



TREASURE VALLEY
DOWN SYNDROME ASSOCIATION

TVDSA Newsletter

Newsletter Editor: [Celena Auger](#)

December 2014

In this Issue

December's newsletter is intended to *INSPIRE* you. Read about a wonderful Christmas wish come true for a young man in Buffalo and a heartfelt letter by a mother to her child with Down syndrome.

Please check out the Social Group page for information on the annual TVDSA Christmas Parties. We would love to see you at one or both events!

As the longest-running parent organization in Idaho, TVDSA is in immediate need of help! Recently, we have had to say goodbye to several key members in our organization. Because of this, TVDSA is in danger of providing fewer services and programs throughout the Treasure Valley. Please review the list on page 3 and consider where you could contribute. Thank you!

Thanks to all who helped raise awareness at the Holiday Parade! We had 25 people proudly wearing our blue and yellow scarves, representing TVDSA. 100 pounds of candy was distributed and we enjoyed beautiful November weather. A special thanks to Collin and Mariska Sloan for bringing their trailer!

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

The Power of a Christmas Wish (and Social Media)

Elliot Shirback had just one wish for Christmas last year. The 25-year-old, who has Down syndrome, wanted 100 Christmas cards.

"He was sad one day; all I wanted to do was uplift him," Shirback's mom, Anne Daggett, told Time Warner Cable News, formerly called YNN. "I said 'Elliot, what is it you want for Christmas this year?' He went, 'I just want some cards, Mom.'"

Wanting to fulfill her son's wish, Daggett took to Facebook mid-December 2013 to ask her family and friends for help.

"If anyone can send him a card, he would love it," she wrote in her Facebook appeal. "He has the biggest heart in the world."

Daggett, who lives in Lewiston, N.Y., with her son, told Time Warner Cable News that she had expected him to receive about "35 cards at best" as a result of her social media request. But she was sorely mistaken.

Within days, her Facebook post went viral and Christmas cards -- from all across the country -- came pouring in.

By Christmas morning, Shirback had reportedly received more than 1,800 cards, mostly from strangers. CBS News says that the young man received a Christmas card "from nearly every state in the U.S."

"It makes me happy," Shirback told Time Warner Cable News of the card onslaught. "It's like a gift, like somebody loves and cares about you."

*Source: Huffpost Good News, November 2014
Originally posted CNN January 2014*



[Click on the picture above for a 2 minute video.](#)



TVDSA Calendar of Events

December 2nd:

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

December 5th:

AIM & Cool Club Christmas Activity 5:30 Caroling, 6:30 Dinner and Gift Exchange
Contact: [Lynda Wells](#)

December 6th:

Snackin' with Santa at Advanced Therapy Care from 12:00pm-2:00pm
Contact: [Malu Mulholland](#)

December 25th:

Merry Christmas from TVDSA!

January 1st:

Happy New Year!

Important student created video about People First Language.

Created by Idaho students through the STEP program, this video will make you think, cry and laugh! The students are excited to see all of the views and making a graph throughout each day. They are trying to get on the Ellen DeGeneres and the more hits they get the better their chance. If everyone shared think how many views the students could get!



<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=oFGByJN715Y&feature=youtu.be>

Dear Nichole,

When you came into my life, your diagnosis of Down syndrome threatened to crush my heart. That tiny extra 21st chromosome seemed too powerful for me to stand up against. I cried constantly, and I feared our lives would be covered with limitations.

I wanted to wake up and find that you were a "normal" baby, that Down syndrome was part of a bad dream. But it wasn't a dream. Your almond shaped eyes – the obvious physical sign of your diagnosis – seemed to remind me you were different every time you looked at me. Then one day, I thought you were looking not just at me, but straight into my heart.

I don't know how to describe this to you, so I will do the best I can. It was as if I had been dreaming for most of my life, and then you came in and you woke me up. Love, joy, and peace became almost tangible. I felt as if my eyes had been opened to the real things that matter in this world.

Maybe I had a "distracted heart" and then you showed up ready to fix it and show me the way.

Not only did you awaken something inside of me; you changed me. God, using you – a little baby girl with Down syndrome – touched the places of my life that needed to allow Him in.

I look at you now, and Down syndrome, although it does not define you, is something in you that I cherish. It is something that I celebrate. I would not change a thing about you. Every single chromosome you have is absolutely perfect! You are exactly who God intended you to be, He created your inmost being.

Thanks to you, I realize that disability is not to be feared, but that every life is to be celebrated. Thanks to you, we adopted your sister, a step of faith and trust as we knew little about cerebral palsy. What we did know, thanks to you, was that her life was meant for celebration too. Oh how you have taught us about celebrating life! Something this world could use a little bit more of.

I wish I loved more like you, and that I gave my hugs as freely as you do. I wish I celebrated others with the same excitement you show. You changed me, inside out, and I am blessed to have you my sweet girl.

