

# Heart Strings



**Our children and adults with Down syndrome**

**are the heart of our organization and our most precious gifts.**

**Volume 25 January-February 2016**

## UPCOMING EVENTS

**February 13th** GRADSA/SOKY Valentine's Dance, Owensboro Middle School North Campus, 7:00 p.m.-9:00 p.m.  
RSVP to Carla at 270-925-0195 or [info@gradsa.org](mailto:info@gradsa.org)

**February 25th** Join Dr. Maggie Bittman for our Behavior Management/ABA Workshop. 6:00 p.m. at the Logsdon Center. RSVP to Carla at 270-925-0195 or [info@gradsa.org](mailto:info@gradsa.org)

**March 5th** GRADSA Dance Team performs at Riverpark Center. We will be doing a Flashmob at 1:30 p.m. then performing at 4:00 p.m. Come show your support!

**March 19th** Color Blast 5K Sign up at [www.colorblast5k.org](http://www.colorblast5k.org) or contact Carla at 270-925-0195 or [info@gradsa.org](mailto:info@gradsa.org) to volunteer.

**March 20th** World Down Syndrome Day Celebration. Tailgating Party at Moreland Park before Mavericks game. Possible discounted pricing for game. Watch for more details.

**April** Speech Therapist to offer workshop. Watch for more information.

**May 30th** Holiday World Watch for more information on cost and reservations.

**August** IEP Workshop presented by Kim Johnson and Robin Bush along with Waivers Update. This will be on a Saturday morning. Watch for more info.

**August 31st** Annual Back to School Pool Party Cravens Pool. Watch for dates to start signing up.

**September** WBKR Yard Party. Watch for more details.

**September 24th** Buddy Walk. Get your teams formed and start fundraising now! Lots of incentives to be offered. Watch for more information.

**October 22nd** Fall Family Fun Night at Reid's!

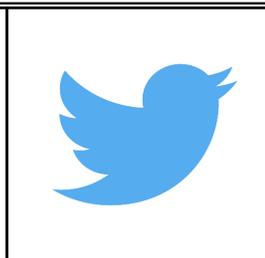
**November** Puberty workshop presented by Diana Merzweiler from Down Syndrome Louisville.

**December 3rd** GRADSA's Christmas Party.

**December 16th** Parents Night Out.



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!



Are you on Twitter?  
Then you can keep up with us by following:  
**@dsgradsa**

## Comments from Carla...

**Hello Everyone...**

**Welcome to 2016! Can you believe it? This June will be my 6th year with GRADSA. I guess it's true that time flies when you are having fun! 2016 is going to be a great year for GRADSA. We have several great events planned and look forward to getting more families involved. Special thanks to everyone that completed the survey that was sent out. This will help the board tremendously in planning for the future. Remember, if you have email please make sure to send your email address to Carla so you don't miss out on any great information. Thanks again for allowing me to be a part of GRADSA; I am truly blessed. I love you all and let's make this an amazing year!!!**

## From the board...

We are extremely sad to lose Tony Hamilton from the board. After 20+ years with GRADSA it is with great regret that we see Tony resign. Tony assures us he will still be at GRADSA events, but he is at the point in his life where he needs to focus on Dana and her future. We totally support Tony in this decision. The GRADSA Board will miss and so appreciate all the time he has donated to GRADSA.



Board member Kyle Gorman presents a plaque to Brad Osborne of PBI Bank thanking the bank for their partnership in the success of our "More Alike Than Different" video campaign.

We are hoping you all have seen the "More Alike Than Different" video! If not, then please go to the link below and enjoy! Once you go to this link you will also see 6 other videos that were part of the "More Alike Than Different" campaign. They are each only about 2 minutes and we feel sure you will love them all so be sure and check it out!!!

<https://www.gradsa.org/awareness-video-full-video/>

You can also go to [www.gradsa.org](http://www.gradsa.org) and click on the Awareness Tab at top.

## Updates/Prayer Requests...

Anna Sue is back in Boston. They placed a stent in on Jan. 20th. Anna Sue will be an inpatient for 10-14 days until they remove the stent. Hoping the tissue will respond this time and stay open. There is a 30% chance. Please keep her in your prayers as the doctors are trying everything to avoid another resection surgery. Your prayers have helped her get this far and she is doing great! Please continue prayers as the power of prayer is amazing.



