



TREASURE VALLEY
DOWN SYNDROME ASSOCIATION

TVDSA Newsletter

December 2015

In this Issue

How can it be December, the end of 2015, and during the busy holidays for all?

We hope despite the busy schedules that come this time of year, you can bring your loved one with Down syndrome to either the **Snackin' with Santa** on December 12th or come ride the **Christmas Trolley** on December 29th. More information can be found on page 4.

Also in this month's newsletter, you will find a link to five powerful videos showing how Inclusive Education CAN work and CAN change lives, no matter the diagnosis, or severity.

On a lighter note, you can read through 21 ways to know you are a parent of a child with Down syndrome. How many times did you nod your head as you read through the list?

Did you know A&E Network is premiering a docu-series "Born This Way," following a group of seven young adults born with Down syndrome on December 8th? Read more on page 3.

Be sure to read a poem written by a 6th grader about her brother with Down syndrome on page 5.

TVDSA wishes you and your family a safe Holiday season!

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

Newsletter Editor: [Celena Auger](#)

Five Videos that will Change Your Mind About Inclusive Education by Tim Villegas

I don't know which side of the fence you are on in regard to inclusive education. And for all intents and purposes...it does not matter. This post could just as easily have been called, **No...Really...I'm Not Crazy...Inclusive Education Works!** Usually when I talk to people who are not familiar with the idea of having students with disabilities (including significant disabilities) in the general education setting they say they are having a hard time "wrapping their head around it" or want to see "what it actually looks like". So...just for those of you who need to see it to believe it, I have picked out five videos that will most definitely change your mind about whether inclusive education is really a good thing or not (or at least they should). [Click on title or here to watch the videos.](#)

- **[Including Issac:](#)** a 13 minute video about a boy with Spinal Muscular Atrophy and his story of inclusion in a private Christian school in Michigan.
- **[Damian's Inclusion Project:](#)** This video was made by the Georgia Department of Education (2011) to highlight a pilot inclusion program for students with the most significant cognitive disabilities in cooperation with Cobb County Schools.
- **[Thaysa:](#)** Thaysa Lumingkewas, 8, has autism and thrives at Maple Wood Elementary School in Somersworth, NH. The school has implemented Response to Intervention (RtI), Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports (PBIS) and Universal Design for Learning (UDL).
- **[Tana Vogele's Story:](#)** Tana Vogele has been included in general education classrooms despite her significant physical and intellectual disabilities. Watch this compelling video about the friendships that have been nurtured during her 4th grade year and what inclusion does to a classroom and school community.
- **[Axel:](#)** This short film (16:39) focuses on Axel Cortes and the staff at Idelhurst Elementary School in Somersworth, NH. Axel is a fifth grader with autism who is non-verbal and exhibited significant behavioral challenges when he arrived at school.

Sometimes we need to see examples of inclusion to really understand that it is possible and happening all over the world. Perhaps you are the one who can influence your local school to implement inclusive practices.

Tim Villegas, Founder and Curator-At-Large at [Think Inclusive](#)
Tim Villegas has worked in the field of special education and with people with disabilities for over ten years. Tim has turned his passion for blogging and promoting ideas about inclusive schools and communities into his own website, thinkinclusive.us. He believes that we can create a bridge between educators, parents, and advocates (including self-advocates) to promote ideas, innovation and inspiration to change our world to be more accepting and value each and every human being. Tim lives with his fetching wife and three adorable children in Marietta, GA.

December 1st:

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

December 12th:

Snackin' with Santa (Best Buds and Lil' Buddies)
1:00pm-4:00pm at 1 Love Church in Boise
Contact: [Danielle Williams](#)

December 25th:

Merry Christmas from TVDSA!

December 29th:

Christmas Light Trolley (AIM & Cool Club) 6:00pm-8:00pm in Downtown Boise
Contact: [Brenda Taylor](#)



Shop with AmazonSmile this Holiday Season 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.

