

TVDSA Newsletter



Newsletter Editor: Celena Auger

September 2011

TVDSA 9th Annual Buddy Walk

presented by: C.K. Quade Law, PLLC

Event Date: Saturday, October 8th

Event Time: 11:00am-2:00pm

Registration: **Online registration ENDS SOON!!! Online Registration ends at midnight September 7th.** (see directions below)

Registration fees PRIOR to September 7th: \$15.00 for adults or \$7.00 for children (12 & under). Registration fee includes a t-shirt, food ticket, and game tickets for the kids.



To register, go to www.idahodownsyndrome.org. Scroll down the page and click on the Buddy Walk logo located on the left. This will take you to our Buddy Walk page where you can register and create an optional team page. Please note: you can pay by PayPal, credit card, debit card, or check with our online registration process.

After September 7th, there is on-site registration the day of the event. On-site registration will be held at Capitol Park from 9:00am-10:30am.

On-site registration fees are: \$17.00 for adults or \$8.00 for children. Shirt size and color are not guaranteed after September 7th.

Event Location: Starting at Capitol Park, walking to Julia Davis Park Bandshell. Boise, ID

At Julia Davis Park there will be food, entertainment, games, bounce houses, prizes, Buddy Walk items for sale, informational tables, a raffle, and more.

NEW THIS YEAR: A Silent Auction! Come and bid on 2 round trip tickets to anywhere in the United States via Alaskan Airlines, a basket of Epionce, a beautiful quilt, and more. Make sure you bring your pocket book!

If you have further questions, please email: Melody Witte and Sara Mitton Cox at buddywalk@idahodownsyndrome.org.

**Don't live in the Treasure Valley?
Can't attend the TVDSA Buddy Walk?
How about supporting another Idaho Buddy Walk?**

Southeast Idaho Buddy Walk

Date: Saturday, September 17th, 2011
Event Time: 9:00am-12:00pm
Location: Jensen Grove in **Blackfoot, ID**

Registration Fees: \$15.00 for adult, \$10.00 for children, and FREE for individuals with Down syndrome if register prior to September 10th. Registration: \$20.00 for adult if register the morning of the event.

For additional information go to www.seidahobuddywalk.com or contact Maria Neumann at 208.317.6211.



For those who have been blessed with a grandchild with Down syndrome . . .

Dear TVDSA Grandparents:

Welcome to TVDSA! We hope you will find information here that will be of help to you as you travel on this unexpected journey with your family.

Your relationship with your grandchild is unique like no other! All children need their family for nurturing, guidance, and most importantly, love and acceptance. Your grandchild, with Down syndrome, is no different.

The birth of a child with Down syndrome takes the entire family on a new journey, a journey that often feels confusing and filled with fear at first. The information and resources we have available for you here at the Treasure Valley Down Syndrome Association will, we hope, ease those fears and uncertainty. We hope that through information and support you will gain an understanding of this baby's special needs and of the love this child has to offer to everyone in his or her life.

We encourage you to learn as much about Down syndrome as you can at this time. But remember, a baby with Down syndrome is a baby first. Treat him or her as you would any other baby.

Please feel free to contact Kate Lukkari, our grandparent contact, at grandparents@idahodownsyndrome.org, or myself at president@idahodownsyndrome.org, if we can provide other resources to you.

- Paul Auger, TVDSA President

In This Issue

* Focus on Grandparents

* Grandparenting Tips

* Meet Sara Adolfson and her Grandparents

* Dakota's Pride

TVDSA Meeting

TVDSA will be having their meeting on

Tues, September 13th
from 7:00pm-9:00pm

at A New Leaf
2456 N. Stokesberry Pl
Meridian
(between Ustick and Fairview off Eagle Rd.)

Topic Discussions:

NDSC Conference

Reports: TVDSA

Scholarship Recipients will share some of the information they learned at this year's NDSC conference in San Antonio, in a panel discussion.

Then social networking by age groups.

For more information please contact: [Kelly Zimmerman](#) or [Erin Rosenkoetter](#)

Down Syndrome Film Gets Emmy Nomination

A documentary about the marriage of two adults with Down syndrome is up for an Emmy award.

The film, "[Monica & David](#)," premiered last fall on HBO. It followed Monica and David Martinez as they prepared for their wedding and subsequently learned to establish an independent life for themselves as newlyweds.

