



STEPPING UP

September 2011

Issue 14

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CELEBRATING EVERY PERSON WITH DOWN SYNDROME

Sign Up For Buddy Walk Now

Annual walk is just days away on September 24

It's almost time for the 13th annual Portland and Southwest Washington Buddy Walk Festival on September 24, 2011. If you want to avoid long lines and make sure that your t-shirts are available, go to www.nwdsa.org and follow the links to register by Sept. 19. Since we are hoping to attract a crowd of over 2,000 people to the Rose Quarter this year, we want to have all of the t-shirts and food coupons organized by teams or families, so that only the team captain or one member of a family has to visit the registration table.

This year's festival is shaping up to be the best one yet. We will have live music from Newel Briggs before the walk and Supervisor afterwards. JJ Jump has graciously offered to organize games for the kids and Hooperville USA will be back with lots of hula hoop action. Gustav's Pub & Grill is donating hot dogs for everyone and we'll also have Dreyer's ice cream, water from Nestle, and Kidz With Ice will be providing special treats. We have also been busy collecting a variety of excellent raffle prizes so don't forget to buy some tickets on the day. We will also have a silent auction full of great deals so be sure to check that out. If it is a sunny day the fountain will be on so the kids can cool off.

We have also done a deal with the Rose Quarter to provide parking on the day for just \$2. Go to our website, nwdsa.org, to print out the coupon.

For more information or questions please call Angela Frome at 503-238-0522 or e-mail afrome@nwdsa.org. Para comunicarse en español, llame a Maria O'Harra, 971-570-0942 o Isis Sanchez, 503-442-5817

Ready for Kindergarten

Cohort gives parents the tools to prepare for Kindergarten

By Janine Paschal

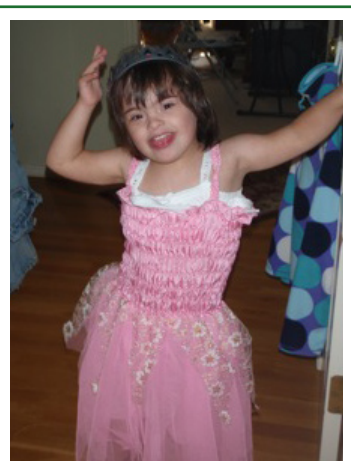
Every parent feels a range of emotion when their children reach important milestones. We are the same time excited, proud and anxious. This was certainly the case when I took our youngest, 4-year-old Anna, to register for kindergarten last spring. Just thinking about my baby becoming a kindergartner brought out all of those emotions as well as a little disbelief that we are here already.

I am excited for Anna to begin this next stage of her life. I am excited that she will participate in a general education classroom. I am excited that she will get to experience the same school that her older brother and sister attended as they had very positive experiences there. I am excited that so many new people will enter Anna's life and that she will learn from them and, hopefully, teach them as well. I am excited about the opportunities that are waiting for her.

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Anna will attend kindergarten at Stafford Primary School this year

NWDSA

northwest down syndrome association
Resourcefulness Center
11611 NE Ainsworth Circle,
Suite 321
Portland, OR 97220

Mailing Address
PO Box 9127
Portland, OR 97207

www.nwdsa.org
503-238-0522

Stepping Up is published quarterly by the Northwest Down Syndrome Association (NWDSA), a non-profit organization managed by a board of volunteers.

To be added to our mailing list please visit www.nwdsa.org and click on the resources link, or send your mailing info to the address above. There is no subscription fee, but if you would like to make a donation, you may send a tax deductible contribution to NWDSA at the address listed above or use PayPal on our website.

Readers are welcome to submit letters and articles to the address above or e-mail editor@nwdsa.org. Please include your name, address, phone number and e-mail.

All submissions will be reviewed and edited for content and style.

The NWDSA Mission:

Create and nurture a loving and inclusive community celebrating every person with Down syndrome.

NWDSA will accomplish this mission by empowering and supporting families and individuals who have been touched by Down syndrome.

We will work to increase education, promote public understanding and acceptance, and toward full inclusion of individuals with Down syndrome in our community.

Opinions published in *Stepping Up* are not necessarily those of the NWDSA

Photo on the back cover
by Jodi Collins of
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www.urban-photography.com

Tee UP for Down Syndrome

Golf tournament to benefit NWDSA set for Oct. 3

By *Melanie Fallis*

Sometimes the most wonderful gifts we receive are the one that are totally unexpected. My husband, Bill, was so captivated by our grandson Riley that they were seldom apart. The bond they created was so strong it could only be broken by Bill's unexpected death in October, 2009. That Sunday was the last day Bill talked with Riley and the last day he played golf with his buddies at Persimmon Golf Course.

In honor of Bill and his love for Riley, on October 3, 2011 we'll once again "Tee UP for DOWN Syndrome" at the 2nd Annual Bill Fallis Memorial Golf Tournament with 100% of the proceeds going to the NWDSA. This tournament is the founding sponsor of NWDSA's new Kindergarten Inclusion Cohort, whose first graduates include Riley's parents, in the spring of 2011. Along with 20 other families with children who experience a disability, they learned how to advocate for Riley as he prepares for kindergarten in a typical classroom this month. They learned that Riley has a right - an inherent right that most of us take for granted - to be INCLUDED.

