



TREASURE VALLEY
DOWN SYNDROME ASSOCIATION

TVDSA Newsletter

Newsletter Editor: [Celena Auger](#)

September 2014

In this Issue

Most everyone is back to school now: new teachers, new classes, possibly a new school. This month's newsletter includes numerous articles to help start your year off on the right foot. Learn how to write an Owner's Manual for your child's teacher, learn some paperwork tips, and about the shift in accountability of special education by the federal government.

The TVDSA Family Meeting is September 9th and we have a temporary NEW LOCATION! We will be meeting at Advanced Therapy Care in Meridian. A newly relocated member of TVDSA, Charmaine Thaner, is an expert on Inclusive Education. Join us for a great discussion! Learn how your child's teachers can tap into their strengths, tips for having your child actively participate in general education classrooms, and how to influence change at your school.

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

Back To School: How to Write your Child's "Owner's Manual" for Special Education Teachers by: Michael Dorfman

Every new car comes with a large owner's manual detailing what every dashboard light means and advice to troubleshoot problems with the vehicle. Every make of car is different requiring a specific manual for your make and model. While two people may own SUVs—a GM SUV will have a completely different set of maintenance requirements than say, a Honda SUV, and those two owner's manuals could not be used interchangeably.

Kids with special needs are no different than cars. Two children with Down syndrome are nothing alike, other than having the same diagnosis. That is why each child with a physical and/or learning disability attending school needs an "owner's manual" to accompany them. I have used the term "owner's manual" facetiously because it's a common and understood term, but not any better than "user's guide." From this point forward the manual will be referred to as the "All About Me" pamphlet.

The All About Me Pamphlet

Teachers, social workers, therapists, administrators and all other school employees are getting larger caseloads and less time to work with students individually. The "All About Me" pamphlet will describe your child, what makes him or her tick, triggers, biographical information, and any other details you deem pertinent. This pamphlet allows the school personnel working with your child to get to know him or her quicker and help plan efficiently.

How the Pamphlet Works

The pamphlet is usually written from the child's voice, but in adult language. The pamphlet does not have to be fancy and can easily be created in Microsoft Word. Every year, we include photos in the pamphlet of our child enjoying his favorite activities and photos of our family to show that he is surrounded by people who love him and that he is valuable. In essence, the pamphlet is partly biographical and partly informative.

You Cannot Go Wrong

There is no right or wrong way to prepare this document. On the first day of school, we make copies and put them in the school mailboxes of every employee who will interact with our child. These pamphlets are usually 5-6 pages long. Too much information, like a car owner's manual, will guarantee the person to stop reading after a few pages.

We use the following headers for our pamphlet:

- Introduction
This is where we describe our son. We talk about his personality, our family, and things that he likes, i.e. hockey and cooking.
- Disability
In this section, we describe my son's learning disabilities in detail. If there are physical disabilities or illnesses, include them in this section as well. Don't assume that the teachers or other personnel understand, or have even heard of the issues your child is dealing with. We use language from the websites that specifically deal with each disability. We then interpose examples of behaviors that my son will exhibit that are connected to the said disability(ies).

Continued on Page 5

September 2nd:

TVDSA Board Meeting
7:00pm-9:00pm at A New Leaf
Contact: [Kristie Yerger](#)

September 6th:

10 year Celebration of the Adventure Island from 10:00am-2:00pm inside Meridian's Settler's Park at the corner of Ustick and Meridian Rd. Contact: [Erin Rosenkoetter](#)

September 9th:

AIM – Free Dance class at Elevated Dance Project from 3:30pm-4:00pm
Contact: [Lynda Wells](#)

September 9th:

TVDSA Family Meeting from 7:00pm-9:00pm. NEW LOCATION: Advanced Therapy Care Topic: The How-tos of Inclusive Education with Charmaine Thaner
Contact: [Erin Rosenkoetter](#)

September 16th:

Best Buds at Piggy Pigs Pottery in Meridian at 6:00pm
Contact: [Malu Mulholland](#)

September 17th:

Mom's Night Out! at Smoky Mountain Pizza in Meridian at 7:30pm Contact: [Malu Mulholland](#)

September 20th:

Lil'Buddies at Journey's house in Kuna from 10:00am-12:00pm.
Contact: [Malu Mulholland](#)

September 20th:

Cool Club at Big Al's in Meridian from 10:00am-12:00pm.
Contact: [Andrew Kopping](#)

October 11th:

TVDSA 12th Annual Buddy Walk 11:00am-2:00pm Capitol Bldg. to Julia Davis Park Contact: [George Taylor](#)

October - Awareness Month Preparation

In October we will be sharing 31 days of pictures on our Facebook page, and would love to highlight your loved one with Down syndrome.

