

# Heart Strings



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

Volume 23 September-October 2015

## UPCOMING EVENTS

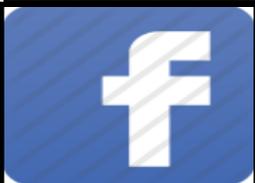
**September 26th Buddy Walk McConnell Plaza SEVERAL CHANGES CHECK OUT INFO INSIDE**  
11-1:30 Pre-Registration starts at 10:30. See Details inside of newsletter. Very important.

**October 24th Fall Family Fun Night Reid's Orchard 6:00 p.m. -9:00 p.m.**  
This year it will be at Reid's Orchard. Lots of games, hayride, food, etc. Don't miss out on the fun!  
RSVP to Carla at [info@gradsa.org](mailto:info@gradsa.org) or 270-925-0195 before October 21st!

**October 29th "Steps to Independence" Presented by Down Syndrome Association of Louisville**  
6:00 p.m.—8:00 p.m. Ron Logsdon Center Great Opportunity for all ages. MORE DETAILS INSIDE!

**December 5th Christmas Party Bellevue Baptist Church 6:00 p.m.**  
As you all know this is one of our biggest and nicest events. Make sure you attend for a great time and a wonderful opportunity to meet our families. RSVP to Carla by November 30th at [info@gradsa.org](mailto:info@gradsa.org) or 270-925-0195.

**December 18th Parents Night Out Logsdon Center 6:00 p.m. to 8:30 p.m.**  
We will have food, movies and games. Perfect chance for a nice dinner out or that last minute Christmas Shopping. Siblings welcome. RSVP to Carla by December 8th 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 email address to [info@gradsa.org](mailto:info@gradsa.org) or 270-925-0195.**  
**The majority of our information is sent by email and on Facebook so let's get connected! Don't miss out!!!**

## Comments from Carla...

### **Hello Everyone...**

I hope everyone is doing well. A big thanks to Helen Wright. Helen is having a get together each month with mothers at different restaurants. I was fortunate to attend in August and we had a great time. Helen does the invites on Facebook. Make sure you friend "Helen Wright" to be invited, if you are not on FB then please let me know and I will make sure you are notified of the date and time. Although this consists of GRADSA mothers (and me) it is a get together for friends, not a GRADSA event. It's almost time for Buddy Walk and we are so excited. There have been several changes this year at the actual event so please make sure you read the information inside. We also started our Fundraising and Registration website from DS Connex. What a great service. We currently have 24 active teams and over 200 registrants. This is amazing and thanks so much to everyone that has formed a team and utilized this website. Another great event we have coming that we are super excited about is our Education Workshop "Steps to Independence" on October 29th. We will have 2 wonderful speakers from the Down Syndrome Association of Louisville. Again, make sure you check out all the details inside the newsletter. I know everyone is extremely busy which makes it hard to attend these events but we feel this one will be very beneficial and one of our best. We have several individuals that will be playing at state tournament for Special Olympics Softball the weekend of September 12th in Bowling Green. Good Luck to all of you and have a great time. GRADSA's Fit with Friends Summer Camp was a huge success. Thanks to everyone that attended. I have a pic of each participant in this newsletter but for lots of action pics please visit our website or FB page. You can tell by the pics what a great time they had. We also had a great time at our Annual Back to School Pool Party which is always a good time and a good turnout. Thanks to everyone who helped or donated lunches at our WBKR Yard Party. We sold out! A special thanks to Atmos Energy, Lil Stevie's Pizza of Masonville and Chick-Fil-A. We could not have done it without their donations! Lots of great pics in this issue and on our website and FB page. Love you all bunches...

# Buddy Walk...

We have several important changes for Buddy Walk this year...