The work is not easy. It is not exact. But it is possible to imagine and then create a world in which ALL of our children belong, and that is where you come in. Your participation in Tee UP for DOWN Syndrome - as a golfer, a donor, and/or a business sponsor - makes it possible for NWDSA to reach even more local families with proven programs that support advocacy, education, and inclusion.

Visit the NWDSA website at www.nwdsa.org to register today! Contact me anytime at melaniefallis@gmail.com.



Helping Families Make Connections

Reciprocal Learning Communities

By *Abby Braithwaite*

It's been a busy summer for the NWDSA's New Parent Outreach, with new faces at Open Arms each month, and many new families enjoying the shade at the Summer Social at Lee Farms. We love meeting all the new babies, and it's a joy to watch parents find their footing on this journey, connecting with other parents and sharing stories.

With so much information available in books and online, it can be tough to find the most up-to-date, strength-based information on Down syndrome, and what we can do to help our kids navigate this world. The NWDSA helps families gain access to the best resources through the New Parent Guide, Open Arms Playgroups and our phone line, but the most comprehensive tool that we have is the Reciprocal Learning Community (RLC).

Please see RLC on page 3

RLC

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One of the most important things we can do as parents is to understand the importance of partnering with the professionals who work with our children. We are our kids' first teachers, and most consistent therapists, and the RLC is a great place to access the best, newest information.

RLC events are targeted for families with children 0-5 with Down syndrome; in addition to being a great place to gather information, they are also an excellent opportunity to meet other families in the community who are on similar paths.

Parents, with the assistance of an advisory board of professionals, choose the topics and plan each session. All of our sessions are research-based and utilize best practices. Each session features Spanish translation. Concurrent childcare sessions, run by qualified professionals with the help of volunteers, provide activities for our children that are relevant to that session's content. Fathers have been very involved in the sessions due in large part to the fact that the sessions run on Saturday mornings. Each RLC concludes with a catered lunch and time to network with presenters and other families or professionals. Sessions, childcare and lunch are all provided free of charge for participants.

Previous topics have included nutrition, behavior, literacy, the father's perspective, person-centered planning, and more. The sessions are interactive, and parents ask questions, provide feedback and get involved.

Keep your eyes open for more information on the next RLC event, coming this fall. Please call the office at 503-238-0522 if you are interested in helping with planning the session.

Cohort

Continued from page 2

I am proud that Anna is a happy, outgoing, inquisitive little girl. I am proud that she has done well in both a community preschool and her ECSE preschool that have helped her get ready for kindergarten. I am proud that we have a supportive network of people who are watching and helping as we prepare for this big step in Anna's education.

I am anxious that Anna will do well, that she will make friends, that she will be accepted. I am anxious to see how she will perform in a classroom full of 5 year olds who are all exploring this new environment together.

And now, as I anticipate the first day of kindergarten, just days away now, I can't help wondering at the same time how Anna grew up so quickly and what has happened to my baby?

Editor's Note: Janine is a graduate of the 2011 Kindergarten Inclusion Cohort. The cohort aims to give parents the tools to advocate for an inclusive placement for their child in kindergarten. The program is designed as a series of six interactive training sessions with expert speakers and best-practices resources. Session topics will include information about the law and your child's rights, tools and supports to use in the classroom, IEP goal writing, communication, behavior strategies, tips from parents and teachers and more. We are now accepting applications for the 2011/2012 Kindergarten Inclusion Cohort. For more information and to sign up for the cohort visit www.nwdsa.org.



Photos from the Summer Social at Lee Farms



northwest down syndrome association

PO Box 9127

Portland, Oregon

97207

A Message from the NWDSA

Each board member of the NWDSA has firsthand experience with the joys and the hardships of caring for a child with individual needs. We understand the importance of connecting with other families and how much we rely on these relationships when we encounter the inevitable challenges. We also celebrate each others victories, making the journey so much richer. The Board of Directors of the NWDSA consists of volunteers and is supported by enlightened professionals. For more information on our organization and ways in which you can become involved or make a donation, please visit our website at www.nwdsa.org or call 503-238-0522.

Para comunicarse en español, llame a Maria O’Harra, 971-570-0942 o Isis Sanchez, 503-442-5817



e-version of this newsletter and past issues available at www.nwdsa.org



Please Recycle



this newsletter

[NWDSA Newsletter Committee](#)

Editor: Abby Braithwaite
Production & Design: Kim Jarvis

Drop in and see us!

Now that summer is over, our regular drop-in hours are back so come and visit us at these times:

Down Syndrome Community Drop-In
Every Thursday
12 - 2 PM
NWDSA Resourcefulness Center

All Born “In” Cross-Disability Drop In
4th Wednesday of each month
5:30 – 7:30 PM
NWDSA Resourcefulness Center

Give us a call at 503-238-0522 to let us know you are coming!