



TREASURE VALLEY
DOWN SYNDROME ASSOCIATION

TVDSA Newsletter

In this Issue

Happy New Year!
Welcome 2016!

Have you made your new year's resolution? Spend more time with the family? Find a better job? Lose weight?

TVDSA wants to continue to support those with disabilities in the Treasure Valley, and specifically advocate for those with Down syndrome. To help with this goal, we are pleased to introduce three more new TVDSA board members on page 6.

During the next couple of months, we will be highlighting some new opportunities for support when your family needs some extra help. This month, read about Collaborative Special Education Advocacy on page 3.

As requested by one of TVDSA Newsletter readers, we have also included some information and resources on home-schooling students with disabilities in Idaho on page 2.

If you have a request or suggestion for future article topics please forward them to:
newsletter@idahodownsyndrome.org.

We hope 2016 will be a great year for all!!!

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

Newsletter Editor: [Celena Auger](#)

January 2016

16 Resolutions for People with Disabilities in 2016

Celebrate the coming new year by participating in one or more of these 16 resolutions that are sure to make 2016 one for the books.

Imagine the possibilities for the road ahead and empower the lives around you! This is a brand new year to be the best you ever.

- Join an adaptive sports league.
- Share your story by submitting a guest post to a disability awareness group.
- Join the social media discussion surrounding your disability.
- Mentor someone younger with a similar disability.
- Thank a caregiver.
- Improve your disability technology. Update a wheelchair. Invest in a new brace.
- Contact your local legislator to improve your city's accessibility.
- Educate coworkers on how they can respectfully discuss disabilities.
- Send a thank you note to your doctors.
- Share your daily tips and tricks online.
- Volunteer to help disabled veterans reclaim their independence.
- Take a vacation.
- Stop saying no.
- Don't be afraid to ask for help.
- Savor time with friends and family.
- Help your child learn to ride a bike. Enroll them in an iCan Bike Camp.

Imagine the culmination of a year chock full of these resolutions! How amazing would life be? What might you accomplish and whose life could you impact?

An incredible year is simply the result of repeated attempts to imagine possibilities within every moment life throws your way.

Make 2016 one for the books!

Source: [Vantage Mobility](#) blog



January 5th:

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

January 14th:

Mom's Night Out! 6:30pm
at Yen Ching in Boise.
Please RSVP by the 11th.
Contact: [Reme Echevarria](#)

January 22nd:

Best Buds 5:00pm Unbirthday
Party at Chuck E Cheese,
Boise. RSVP by 20th.
Contact: [Danielle Williams](#)

January 22nd:

D.A.D.S. 6:30pm-8:30pm
at Grinkers in Eagle.
Contact: [Gus Olmos](#)

January 29th:

Hispanic Outreach 6:30pm-
9:00pm at Enrinque's in Kuna.
Contact: [Lucy Olmos](#)

Support for Special Needs Homeschoolers in Idaho

[NATHHAN \(NATional cHallenged Homeschoolers Associated Network\)](#)

is a Christian, non-profit organization dedicated to providing encouragement to families with children with special needs that are homeschooling. They publish an online or hard copy quarterly newsletter. They also publish a family directory, updated each year. They have a large lending library operated by mail.

[Shining Children with Radical Unschooling](#)

This list is a forum for those either radically unschooling or learning how to radically unschool to discuss our "shining" children (Highly Sensitive, Out of Sync, Asperger's traits, Explosive) and all the issues that accompany life with them--how we grow and learn ourselves thanks to our non-typical children and how unschooling frees their spirits and allows them to truly "shine."

[Special Needs Homeschooling Forum at vegsource.com](#)

A message board for parents who are homeschooling special needs children.

