



TREASURE VALLEY
DOWN SYNDROME ASSOCIATION

TVDSA Newsletter

In this Issue

November starts the busy holiday season. It is a time to be thankful for all of the little things in our lives. We hope you are able to take a moment and celebrate those little things that you are grateful for each day.

In this month's newsletter you will find an article written by a father of a child with Down syndrome and what he is thankful for (page 1).

The school year is in full swing, many parents will be having their child's IEP soon. We hope you will be thankful to find 10 defusing comments for IEP meetings on page 2 as some helpful tips.

Check out the many social activities this month on page 4. Enjoy a lighthearted Thanksgiving poem on page 6.

Happy Thanksgiving to your family from TVDSA!

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

Newsletter Editor: [Celena Auger](#)

November 2015

Seven Reasons I am Thankful for Down Syndrome. by: Treyton Posse

I don't know where I'm going but I sure know where I've been.

Can you name that song? Maybe the group that sang it? Think eighties hair-band – it was released in 1982 and then again in 1987 to be exact.....The group is Whitesnake and the name of the song is "Here I Go Again." I was 14 years-old in 1987 and worked at an ice cream parlor that summer. I had a moped that I rode around and thought I knew a lot about life.

I have always loved the melodramatic chorus to this song, it says: "Here I go again on my own, goin' down the only road I've ever known, like a drifter I was born to walk alone an' I've made up my mind I ain't wasting no more time." I remember singing that song at the top of my lungs as I cruised the open roads at 30 mph on my moped.

Being able to say, "I am thankful for Down syndrome," has been a journey; one I never intended on taking. I had no idea where I was headed either but now that I have a few years of perspective I have found some things that cause me to give thanks. I anticipate that this list will change over time as new circumstances and growth opportunities present themselves.

The list of Down syndrome Thanksgiving.

1. I am thankful for Treyton. Although Down syndrome did not give me Treyton I have never known him without Down syndrome in the picture. I love life with Treyton and would never want it any other way.
2. I am thankful for a new understanding about what is important in life. Because Treyton's future is something other than "the norm" we have had to reevaluate and re-prioritize a lot of things. It sure seems like I was missing out on a lot before.
3. I believe that having a child with Down syndrome is helping me to be a better parent to all of my kids. It is a challenge to balance my time and focus between all four children but my skills are improving and my understanding of the individual needs of each child is growing.
4. I am thankful that Down syndrome has helped me to appreciate the many small blessings that happen each day. Because Trey is on a different development schedule I have learned to be thankful for the small improvements that take place on the path to bigger achievements.
5. Having a child born with Down syndrome has opened my eyes to the way society often discriminates against those with the disability as well as other disabilities or anything that is not considered "typical."
6. I am thankful for the opportunity to meet new people both in person and in the blogosphere. This is a chance to be part of something bigger than myself and my own little world.

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November 3rd:

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

November 17th:

Mom's Night Out! 6:00pm
Dinner at Epi's – A Basque
Restaurant in Meridian.
MUST RSVP by November 5th!
Contact [Reme Echevarria](#)

November 19th:

TVDSA Family Meeting
7:00pm-9:00pm at Boise First
Church- Nazarene in
Meridian.
Contact: [Kristie Yerger](#)

November 24th:

Best Buds at Nampa Reel
Theater. Time and movie
TBA
Contact: [Danielle Williams](#)

November 26th:

**Happy Thanksgiving from
TVDSA!**

November 28th:

Lil' Buddies at Jabbers in
Nampa at 10:00am.
Contact [Elisha Jimenez](#)

10 Defusing Phrases to Use at IEP Meetings by Amana Morin

Emotions can run high [at IEP meetings](#). But it's important to focus on the end goal: helping your child. Here are 10 stay-calm phrases you can use to redirect conversation and defuse tense situations.

1. "I may be misunderstanding."

[IEP](#) meetings can get heated when there is disagreement about how to interpret laws or test results. You can defuse that by taking a step back and giving the school a chance to explain its position. If you're certain you're correct, don't worry—you'll get a chance to say so.

Sample response: "I may be misunderstanding. Can you show me a detailed interpretation of that law? Here's the information I have on hand that speaks to this issue."

2. "I can show you."

If someone tries to shut conversation by telling you she's not sure where your information is coming from, that's easy enough to defuse. Simply show her.

Sample response: "I can show you where I've highlighted that information in the report and progress notes. Can we make each team member a copy?"

3. "How can we work together to make this happen?"

It can be frustrating (to say the least) to hear someone at your child's school tell you it [doesn't provide a certain service](#) or doesn't have the staff to implement it. But the law is on your side, so make the conversation about collaboration.

Sample response: "How can we work together to make this happen? The law says services must meet my child's unique needs, and this is the recommended service."

