

# **TVDSA**

## **Newsletter**



Newsletter Editor: **Celena Auger**

July 2011

### **The 28th Annual TVDSA Potluck Picnic is HERE!**

Date: **Wed, July 6th: 6:00pm-8:30pm**

Location: **The Mager's Party Barn**

4090 S. McDermott Rd. Nampa, ID  
Between Victory and Amity

We ask that everyone bring BOTH a main dish or salad AND a dessert.  
Water and pop will be provided along with utensils and plates.

Entertainment to include:

- \* Talent Show (contact [Joyce Page](#) to be included)
- \* Dancing \* Face Painting \* Bounce Houses \* a Fish Pond
- \* Pet the Personal Ponies



**Bring the entire family for a fun evening!**

Want to help? Need more information? Contact [Lynda Wells](#)

### **ANNOUNCING THE 2011-2012 TVDSA BOARD OF DIRECTORS**

**Note:** There are two openings still available on the TVDSA Board, the Secretary and the self advocate positions. If you are interested in joining the following great individuals in enhancing the quality of life for people with Down syndrome by promoting inclusive environments, providing accurate information to parents, families, and the community, and by advocating respect, dignity, and appropriate supports for people with Down syndrome, please contact [Paul Auger](#) or [Kristie Yerger](#).

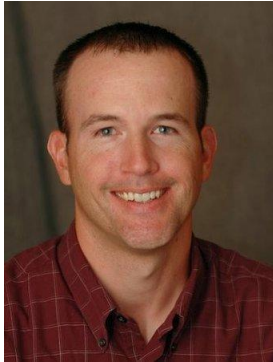
#### **In This Issue**

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\* [Tips for Summer Reading with your Child](#)

## Tips for Summer Reading with Your Child

### Paul Auger - TVDSA President



Paul Auger became the TVDSA President in May after serving as the Board Program Chair. Last year, he arranged several educational workshops, guided the membership meetings, launched the Cool Club and DADs social groups and assisted with the seasonal events of Snackin with Santa and the Easter Egg Hunt. Paul is an advocate for all people with Down syndrome. He understands first-hand their potential and the challenges they face daily in our community.

During the day, Paul is a Project Manager at Scentsy, Inc. with responsibility for developing programs and functionality driving the success of Scentsy's Consultants. He grew up in Tulsa, Oklahoma, went to school at Texas A&M University and moved to Boise in 2008 after living in the Dallas, Texas area for eleven years. What brought him to Boise was his desire to find an inclusive school system for his daughter, Baylee, who has Down syndrome. It was the best decision he ever made. Rounding out his family are his wife of 15 years, Celena, his son, Trevor, and their Australian Shepherd dog, Sebastian. Paul can be reached at [president@idahodownsyndrome.org](mailto:president@idahodownsyndrome.org).

### Kristie Yerger - TVDSA Vice President & Programs Chair

Three and a half years ago Kristie was told some of the most devastating news an expectant parent could ever be told, or so she thought at the time. Kristie was informed her baby boy was going to be born with Down syndrome. Five months later she stared into the most beautiful eyes she had ever seen, deep blue speckled with white flecks. He looked back as if to say, "...everything is going to be fine."



Three years later, everything is fine. It's better than fine. Kristie speaks of her son, "Caleb has brought so much happiness and love into my life that I look back on those tears and wonder what I was so afraid of. Yes he is different, but in so many ways he is the same. He laughs, he cries, he loves, he angers. He is a brother and a son. He is my definition of 'love'."

Before this journey began, Kristie was a mother to two boys, Ethan (now 15) and Seth (now 6), and the wife of a wonderful man and physician, Jim. Before settling down into the role of full-time mom,

Studies have shown that many students experience the loss of reading skills during the summer, which can be particularly concerning when a child is already struggling with reading. The good news is that children who practice reading over the summer usually experience an increase in their reading skills. The following is a list of some suggestions for fun ways to encourage reading with your child during the summer:

1. Try reading with your child outside (on the steps, at the park, at the beach, etc.).
2. Read the same book that your child is reading so that you can discuss it together.
3. Buy books on tape and listen to them in the car or listen to them together as a family.
4. Throughout your day, point out words to the child or play word games while you are cooking, grocery shopping or driving.
5. Check your local library summer schedule for special summer reading activities.
6. Get a subscription for your child to a children's magazine that he/she enjoys.
7. Make arrangements for the child to become pen pals with a classmate or a child from another area.
8. Start a summer scrapbook where your child can tape souvenirs from family activities. Have your child write captions for the pictures.