Please send a picture and short paragraph to celebrate DS Awareness Month to Malu Mulholland at vicepresident@idahodownsyndrome.org

2014 TVDSA Buddy Walk

Registration is remaining OPEN!

Unfortunately, t-shirt size and color is not guaranteed after September 1st!

The 12th annual TVDSA Buddy Walk will be held on **October 11, 2014.**



Changes for 2014:

- All individuals with Down syndrome walk for **FREE!**
- You can purchase your raffle tickets online **BEFORE** the event (6 for \$20). At the event they will be available for 5 for \$20.
- More area will be available at Julia Davis Park for activities.
- A variety of food trucks will be available at the park, please bring money for your lunches as it is not included in registration this year!

Register online and save! Prices will be higher the day of the event!

Online Registration:

\$15.00 for adults and kids 13 & up;
\$10.00 for kids 12 and under.

Registration Day of Event: October 11th

\$25.00 for adults and kids 13 & up;
\$15.00 for kids 12 and under.

We will have entertainment, information, and fun!

Look for more details on the registration site at <http://goo.gl/Uu6fL7>

We hope to see you all there!



Treasure Valley Resource Fair & 10 year Anniversary Celebration of Adventure Island Playground



Idaho's first Universally Accessible Playground

Saturday, September 6th 10:00am-12:00pm

inside Meridian's Settler's Park (corner of Meridian and Ustick)

First 150 attendees will receive a "Map to Services" magnet and commemorative t-shirt.

Music * Mini Donuts * Playground for All * Resources of All Kinds *
Come visit the TVDSA booth * Enjoy some of our last days of summer.

For more information, contact: Erin Rosenkoetter at community@idahodownsyndrome.org

Free for families

A 'Major Shift' In Oversight of Special Education by: Claudio Sanchez

U.S. Education Secretary Arne Duncan says states must ensure progress for students with disabilities. The Obama administration said Tuesday, June 24th, 2014, that the vast majority of the 6.5 million students with disabilities in U.S. schools today are not receiving a quality education, and that it will hold states accountable for demonstrating that those students are making progress.

Education Secretary Arne Duncan announced what he calls "a major shift" in how the government evaluates the effectiveness of federally funded special education programs. "It's not enough for a state to be compliant if students can't read or do math," Duncan said. "We must have a system that will do more than just measure compliance."

The latest government figures show that the dropout rate for students with disabilities is twice that for nondisabled students. Two-thirds of students with disabilities are performing well below grade level in reading and math. By the eighth grade, that figure rises to 90 percent. And yet, Duncan said, most states are doing exactly what the federal Individuals with Disabilities Education Act has required until now. School districts are required to create an "individualized education plan," or IEP, tailored to a student's needs. School officials must show that these children are getting instructional support in a timely manner and that they have full access to the curriculum and everything else that goes on in school.

Under the new guidelines, Duncan says he'll require proof that these kids aren't just being served but are actually making academic progress. "We know that when students with disabilities are held to high expectations and have access to a robust curriculum, they excel," Duncan said. These are students with a range of disabilities, from ADHD and dyslexia to developmental, emotional and behavioral disorders.

During his conference call with reporters, Duncan was joined by Kevin Huffman, Tennessee's education commissioner. Huffman challenged the prevailing view that most special education students lag behind because of their disabilities. He said most lag behind because they're not expected to succeed if they're given more demanding schoolwork and because they're seldom tested. "In Tennessee, we've seen over time that our students with disabilities did not have access to strong assessments. So the results were not providing an honest picture of how those students were doing."

The Education Department has already targeted Delaware, California, Texas and the District of Columbia for federal intervention because special education students in these jurisdictions are not doing well. Duncan says he is creating a \$50 million technical-assistance center to help states comply with the new guidelines. States that fall short could lose federal funding earmarked for special education, which totals about \$11.5 billion a year.

Source: nprED: How Learning Happens

Back-to-School Tips for Parents of Children with Special Needs

A new school year means a new grade, new teachers, new goals, and maybe even a new school! In order to help you and your child with special needs be as successful as you can be, we've put together a list of eight helpful back-to-school tips that we hope will make the transition into a new school year a little easier for you and your child.

Organize all that paperwork

In the world of special education, there are lots of meetings, paperwork, and documentation to keep track of. Try to keep a family calendar of school events, special education meetings, conferences, etc. Setting up a binder or folder to keep your child's special education documentation, meeting notices, and IEPs in sequential order can also help you stay organized.