Love,
Mom

Source: Finding Beauty in Brokenness, Ellen Stumbo's Blog, October 31, 2014
Ellen Stumbo is the founder of Disability Matters. She is a writer and speaker who focuses on sharing the real -sometimes beautiful and sometimes ugly - aspects of faith, church, disability, parenting, and adoption. Ellen's writing has appeared on Focus on the Family, LifeWay, MomSense, Not Alone, Mamapedia and the Huffington Post. Ellen blogs at <http://www.ellenstumbo.com/> and you can also find her on [twitter](#) and [Facebook](#).





TVDSA Pleads for Your Help Today

Although the Treasure Valley Down Syndrome Association (TVDSA) has had a good year with a lot of productive and successful activities, without **your help**, our future does not look so positive. As the longest-running parent support group in Idaho, we ask that you consider helping in **one area** of need below.

BOARD MEMBERS NEEDED: Board meetings are held the first Tuesday of every month from 7:00pm-9:30pm. There are multiple immediate openings available on the TVDSA Board of Directors. The board develops the vision for the organization and serves as an advisory panel over the programs TVDSA supports. Although the board can assist, they are not the only workhorses behind each project. Current openings include:

- **Programs Chair** - oversees the different social group activities, filling in when there is a vacancy, assist in the Easter Egg Hunt and Christmas party preparations.
- **Fundraising Chair** - oversees all fundraising events outside of the Buddy Walk, endless opportunities.
- **Community Chair** - oversees the family meetings, sets up involvement in parades and local conferences, and helps oversee the World Down Syndrome Day Celebration and the Summer Picnic.
- **Buddy Walk Chair** (ideally two chairs that will co-chair) - organize and oversee the Buddy Walk committee for the annual Buddy Walk held in October.

Not interested in being a board member? How about helping out on a sub-committee? Without help in the committees, board members cannot stay sane and projects cannot succeed:

- **Buddy Walk Committee** - numerous individuals are needed to make the Buddy Walk successful each year - areas include: pre-registration, t-shirts, raffle, sponsorships, administrative licenses, food sourcing, event day volunteers, entertainment, plus onsite organization.
- **World Down Syndrome Day Committee** - 5-7 individuals needed to help organize the annual celebration on 3-21 in March (activities, venue, food, etc.)
- **ATV Raffle Committee** - 5+ individuals needed to help organize a new TVDSA fundraiser. An ATV has been donated, and TVDSA will be raffling it off. We need heads to organize and sell tickets. ATV will be awarded at the World Down Syndrome Day Celebration 2015.
- **Calendar Committee** - 3-5 individuals are needed for the annual calendar. The calendar takes creativity, time, photography knowledge or willingness to find one at a low price, and organization of the models.
- **Family Meetings Coordinator** - someone to help organize discussion topics and speakers, child care and location for the family meetings held the second Tuesday in January, May, September, and possibly November.
- **Cool Club Coordinator** - someone to organize outings in the community for individuals with Down syndrome ages 12-17 (Junior and Senior High school students). Although activities can be monthly, the goal is 6-8 activities through the year plus coordinating a Christmas Celebration with the Adults in Motion in December.

We appreciate you taking the time to consider helping the TVDSA family so we can continue to be a successful non-profit organization, ran completely by volunteers and no paid staff. Your help is priceless and greatly appreciated by all.

Please feel free to contact ANY of our current board members with questions or inquires of any of the above openings.

Sincerely,
2013-2014 Board of Directors



- Kristie Yerger president@idahodownsyndrome.org
- Paul Auger secretary@idahodownsyndrome.org
- Lucy Olmos treasurer@idahodownsyndrome.org
- Lynda Wells advisor@idahodownsyndrome.org
- George Taylor buddywalk@idahodownsyndrome.org



TREASURE VALLEY
DOWN SYNDROME ASSOCIATION

Social Groups Page

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

D.A.D.S. will not be gathering in December.

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

MOM'S Night Out!

Moms will not be gathering in December.

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



**TVDSA wishes
EVERYONE a happy
and safe Holiday
Season!**



Snackin' with Santa

Saturday, December 6th
12:00pm - 2:00pm

Advanced Therapy Care
48 S. Baltic Place in Meridian

(off Franklin Road between Locust Grove and Main Street)

Come Meet Santa, eat Goodies and Make a Craft!

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

Please bring your Christmas wishes to share with Santa, a snack to share with others, and don't forget the camera!

For more information or questions, please contact: [Malu Mulholland](#) at 702-460-2894 or [Jorliena Isaacson](#)

TVDSA Welcomes and Thanks two new program coordinators!

[Jorliena Isaacson](#) will be coordinating 2015 Best Buds activities and [Fiona Robles](#) and [Elisha Jimenez](#) will be co-coordinating the 2015 Lil' Buddies activities.

Please thank them for donating their time to allow the programs to continue in the future. If you have ideas for activities or want to help, please contact them.