*(Suggestions adapted from Learning Disabilities)*

Kristie was a respiratory therapist working in the state of Oregon. She was born and raised in Idaho Falls but attended college in Montana before finishing her degree in Arizona. Kristie and her husband relocated their family back to Idaho after he finished his medical residency in 2004.

Kristie feels proud to be a part of the Treasure Valley Down Syndrome Association and the opportunity to share to the public at large just how great Down syndrome can be. She looks forward to serving TVDSA as an ambassador and a voice for the members. Kristie can be reached at [vicepresident@idahodownsyndrome.org](mailto:vicepresident@idahodownsyndrome.org).

## Lynda Wells - TVDSA Treasurer & Advisor



Whenever we have passion for anything there is always a reason behind that passion. Lynda's reason for being involved in TVDSA began 28 years ago with the birth of her daughter Colleen. Colleen is the youngest of her 8 children. Colleen has contributed to Lynda's personal growth more than any other person in her life. The challenges and joys that have come from being Colleen's mom have been blessings in her life!

Lynda has served as Treasurer for TVDSA for the past 23 years. During that time she has had the privilege to work with and meet many incredible individuals equally as passionate about the potential of individuals with Down syndrome. Lynda says, "while I can look back and realize that the journey our family began so many years ago was not nearly as scary as we thought it would be, there are others today who are just beginning their journey. I would like to think that TVDSA has helped to build a bridge over the chasm of fear, despair, prejudice and the unknown that parents face as they begin on their path with their new baby." Lynda wants to continue to serve to ensure that the work of those who had the vision to create a strong support system for families of individuals with Down syndrome in the Treasure Valley, continues to grow. You can reach Lynda at: [treasurer@idahodownsyndrome.org](mailto:treasurer@idahodownsyndrome.org).

## Lucy Olmos - Transitioning to TVDSA Treasurer

Lucy Olmos is a Certified Public Accountant and a graduate of Boise State University. Lucy has filled various accounting and management roles during the last thirteen years of her accounting career. Through her career and volunteer work, she enjoys the opportunity to promote diversity and assist the Hispanic community. This is something she's always had a passion for along with sharing her faith with others.



Association of America  
[www.idanatl.org](http://www.idanatl.org))

### Calendar of Events

#### July 6th:

TVDSA Annual Picnic  
6:00pm- 8:30pm  
Nampa  
Contact: [Lynda Wells](mailto:Lynda Wells)

#### July 9th:

Lil' Buddies Playgroup  
3:00pm-5:00pm at  
Guerber Park in Eagle  
Contact: [Kristie Yerger](mailto:Kristie Yerger)

#### July 9th:

DADs and Cool Club  
at 6:30pm at  
the Meridian Speedway  
Contact: [Irene Gans](mailto:Irene Gans)

#### July 11th:

Buddy Walk Committee  
Meeting at 7:00pm at  
the Moxie Java at Eagle  
and Overland  
Contact: [Sara Cox](mailto:Sara Cox)

#### July 13th:

IPUL Monthly Parent  
Support Meeting  
6:00pm-8:00pm  
Contact: [Angela Lindig](mailto:Angela Lindig)

#### July 14th:

PEAK [Webinar](#): Early  
Intervention  
6:30p-7:30pm

#### July 16th:

Adults in Motion (AIM)  
1:00pm-3:00pm  
Summer Fun and Games  
at the Gallas' house  
Contact: [Freddie Gallas](mailto:Freddie Gallas)

#### July 19th:

TVDSA Board Meeting -  
Strategic Planning  
Meeting, in Nampa

#### July 25th:

Lil' Buddies Playgroup  
10:00am-12:00pm at  
Just Kid'n Around in  
Meridian  
Contact: [Kristie Yerger](mailto:Kristie Yerger)