Advantages of Homeschooling a Child with Special Needs

When you have a special needs child, no public school will ever be able to fully cater to their needs. Private schools do exist for many types of special needs, but they can be expensive and often still not fully adapted to your child's specific situation. Therefore, you might find yourself wondering how to get your child the education that they deserve in a format that works for them. Homeschooling a special needs child is a very advantageous choice for many parents who can afford the time and resources to do so. A homeschool program will allow children with special needs to have their specific needs addressed and also avoid many obstacles that they would face in a traditional classroom. When it comes to children with learning disabilities or other severe impairments, sometimes a parent who understands their special needs is the only one who can teach the child.

Homeschooling for Your Child

You need to be certain that you have the time to homeschool your child if you decide to do so. If you have a job that you cannot afford to leave, or a schedule that doesn't leave time in the day for a homeschool program, you might want to consider private schools or tutors that can assist your special needs child instead. However, if you are able to homeschool your child, you can find many advantages to this form of education. Here are some considerations when determining what is best for your child:

- Talk with the child, if possible, about what would work best for them.
- Ask doctors, counselors, family and friends if they feel it is a good solution.
- Find other families that homeschool special needs children and find out how it works for them.
- Consider the sacrifice that the child will make in not having a traditional education, including social interaction, and make sure that you have a way to counteract that loss.
- Can you afford a private school or special needs program for your child? If not, homeschooling your special needs child might be a cost-effective alternative.
- You know your child better than anyone else. When they have special needs, it is often hard for others to understand them, making education a difficult process.
- Your child will be able to learn at THEIR pace, and explore areas that interest them more freely than they would in a public school system.
- Are you capable of giving your child the best education they can get, in spite of their needs? Many parents have the best of intentions. However, truly understanding the needs of your child and their educational stumbling blocks is essential to your success.

Network with Others to Learn about Special Needs Education

There are millions of parents out there with special needs children. Having the ability to find a support group or other organization will allow you to gain insight into the homeschooling process as well as the educational needs and learning capabilities of your child. As a teacher, you may be required to put your parental role aside, which can create tension for many families and students. By getting to know other people with special needs children, you can learn which educational options worked best for them and how homeschooling has helped their children. There are many situations that can occur when it comes to educating a special needs child. Taking the time to talk with others and learn about these potential problems and benefits before you get started will allow you to have a better sense of the advantages of homeschooling a special needs child and whether it is the right option for your family.

Source: Smart Tutor Education Programs: <http://www.smarttutor.com/advantages-of-homeschooling-a-special-needs-child/>

Bringing Cookies to IEP Meetings Will Only Get You So Far!

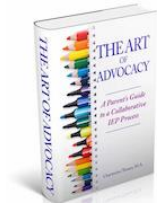
You've gone to IEP workshop after IEP workshop, searched for answers at conferences, done late night research on the internet, and yet you still have those guilty feelings that you're not doing a good enough job advocating for your child.

It takes more than gathering records, giving factual information or reciting research, and the law to be a successful advocate for your child.

Charmaine Thaner, retired teacher and parent of Dylan, whom happens to have Down syndrome, founded her own advocacy business, Collaborative Special Education Advocacy and has been professionally advocating for families since 2009. She has attended countless IEP meetings, many facilitated IEP meetings and mediation sessions on behalf of students with disabilities.

Parents that have worked with Charmaine know her insights and strategies are invaluable when advocating for children with any type of disability. She can be hired to review, analyze, and make specific suggestions on how IEPs can be improved. She also attends IEP meetings with families to ensure their voices are heard and their child receives the education they deserve.

Contact Charmaine at 208-340-5874 for a free 30 minute phone consultation. Check out many resources on her website: www.cspeda.com. Parents can also purchase her recent #1 International Best Seller Amazon book, *The Art of Advocacy: A Parent's Guide to a Collaborative IEP Process* at <http://amzn.to/1IP4djD>.



Disclaimer: TVDSA is sharing Treasure Valley support service opportunities but does not specifically support one organization over another.