- 1) Everyone will be required to register to get their free lunch. If you do not have a wristband then you will not get a free lunch. This is to help GRADSA determine how many people attend this event. We need this information for reporting and grants. Please understand and be patient. It will be a very short registration form but must be completed. If you want to beat the lines you can register at : <http://www.ds-stride.org/gradsabuddywalk> and click on the blue register button. If you are representing a team you will also pick your team from here. You can also go to [www.gradsa.org](http://www.gradsa.org) and click on the landing page to be directed to the DS Connex site. It is too late to order T-shirts but we will have a very limited quantity on hand to sell the day of the event.
- 2) Event starts at 11:00 a.m. but pre-registration will start at 10:30 a.m. **PLEASE note that this year the actual walk will start at 11:30 a.m., not 1:15 p.m.** We hope this will be a good change. We have had a lot of concerns in the past with children being too tired by 1:15 and some extended family comes when it starts but could not stay that long. We are hoping this will be a great fix.
- 3) We have moved! We will be at the McConnell Plaza across from Hampton Inn.
- 4) You can still create a fundraising team by going to the same website as above. You will start on the blue register button and then you can register yourself or a team. There are also directions on the site under "Team Captain." If you have any problems please contact Scott Sullivan at [scott@ffponline.net](mailto:scott@ffponline.net) or Carla at [info@gradsa.org](mailto:info@gradsa.org) or 270-925-0195. Thanks so much to the 24 teams we currently have signed up. There are team incentives this year.
  - a) The last 4 weeks leading up to Buddy Walk there will be a weekly drawing for a gift card, raffle tickets, etc.
  - b) Everyone that raises at least \$1,000 will be in a drawing for Titan-Falcons tickets on Oct. 25th
  - c) Everyone that raises at least \$4,000 will receive an iPad

Congratulations to Adrienne Free for winning ROMP tickets. Congratulations to Mitchell Hensley for winning Holiday World tickets. Congratulations to Kandi Gilbreath (team captain of DCHS Buddies) who won a gift card to Salsarita's. Huge congratulations to Emily Stone, Chapel Estes, Mitchell Hensley and Blake Lamb. They will be in a drawing to be on GRADSA's 2016 Billboard!



## 2015 Buddy Walk Agenda September, 26th 2015 McConnell Plaza on the River



### Important Changes on time of Walk-Please Read

10:30 Registration is Open

11:00 Impending Arrival of Ambassadors: Leland Isbill and Taylor Palmer

11:20 Prayer. National Anthem by Dana Hamilton

11:30 Official Walk

Lunch will be ready when participants start returning from Walk

12:15 Bowling Green's Jammerz and Rockerz Dance Team to Perform

12:30 Fit with Friends and Healthpark with KY Mavericks

12:45 Announcements

1:10 Introduce Ambassadors.

Introduce our "Guests of Honor" and pass out gifts.

1:30 Announce Winners of All Team Categories

Drawings for Team Incentives

Recognize any Team that raised \$4,000 and receives an iPad

Announce Basket and 50/50 Winners

## "Steps to Independence" ...

This Educational Workshop will be presented by:

Sara Tinker-Career Solutions Specialist-Down Syndrome of Louisville

Diana Merzweiler-Executive Director of Down Syndrome of Louisville

Topics covered will ne:

Transition preparedness, building healthy habits and employment.

How families can prepare for employment early on in their loved one's life

How to build networks of people that can help you later in life

What to look for to be sure their schools prepare them

How to pick a great supportive employment agency

These are just a few of the items covered and will be helpful information for all ages .

Make sure you RSVP to Carla at [info@gradsa.org](mailto:info@gradsa.org) or 270-925-0195

## FED Aims to Help College Students with Disabilities... Disability Scoop 07/08/15

Federal officials are looking to add new resources to support students with disabilities pursuing higher education. The U.S. Department of Education said it plans to fund a new National Center for Information and Technical Support for Postsecondary Students With Disabilities. This center would "provide technical assistance and information on best and promising practices for students with disabilities as they transition to or attend postsecondary education," the Education Department said in a notice published in the Federal Register announcing the funding availability. Under federal law, colleges and universities are prohibited from discriminating against students with disabilities, but their obligations are far less comprehensive than the requirements for elementary and secondary schools under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act. The objective of the new center would be to help those with disabilities and their families understand the different rights and protections afforded them under section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act and the Americans with Disabilities Act as they consider and pursue postsecondary educational opportunities, the Education Department said. What's more, the center would also be tasked with supporting colleges and universities in fulfilling their obligations to accommodate students with disabilities, according to the federal notice.

## Feds: Most States Failing To Meet Special Ed Obligations... Disability

Scoop 07/14/15

Federal officials indicate that less than half of states are meeting their obligations under special education law. The U.S. Department of Education says that just 19 states qualified for the "meets requirements" designation for the 2013-2014 school year. The rest of states were classified as "needs assistance" or "needs intervention." Under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act, the Education Department must evaluate states annually on their efforts to implement special education programs. The ratings carry significant weight. If a state fails to meet requirements for two or more years, the Department of Education must take enforcement action, which can include a corrective action plan or withholding funds, among other steps. This is the second year that the Education Department has relied on stricter measures to assess compliance. Previously, states were graded based on their adherence to procedural requirements like completing evaluations or due process hearings. Now, however, federal officials are taking into account student performance and functional outcomes for kids with disabilities in addition to compliance. States were notified in letters dated June 30 of their standing. For the ninth consecutive year, federal officials said that Washington, DC "needs intervention." The same designation was given to Texas for the second year in a row. States determined to "meet requirements" for the 2013-2014 school year include Connecticut, Indiana, Iowa, Kansas, Kentucky, Maryland, Massachusetts, Minnesota, Missouri, Nebraska, New Hampshire, New Jersey, Oklahoma, Pennsylvania, Rhode Island, Vermont, Virginia, Wisconsin and Wyoming. The Education Department said that the remaining states need assistance.