#### August 5-7th:

Annual NDSC  
[Conference](#)  
Registration is NOW  
open!  
San Antonio, TX

Alongside her husband, Gustavo, Lucy's most important role is raising her four children (Christopher, Gabriela, Annabel and Mikaela). Lucy and her family are members of the St. Mark's Catholic Community in Boise. After participating in youth ministry for almost five years, Lucy continued to stay active in various ministries such as Council of Catholic Women, Latino Ministry, young adult ministry, elementary education, and Small Faith Community. Lucy recently joined a local LIFT-ID group (Ladies in Faith Together) and her family continues to participate in various ministries at St. Mark's. Lucy and her husband are members of the Treasure Valley Down Syndrome Association where they participate in events to promote Down syndrome awareness. In addition to serving on the TVDSA Board she has served as a board member for Catholic Charities of Idaho since 2007. Lucy enjoys staying active with her family by playing soccer and participating in various running events. Lucy may be reached at [espanol@idahodownsyrndrome.org](mailto:espanol@idahodownsyrndrome.org).

## Angela Bowman - Marketing Chair



Angela Bowman joined the TVDSA board this year, after many years of participating in the annual Buddy Walk in Boise. She has helped to give our website a new look, as well as further developing our social media presence. Angela works in the St. Luke's Health System Revenue Cycle department, focusing on business process workflow, policy development, and online content editing. She grew up in Filer, Idaho and now lives in Meridian with her husband Bryan and their two kids.

Angela has a close bond with her older cousin Justin, who has Down syndrome. Angela says of Justin: "Justin teaches love without even trying. He experiences every moment to the fullest. He doesn't waste any time with worry or self-doubt. When he says "Hi, how are you doing?" he's not asking just for the heck of it - he really wants to know how you are doing. I feel blessed to have Justin in my life, he's the most authentic and genuine person I know!" Angela can be reached at [marketing@idahodownsyrndrome.org](mailto:marketing@idahodownsyrndrome.org).

## Mary Anne Murphy - Librarian

Mary Anne Murphy has been married to Pierce for 27 years and they have eight children, one of whom has Down syndrome. This child has positively impacted every family member, and in fact, most everyone who knows him. Mary Anne is involved in the Treasure Valley Down



September 23rd:  
Parent Network of the Capital Region 2011 Fall Conference: "Embracing Differences: Creating a Meaningful Inclusive Environment for ALL Students"

October 8th:  
TVDSA Buddy Walk  
11:00 am  
Boise, Idaho

October 13-14th:  
2011 Idaho Partnerships Conference: "emPOWERment"  
Boise, Idaho

October 24-25th:  
Youth with Disabilities Secondary Transition Conference  
Portland, OR

### Lil' Buddies

#### Playgroup Dates:

Saturday, July 9th:  
3:00pm-5:00pm at Gueber Park in Eagle off Hill Road, west of Hwy 55

Monday, July 25th:  
10:00am-12:00pm at Just Kid'n Around in Meridian (off Overland west of Eagle Rd.) Entrance fee will be paid by TVDSA!

#### A Special Thank You:

To Susan Wallace who taught our last baby signing class. If you missed this class or would just like to take it again, we will be offering another one in the fall.

Happy Birthday to all of our July Lil' Buddies!

If your Lil' Buddy has a July birthday, please email Kristie, so (s)he can be included in our Happy Birthday list!

Need more information on Lil' Buddies Group? Please contact [Kristie Yerger](mailto:Kristie.Yerger)

Syndrome Association because she wants to be helpful to other people. In particular, she likes to help people have access to positive and helpful information. Mary Anne currently runs the TVDSA library and is always pleased to help members find the right books and other materials that will be helpful to them. The library is available at parent meetings and the annual picnic, as well as by arrangement by contacting Mary Anne. She can be reached at [library@idahodownsyndrome.org](mailto:library@idahodownsyndrome.org).

## Sara Mitton Cox - Buddy Walk Co-Chair



Sara Mitton Cox first became involved in TVDSA as a Buddy Walk volunteer. Driven by the desire to educate people about Down syndrome, she saw the Buddy Walk as the perfect way to do that. Sara's older brother Justin has Down syndrome and her whole life she watched him bring joy, inspiration, and wisdom to countless people. She is passionate about spreading the message that Justin is a blessing and that people with Down syndrome, and any disability for that matter, should be respected and included just like everyone else. After working in non-profit marketing for five years she hoped to share her knowledge with TVDSA and in 2006 joined the board. She served as Secretary, Vice President and was elected President in 2009. Sara stepped down from President in May to dedicate more time to her husband and two step-sons. She continues to serve on the board as the Buddy Walk co-chair. Sara can be reached at [smitton@idahodownsyndrome.org](mailto:smitton@idahodownsyndrome.org).

