



TREASURE VALLEY
DOWN SYNDROME ASSOCIATION

TVDSA Newsletter

Newsletter Editor: [Celena Auger](#)

December 2012

In this Issue

The December issue looks at the positives of an inclusive environment for both children with disabilities and without and how thinking outside the box can help many of our loved ones succeed beyond our dreams. There is also an article that describes a new way to celebrate the daily successes of you and your family, not only during the holidays, but for years to come.

The TVDSA Newsletter staff wants to hear from you!

- What do you want more/less of?
- What topics do you want to read more about?

We realize there is a wide audience this newsletter reaches, but we want to make sure you are getting out of the newsletter what you need and want for your family. In 2013 TVDSA hopes to bring you even more of what you need to advocate and be a healthy family as a whole. Please email any comments or suggestions to:

newsletter@idahodownsyndrome.org

Monthly and archived TVDSA newsletters are available on our website at: www.idahodownsyndrome.org for viewing and sharing.



TVDSA Christmas Parties!
No matter the age, we have a party for you!



Cool Club and Adults in Motion Christmas Potluck

Wednesday, December 12th

6:00 p.m. – 9:00 p.m.
at the Mager's Party Barn
4090 S. McDermott Road, Nampa

Come for a night of socializing, potluck food, and of course dancing!

Meat, drinks, plates, cups and napkins will be provided.

We ask that each family bring a side dish **AND** dessert to share.



We hope to see you at one or both events.

TVDSA wishes everyone a safe and wonderful holiday season!

Snackin' With Santa

Saturday, December 15th

2:00 p.m. – 4:00 p.m.
at A New Leaf
2456 N. Stokesberry Place, Meridian

Whether you are a kid or a kid at heart, this is a celebration for you!

Share your wishes with Santa, decorate holiday cookies and socialize with friends over provided snacks.

IF – Thinking by: Kathie Snow, Disability is Natural

Many years ago, at my children's inclusive elementary school, I was asked to observe in a fifth-grade classroom, and share my ideas on better strategies for Chris, a boy with Autism.

Chris received intensive adult support: a teacher's aide usually sat right next to him. During a spelling test, Chris told her how to spell each word, and she wrote for him since his writing was illegible to everyone except Chris. But most of her efforts were to keep Chris in his seat. It was painful to watch as – every few minutes – Chris fidgeted and started to rise, and a gentle, but firm, hand on his shoulder kept him in his seat.

Long-story short: I ran to my son's first-grade classroom to borrow his laptop computer for Chris to try out. During the next two hours, Chris was captivated as he explored all the programs on the computer; he never once tried to get up; and when he discovered the word processing program, he found the letters on the keyboard to type his name, had an ah-ha look on his face, and said, "Mrs. Snow, if I had one of these [a computer] I could take spelling tests all by myself." Indeed he could – and he and I both laughed with glee!

Chris was so thoroughly engaged with the computer that he never felt the need to "escape." (Was this need born out of boredom and/or the desire to get away from a Hovering Helicopter Helper?) Chris had no previous access to a computer because his mom had said, "He could never do that." But I didn't know this; my action was a shot in the dark, generated by IF-Thinking. And Chris shared his own IF-thinking with me.

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December 12th:

Annual Christmas Potluck Dinner
6:00pm-9:00pm at the Mager's Party Barn in Nampa
Contact: [Freddie Gallas](#)

December 15th:

Snackin' with Santa
2:00pm-4:00pm
At A New Leaf in Meridian
Contact: [Kristie Yerger](#)

January 12th, 2013:

Idaho Stampede Night
7:00pm game, \$12.00 tickets
Please pre-order by January 4th
Contact: [Malu Mulholland](#)

January 18th & 19th, 2013:

[r.i.s.e conference](#)
Portland, OR

The Inclusion Paradox: Why the student with disabilities sitting next to your child may improve his or her education. By Valle Dwight

When Bill Grundfest heard that his son's kindergarten class in Bel Air, Calif., would include a child with a cognitive disability, he was concerned. He worried that this child would take up all of the teacher's time, leaving the rest of the class twiddling their thumbs.

"In spite of good teachers being able to see out the backs of their heads, they only have a finite amount of time and energy," he says. "One expects a disabled child to need more time and energy than a nondisabled one, hence less time for everyone else."

In the tiny Southern California school district, Grundfest kept his concern to himself, fearing that other parents would think him intolerant. But he fretted just the same, nervous that his son's education would be a watered-down version of what he had envisioned.

The history of inclusion:

Grundfest is not alone in his concern, of course. Many parents fear the effects on their own kids when a child with a disability joins their classroom. Some worry that the teaching will be geared to slower learners, some are wary of potential behavior issues, and others think that the resources to teach students with learning problems would be better directed at those without disabilities.