4. "May I see a copy of the written policy?"

Someone from the school might say, "This is how we've always done something." But that doesn't necessarily mean it's a policy. Defuse any arguments about it by asking to see in writing that this is how they handle the situation.

Sample response: "I understand this is how you do things. May I see a copy of the written policy that outlines this procedure?"

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Shop 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.



10 Defusing Phrases (continued from page 2)

5. "Let's ask him to join us."

Federal law says that the [IEP team](#) needs to include someone who is able to make decisions about staff and funding. But in practice you may hear, "I'm not in a position to make that decision." Instead of getting upset, get practical.

Sample response: "Is it Mr. Smith who has that authority? Let's call him and ask him to join us."

6. "I understand."

It may surprise you how this simple phrase can defuse tense situations. Keep in mind it doesn't mean the same thing as "I agree." It just means you're hearing what's been said.

Sample response: "I understand you only have 15 minutes left for this meeting. While we're all here, why don't we set up another time to continue this conversation."

7. "I've noticed..."

Parents are equal members of the IEP team. If you feel like your concerns aren't being heard, take a breath and then calmly speak up. Be specific about what you know about and see in your child.

Sample response: "I've noticed that at the end of the day, Olivia isn't able to focus on her homework without getting frustrated. I'd like to talk about how to make that easier for her."

8. "How does that look in the classroom?"

Conversation about [accommodations](#), [behavior plans](#) or [instructional strategies](#) can easily turn to talk about theories or ideas. You can redirect by asking about how things will actually work.

Sample response: "I like the idea of checking in every 15 minutes to see if Olivia is on task. How will that happen in the classroom? Will the teacher be able to manage that?"

9. "What alternatives do you suggest?"

When you hear, "We don't agree with that recommendation," you may feel the need to push to defend your position. Instead, keep the dialogue going.

Sample response: "OK, you don't think that will work for Olivia. What alternatives do you suggest to address that identified need?"

10. "Let's talk about what's working."

Sometimes it can feel like an IEP meeting is a long conversation about what's going wrong. It doesn't have to be. In fact, focusing on what's going well can help you discover ways to address other issues.

Sample response: "Let's talk about what's working. Maybe some of those strengths and strategies can help us find ways to address the trouble spots."

More IEP Tips

[5 Important Things to Do Before an IEP Meeting](#)

Preparation is the key to being an effective, confident advocate at your child's [IEP meetings](#). Here are five important things to do before an [IEP](#) meeting.

[5 Ways to Politely Decline the School's IEP Draft](#)

At the end of an [IEP meeting](#), you may be asked to sign a draft of the [IEP](#). If you disagree with any part of the IEP, you don't have to sign. Try these tips to make your case.

Source: [Understood](#) for learning and attention issues.

Amanda Morin is a parent and former teacher.

She is also the author of *The Everything Parent's Guide to Special Education*.



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Social Groups Page

TVDSA Family Meeting

Thursday, November 19th
7:00pm-9:00pm

at Boise First Church – Nazarene
3852 N. Eagle Rd., Boise

Speakers: George Taylor and Gus Olmos, TVDSA Scholarship Recipients

Topic: National Down Syndrome Congress Convention –Come listen and learn from two attendees as they share what they learned at this year's conference in Phoenix, AZ.

Interested in attending next year's NDSC Convention in Florida? TVDSA does offer scholarships to TVDSA members!

Free Childcare Available

Do you have an interest in helping with TVDSA but don't know where or how?

WANTED

Family Meeting Coordinator – organizing 4 Family meetings during the year – securing speakers and facility.

Please contact Kristie Yerger with questions or interest.



Lil' Buddies (5 years and under)

Lil' Buddies will be going to **Jabbers** located at 1210 N Galleria Drive in Nampa on **Saturday, November 28th** at **10:00am**.

TVDSA will pay for one parent and children with Down syndrome. All other family members are welcome to

join us too. Day Passes: 4 & over: \$7.54, 1-3 years: \$6.60, Under 12 months free with another paid child. Adults free with paid child.

Need more information on **Lil' Buddies**? Please contact [Elisha Jimenez](#) at 208-871-4780.

Best Buds (ages 6-11)

Best Buds will have an afternoon at the movies on **Tuesday, November 24th** at the **Nampa Reel Theater** located at 2104 Caldwell Blvd, in Nampa.

Movie selection and exact time will be announced closer to the date.

Need more information about **Best Buds**? Please contact: [Danielle Williams](#) at 208-794-8995.



Mom's Night Out!

November is a month for being thankful for many things in our lives. TVDSA is thankful for all of you moms. Just to show how amazing and wonderful you are, Moms Night Out! will be at **Epi's-A Basque Restaurant** ([menu](#)) located at 1115 N. Main Street in Meridian on **Tuesday, November 17** at **6:00 pm**. TVDSA is paying for the meals!