Focus on Grandparents by The National Down Syndrome Congress

The impending birth of a child generally fills an entire family with anticipation and delight. The hopes and joys of the prospective parents and grandparents tend to be dashed however, when the eagerly awaited infant is born with Down syndrome. Both parents and grandparents may experience similar feelings of confusion, shock and grief. The grandparents' reaction however, is doubled--grandparents suffer not only for the newborn but for their own child's pain as well. As the grandparent of a child born with Down syndrome commented, "I worried, of course, about the welfare of my grandchild, but my heart broke even more for my son and daughter-in-law for what they were going through and for not being able to experience the normal joy of becoming a parent."

Initial Reactions

The initial reactions to the birth of a child with Down syndrome may be numbness. Numbness is nature's way of protecting us from feeling unbearable pain, and it gives us time to develop ways of coping. A frequent coping mechanism that follows is denial. Feelings of unreality, that this really didn't happen or it is a mistake, are common examples of denial. Grandparents frequently cling to denial reactions, hoping against hope that their grandchild was incorrectly diagnosed. In extreme situations a grandparent may avoid visiting or even telephoning, thus not having to come to terms with the painful truth.

Unfortunately, this type of behavior can be mistaken for disinterest, compounding the new parents' sorrow and robbing them of much needed support. It is important to recognize that clinging to denial is one way of not having to grieve. Persistent denial, as understandable as it is, will only backfire because we must grieve in order to heal. Grief is the natural expression of all the emotions we feel when faced with an upsetting experience. Not allowing oneself to feel these tremendous pangs can often result in depression, stress-related physical illness, insomnia, and other emotional problems. Paradoxically, the only way to relieve grief is to permit the sorrow and pain to surface. Feelings of grief shared with someone else, such as a spouse, friend, or member of the clergy, gradually lessen in duration and intensity. Grandparents who believe they are being strong by denying or suppressing their grief feelings run the risk of compromising their ability to function and being of any assistance.

Very often the grandparents and new parents are unable to communicate with each other exactly how they feel. Both may feel vulnerable or wish to protect each other. However, sharing feelings honestly and openly will bring the family closer together. Sympathetic words or tender encouragement can go a long way at this point.

One of the most frequent reactions to tragic circumstances is anger. This can be a generalized response such as "why did this happen to me?" Or can be directed to others, such as the doctor or the hospital where the child was born.

Now the documentary has been nominated in the outstanding informational programming category of the News & Documentary Emmy Awards.

Winners will be announced Sept. 26 at a ceremony in New York City.

This is not the first honor for "Monica & David." The film was named best documentary feature at the prestigious Tribeca Film Festival last year.

Calendar of Events

September 7th:

Buddy Walk Early
Registration ends at midnight!

September 7th:

IPUL Parent Support Group - Parent and Professional Collaboration- A Cultural Perspective
6:00pm-8:00pm Boise
Contact: [Angela Lindig](#)

September 10th:

Lil Buddies Playgroup
3:00pm-5:00pm
at Clair's House in Boise
Contact: [Kristie Yerger](#)

September 12th:

TVDSA Buddy Walk Committee Meeting
7:00pm
Contact: [Sara Milton Cox](#) or [Melody Witte](#)

September 13th:

TVDSA Meeting
7:00pm-9:00pm
at A New Leaf, Meridian
Contact: [Kelly Zimmerman](#) or [Erin Rosenkoetter](#)

September 17th:

D.A.D.S. Gathering at 12:00pm
Albertson's Boise Open TVDSA has Clubhouse Passes! Please reserve yours by contacting [Jim Yerger](#)

Anger in its extreme form can manifest itself as uncontrollable rage, thus paralyzing and frightening at the same time. Frequently, anger is displaced and serves as a way of assigning blame to others, especially to the doctors and therapists. At times misplaced anger is directed towards the child with Down syndrome for being disabled and this unhappy situation can result in rejecting the child altogether.

Unfortunately, there is no easy answer to dealing with anger. Although anger is understandable, it is ultimately non-productive. As one young parent told the grandparents, "My anger went away when one day I looked down at my child and thought not "Why me?" but "Why him?"

Of all reactions, feelings of guilt and blame are the most cumbersome. Comments from other family members: "This never happens on our side of the family" - only adds more distress. In some cultures the birth of a child with a disability is seen as a form of punishment for something that happened in the past, even in a previous life! Some parents and grandparents feel that having a child with a disability is a sign of weakness or an inherent imperfection even when this is patently untrue. Guilt or laying blame serves no purpose; it shuts out the world and closes off avenues of help. Grandparents can play a major role in assuaging unfounded guilt by assuring the young parents that laying blame at their doorstep is unthinkable.