Inclusion of children with disabilities in the classroom is nothing new — it's been around since 1975, when the Individuals With Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) was passed. The law calls for children with disabilities to be educated in the "least restrictive environment," opening the door for them to join general education classrooms in their neighborhood schools. In the almost 35

years since IDEA passed, more and more children with disabilities have been included in classrooms, but parental concerns about the education of typical students remains an issue.

What research says about inclusive classrooms:

However, studies show that typical students do not suffer when there is a child with a disability in the classroom. Deb Staub, a social worker in Seattle, found in her research — "[On Inclusion and the Other Kids: Here's What Research Shows so Far About Inclusion's Effect on Nondisabled Students](#)" (pdf), published by LeadScape — that the academic performance of typical students in an inclusive classroom was not adversely affected.

She points to a study that compared the instructional time in an inclusive classroom to that of a classroom without children with learning differences and found that the presence of students with severe disabilities had no effect on typical students. In fact, research has found that when children with disabilities are present in the classroom, all students benefit — both academically and in other ways that are harder to measure.

What inclusive classrooms do better...

The inclusive edge

Academically, inclusive classrooms afford an obvious boon. Additional staff dedicated to kids with learning disabilities lowers the overall student-to-teacher ratio. Smaller groups and

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Announcing Just in time for the Holidays: TVDSA Greeting & Note Cards

TVDSA has greeting cards available to purchase. The original calendar photo shoot pictures are now greeting & note cards!

Cards will be available at both Christmas parties and online (coming soon).



Set of 11, with one of each of the prints.

Costs: \$7.00 per set
+ Shipping: by request and donation *

(*Or you have the choice of picking up from Eagle location, and pay no shipping)

To [view and order](#) the greeting/note cards visit: [website](#) (coming soon).

IF-Thinking (Continued from Page 1)

What if we made an IF-List regarding the person with a disability we care about? What if we incorporated IF-Thinking in IEP/IHP/ISP meetings? We could make an IF-List about what we're currently doing (to examine those actions), and make a list of new things that might result in positive outcomes. Consider the following examples. . .

- IF I help Graciela too much, I may make her helpless.
- IF we choose more natural ways to helping our child, instead of traditional therapies, we can meet our child's needs, and our family can live a more normal life.
- IF Tom has many opportunities to practice driving, with appropriate adaptations, he may be able to drive.
- IF Amber is at her IEP meeting, and participates in writing relevant and meaningful goals for herself, she'll probably have a much better school year.
- IF we provide Joaquin with the supports he needs, he can successfully move into his own place.
- IF Nicole has a power wheelchair, she'll be more self-reliant, and able to enjoy age-appropriate activities instead of being treated like a baby when she's pushed in the manual wheelchair.
- IF Medicaid insurance won't find the assistive technology devices we need, we'll look at other options (volunteer agencies, getting used devices, etc.)

- IF Dylan has a communication device, he can speak for himself, and won't need to communicate through his behavior (so maybe some of the "inappropriate behavior" will disappear), and he can also tell his mom and dad, "I love you," for the first time ever.
- IF we provide a one-on-one aide for Latoya, we'll be sending the message that she's incompetent (to her and to others). This could worsen her behavior, and also prevent others from helping. What IF assisted technology devices and natural peer support could eliminate or minimize the need for one-on-one support?
- IF Jeremy is in special, segregated settings, he won't learn how to get along in the real world.
- IF we focus on Sandra's abilities, instead of trying to "fix her problems," we'll bring out the best in her.
- IF we really listen to Stephen, and are guided by his wants and needs, we'll be on the right track.

IF-Thinking can take us beyond the status quo to new possibilities and better outcomes. But this can happen only **if** we choose to take the time and make the effort to consider. . . **IF!**

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Create a Joy Journal: Remember the moments of triumph, laughter, inspiration, and small miracles By Terri Mauro, About.com Guide

Maybe you keep a record of medical details and contacts with professionals, and maybe you keep a personal journal to help you deal with the stresses and heartaches of parenting a child with special needs. Those are good things to do, but try adding one more record-keeping exercise to your routine: a special journal just for jotting down all the things that go *right* for your child, the everyday triumphs, the funny things that happen, the nice things someone says, the battles won, the milestones met in their own sweet time. It's easy to lose track of that good stuff when the bad is coming at you, so it's worth taking a moment to write it down when it happens. You'll not only have the ultimate inspirational resource for those times when everything seems gloom and doom, but you'll provide your child and family with a positive history of your lives together.

"After our daughter's prenatal diagnosis, I KNEW life would be challenging. However, our life is NOT all about Down syndrome, as I initially feared it would be.