## NIKE Creates Shoe for People with Disabilities . . . Disability Scoop 07/17/15

Thanks to a plea from a teen with cerebral palsy seeking shoes he could put on his feet independently, Nike is introducing sneakers designed specifically for people with disabilities. Matthew Walzer, then 16, wrote an open letter to Nike in 2012 asking the athletic-wear giant to make a more accessible line of shoes that would still provide the support people like him need. "At 16 years old, I am able to completely dress myself, but my parents still have to tie my shoes. As a teenager who is striving to become totally self-sufficient, I find this extremely frustrating, and at times, embarrassing," Walzer wrote. "My dream is to go to the college of my choice without having to worry about someone coming to tie my shoes every day. "Now, Walzer is getting his wish. The company said this week that after working with Walzer for three years on testing prototypes, they are introducing an "easy-entry footwear system." Rather than rely on laces, the new approach uses a wrap-around zipper system to secure the shoe. What's more, a larger opening at the back makes it easier to slide the foot in and out. "In talking to Matthew and many other athletes with disabilities, the ease of entry was just as important as the lacing solution," Tobie Hatfield, a Nike designer, said in a posting on the company's website. "While varying levels of mobility make it difficult to provide a universal solution, we feel this is a significant development for anyone who has ever struggled with independently securing their foot within Nike shoes." Starting Thursday, limited quantities of the LeBron Soldier 8 FLYEASE will be available on Nike.com. Additional FLYEASE styles are in the works, the company said. "I knew what I was doing was, in football terms, 'a Hail Mary,' and to be quite honest I had very low expectations. I was expecting a very polite letter back in recognition of my request," Walzer, who is now a sophomore at Florida Gulf Coast University, said in the Nike posting. "There are not enough 'thank yous' in the world to express my undying gratitude."



## Basketball Player Names School Gym after Cheerleader with Down syndrome . . . Good Morning America 03/12/15

When members of a school basketball team saw bullies hassling Desiree Andrews, a 14-year-old cheerleader with Down Syndrome, they did something amazing for her. "They were pointing and laughing at her from the stands," says Miles Rodriguez, a basketball player at Lincoln Middle School in Wisconsin. "It's not funny to make fun of somebody by the way they look or act." Without a second thought, the team walked off the court to demonstrate against those bullying Desiree. "You have these kids that were picking on her and it came to the attention of the team, said Timothy Nieman, the school's athletic director. "The team as a whole has something to say about it. They came out and said, 'Hey, she is here to support us. You guys need to cut it out.'" The students then took Desiree under their wing, even naming the school gym "D's House" after the teen. "She was happy that we had her side and that we had her back," said one of the players, Scooter Terrien. "You can tell she was happy because she never took the smile off her face." Since catching fire, the logo "D's House" has been plastered onto t-shirts and other promotional material. "People will say that kids look up to teachers," Nieman said. "Well, I think in this case that many teachers are looking up to them." In the future, members of the Lincoln Knights basketball team said they'll keep striving to eliminate bullying in their school, no matter how hard the fight. "This is not a one-time thing," said player Harice Hodges. "You always have to stick up for kids that are bullied. It's the right thing to do."



**If you are currently enrolled in Kroger Rewards and have GRADSA picked as your charity please go in and update. Our year is up and you do have to update your charity each year. THANKS SO MUCH!**

## Awareness Video...

GRADSA is so excited to announce that our "Awareness Video" will be launched Wednesday, September 9th. PLEASE make sure you go to our FB Page and LIKE and SHARE this video. PBI Bank will donate \$1 for every LIKE/SHARE we receive up to \$1,500! This is an amazing opportunity and a great way to help raise awareness. This project started with 6 individual 2 minute videos which included Dana Hamilton, Mitchell Hensley, Michael Smith, Matthew Huston, Sam Winstead and Leland Isbill. If you have not seen these great videos they are on our website under the Awareness tab. The final video is 19 minutes and it is a wonderful video to help educate and raise awareness on Down syndrome. Special thanks to Owensboro Health for the grant and to Mike Dunn with Evermore Productions for the making of the video. Please make sure you get to see it. It features several of our wonderful family members.