## Melody Witte - Buddy Walk Co-Chair

Melody Witte is the proud mother of 3 sons and a daughter. Melody's 13 year old son, Matthew, has Down syndrome. When Matthew was 2 years old Melody heard about something called the "Buddy Walk" that was taking place across the United States and other countries to raise awareness about Down syndrome. She was anxious to participate, but quickly found out that Idaho was 1 of 2 states that did not yet have an organized Buddy Walk. Another 2 years went by without any Buddy Walks taking place in Idaho. When Matthew was 5 years old Melody decided to organize the first Idaho walk with her husband's blessing. The Idaho Buddy Walks have grown from 130 participants in the Treasure Valley the first year to over 1,300 participants in 2010. In addition, there were THREE Buddy Walks in the state of Idaho last year! The Buddy Walk is the major fundraiser for TVDSA and has



### Cool Club & DADs groups

The Cool Club and the DADs will both meet on:

Saturday, July 9th  
at 6:30pm  
at the Meridian Speedway

Activity: A night at the Meridian Speedway: Idaho Pro Trucks, ISRL Sprintcars, Pepsi Sprintcars, Edmark Mini Stocks and Jr. Stingers

The tickets for this night are being supplied **FREE** of charge by a generous donation by Rick Murray with Sysco Foods. THANK YOU!

For more information or to RSVP, contact [Irene Gans](#) or [Rick Murray](#)

### Adults In Motion (AIM) Update

July 16th  
1:00pm-3:00pm  
at the Gallas' House

Activity: Summer of Fun and Games.

Please bring your favorite cool summer snack to share (fruit, ice cream, etc.)

Please contact [Freddie Gallas](#) for more information or to RSVP.

### NEW WEBSITE!

It is HERE! Check out our new website:

[idahodownsyndrome.org](http://idahodownsyndrome.org)

The new website will be updated regularly with events and information.

Your involvement is encouraged through the new BLOG.

Also, we are on [Facebook](#) and [Twitter](#), if you haven't yet connected with us online, do it today!

allowed TVDSA to produce wonderful informational packets for new parents, sponsor workshops, give conference scholarships, build a TVDSA website and much more. It is a privilege for Melody to be a TVDSA board member and chair the Buddy Walk each year. She has found the TVDSA board members to be hardworking and selfless in spite of their very busy lives. Melody can be reached at [buddywalk@idahodownsyrndrome.org](mailto:buddywalk@idahodownsyrndrome.org).

## Trish Vranish - Community Outreach Chair



Patricia Vranish was born and raised in New Jersey and moved to Idaho 23 years ago. She is a devoted wife and mother of six children, one of which has Down syndrome. Patricia loves spending time with her family at their cabin, riding horses with her friends, and showing off her 2 year old son, Aaden who happens to be sporting an extra chromosome. Her friends know her to be a compassionate, generous, and fun-loving person who gives much of her time to helping others succeed in life.

One of her favorite quotes is "The best and most beautiful things in the world cannot be seen or even touched. They must be felt with the heart." Therefore she lives her life with an open heart ready to embrace the beauty life has to offer.

Patricia is a proud mother of a child with Down syndrome and is not shy about letting everyone know. One of her passions in life is to promote and educate people about Down syndrome. She is extremely grateful for her son Aaden and recognizes the blessings that come from raising a child with Down syndrome. Patricia would like to encourage mothers and fathers to embrace having a child with Down syndrome and to not let fear or inadequacies get in their way. She believes that if parents will open their hearts, they will learn more from their child than their child will ever learn from them. Her favorite analogy of raising a child with "designer genes" is by likening it to a road trip. You end up at the same destination, but you just take the scenic route to get there. Yes, the trip takes longer, but boy is it beautiful!

Aaden has taught Patricia that love has no boundaries. He has taught her to be opened-minded and more accepting of others. The greatest lesson he has given her is that things don't matter, but people do! So to everyone reading this: Live well, love deeply, and laugh much! Trish can be reached at: [community@idahodownsyrndrome.org](mailto:community@idahodownsyrndrome.org).