Jonah Edge had open heart surgery on January 12th in Indianapolis. He is home and doing well. Please pray for Jonah, for his pain control and that he can stay hydrated. The worst is out of the way but he still has a complicated road to full recovery. We know Jonah will be back to his old self but, the sooner the better. He has had some drainage concerns and bad days, but we look forward to seeing him back as his sweet and fun-loving self. Let's all keep praying for Jonah and his amazing mom, Anji.



Feb. 1st was Landon's first day back to school full-time. Landon is still going to Cincinnati every other week for his transfusion that is done at the hospital. Once a month when he goes for his transfusion he also has an OT and PT appointment with his rheumatologist. On his next trip Landon will see a specialized ophthalmologist in arthritis. Even with his infusion every other week Landon is still on a high dose of steroids which he is being weaned off of slowly each week. The Ashby's want everyone to know they appreciate all your encouragement and prayers.



## Dance Team Update/Contest...

The GRADSA Dance Team is up and running. We are excited to have 17 dance participants! This has been an amazing turnout and they already have their first performance scheduled March 5th at the Riverpark Center; you don't want to miss it. The instructors and dancers are working hard to get ready and we wish them the best of luck.

As our dance team gets started we are working to come up with the perfect name and WE WANT YOUR HELP. We are having a CONTEST to name the GRADSA Dance Team. You can submit your suggestions to [info@gradsa.org](mailto:info@gradsa.org) by February 21st. The winner will receive a \$50 gift card. We will review all of the submitted names and let the dancers help narrow down the list before the board votes on the new name. This is such an exciting time in the history of what will undoubtedly be one of the best programs GRADSA has ever offered. We are excited to have you be a part of it.

## This is too cool-Simulated Town Offers Life Skills Training . . . Disability Scoop 11/18/15

NEW ALBANY, Ohio — Kierra Saunders had already been to the bank twice to replenish her funds after decorating a tote bag for her sister, visiting the pet shop and buying herself a trinket in another store. After that whirlwind, the 15-year-old from Columbus Alternative High School grinned as she relaxed with a red snow cone in the town center. Kierra, who has a developmental disability, had navigated the nuances of LifeTown Columbus with help and advice from her volunteer mentor, Brandi Burch. LifeTown, located in the Lori Schottenstein Chabad Center, is a simulated streetscape intended to make everyday life less intimidating for young people with disabilities. “Every single venue is literally another life skill being learned,” said Rabbi Areyah Kaltmann. Kids learn time management at the movie theater, dining etiquette at the deli, proper grooming in the salon, preventive health care in the doctor’s office, and budgeting and saving at the bank. On a recent Wednesday, the town buzzed with 56 students, their teachers and aides, and the 20 volunteers running the storefronts. Kaltmann and his wife, Esther, have led the program since it began eight years ago. The town operates every weekday morning when school is in. Thirteen Columbus-area school districts now send 2,500 students per year. When the kids arrive for their monthly visit, they receive wallets, \$12 and a worksheet of errands to run. Each worksheet is customized to the student’s skill level and the lesson plan that the teacher and LifeTown worked out in advance. Volunteer Matt Bores ran the movie theater, showing a short film every 20 minutes and selling the moviegoers candy and popcorn. “It just seems like my little contribution,” said Bores, a local guitar teacher. New this year at LifeTown is a one-on-one mentoring program, paid for with a \$90,000 grant from the Ohio Department of Education called Community Connectors, which the program won this year. The goal is to help older students with mild to moderate disabilities move smoothly from school to the work world. Ninety-four students have been paired with 86 adult mentors, all of whom have been recruited since early July. These students benefit from forming a relationship with an adult who can be a role model to encourage and support them, said volunteer coordinator Nancy Eisenman. “These kids don’t really meet a lot of other adults outside of their families,” she said. To keep the mentorship program growing and the town running every day requires a constant supply of outside help — about 20 volunteers a day. Beyond the 86 mentors, LifeTown has a bank of 800 volunteers. Corporations including L Brands, DSW, Cardinal Health, Wendy’s and Nationwide Insurance regularly send teams of employees to help. “It’s a benefit for the community that (these corporate workers) are getting exposed ... to young people with disabilities, when they typically may not have had that exposure,” Eisenman said. “And long term, those companies may be more inclined to hire” people with disabilities. It can benefit the employers, too. Studies have shown that “employees who volunteer as part of their duties, they stay longer, and they report that they’re happier at their positions,” Eisenman said.