Special Needs Legislative Update by Virginia Beringer

NATIONAL UPDATES

Currently legislation is being considered in the 2015-2016 Session. The National Down Syndrome Society (NDSS) has a listing of legislation, divided by the following: Health outcomes and quality of life, education opportunities, improving adult opportunities, and creating economic futures for individuals with Down syndrome. The parent link is: <http://www.ndss.org/Advocacy/Legislative-Agenda>

On December 10, Obama passed the Every Student Succeeds Act (S.1177). More information on the law can be found here: <https://www.congress.gov/bill/114th-congress/senate-bill/1177>

An effective way to impact federal legislation is to contact your senator or representative when an issue of importance is at the front of the legislative agenda. Maps of Idaho's legislative districts are provided on this website: <http://legislature.idaho.gov/about/idmap2.pdf>

These are websites to contact your representatives:

www.votesmart.org

www.govtrack.us

IDAHO UPDATES

The Idaho Disability Defense and Education Fund ("IDDEF") is soliciting crowd funding to assist families in assuring crucial services for their children by holding the State of Idaho accountable. IDDEF will use the funds to put needed pressure on the State of Idaho to protect and restore necessary services. Their crowd funding video and fund raising site can be seen on this link:

<https://www.crowdrise.com/idahodisabilitydefen>

Virginia Beringer, the new TVDSA Legislative Chair, will be trying to keep us updated on current national and local legislative activity in the monthly newsletter. If there is an area you would like more information on please email Virginia with your interest/request.



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Social Groups Page

Mom's Night Out!

Thursday, January 14th
6:30pm at **Yen Ching**
305 N 9th Street, Boise

Look forward to reconnecting with all the moms after the busy rush of the Holidays? Come relax and hang out with other amazing TVDSA moms and shed the stresses of everyday.

Please shoot me a text or email by Monday, January 11th, if you plan on attending. Yen Ching would like to know about how many moms will be coming so they can plan accordingly. TVDSA will pay for dinner.

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.



Best Buds

In January, Best Buds will be having a **Happy unBirthday** for all the kids with Down Syndrome in the Best Buds group!

Come **Friday, January 22nd at 5:00pm** to **Chuck E Cheese** located at 6255 Fairview Avenue in Boise, to celebrate your child's unBirthday with TVDSA!

Each child with Down syndrome will receive a soda, a piece of pizza and 16 tokens. Additional tokens can be purchased by the parent.

Please RSVP with unBirthday names (for the cake) by January 20th. We want to make sure we have ample seating for everyone!

Need more information about Best Buds? Please contact: [Danielle Williams](mailto:Danielle.Williams@tvdsa.org) at 208-794-8995.



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

Dads, do you need out of the house after all of the holiday craziness?

D.A.D.S. will be gathering **Friday, January 22nd from 6:30-8:30pm** at **Grinkers Grand Palace** located at 228 East Plaza Drive, Suite H in Eagle.

Grinkers will take you back in time with fantastic retro arcade with all the great games and pinball from the 80's.

TVDSA will be buying dinner (cold/hot sandwiches). Be sure to bring quarters (yes they are the old quarter games!)

For more information on D.A.D.S. contact [Gus Olmos](mailto:Gus.Olmos@tvdsa.org) at 208-412-3159.



Hispanic Outreach

The TVDSA Hispanic Outreach will be getting together on **Friday, January 29th from 6:30p-9:00pm** at **Enrique's** located at 482 W Main Street in Kuna. TVDSA will be purchasing dinner.

We welcome anyone interested in providing support for Spanish Speaking families in our community.

For more information please contact [Lucy Olmos](mailto:Lucy.Olmos@tvdsa.org) at 208-631-2588.

SAVE THE DATE!

TVDSA is bring back the
bike camp!

The 2016 iCan Bike
Camp will be held
June 6th-10th in
Meridian, Idaho

Registration will open
soon!