## Legislative Update by Deborah Waters

July is here, and with it brings implementation of the new Medicaid Law. While much of the law focuses on how providers will be reimbursed by the Government, some cuts to the services our families have enjoyed will be put into effect. The following is a brief overview of such cuts:

\* Adult PSR services will be cut from 5 hours/week to 4 hours/week

\* Physical and speech therapy for adults will be capped at \$1,870 per year. Occupational therapy for adults will have a separate cap of the same amount. (Effective January 1, 2012)

\* The family-directed services option is a new option for families, as part of the Children's System Redesign, allowing families to use a child's budget to identify and purchase services and supports from people and businesses of their choice.

\* Dental care for persons over 21 years of age will be limited to emergency services only.

\* Adults with chronic conditions such as diabetes will continue to have access to the same podiatry and optometry benefits, however benefits will be eliminated for all other adults.

\* Eyeglasses will no longer be covered for adults age 21 and over.

For more information, see 2012 Idaho Medicaid Cost Reductions [FAQ](#)

## Wayne Blakeman - Fundraising Chair

In the year of 2006, Wayne was suddenly thrust into the realm of a new reality, literally forced to make a life or death decision on his unborn child. At first he was not convinced of one side or the other. After long discussions with his partner, doctors, and counselors, they made the decision for life. It was a decision he has never regretted. Even after eating hospital food for a month! It is a decision that wouldn't even take Wayne a second to answer now. He feels certain most members, he dares to say all, strongly feel the same way. Now he is the proud parent of a beautiful little four year old girl named Mary. There are pictures on his Facebook page, members can friend request to see them.



Wayne has lived most of his life in Idaho and currently works in the construction trade. Most of his family is in Eastern Idaho, and the largest remaining part in Wisconsin, where he was born. Mary has three siblings, Samantha, 19, Nicolas, 15, and Autumn, 7. Wayne's interests are varied. He likes to garden and can occasionally manage to sneak off and go fishing.

When Wayne moved to Boise two years ago, he made contact with TVDSA and asked to be put on the mailing list. Eventually, Wayne went to a great signing class, started volunteering and became a member. He has met many wonderful TVDSA parents and looks forward to meeting the rest. His perspective is that as parents of children with Down syndrome, we are all advocates for our children no matter where we, or they, are! He feels It is important that we associate with each other and promote awareness of our children to increase public interaction, self sufficiency and acceptance. Wayne believes this will also not only help us, but society in general and definitely will help people faced with tough choices. Today is a different world than the one he grew up in, for children with disabilities. Wayne wants to help make it better yet. He wants to make sure his daughter, Mary, has the best future possible. You can reach Wayne at [fundraising@idahodownsyndrome.org](mailto:fundraising@idahodownsyndrome.org).

## A Big Thank You to Our Outgoing Board Members!

TVDSA would like to thank the following individuals for their recent service as members of the board. Your time and talents were greatly appreciated!

### Idaho Parents Unlimited

#### IPUL Parent Support Group

July 13th

6:00pm-8:00pm

500 S. 8th St. Boise

**Topic: Informal discussion  
and sharing of community  
resources**

For more information or to register for this workshop, please contact [Angela Lindig](#)

### Summer Sign Language Class

Just Kid'n Around will be holding a summer signing camp.

August 1st-5th

9:00am-12:00pm

You can download a brochure and a registration form [online](#).

### Conferences, Workshops and Webinars

PEAK Webinars:

[Early Intervention Webinar](#)

July 14th

6:30pm-7:30pm

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Parent Network of the  
Capital Region 2011 Fall  
Conference:

**Embracing Differences:  
Creating a Meaningful  
Inclusive Environment for ALL  
Students**

September 23rd, 2011  
Latham, NY

For more information see:  
[Parent Network of the  
Capital Region brochure](#)

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## emPOWERment 2011

Idaho partnerships  
conference on Human  
Services

October 13th & 14th  
Boise, ID

Registration begins July 15th  
For more information see:  
[Idaho Partnership on Human  
Services Conference  
brochure](#)

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r.i.s.e 6th Annual Building  
Futures, Youth with  
Disabilities Secondary  
[Transition Conference](#)

October 24th-25th, 2011

Sheraton Portland Airport  
Hotel  
Portland, OR

## Thank you - Joyce Page



Joyce Page, TVDSA Vice President, will be leaving the board in July as her and her family relocate to Texas. After attending a NDSC convention nearly two years ago, Joyce and her daughter came back to Idaho fired up and ready to make a difference in the community. Realizing our group could be offering much more with more volunteers, Joyce went on a volunteer recruiting spree that still continues. She helped grow and restructure the board as well as established many new programs.