Everyone who is planning on coming must **RSVP through text or email by November 5th**. Unfortunately, we will not be able to accommodate any moms that don't RSVP. Epi's has limited space and needs a head count ahead of time.

Thanks again for all you do. For more information about Mom's Night Out! contact [Reme Echevarria](#) by email or by phone (call/text) at 208-866-4095.



Conferences, Workshops, Webinars & TVDSA Scholarship Information

IPUL Workshop

November 11th from 6:00pm-9:00pm
4619 Emerald Suite E, Boise

Topic: Fostering Parent and Professional Collaboration: Partnership Strategies -Because of the different strengths parents and professionals bring to collaboration, there are different actions each can take to make the relationship more productive. This workshop will discuss what both parents and professionals can do to strengthen these relationships.

Please RSVP at 208-342-5884, but RSVP not required.

Can't make it in person?

How about hearing the same information via the **Parent and Professional Collaboration Webinar: November 24th** either at **11:00am** or **3:00pm**

Click on the time to register or contact IPUL at
208-342-5884 or parents@ipulidaho.org

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 TASH Conference

Portland, OR

December 2-4, 2015

www.tash.org/conference2015

This year's conference theme, "Celebrating 40 Years of Progressive Leadership," acknowledges TASH's 40 years of generating change within the disability community and anticipates a brighter, more inclusive future for people with disabilities in all aspects of life. The conference has impacted the disability field by connecting attendees to innovative information and resources, facilitating connections between stakeholders in the disability movement, and helping attendees to reignite their passion for the full inclusion of people with disabilities in all aspects of life.

Registration is Open!

2016 PEAK Conference on Inclusive Education

Denver, CO

February 25-26th, 2016

<http://conference.peakparent.org/>

Inclusive education is a process of school reform that creates equality in education and increases achievement for ALL students, including students with disabilities. PEAK Parent Center's annual Conference on Inclusive Education holds the tools you need to reinvent schools to be places where all students can achieve success!

Registration is Now Open!

Register by January 31st for the best prices!

11th Annual All Born (In) Cross-Disability Best Practices Inclusive Education Conference

Portland, OR

Saturday, April 23rd, 2016

<http://allbornin.org/abi-conference/cross-disability-inclusion-conference/>

This is an exciting day for parents, caregivers, and professionals working to end segregation in neighborhood schools and the community. Come celebrate and learn how we can use Universal Design for Learning and Best Practices to reach and teach every child. Share, learn and make connections so that we can all go forth to open the eyes of the wider community to the fact that our children are all born "in".

Pre-Registration is Now Open!

Seven reasons I am thankful (Continued from Page 1)

- Down syndrome is helping all of my children to become better people, to see a much bigger world than I ever did at their ages.

The reality of the situation.

I had no idea that I was going to have a son with Down syndrome nor what such a thing would involve. I guess I am also thankful that I did not know ahead of time because I had the opportunity to meet my son without prejudice. I was able to look into Treyton's eyes before my ignorance of Down syndrome could influence me.

There is a lot in life that we cannot control; however, the one thing that is always within reach is how we respond. Not every situation is equal – some things are much more difficult than others to deal with but we always have a choice. I don't know what tomorrow will bring and given recent events I don't expect things to be too easy. So for now, I am going to focus on this gift of Down syndrome I have been given.

Source: [Treyton's Posse](#): A Father's Perspective on Down Syndrome. November 28, 2013



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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](#)!

TWAS THE NIGHT OF THANKSGIVING



'Twas the night of Thanksgiving,
but I just couldn't sleep,
tried counting backward,
tried counting sheep.

The leftovers beckoned ---
The dark meat and white,
But I fought the temptation
with all of my might.



Tossing and turning with anticipation.....
The thought of a snack became infatuation.....

So to the kitchen I did race, Flung open the door,
And gazed at the fridge full of goodies galore.
I gobbled up turkey and buttered potatoes,
Pickles and carrots, beans and tomatoes.
I felt myself swelling so plump and so round,
Till all of a sudden, I rose off the ground!!
I crashed through the ceiling. Floating into the sky....
With a mouthful of pudding and a handful of pie,
But I managed to yell as I soared past the trees.

**HAPPY EATING TO ALL!!
PASS THE CRANBERRIES PLEASE!!**



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.

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](#)
Vice President: [George Taylor](#)
Advisor: [Lynda Wells](#)
Fundraising: [Kris Goodwin](#)

Treasurer & Spanish Contact: [Lucy Olmos](#)
Secretary & Membership: [Paul Auger](#)
Marketing Chair: [Jason Robles](#)

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](#)