You might be the parent of a child with Down syndrome if...

Raising any child can be a challenging, joyful and rewarding experience, but parenting a child with Down syndrome can involve its own unique quirks. The Mighty and [Downs Designs Dreams](#)*, an organization that designs clothing specifically for people with special needs, asked their readers on Facebook to complete this sentence: You might be the parent of a child with Down syndrome if ____.

Take a look at some of their favorite responses below for a glimpse into what it's like to parent a child with Down syndrome.

You might be the parent of a child with Down syndrome if...

1. "'Flexibility' is your mantra." — Kristin Thomas Cutlip
2. "You know that baby steps are giant leaps." — Sally Kennedy
3. "You understand a diagnosis is a direction, not a destination." — Ali Hammons
4. "You smile... a lot!" — Kim Sztajer Parnis
5. "You're used to every other kid charging to greet your kid with excitement when you enter a room." — Team KC UpHearted
6. "Sloppy tongue kisses become the norm." — Crystal DiPasquale
7. "You can see beyond outward appearances." — Melissa King
8. "Your next big hug is minutes away." — Liz Schwartz
9. "Your child's therapists know more about your personal life than your shrink." — Katherine Allison
10. "You have your priorities straight." — Anna Powers
11. "Your child wants to hug everyone they see." — Calvin Nelms
12. "Even the 'naughty' milestones are celebrated." — Debora Miller
13. "You know what love is." — Janilee Holmes
14. "You have watched the same movie a million times!" — Debra Bryan
15. "Your child sleeps with their chin resting on their knee caps." — Calvin Nelms
16. "A trip to the grocery store is like escorting the prom queen/king to the ball." — Liz Schwartz
17. "Everyone in your town knows you by sight as the mom of the kid who shouts 'hiya' to everybody, and they ask you where he is and how he's doing if they see you out on your own." — Kerry-Ann Fender
18. "You don't treat [your child] any differently than any other child." — Ann Reichelt
19. "Your 11-year-old still comes and crawls in your lap to snuggle every day." — Patrice Bagwell
20. "You know how incredibly blessed you are because of [your child] and their diagnosis." — Angela Palmer-Fisher
21. "Your child has taught you to see the world through the eyes of unconditional love." — Nancy Dyer

***Some answers have been edited and shortened. To read through all of the submissions, click [here](#).*

[Downs Designs Dreams](#) is the home of two exclusive clothing brands for people with special needs: [Downs Designs](#) and [NBZ Jeans](#). Both brands offer stylish, high-quality jeans with elastic waists, soft stretchy denim and no button or zipper which facilitate independence. The organization is currently pending 501(c)3 nonprofit status and has recently launched its [Adopt-A-Jean campaign](#) where they donate a pair of our jeans every Friday.

Top 21 responses first posted on [The Mighty](#), June 18, 2015.

New Show Will Put Spotlight on People With Down Syndrome

NEW YORK, NY - November 11, 2015 - A&E Network will premiere the new original docu-series "Born This Way," following a group of seven young adults born with Down syndrome along with their family and friends in Southern California. The six-episode, hour-long series from Bunim-Murray Productions premieres Tuesday, December 8 at 8:00pm MST.

Cameras follow the young men and women of "Born This Way," as they pursue their passions and lifelong dreams, explore friendships, romantic relationships and work, all while defying society's expectations. In their willingness and courage to openly share their lives, through a lens that is not often shown on television, we learn they have high hopes just like anyone else. The series also gives voice to the parents, allowing them to talk about the joy their son or daughter brings to their family, and the challenges they face in helping them live as independently as possible.

"We are proud to be airing this important and extraordinary series and hope it will inspire meaningful conversations about people with differences," said Elaine Frontain Bryant, EVP & Head of Programming A&E Network. "'Born This Way' is a show with honesty, humor and heart that celebrates and embraces diversity."

"There is a freshness and honesty in the way these young adults lead their lives; something we could all learn from them. We are enormously thankful to them and their families for participating in this project," said Jonathan Murray, Executive Producer.