Joyce and her daughter Becky have been passionate about creating more opportunities for adults with Down syndrome and have made great progress. TVDSA will certainly miss Joyce's drive and fire that has motivated us all! Your efforts will carry on long into the future!

## Thank You - Rebecca Page

Rebecca Page has served as a self advocate on the TVDSA board and will leave the position as she moves to Texas with her family in July. Becky has truly been an inspiration to our TVDSA family. She stood confidently on stage at the Buddy Walk and delivered heartfelt speeches in front of hundreds of people, has done television and radio interviews, and has spoken in classrooms and at fundraisers with endless energy and pride. She has shown us, and the community, that adults with Down syndrome have dreams and hopes, just like anyone else. Her joy and enthusiasm have helped us develop an adult group that we hope continues to grow long into the future. We are privileged to have had Becky as a board member and her absence will leave an irreplaceable gap. Thank you for all you have done Becky!



Registration is now open for  
the **39th Annual NDSC  
Convention.**

Click [here](#) to view the NDSC  
convention website.





## Thank you - Leslie Bryant

Leslie Bryant jumped in as our Marketing Chair nearly two years ago as we were growing at a fast pace and needing a fresh new look. She redesigned materials such as business cards, brochures, flyers, email templates and more. Plus, she helped us establish a new system for better communicating with families. Her professionalism and hard work took TVDSA to a new level. Though Leslie and her family relocated to Salt Lake City, and she will no longer be a board member, she promises to continue her support and offer printing and design services through her company Bryant Ideas. Thank you Leslie for your wonderful contributions!

## Thank You - Kate Lukkari

Kate Lukkari joined the board nearly two years ago when we were desperate for a Secretary and was a perfect fit for the job. Filled with love for her granddaughter, Corgan, who has Down syndrome, Kate has been a large part of everything TVDSA has done in the last two years. Her detailed and caring nature has been a huge asset and we appreciate her hard work and the numerous, tirelessly hours in helping to shape the organization. You will be missed Kate!



## Do you have a child that likes to perform? The Elevated Dance Project Verge Company needs them!



Once again, Verge will be performing at this year's **Buddy Walk**, October 8th in Boise. However, they need additional dancers interested in learning a **HIP HOP Routine** to perform at the Buddy Walk beside them. Rehearsals will be weekly at the Elevated Dance Project studio in Eagle, August through September to prepare for the Buddy Walk. Exact times TBA.

### Requirements:

- \* Loves to dance and perform (no trained experience is necessary)
- \* Open to boys and girls, ages 10 and up.
- \* No Cost to TVDSA Newsletter recipients
- \* If interested, please contact [Melissa Larson](#) or [Celena Auger](#) for more information and/or registration.

## TVDSA Scholarship Information

Are you considering attending the NDSC Conference? How about another local or national conference?

Did you know that TVDSA supports members in gathering information at local and national conferences and/or workshops?

The TVDSA Scholarship program is NOT income based, so everyone is eligible.

Please see our Scholarship [application](#) for the guidelines and how to apply today.

For additional questions, please contact our [Scholarship Committee](#).



TREASURE VALLEY  
DOWN SYNDROME  
ASSOCIATION

Board of Directors

President: [Paul Auger](#)  
Treasurer & Advisor: [Lynda Wells](#)  
Transitioning Treasurer: [Lucy Olmos](#)  
Marketing Chair: [Angela Bowman](#)  
Community Outreach: [Irish Vranish](#)

VP & Programs Chair: [Kristie Yerger](#)  
Buddy Walk Co-Chair: [Sara Mitton Cox](#)  
Buddy Walk Co-Chair: [Melody Witte](#)  
Librarian: [Mary Anne Murphy](#)  
Fundraising Chair: [Wayne Blakeman](#)

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## About Treasure Valley Down Syndrome Association

For more information, articles, past newsletters and pictures, please visit our website at <http://idahodownsyndrome.org/>

**Mailing:** PO Box 1404 Meridian, Idaho 83680

Check us out on [Facebook](#) and [Twitter](#)!

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