Depression and anxiety are other reactions that can occur and recur. The best way to deal with depression is to recognize that sad feelings are justifiable under the circumstances. Active involvement in the child's welfare may dispel the gloom or lessen the intensity. However, when the depression is generalized, pervasive or extreme, professional intervention is indicated. Acceptance is the hoped-for reaction to the birth of a child with Down syndrome. Although sorrow over the event may never disappear entirely, the unhappy feelings do lessen in intensity as time passes. There is a more positive side to the picture, for as the child grows, parents and grandparents alike have the opportunity to experience joy and pleasure just as with any other child.

As one grandmother commented, "Although I can never completely accept the fate that has befallen my children, it doesn't get in the way of the love we feel for my little granddaughter. Somehow that makes the reality of the situation not as grim."

Things to Remember

Most grandparents who have financial resources and leisure time at their disposal find great pleasure in the relationships they develop and the activities they share with their grandchildren. In many cases grandparents have a more relaxed attitude towards their grandchildren; they are not as pressured or fearful of spoiling children as when they were young parents themselves. Tales of doting grandparents who indulge their grandchildren's every whim are legendary, however, including allowing grandchildren forbidden sweets, staying up late, or ignoring family rules although prompted by the most loving of intentions, indulging grandchildren can create family friction--especially if the child has special dietary

September 17th:
Cool Club & AIM
4:00pm
Bowling at Nampa Bowl
and Pizza
Contact: [Molly Benton](#)
or [Freddie Gallas](#)

September 17th:
Southeast Idaho Buddy
Walk 9:00am-12:00pm
Blackfoot, ID
Contact: [Maria
Neumann](#)

September 19th:
TVDSA Buddy Walk
Committee Meeting
7:00pm
Contact: [Sara Mitton
Cox](#) or [Melody Witte](#)

September 23rd:
Parent Network of the
Capital Region 2011 Fall
[Conference](#) :
"Embracing
Differences: Creating A
Meaningful Inclusive
Environment for ALL
Students " Latham, NY

September 26th:
Lil' Buddies Playgroup
10:00am-12:00pm
at Westin's House in
Boise
Contact: [Kristie Yerger](#)

September 26th:
TVDSA Buddy Walk
Committee Meeting
7:00pm
Contact: [Sara Mitton
Cox](#) or [Melody Witte](#)

October 8th:
TVDSA Buddy Walk
11:00am-2:00pm
Capitol Building to Julia
Davis Park Boise, ID
Contact: [Melody
Witte](#) or
[Sara Mitton Cox](#)

October 13-14th
2011 Idaho Partnerships
[Conference](#)
"emPOWERment"
Boise, ID

October 24-25th:
Youth with Disabilities
Secondary Transition
[Conference](#)
Portland, OR

restrictions or needs careful behavioral monitoring.

Grandparents can avoid hard feelings by sitting down beforehand and requesting careful explanations regarding their grandchild's care, including for example what activities are most beneficial, hints on handling, and dietary needs.

By becoming as expert as possible, grandparents will be able to provide consistent care and help when and where it is most needed. Use leisure time to your grandchild's best advantage. Because grandparents tend to be removed from the day-to-day care of children, they are better equipped to do things. The grandfather, for instance, who patiently tosses the ball back and forth to help with coordination, or the grandmother who spends hours teaching shoelace tying is providing a loving service that delights both grandparent and grandchild. The best gift a grandparent can offer is the gift of time.

Providing actual financial gifts, however, requires careful evaluation. Many well meaning grandparents leave bequests or send funds to their grandchild who has Down syndrome, not realizing that it may not be the best way to provide for the child's needs. Grandparents and parents should seek the advice of attorneys or experts in the field before drafting wills, planning estates or giving sizable gifts. Regulations vary from state to state so it's a good idea to contact your local Down syndrome group for information and guidance.

Reprinted from The National Down Syndrome Congress.

Grandparenting Tips

**From Pacer, the Parent Advocacy Center
for Education Rights**

- Offer support, but don't hover: By doing so, your child will know you trust their decisions about medication, therapy, education, etc.
- Provide support in practical ways: Open communication is important. Ask what you can do to help. You can attend doctors' appointments for moral support and an extra set of ears and notes, or baby-sit to allow your children to relax one evening a week. Even if you live far away, you can help by locating therapists in your grandchild's city and finding useful books or other information.
- Offer opinions only if asked: Some parents might be sensitive about suggestions for raising their child. Try to understand that raising a child with a disability is difficult and give advice only when your child asks for it. "Sometimes my parents say things that sound as if they think we aren't doing things right," said a mother. "For example, my child has difficulty eating. But my mother has said, 'She does just fine when she's with me.' That might have been Mom trying to reassure me, but that's not how I heard it."