"I'm so incredibly proud to see 'Born This Way' highlight the outgoing personalities and amazing abilities of Best Buddies participants like Rachel Osterbach and Sean McElwee," said Anthony K. Shriver, Founder and Chairman, Best Buddies International. "It is my hope that this show will demonstrate to society that individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities are just like everyone else and should be fully included in our communities, our workplaces and our lives."

A&E has partnered with celebrated global non-profit organization Best Buddies International and committed to an on-air PSA featuring Anthony K. Shriver and Best Buddies program participants in support of promoting opportunities and increasing awareness for people living with intellectual and developmental disabilities.

The cast of "Born This Way" includes:

Rachel - Working in the mailroom for an insurance company, she will be the maid of honor at her brother's upcoming wedding. Rachel would love to get married herself, but first she has to find the right guy.

Sean - An excellent golfer and avid sportsman, Sean is a self-professed ladies' man, who is not shy about introducing himself to every eligible woman he meets.

John - From a very young age, John made it clear to his parents that he craved the spotlight. A born entertainer, John is committed to his music and is pursuing a career in rap.

Steven - Working as a dishwasher at Angel Stadium in Anaheim and in customer service at a local grocery store, Steven is a huge movie buff and knows the title and year of each Oscar winning film.

Cristina - This loving and compassionate young adult works in a middle school. In her free time she loves talking on the phone with Angel, her boyfriend of 4 years and the man she plans to marry.



Scene from the new A&E Docu-Series "Born This Way." Photo by Adam Taylor, courtesy of A&E.



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Social Groups Page

Mom's Night Out!

Thanks to all 23 moms who came to Epi's on November 17th. We hope all of you who came had a great time and felt appreciated!

TVDSA wants all TVDSA Moms to know you are amazing women! We know how much you do for your families. Thank you for all you do each and every day. We hope to see more of you in the New Year.

Happy Holidays to you and your families.

There will **NOT** be a Moms Night Out! in December. We will resume in January 2016.

For more information about Mom's Night Out! contact [Reme Echevarria](mailto:Reme.Echevarria@tvdsa.org) by email or by phone (call/text) at 208-866-4095.



Snackin' with Santa

Saturday, December 12th

1:00pm - 4:00pm

1 Love Church

5405 S. Five Mile Boise, ID 83709.



Lil' Buddies and **Best Buds** are hosting **Snackin' with Santa**.

In addition to Snackin' with Santa, we will be taking pictures, art projects, decorating Christmas cookies, and some fun games.

New This Year: We will be doing a **gift exchange** this year! All children including siblings are welcome to participate, but only children that bring a gift will be to receive one in return. Please bring a new, wrapped gift, between \$5 and \$10 for each child that you would like to include in this exchange.

There will also be a raffle for the adults (massages, gift certificates, etc.). Raffle tickets will be \$2 each or \$6 for 10. Money raised will go towards future events.

Please text Danielle at 208-794-8995 by December 9th with the number of people coming in your party to ensure that we will have enough cookies and snacks for everybody.



Christmas Trolley

Tuesday, December 29th

6:00pm-8:00pm



Adults in Motion and **Cool Club** will be celebrating the Christmas season together with a **Christmas Lights Tour**.

Please join us for 75 minutes of fun while we tour Boise's magnificent Christmas light displays around downtown and enjoy festive music. The trolley is fully enclosed, has heat, and is wheelchair accessible.

The trolley will leave from behind Elmer's Restaurant at the corner of Yale Street and Lois Ave in Boise. Parking is free inside the overflow lot behind Elmer's Restaurant. *Please arrive by 6:00pm for a prompt 6:30pm departure.*

Please RSVP by December 7th to ensure room for everyone, to Brenda Taylor at 208-724-5226 or email: coolclub@idahodownsyndrome.org

TVDSA is providing this activity FREE to teens and adults with Down syndrome plus one guest.