The message I would give to every mom with a prenatal diagnosis is –
"Life will continue on as before.

Joy will return.

You will make *PEACE* with the diagnosis. For those who might not be there yet, hang on, there are many *smiles* ahead."

**Michelle, Mom to Lilly
International Down Syndrome
Coalition**



TREASURE VALLEY
DOWN SYNDROME ASSOCIATION

Social Groups Page

Dads Appreciating Down Syndrome (D.A.D.S.) Meeting:

There will be No Meeting in
December.

For more information about **D.A.D.S.**
please contact [Gus Olmos](#)

Moms' Night Out:

There will be No Outing in
December.

For more information or to help
organize, please contact [Kristie
Yerger](#)

GoodSearch and TVDSA

You search the internet all the
time anyway, why not do it and
earn money for TVDSA. Just go
to: www.goodsearch.com and
select TVDSA as your favorite
cause. Simply search Down
syndrome, we can be found
near the end of the list. Then
every time you do an internet
search a donation is made to
TVDSA. Tell everyone you know
about GoodSearch for TVDSA.

Lil' Buddies & Best Buds Update:

December Gathering:

Lil' Buddies and Best Buds
will come together for
the holidays with
Snackin' with Santa on
Saturday, December 15th
from 2:00pm-4:00pm at A
New Leaf at 2456 N.
Stokesberry Place in
Meridian.

We will be decorating
Christmas cookies and
we will have a special
guest – Santa! Come
with your wish list!

Need more information
on **Lil' Buddies or Best
Buds**? Interested in
helping organize the
monthly gatherings?
Please contact [Kristie
Yerger](#).



Adults in Motion (AIM) and Cool Club (Jr./Sr. High)

December Gathering:

will be **Wednesday,**
December 12th from
6:00pm-9:00pm for our
Annual Christmas
Potluck Dinner.

Each family is asked to
bring a side dish AND
dessert to share in the
potluck!

It will be a night of
socializing, eating and
of course dancing!

Meat, drinks, cups and
napkins will be provided.

For more information
about **AIM** contact:
[Freddie Gallas](#).

For more information
about **Cool Club**
please contact:
[Melanie Berlini](#)



Congratulations: Donnis Mager & Karleen Lemmon!

At the 2012 Idaho
Partnership Conference,
they awarded the first
ever Commitment to
Community Awards.
Among the nine
nominees, two of the
Lifetime Achievement
Award Nominees were
TVDSA family members.

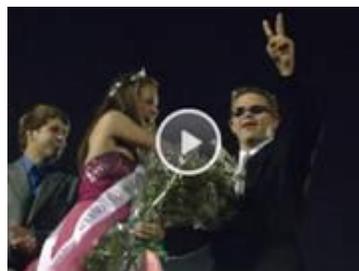
The Commitment to
Community Lifetime
Achievement award
honors a single individual
for his or her lifetime
contribution to enriching
the lives of individuals
with disabilities. The
recipient of this award
embraces the values of

inclusion, collaboration
and advocacy. Karleen
Lemmon and Donnis
Mager were both
nominated. Donnis
Mager won the 2012
Lifetime Achievement
Award. Congratulations
to you both!

Congratulations to Homecoming King Nathan Lago!

The 2012 Homecoming King at the Wood River
High School in Hailey, Idaho is Nathan Lago. The
local high school senior, who has lived his entire
life in Blaine County, was recently crowned
homecoming king. Nathan has Down syndrome.

"It makes me feel very proud, very proud of
Nathan and our community," said Tifny Lago,
Nathan's mother. "I think from the time he was
in preschool there's always been a culture of
inclusion. And, it's never been a fight for us to be
included. He's always been accepted by his
peers and staff."



Conferences, Workshops, Webinars & TVDSA Scholarship Information

Family Caregiver Workshop

4 FREE classes that help home caregivers and family successfully care for loved ones with Alzheimer's or other dementias

5:30pm-7:30pm on

December 11th - Classes 1&2

December 13th - Classes 3&4

To make a reservation or learn more call Elizabeth Britton at 208-888-9962

[PEAK Parent Center Conference on Inclusive Education](#)

February 7-8, 2013
Denver, Colorado

[Down Syndrome Affiliates in Action Leadership Conference](#)

February 21-24th, 2013
Cincinnati, Ohio

Early Birds save \$100 if register before December 1st!

TVDSA Scholarships

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.

[Inclusion Works!](#)

February 7-9, 2013
The Renaissance Hotel
Austin, Texas
Registration closes January 27th!

[Trisomy 21 Conference](#)

March 2, 2013
The Renaissance Hotel
Houston, Texas

[r.i.s.e conference](#)

Respect, Inspire, Support and Educate 23rd Annual Parent Conference

January 18th & 19th, 2013
Portland, OR

[ID Miss Amazing Pageant](#)

February 8-9th, 2013
Boise, ID

[Wrightslaw Conferences](#)

Special Education Law and Advocacy
Various dates and locations across the U.S.