Conferences, Workshops, Webinars & TVDSA Scholarship Information

IPUL Workshop

Wednesday, January 13th from 6:00pm-9:00pm
4619 Emerald Suite E, Boise

Topic: Skills for Effective Parent Advocacy Parents will understand what "advocacy" means, learn the skills necessary to become an effective advocate, what additional resources they may need and where to go for more information. We can deliver this training for parents, youth, and individuals with disabilities.

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

Can't make it in person?

Attend the webinar on **Tuesday, January 29th**.

Same topic – two times to choose from: [11:00am-12:00pm](#) or [9:00pm-10:00pm](#)

Click time to register.

To contact IPUL: 208-342-5884 or parents@ipulidaho.org

5th Annual Family Caregiver Conference Moving Conversation to Action

Saturday, February 20th
8:00am-4:00pm

Registration is \$30 per person and includes the Conference, Resource Expo, Lunch and Parking.

Registration is now [open!](#)



Inclusion Works!

February 7-9th
Houston, Texas

Inclusion Works! is an opportunity for educators, administrators and parents to improve their skills in educating and supporting students in Special Education. The Arc of Texas is committed to the goal of promoting, protecting and advocating for students' right to be included in regular education settings with the appropriate aids and services. Conference participants will be offered information and education about research-based practices, aligned with the purposes of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA), so that their students can meet their educational, employment and independent living goals!

Click [here](#) for more information.

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!

2016 Tools for Life: Secondary Transition and Assistive Technology Fair

March 1-2nd
Riverside Inn Hotel
Boise, 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 2016 Tools for Life Fair is **Making Assistive Technology Work For You!** Throughout the two-day event, there will be keynote speakers and presentations around employment, assistive technology, post-secondary education, and self-advocacy/self-direction.

For more information, [click here](#).

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!

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.

Welcome New TVDSA Board Members!

TVDSA is excited to announce and introduce three more new board members.

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



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!](#)

Virginia Beringer – Legislative Chair:

I joined the TVDSA board because I had questions that I could not easily find answers to. I decided it was time for me to become more involved in the organization; a group of like-minded individuals that will ultimately advocate for my son and his peers with special needs.



Reme Echevarria – Fundraising Co-Chair:



My 2015 new year's resolution was to do as much as possible to help out TVDSA. I became the Moms Group Coordinator, and joined the Buddy Walk Team. It has been a great opportunity for me. I have learned a lot and have made some long lasting relationships with the TVDSA families. Every family has their unique story and I love how we are all there to help each other. TVDSA has real people who care about you and your family. I decided to join the

Board because I love the TVDSA Community and I wanted to help TVDSA reach and exceed their goals. I also wanted to learn as much as I could to help out my daughter, Abi so she can have a life of happiness and independence. I am grateful for TVDSA.

Andrew Kopping – Programs Chair

Andrew lives in Meridian, Idaho with his lovely wife, Genevieve, and four children. In his spare time, Andrew enjoys sports and outdoor activities including basketball, baseball, fishing, and camping. He loves to cook and participates in Meridian's annual Wing-Off competition every year. He also volunteers at his church and has a niche for working with youth in both religious instruction and Scouting activities. His son, Albert, is 15 and especially enjoys spending time with him on camp-outs and playing Challenger baseball.

Andrew has enjoyed getting more involved in TVDSA through attending parent meetings, participating as a past Cool Club coordinator, and serving on the I Can Bike Camp committee. He is looking forward to working on the board as the new programs chair.



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](#)
Co-Fundraising: [Kristine Goodwin](#)
Co-Fundraising: [Reme Echvarria](#)
Legislative Chair: [Virginia Beringer](#)

Treasurer & Spanish Contact: [Lucy Olmos](#)
Secretary & Membership: [Paul Auger](#)
Marketing & Buddy Walk Chair: [Jason Robles](#)
Community Outreach Chair: [Erin Rosenkoetter](#)
Programs Chair: [Andrew Kopping](#)

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](#)