## GRADSA's Funding Policies...

Theses were in the Jan.,-Feb. newsletter but we have talked to several people here recently that were not aware so I am running this again...

### **Education Conference Funding**

**PURPOSE:** To encourage individuals with Down syndrome, their families and GRADSA leadership to continue their education through conferences, seminars, and extra-curricular activities. Funds are to assist with registration, transportation and other associated expenses.

**WHO CAN APPLY:** An individual with Down syndrome, a parent or legal guardian of an individual with Down syndrome or a GRADSA board/committee member.

**HOW TO APPLY:** Submit the following to GRADSA, PO Box 2031, Owensboro, KY 42302 or email to [in-fo@gradsa.org](mailto:info@gradsa.org).

- Completed application form
- Receipts for which reimbursement is being requested

**ADDITIONAL DETAILS:** All requests are subject to funding availability and must be approved by the board prior to reimbursement. Requests must be submitted within 30 days of the date printed on the receipts or within 30 days following the event date. GRADSA will only reimburse for actual expenses incurred after the event has begun or has taken place. In addition, GRADSA requests that the beneficiary or their family submit or present a brief summary to the board of how the event was beneficial. Any conferences or seminars must be specific to the Down syndrome or Special Needs Community. Scholarships will be awarded between \$150-\$500, with priority given to those that can most adequately share their experience with the GRADSA community. Maximum scholarship of \$500 per family per calendar year.

### **Travel Reimbursement Funding**

**PURPOSE:** To financially assist GRADSA families and board members when traveling out-of-town for special Down syndrome events or medical visits. Funds are to assist with gas, lodging, food and other travel related expenses.

**WHO CAN APPLY:** A family affiliated and involved with GRADSA whose primary purpose for travel is for the family member with Down syndrome; or a board member traveling for a Down syndrome event that will enhance the mission of the GRADSA community.

**HOW TO APPLY:** Submit the following to GRADSA, PO Box 2031, Owensboro, KY 42302 or email to [in-fo@gradsa.org](mailto:info@gradsa.org).

- Completed application form
- Receipts for which reimbursement is being requested

**ADDITIONAL DETAILS:** All requests are subject to funding availability and must be approved by the board prior to reimbursement. Requests must be submitted within 30 days of the date printed on the receipts. GRADSA will only reimburse for actual expenses incurred. Limit of \$400 per family per calendar year.

**Applications for these funds are available on [www.gradsa.org](http://www.gradsa.org). For a printed copy please contact Carla at 270-925-0195.**

## GRADSA Announcement...

GRADSA Board is happy to announce we have added Hopkins County to our coverage area. We have had families in this county for a while so we wanted to make sure they felt welcome and make it legal. Special thanks to Board Member and Attorney Mark Pfeifer for the research into this matter to be sure we could still use the Green River Area name. That now includes Daviess, McLean, Ohio, Hancock, Henderson, Union, Webster and Hopkins. We do have a few families from other counties and we are thrilled you are a part of GRADSA.

# Fit with Friends Summer Camp 2015...



# Back to School Pool Party 2015...



# WBKR Yard Party 2015!!!



See more pics at [www.gradsa.org](http://www.gradsa.org) or [www.facebook/GRADSA](https://www.facebook.com/GRADSA)

# Happy Birthday!!!

## September

04 Mitchell Hensley  
09 Isaac David Ramsey  
10 David Fogle  
11 Kelsey Dueker  
11 Ashley Pinkston  
13 Raven Paulson  
16 Kaleb Warman  
18 Alyssa Toerne  
20 Ruby Galindo  
21 Denise Howard  
26 Elias Jorge  
27 Trevor Brown

## November

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

## October

01 Eric Winevarger  
14 Blake Lamb  
28 Kenneth James  
28 Isabella Reardon

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

# Happy Birthday!

If your child's birthday is not in the newsletter then please let Carla know the date at [info@gradsa.org](mailto:info@gradsa.org) or 270-925-0195. We are missing several birth dates. We honestly hate to leave anyone out. Thanks so much.

## GRADSA's Cuties...



Sweet Trevor Brown with his equally sweet mother at work. He was worn out after the WBKR Yard Party! Thanks for all your hard work Trevor!

Matthew Huston at the state Basketball finals. OHS won the whole thing. This is the cover page of the OHS Yearbook. Congrats Matthew!



## 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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