@gradsa.org to sign up for a shift.

DSAW 2011 needs your help!

GRADSA is no longer paying for a DSAW Coordinator so we need help in many areas.

We are currently needing individuals that are home during the day to make phone calls to business'.

We are needing someone that would be willing to contact local restaurants to set up fundraisers. Currently we have Beef O Brady's, Tumbleweed and Real Hacienda. There are so many restaurants that offer this we should have at least 1 or 2 per month. The restaurants that do not require vouchers are preferred but we will schedule any.

We also need individuals to call upon business' that are not allowed to wear jeans to work. We would like to sponsor a "Dress Down for Downs Day". The company would have a certain day that employees can wear jeans but they have to pay and the money goes to GRADSA.

If you can help please contact Carla at 925-0195. THANKS SO MUCH.

A workshop entitled "A Parent's Guide to Your Child's IEP/504 Plan: Navigate the Documents and Help Your Child Succeed" will be held on Tuesday, May 10, from 6:30 - 8:00 p.m. The workshop will be presented jointly by the Special Education Directors from Daviess County Public Schools and Owensboro Public Schools, Robin Bush and Kim Johnson. The session will provide an overview of the IEP and 504 documents and assist parents in preparing for their child's next meeting. Participants will learn the special education/504 lingo and where to find important information on each of the documents.

The workshop will be held in the Young Meeting House at Wendell Foster's Campus, 815 Triplett Street, Owensboro, KY. For more information, contact Cindy Huston @ (270) 852-1478 or email: chuston@wfcampus.org

Valentine's Dance

This was the most fun I have had in along time. I believe everyone had a wonderful time. Hope you enjoy the pictures.



**2011
King & Queen
Mark
&
Mary**



Yvonne Harl is ready to...raise the ROOF!!!

Alan Wood & Shawn Riney...Without a doubt...the LIFE of the party not to mention extremely handsome!!!



Dana Hamilton...This girl can DANCE!!!



Michael Smith and Shannon Mahoney... what a happy and cute couple



News from NDSC

Senate Hears Important Testimony on Employment of People with Disabilities

On March 2, 2011 Senator Tom Harkin (D-IA), Chairman of the Health, Education, Labor and Pensions (HELP) Committee convened the first in a series of hearings to examine how to improve employment opportunities for people with intellectual disabilities. According to Senator Harkin's press release:

"So, this hearing is one of the first steps to address this problem of under-participation in the workforce by persons with disabilities. I am asking my colleagues to join with me in working toward the great goals of significantly increasing the employment rate, decreasing the poverty rate, and increasing the quality of life of persons with disabilities. The important work we have done since the landmark passage 35 years ago of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act, and 20 years ago of the Americans with Disabilities Act, dramatically improved the lives of persons with disabilities. We have addressed education and we have addressed access. Now we must address employment and economic well being.

David Egan, a young man with Down syndrome and a board member of the Down Syndrome Association of Northern Virginia testified about his job as a distribution clerk at a consulting firm in Washington, D.C. In his testimony Mr. Egan stated:

"I am treated like other employees at Booz Allen Hamilton. I receive benefits, time off and a 360 degree assessment like everyone else. I go to compulsory training, all hands meetings, and attend corporate events. The company cares about my personal and professional development. . . I feel that I am part of the team."

Testimony and archived videos will be posted at: <http://help.senate.gov/hearings/>

Senate Introduces IDEA Expert Witness Fees Bill *Adapted in Part from the Council of Parent Attorneys and Advocates*

On March 17, 2011, legislation was introduced in the House of Representatives and the Senate to enable parents to recover expert witness fees in due process hearings and lawsuits under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA). NDSC played a key role in getting this legislation introduced previously in the House of Representatives.

The IDEA Fairness Restoration Act (S. 613) (H.R. 1208) was introduced in the Senate by Senator Tom Harkin (D-IA), Chair of the Senate Health Education Labor and Pensions Committee; Senator Barbara Mikulski (D-MD), and Senator Bernie Sanders (I-VT); and introduced in the House of Representatives by Congressman Chris Van Hollen (D-MD) and Congressman Pete Sessions (R-TX).

In its [*Arlington Central School District v. Murphy \(2006\)*](#) decision the Supreme Court decided that parents who win/prevail in their IDEA cases cannot get expert witness fees. This ruling was made in spite of the fact that the legislative history to the 1988 IDEA attorney fees provision clearly states that expert fees are covered the Supreme Court. The bipartisan IDEA Fairness Restoration Act will restore Congress' original intent and make due process hearings more affordable for parents of children with disabilities.

Without the ability to recover their expert witness fees, few parents could afford to exercise their constitutional and IDEA rights to challenge denial of a Free Appropriate Public Education to their children by school districts. This is because the Supreme Court ruled, in another IDEA [*decision \(Schaffer v. Weast\)*](#) that the party requesting a due process hearing (usually the parents) has the burden of proof.

This means that they must present admissible evidence about educational methodology, complex behavioral supports, medical issues, and other technical subjects. Only qualified expert witnesses can present this technical testimony and such testimony can easily cost many thousands of dollars.