Lil' Buddies

Playgroup Dates:

Saturday, September 10th:

3:00pm-5:00pm at
Claira's House: 4112 N
Jullion Way in Boise

Monday, September 26th:

10:00am-12:00pm
at Westin's House: 7206 S
Angel Way in Boise

Happy Birthday to:

Halle - she turns 4!

If your Lil' Buddy has a September or October birthday, please email [Kristie](#) to have your child individually recognized and added to our Birthday list!

Need more information on Lil' Buddies Playgroup? Please contact [Kristie Yerger](#)

Elementary

Elementary Age Social Group Coming Soon!

Watch your inbox for details!

Need more information on the Elementary Social Group or want to help organize? Please contact [Kristie Yerger](#)

Cool Club & AIM

**The Cool Club and the
Adults in Motion (AIM)**
will both meet on:

September 17th

at 4:00pm
at Nampa Bowl

Activity: Bowling at Nampa Bowl, followed by pizza afterwards!

For more information or to RSVP, contact [Molly Benton](#) or [Freddie Gallas](#)

- Find out what you need to know about the disability: If you become informed about a child's disability, it indicates that you really want to be involved. However, follow the lead of your children. They have gathered plenty of information, and they have the information they need to raise their child. Before you offer new information, wait until they ask.
- Accept your grandchild as he or she is: Treat the child with a disability as you would any grandchild. Acknowledge the disability, but recognize the talents and abilities of your grandchild.
- Give yourself time to grieve: Many grandparents say their grief is magnified because they watch their child grieving also. Let yourself grieve and take care of yourself during difficult times.
- Enjoy your grandchild: If you enjoy reading to your grandchild, sit on the couch and read a book-even if the doctor says the child can't hear. Rock your grandchild in your favorite rocking chair. Bring pictures of your grandchild to your friends. Spend time together-you will quickly learn all of the talents and abilities your grandchild has and the important place you have in his or her life.

TVDSA Spotlight Family:

**Meet Sara Adolfson
and her proud Grandparents:
Bill & Geri DiRocco**

On October 26, 2007 our life changed forever. My wife, Geri and I waited in the prenatal intensive care unit of Saint Al's hospital as we awaited the arrival of what we later found were twin girls. Extra concern was given because the doctors were concerned that baby "B" was not responding properly. My daughter Kari was forced to give birth prematurely by Caesarian section. We prayed and our prayers were answered...both little babies, although 6 weeks premature, were going to be just fine physically.



We then got the news that baby "B" had Down's syndrome. With my daughter, we cried a lot. Seeing that small infant in her incubator sometime struggling for breath, we knew in our hearts that God had something special in mind for her daddy Eric, mom Kari, and the whole Adolfson family. He had something in mind for us as grandparents too. To see baby "B" - Sara struggle, grow and develop has been an experience that touches one's soul. She has so much love to give and asks little in

D.A.D.S. Group

The D.A.D.S. next gathering will be

Saturday, September 17th
at 12:00pm

At the
Alberstons Boise Open.
We have clubhouse passes!

For more information or to reserve your pass, contact: [Jim Yerger](#)

Winter Special Olympics Team

Despite the heat, it's time to start thinking about the Special Olympics Winter Games

High Valley is now recruiting for Alpine Skiers and Snowboarders.

For more information please contact Deborah Havens at dhmerritt@cablone.net

Idaho Parents Unlimited

IPUL Parent Support Group

September 7th
6:00pm-8:00pm
500 S. 8th St. Boise

Topic: Parent and Professional Collaboration- A Cultural Perspective

Learn about Cultural differences and values and what parents from different cultures want from professionals.

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

return. She wants to be read to, she wants to dance, she wants to laugh and follow the example of her twin, Emily. Yes, she does have a mind of her own, especially when she knows she is being chased by a parent (or grandparent). As a grandparent seeing what Sara has become as a bouncing 3 year old...her love of family and love she gives her dolls in her stroller; her attention to getting that doll potty trained; her enthusiasm to get on the bus to school; the twinkle in her eyes when she says "papa" and "grandma" are priceless and will always be in our hearts.