Start a communication log

Keeping track of all phone calls, e-mails, notes home, meetings, and conferences is important. Create a "communication log" for yourself in a notebook that is easily accessible. Be sure to note the dates, times, and nature of the communications you have.

Review your child's current IEP

The IEP is the cornerstone of your child's educational program, so it's important that you have a clear understanding of it. Note when the IEP expires and if your child is up for reevaluation this year. Most importantly, be sure that this IEP still "fits" your child's needs! If you're unsure, contact the school about holding an IEP review meeting.

Relieve back-to-school jitters

Just talking about the upcoming year and changes can help reduce some of that back-to-school anxiety! Talk to your child about exciting new classes, activities, and events that they can participate in during the new school year. If attending a new school, try to schedule a visit before the first day. With older students, it is sometimes helpful to explain the services and accommodations in their IEP so that they know what to expect when school begins.

Keep everyone informed

It's important that a routine is in place once school starts. You can even begin practicing your new schedule, focusing on

Continued on Page 6



TREASURE VALLEY
DOWN SYNDROME ASSOCIATION

Social Groups Page

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

D.A.D.S. will not be meeting in September. We apologize for not meeting this summer. Gus will be having a new baby around soon and is busy preparing for the addition. Congratulations to Gus and Lucy!

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

TVDSA Family Meeting

September 9th
7:00pm-9:00pm

New Location:

Advanced Therapy Care
68 Baltic Avenue in Meridian

Kick off the school year the right way! Bring the whole family and join us for our newly formatted family meeting.

Topic: The How Tos of Inclusive Education Learn how your child's teachers can tap into their strengths, tips for having your child actively participate in general education classrooms, and how to influence change at your school. Check out the free resources on Charmaine's website: www.cspeda.com

Presenter: Charmaine Thaner, Educational Consultant and Liaison Collaborative Special Education Advocacy

For more information contact [Erin Rosenkoetter](#)



Lil' Buddies (age birth-5 years) Update:

Lil' Buddies will be playing at Journey's house Saturday, **September 20th** from **10:00am-12:00pm**. Journey lives at 612 W. Ram Hill Street in Kuna. Come for a morning of fun!

Help Wanted: If you would like to help organize monthly outings and fun activities for infants-toddlers, ages birth-5 years with Down syndrome in the

Treasure Valley, please contact [Malu Mulholland](#). We are looking for a new Lil' Buddies coordinator to take over.

Need more information on **Lil' Buddies**? Please contact [Malu Mulholland](#).



Best Buds Update:

Best Buds will be going to **Piggy Pigs Pottery** located at 46 E Fairview Ave in Meridian on Tuesday, **September 16th** at **6:00pm**. TVDSA will cover the studio fee of individuals with Down syndrome. Pieces can be purchased from \$4.00 and up.

Need more information on **Best Buds**? Please contact [Malu Mulholland](#)

Help Wanted: We are looking for a new Best Buds coordinator to take over. If you would like to help organize monthly outings, and fun activities for children in elementary school with Down syndrome, please contact [Malu Mulholland](#).

Cool Club Update:

Cool Club will be **BOWLING** at **Big Al's** in Meridian (off Eagle and Fairview) Saturday, **September 20th** from **10:00am to 12:00pm**. TVDSA will provide the games, each participant will need to

rent (\$2.00) or bring appropriate bowling shoes.

Need more information on **Cool Club**? Please contact: [Andrew Kopping](#) 208-350-9908

AIM Update:

AIM will not be meeting in August. However, please mark your calendar for **September 9th** at **3:30pm**. **Elevated Dance Project** is opening their doors to AIM for a **free dance class**. The Super Stars class is from 3:30pm-4:00pm on Thursday's in Eagle. The EDP studio is located at 1396 E. Iron Eagle Drive #300 in Eagle. If you are interested in

continuing with the class (there is no obligation for the free class) tuition is \$25 per month. We hope you can come enjoy some movement, dance and fun!

Need more information on **AIM**? Please contact [Lynda Wells](#)

MOM'S Night Out!

Moms had a GREAT turnout in August – eight moms and two were new to the area! On **Wednesday, September 17th** at **7:30pm**, we will be going to **Smokey Mountain Pizza** located at 980 East Fairview Avenue in Meridian. TVDSA will provide the appetizers.

Help Wanted: If you would like to help organize monthly outings, and fun activities for mothers of individuals with Down syndrome in the Treasure Valley, please contact [Malu Mulholland](#). We are looking for a new Mom's Night Out! coordinator to take over.