Teen & Adult Christmas Party

Friday, December 5th

5:30pm: Caroling

6:30pm: Dinner & Gift Exchange



If you can only make it to the caroling or the dinner and gift exchange, we hope you come! You can do either or both!

We will meet at 5:30pm at Spring Creek Senior Living located at 3165 N. Meridian Road, in Meridian (Ustick and Meridian Rd). We will carol and visit with residents from 5:45pm to 6:10pm.

Then we will move the festivities to the Wells' home located at 2336 W. Tango Creek Dr. (in the Lochsa Falls Subdivision at Linder and Chinden in Meridian) at 6:30pm for Sloppy Joes and a Christmas gift exchange.

Please bring a \$5.00 or less, wrapped gift, for the exchange. Everyone is invited to participate (siblings, parents, etc.)

Please let us know if you have any special dietary needs!

**Please RSVP by December 1st
to allow for adequate food preparation and planning.**

If you have any questions or need directions, please contact [Lynda Wells](#) at 208-895-8944 (home) or 208-590-1755 (text)

TVDSA would like to thank Lynda Wells for her dedication to coordinating activities for the AIM program, including this year's Christmas party!

TVDSA needs a new Cool Club program coordinator!

Please contact Kristie Yerger for more information at: president@idahodownsyndrome.org

Conferences, Workshops, Webinars & TVDSA Scholarship Information

IPUL FREE Webinar Series

December 30th
Times: 10:00am-11:00am

Topic: **Skills For Effective Advocacy**

Parents will understand what "advocacy" means, learn the skills necessary to be an effective advocate and what additional resources they may need and where to go for more information
[Register Here](#)

2015 Inclusion Works Conference

Engaging All Students in Inclusive Classrooms


February 4-5th
San Marcos, Texas

[Registration Open Now](#)



Save the Date:

PEAK Conference on Inclusive Education



February 12-13th
Denver, Colorado

[Registration Now Open!](#)

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.

2015 Tools for Life: Secondary Transition and Assistive Technology Fair

March 2-3, 2015
University Inn Best Western Plus
Moscow, ID

Tools for Life is for transitioning youth with disabilities and all who support them. Attendees include educators, special educators, therapists, counselors, service providers, job developers, other rehabilitation specialists, and **especially high school students with disabilities and their families.**

The theme of the 2015 Tools for Life Fair is College, Post-Secondary Training and Career Readiness. Throughout the two-day event, there will be keynote speakers and presentations around employment, assistive technology, post-secondary education, and self-advocacy/self-direction. An Exhibit Hall will be open both days, from 9:00am to 4:00pm to allow agencies and vendors the opportunity to promote their organizations, share resources, and showcase their products. Look for the Tools Informational Booklet (PDF) to be available soon.

Planning will help make the most of your Fair experience. Read the [2015 Tools Fair Booklet](#) (PDF) for information about Keynote and Guest Speakers and details about the event. Read [Preparing Students for Tools for Life Guide](#) (PDF), and look for the Conference at a Glance and Tools Fair Program to be available in early 2015 to plan what sessions you and your students would like to attend!

Would you like to be added to our special Tools for Life Fair newsletter to track news about the event and get a copy of the Conference at a Glance and the Program? [Sign Up Here!](#)

Legal Requirements for IEPs: Specific and Individualized

The IEP is a written commitment for the delivery of services to meet your child's educational needs.

Parents must be sure your child's IEP is tailored to his specific needs.

Your child's IEP **must** include Present Levels of Academic Achievement and Functional Performance that describe what your child knows and is able to do (or not do).

Wondering if your child's IEP is really specific to his unique needs?

When you answer the questions on this [Wrightslaw IEP Checklist](#), you will know if your child's IEP is individualized, as the law requires.

Source: Wrightslaw, November 2014 Newsletter
<http://www.wrightslaw.com>

IEP Checklist - Is Your Child's IEP Individualized?		
Question	Yes	No
1. Does the IEP include accurate information about your child's present levels of academic achievement and functional performance?		
Comments/Concerns:		



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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](#)!

2015 TVDSA calendars are now available for purchase

\$15.00 each

**A Great Christmas Present for everyone
in your life!**

Please contact [Kristie Yerger](#) or complete
an [order form online](#) to order.



**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.

Shop this Christmas with AmazonSmile and support TVDSA:

AmazonSmile is a simple and automatic way for you to support TVDSA every time you shop, at no cost to you. When you shop at smile.amazon.com, you'll find the exact same low prices, vast selection and convenient shopping experience as Amazon.com with the added bonus that Amazon will donate a portion of the purchase price to TVDSA.

Visit smile.amazon.com and select Treasure Valley Down Syndrome Support Group as your favorite charity "BEFORE" you start shopping and TVDSA will receive 0.5% of the purchase price from your eligible AmazonSmile purchases.

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](#)
Board Chair: [George Taylor](#)

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