These bill should be posted shortly at <http://thomas.loc.gov>. NDSC will let readers know when timely advocacy efforts are needed.

New Legislation Introduced to Increase Employment Opportunities

On Friday, March 4, 2010 a Congressional briefing was held which was sponsored by the Collaboration to Promote Self-Determination entitled "*Taking a TEAM Approach to Effective Transition Policy for Youth with Significant Disabilities: Using Data, Promising Practices, and Sound Policies to Promote Transitioning towards Excellence, Achievement and Mobility (TEAM).*"

This briefing was held to educate Hill staffers about the poor outcomes for students with disabilities transitioning from high school and to encourage co-sponsorship of the TEAM Acts.

These three Acts (H.R. 602, 603 and 604) are designed to improve outcomes by creating a system that is designed to ensure that youth with disabilities will have the services and supports necessary to transition from high school to post-secondary or integrated employment. Currently, many schools lack effective transition programs and very few individuals with disabilities who have left high school are employed. Experts in the field presented the data demonstrating the need for the transition reforms of the TEAM Acts.

U.S. Representatives Greg Harper (R.MS) and Cathy McMorris-Rogers (R.WA) introduced the three bills which amend the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA), the Developmental Disabilities Act and the Rehabilitation Act of 1973. To read these bills, go to <http://thomas.loc.gov> and under bill number enter H.R. 602, 603 and 604.

Sensory Smart Parent Website offers helpful tips...

Just as your child needs food throughout the course of the day, he needs sensory input, and opportunities for getting away from stimulation, spread out over the whole day. A "sensory diet" is a carefully designed, personalized activity plan that provides the sensory input a person needs to stay focused and organized throughout the day.

Visit: SensorySmartParent.com for more details and helpful information.

Looking for summer camps for your child or youth?

Visit : <http://nichcy.org/publications/camps>

Did anyone see 60 minutes with Albert Pujols? Wow, it was awesome. If you missed it you can check it out on You Tube. Just type in, "60 minutes with Albert Pujols." I love baseball and now St. Louis Cardinals is my new favorite team!!! Way to go Albert Pujols!!!

Looking for some good movies? Visit www.sproutflix.org for some great suggestions for movies concerning Down syndrome.

Enrichment Fund Application Now Available

The Joshua O'Neill and Zeshan Tabani Enrichment Fund offers financial assistance to young adults (18+) who have Down syndrome and wish to continue to enrich their lives by enrolling in postsecondary programs or taking enrichment classes that will help them to enrich life through employment, independent living skills, life skills or another way. All applications must be postmarked or emailed by July 15th. For your application go to: www.ndss.org and type in *enrichment fund*.

Organizations Giving iPads to special needs families

While it's not as easy as it sounds there are organizations out there giving away iPads to children with special needs.

Here is a list of some of them previously mentioned on Squidalicious.

If you have any to add please let me know.

- [iHelp for Special Needs](#) is dedicated to help raise funds for children with special needs to receive iPads & Apps to assist with communication, life & Social skills.
- [The Conover Company](#) is a maker of special needs apps for the iPhone and iPad. They also give out the Conover Mobile Technology Grant is to promote the use of mobile technology and their apps to improve an individuals freedom and independence.
- [Danny's Wish](#) is committed to providing life enhancing resources and experiences for children and families dealing with autism and autism spectrum disorders. Their goal for this campaign is to raise \$50,000 to supply approximately 100 iPads to those children affected and in need the most.
- [iPads4U](#) The blog [Apps 4 Children with special needs](#) is giving an iPad away to a family in need every time \$500 is raised.

Happy Birthday!!!

April

2 Toy Taylor
7 Chapel Estes
12 Latasha Jones
13 Peyton VanMeter
13 Seth Johnson
25 Scott Cissna
30 Leland Isbill
McKenzie White

June

1 Neal Sweeney
5 Caleb Francis
15 Jason Snell
17 Tina Miller
18 Zeriam Newcom
18 Chris Hagan
23 Amie Morris
27 Joseph Clements

May

1 Mason Clark
13 Colin Powers
20 Levi Wright
25 Larry Basham
25 Amanda Eaton
31 Dustin Lee

“This is the day which the
Lord has made;
Let us rejoice and be
glad in it.”

Psalm 118:24



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 kids meal while teens and adults have their choice of a small spaghetti with marinara or meat sauce. To receive you 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 it's 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. Articles written for *Heart-Strings* may be reproduced if credit is given to the original author and GRADSA. Permission to reprint articles not original to *HeartStrings* should be acquired from the original source.

GRADSA
P. O. Box 2031
Owensboro, KY

info@gradsa.org
www.gradsa.org

Brenda Walker, President		Carla Renfrow, Executive Director	Stephanie Smith, Past Pres.
Phone: 270-316-7219		Phone: 270-925-0195	
Email: Brenda_walker@daviess.kyschools.us		email: info@gradsa.org	
Board Members:			
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