For more information or questions, please contact: [Malu Mulholland](#)

Conferences, Workshops, Webinars & TVDSA Scholarship Information

IPUL presents: Success with the IEP

Wednesday, **September 24th**
6:15pm-8:15pm

Join us to learn the ins and outs of a successful IEP meeting and writing meaningful goals. Also, learn how to communicate with your IEP team to get the results you desire.

Location: SandCastles Learning Center
3214 Acre Ln. Boise 83704

Contact:
debbie@ipulidaho.org or call
208-342-5884

Individual Educational Plans (IEPs). We love them. We hate them. We dread them. We need them.

IPUL FREE Webinar Series

September 30th

Times: 10:00am-11:00am

Topic: Success with the IEP
Learn how to put this communication vehicle to work for your student and how to write meaningful goals.

[Register Here](#)

Idaho Partnerships Conference on Human Services

**MISSTON:
POSSIBLE
2014**

October 30 & 31
at the Boise Riverside Hotel

[Registration is Open!](#)

TVDSA Scholarships
available!

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 all TVDSA members are eligible.

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



How to write your child's "Owner's Manual" (continued from page 1)

- **Your Child's Needs**
Does your child need sensory breaks? Does your child need to sit in the front of the classroom? Does your child need help with social interaction? This is the section to describe them. Remember, you are not placing an order and don't phrase it like it's a command. You are communicating what will help your child to thrive in each individual classroom setting.
- **Past Successes**
Include a paragraph on ways your child has thrived socially and/or academically in the past. Sometimes a teacher does not need to re-create the wheel for your child. Remember, this is not an IEP document. It's an informal way to demonstrate ways that your child has succeeded in the classroom. This section can discuss ways to motivate your child or systems that have helped.
- **Triggers**
This section is vitally important. It can prevent a lot of headaches for your child and the teacher. In frank language, explain what sets off your child, i.e. frustration, loud noises, movies, dark room, etc. Detail what can make him or her upset, cry, violent, shut down, sad, or angry.

Explain the signs that these emotions are going to come out in your child. We all know when our own children are off, and we know the signs. We need to convey those in the pamphlet. We also need to explain what to do when these feelings or emotions comes out at the wrong time. If your child is crying, what will help him or her stop? Equip the teacher with the tools that you use to quell a disturbance.
- **Conclusion**
No one knows your child better than you. However, with great communication and a team attitude, your child's teachers and other school personnel will know how to work with your child in the way he or she learns best.

The above are merely recommendations and there is no right or wrong way to write a pamphlet. If you're creative, add an artistic flair to it. If your child is capable, do this as a project with them. Enjoy the journey and know you're doing all you can for your child to succeed.

Source: Friendship Circle Special Needs Resource Blog: www.friendshipcircle.org/blog/



TREASURE VALLEY
DOWN SYNDROME ASSOCIATION

PO Box 1404
Meridian, Idaho 83680
208-954-7448

We're on the Web!

See us at:

www.idahodownsyndrome.org

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

Back-to-School Tips (Continued from Page 3)

morning and evening routines, and begin implementing them well in advance of the first day of school.

Stay up-to-date on special education news

Being knowledgeable about your child's IEP and their disability can help you become a better advocate for your child. Try to keep up-to-date on new special education legislation, news, and events. The more you know, the more prepared you will be to navigate the world of special education and successfully advocate for your child!

Attend school events

Take advantage of Open House, Back-to-School Night, and parent-teacher conferences to help you and your child get a feel for the school and meet the teachers, other staff, students, and families. Share the positives about working with your child, and let the teacher know about changes, events, or IEP concerns that should be considered for your children in special education.

Source: Reading Rockets: www.readingrockets.org



You can help TVDSA earn donations
just by shopping with your Fred
Meyer Rewards Card!

Here is how the program works:

- Sign up for the Community Rewards program by linking your Fred Meyer Rewards card to TVDSA at www.fredmeyer.com/communityrewards searching by name or by Non-profit (NPO) number **93128**.
- Every time you shop and use your Rewards Card you are helping TVDSA earn a donation!
- You still earn your Rewards Points, Fuel Points and Rebates just as you do today.



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.

The mission of the 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:

President: [Kristie Yerger](#)

Advisor: [Lynda Wells](#)

Community Outreach Chair: [Erin Rosenkoetter](#)

Secretary: [Paul Auger](#)

Vice President and Programs Chair: [Malu Mulholland](#)

Treasurer & Spanish Contact: [Lucy Olmos](#)

Buddy Walk Chair: [George Taylor](#)

Self-Advocate: [Seth Paetel](#)

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](#)