Shortly after our Sara was born, Kari purchased some yellow and blue wristbands with the Down's imprint on them. I wear mine proudly and have yet to remove it. I have been asked numerous times what it means. I look at it each day and am constantly aware of that little angel in my life. I grew up in a town in Montana where a building not far from my home was titled "School for the Deaf and Dumb." I never entered the place, but now years later, I wish I had. Referring to people with disabilities to a name like that was an outrage. My Sara exhibits a determination, charm, and an ability to learn that is phenomenal. I think of the people who passed through that facility who didn't have parents like Eric and Kari and siblings who care for her, like brothers Caleb, Ethan and sister Emily. Those were families who didn't realize how extraordinarily special the Saras of the world truly are. True, Sara requires extra support, but the return to all of us is immeasurable. As I said, Geri and I are blessed by our #7 grandchild. This October, when we proudly wear our "Buddy Walk" shirts in downtown Boise, we will again be with many other kids who are an inspiration to us all.

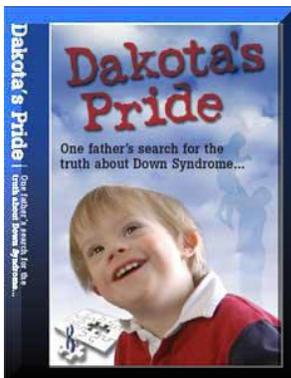


-Written by: Bill DiRocco aka "Papa"

From the TVDSA Lending Library

by Mary Anne Murphy

Dakota's Pride DVD



When a grandchild who has Down syndrome is born, grandparents, naturally, have many questions. When the grandparents do not live close to their precious new grandchild, it can be harder to keep up with all that the child's parents are learning. The DVD called Dakota's Pride can help grandparents gain the information they seek. This heart-warming documentary is the creative work of a father and his friend who take their questions about Down syndrome and

Conferences, Workshops and Webinars

PEAK **FREE** Webinars:

[Seminario Virtual- ELIEP: Un Instrumento para Realizar las Posibilidades](#)

September 8th
6:30pm-7:30pm

[Life After School](#)

September 13th
6:30p-7:30pm

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](#)

emPOWERment 2011

Idaho partnerships
conference on Human
Services

October 13th & 14th
Boise, ID

[Online Registration](#)
is now open!

For more information see:
[Idaho Partnership on
Human Services
Conference brochure](#)

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

October 24th-25th, 2011
Sheraton Portland Airport
Hotel
Portland, OR

go on a few road trips to gain answers. Members are welcome to check out Dakota's Pride and mail it to grandparents that may live far away (or even take it to grandparents who live locally.) Mailing a DVD is not very expensive, and there is plenty of time for grandparents to watch and return before the due date. This DVD is one good way for grandparents to stay connected.



Do you enjoy playing or watching golf? Get your Boise Open Tickets Now!

September 12-18th, 2011
Hillcrest Country Club
Boise ID

The future of the PGA TOUR returns to the Hillcrest Country Club for the 22nd annual Albertsons Boise Open presented by Kraft. Thanks to Sara Lee TICKETS Fore CHARITY program, 100% of your ticket purchase online through the [website](#) in advance can benefit TVDSA when you select Treasure Valley Down Syndrome as the Designated Charity to support. In addition, when you purchase in advance, the ticket prices are cheaper! What a deal!

Ticket Options Available:

- * **New Foursome Package** \$150.00 (includes 4 weekly tickets to the tournament, four Hillcrest Country Club VIP passes for the tournament and an official tournament cap (value \$300))
- * **Individual Grounds:** \$25.00 (grounds tickets good for entire tournament)
- * **Individual Clubhouse:** \$50.00 (Clubhouse and Grounds admissions for the entire tournament)
- * Additional packages also available for larger parties.
- * Children 12 and under are FREE with ticketed adult

<https://www.albertsonsboiseopen.com/tickets-info>

TVDSA Scholarship Information

Are you considering attending an upcoming workshop or 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](#).



Board of Directors

President: [Paul Auger](#) VP & Programs Chair: [Kristie Yerger](#)
Treasurer & Advisor: [Lynda Wells](#) Secretary: [Audrey Sturtevant](#)
Marketing Chair: [Angela Bowman](#) Buddy Walk Co-Chair: [Sara Mitton Cox](#)
Transitioning Treasurer: [Lucy Olmos](#) Buddy Walk Co-Chair: [Melody Witte](#)
Librarian: [Mary Anne Murphy](#) Community Outreach: [Trish Vranish](#)
Fundraising Chair: [Wayne Blakeman](#)

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!](#)