## Way to go Apple . . . Disability Scoop 12-8-15

Disability Awareness Effort Asks People To “Just Say Hi First!” Apple’s Siri and CEO Tim Cook are the latest to sign on for a star-studded campaign encouraging people to lose their fear of interacting with those who have disabilities. Through a series of short videos, the awareness campaign from the Cerebral Palsy Foundation encourages people to “Just Say Hi.” In addition to Cook, the group has produced spots featuring television hosts Gayle King and John Oliver, actors William H. Macy and Michael J. Fox, as well as Microsoft CEO Satya Nadella, among other recognizable faces. “It’s a fact of life that people with disabilities have challenges most of us can’t fathom,” said Richard Ellenson, CEO of the Cerebral Palsy Foundation. “While ‘just saying hi’ only scratches the surface of all we can do, it’s a simple and impactful first step.” In the newest of the campaign’s 17 videos, which was released Tuesday, Cook turns to iPhone’s Siri to ask “How do you start a conversation with someone who has a disability?” Siri responds, “It’s easy. Just say ‘Hi.’” The videos are appearing on CBS stations nationwide, in some New York City taxis and train stations and in various online outlets, Ellenson said, with more exposure in the works. “We’ve got many more to release. This is just the start of the conversation,” Ellenson said.

## "Born This Way", TV show gets second season... Disability Scoop 01-12-15

More episodes are on the way for "Born This Way" for a second season. "We have been overwhelmed and moved by the feedback we've received for 'Born This Way' from viewers, as well as people with disabilities and their family members," said Elaine Frontain Bryant, executive vice president and head of programming at A&E Network. The network did not specify when the second season will air or how many new episodes have been ordered. "Born This Way" is produced by Bunim/Murray Productions, which is behind some of television's most popular reality shows including "The Real World," "Project Runway" and "Keeping up with the Kardashians." "Over the course of my career, when I've been asked what show I was proudest of it was always 'The Real World.' Now there's a contender to that title - it's 'Born This Way,'" Jonathan Murray, the show's executive producer, said in a statement. "I am thrilled the series will return for a second season."

## Christmas Party 2015...more pics on our FB and website



## The Adult Group had a GREAT time passing out gifts at the Nursing Home...



# Happy Birthday!!!

## January

04 Landon Ashby  
 12 Shannon Mahoney  
 16 Raegan Brown  
 20 Erin Clark  
 21 Ashley Hagen  
 22 Ashley Dant  
 23 Isaiah Cruz  
 23 Elizabeth Stickler  
 24 Sheri Storm  
 24 Kathleen Kight  
 30 Zoey Doolin

## February

03 Jonah Edge  
 04 Levi Goodall  
 06 Lexxi Jones  
 06 Maely Vance  
 06 Morgan King  
 07 Brett Duncan  
 14 Lindsey Spain  
 15 Michael Smith  
 17 Cody Trunnell  
 18 Caleb Lancaster  
 18 "In Memory" Heather Sutton  
 24 Andrew Conway

## March

04 Preston Peach  
 06 Tatum Edge  
 17 Matthew Cook  
 19 Elliott Williams  
 21 Adrienne Free  
 24 Sam Winstead  
 25 Brooklyn Griffith  
 28 McKenzie White  
 31 Dylan Allinder

"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 Christmas Cuties...



Santa's helper.  
Sweet Hannah!



"Uh-ho, did Santa see that?" asks precious Anna Sue!



Come on Santa, Preston is ready!



Love Lexxi's and her brother's P.J.'s!



Crazy Trevor and friend are ready for Christmas!

### 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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