Conferences, Workshops, Webinars & TVDSA Scholarship Information

IPUL Workshop

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

Topic: Stop Spinning Your Wheels- Advocacy and Coordination Skills for Your Child's Special Health Care Needs: You will learn about the patient-centered, comprehensive, coordinated approach to health care for children and youth with special health care needs. Participants will be given tools to identify their particular needs and how to talk with their child's providers to ensure a system of coordinated care. Parents will also be given information and training on 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.

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

To register or contact IPUL:
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.

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!

Idaho Miss Amazing Pageant

April 8-9th
Nampa Civic Center

Miss Amazing offers exciting opportunities for girls and women 5 and older to explore their potential and enhance their strengths.

For four years the Idaho Miss Amazing Pageant has been celebrating the multi-faceted identities, valuable abilities and strengths of girls and women with disabilities. Idaho Miss Amazing is so much more than a pageant. It is a platform for girls and women with disabilities to share their abilities and ambitions. It is an experience that inspires all people to empower themselves and each other.

To become involved either as a participant, volunteer or sponsor – please visit www.idmissamazing.com

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!

As I Do by Ashley Klinkrad

Do you see him as I do?
With a smile on his face.
Or is he too different to you,
That you can't see his grace?

Do you watch him as I do?
As he struggles to share.
Or is he so hard to understand,
You don't hear what he says?

When you look at his eyes,
Do you see hope as I do?
Or is it just the different shape
That draws attention from you?

When he stands here in front of you
Sharing his dream
Can you see past his challenges
And become part of his team?

Do you see him as I do?
As courageous and handsome.
Down syndrome brings challenges
He has had to overcome.

So let me tell you a bit
About Down syndrome itself,
It has to do with an extra chromosome
In his or her self.

It affects how you look,
How you learn, how you grow.
But some things it won't change
Is that your feelings you know.

So take time with these children
Who are different to us
And give them a place in this world
With genuine love and with trust.

Ashlyn Klinkrad is 12 and in Grade 6 and is the oldest of 3 children. She has been advocating for children with disabilities since she was in Grade 1 (7 years old). At the age of 8 she became a Chaeli Campaign Pay-It-Forward Ambassador. She speaks annually for Down Syndrome Awareness Day to children at her school. Ashlyn also enjoys partnering her youngest brother in wheelchair dancing, playing hockey, drama, and tennis.

The post [As I Do – A Poem For My Brother Who Has Down Syndrome](#) appeared first on [Ellen Stumbo](#).



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(208) 954-7448

We're on the Web!

See us at:

www.idahodownsyndrome.org

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

Welcome New TVDSA Board Members

TVDSA is excited to announce and introduce two new board members.

Each have shared why they are volunteering to support TVDSA in its mission in supporting those in the Treasure Valley with Down syndrome.

Kristine Goodwin – Fundraising Chair



Since My Granddaughter, Journey, was born I have been very involved in helping where and when I am needed. I have served on the TVDSA Buddy Walk committee for a number of years now.

I wanted to be on the board to help the organization strive in its goals.

Erin Rosenkoetter – Community Chair

I am excited to be returning to the TVDSA Board! As a busy mom of 8, I have found that participation in TVDSA is THE BEST way to learn how I can support my son, Benjamin, and other individuals with Down syndrome. Through TVDSA I have made life-long friends, participated in awesome events such as World Down Syndrome Day and the annual Buddy Walk, made sure my son is fully included in school, attended conferences, and met some of the most wonderful individuals (who happen to have Down syndrome). I look forward to being a more active part of such an amazing group!



TVDSA still has vacancies on the board if you are interested in becoming more involved in TVDSA, sharing your opinions, and shaping the future for those with Down syndrome in the Treasure Valley. For more information on how to get more involved either as a board member or serve on a committee, please contact any TVDSA Board member. Click on the names below to contact them by email.

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: [Kristine Goodwin](#)

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