"Don't ever prejudice the limits of our abilities. We definitely will surprise you and sometimes we even surprise ourselves!"

-Annie Forts

The Inclusion Paradox (continued from page 2):

more individualized instruction (a necessity for children with disabilities) usually means a boost for everyone in the classroom.

Some of the adaptations made for children with disabilities may benefit other students as well. A PA system installed for a hearing-impaired student helps the entire class hear the teacher better. A visual schedule that outlines the day's plan turns out to be a great organizing tool for all students.

As for the harder-to-measure benefits, many parents report that their children enrolled in inclusive classrooms are more compassionate, have better social skills and higher self-esteem, and are more open to the needs of others. Staub's research found that typical children in inclusive classrooms exhibited increased patience with slower learners and more ease with people with disabilities.

An unlikely convert:

Such studies confirm what Grundfest observed in his son. Not only did his son accept his classmate with the disability without hesitation, but the boys became friends as the year went on. "He seemed to completely understand this kid's limitations, but they were still buddies," says Grundfest. "He was experiencing people who are different without thinking that they are less."

"Our son seems to be growing up to be a kind and compassionate kid," he adds. "And I think having a classmate with a disability was part of helping him become that."

Grundfest, who like many adults did not go to school with children with disabilities, realizes that he had a vision of what his child's education would look like and was thrown by the reality. "We expect that world will repeat what we experienced as kids, and that's where we go wrong," he says. "They are not you, and the world is vastly different."

Seeing his son incorporate this classmate into his life with such little fanfare has turned Grundfest into an inclusion convert. "My views changed by learning from my own son," he says. "He had zero discomfort around his classmate. As the song says: 'You've got to be taught to hate and fear.'"

In an ironic twist, Grundfest now sees that he learned as much from the experience as his son did. "Someday I hope I can grow up to be like my kid," he says.

Source: *Great Schools™ Involved parents. Successful kids.* January, 2010 <http://www.greatschools.org>



TREASURE VALLEY
DOWN SYNDROME ASSOCIATION

PO Box 1404
Meridian, Idaho 83680

We're on the Web!

See us at:

www.idahodownsyndrome.org

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

***"As far as we're concerned,
DISability means
POSSibility."***

-unknown

TVDSA 2013 Calendars Still Available!



It's not too late to get your 2013 TVDSA
Calendar for just \$15.00

You can order your calendars online at:

[http://idahodownsyndrome.org/documents/Calendar
Preorder_Form.pdf](http://idahodownsyndrome.org/documents/Calendar_Preorder_Form.pdf)

TVDSA & the Idaho Stampede

TVDSA will be teaming up with the Idaho Stampede for a fun night while raising money and spreading awareness. Mark your calendars now for **January 12, 2013**. Game starts at 7:00pm.

Tickets start at \$12 each. The ticket order form can be found on our [website](#).

Please order your tickets by Friday, January 4th, 2013.

From the TVDSA Lending Library:

Accessing the Curriculum – Strategies for differentiation for pupils with Down syndrome

**by: Gillian Bird, Sandy Alton and
Cecilie Mackinnon**

This booklet, a publication of Down Syndrome Education, addresses the question of how to modify the curriculum to meet the needs of students with Down syndrome so that they may learn in the regular classroom. This tool can help parents and educators to develop an effective and useful education plan so that students with Down syndrome may learn alongside their peers using the same curriculum. The information presented here is a result of many years of work and research by world-renowned experts in the field of education for individuals with Down syndrome.

By differentiation the authors mean making changes, from small changes to larger ones, which enable children to learn from the school curriculum, designed for their

age group, with peers in an inclusive schooling system. Differentiation of the curriculum enables children with Down syndrome to learn with their typically developing peers and progress forward in all aspects of their development, as other children do, using the same curriculum as a guide.

This booklet is available from the TVDSA library as an individual booklet from the down syndrome education (dse) online program. Members may reserve it by contacting the librarian at library@idahodownsyndrome.org.

For a complete list of the books/DVDs available through TVDSA, please check out our [Lending Library](#).



The mission of Treasure Valley Down Syndrome Association is to enhance the quality of life for persons 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.

Board of Directors:

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Advisor: [Lynda Wells](#)

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Secretary: [Audrey Byrum](#)

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Buddy Walk Chair: [George Taylor](#)

Community Outreach Chair: [Erin Rosenkoetter](#)

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

Mailing: PO Box 1404 Meridian, ID 83680; Check us out on [Facebook](#) and [Twitter](#)