



TREASURE VALLEY
DOWN SYNDROME ASSOCIATION

TVDSA Newsletter

January 2017



In This Issue

Happy New Year!

Another year flew by! A new year is here! TVDSA wishes everyone a great upcoming year, full of possibilities, fun, celebration of accomplishments, and family memories to remember.

In this month's issue we give you an article on page 1 & 3 to help start the New Year on a positive foot. Celebrate your child's strengths and share the strategies that work so they can succeed in ALL areas of their lives – school, extra-curricular, church, therapies, etc.

A couple of our social groups are celebrating the New Year with activities this month. Check out what is planned on page 4.

Is one of your New Year's Resolutions to help others? Contribute? Volunteer? TVDSA needs your ideas and energy in many areas, or on committees, so we can help make positive impacts on your child's life. Check out the list on page 5 and see how you may be able to help TVDSA in 2017.

Happy New Year!

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

Newsletter Editor: [Celena Auger](#)

Start 2017 off on the “Right Foot” and have a “Positive” year to come!

Strengths and Strategies by Paula Kluth

This article is from the website of Dr. Paula Kluth. It, along with many others on inclusive schooling, differentiated instruction, and literacy can be found at www.PaulaKluth.com. Visit now to read her Tip of the Day, read dozens of free articles, and learn more about supporting diverse learners in K-12 classrooms.

Assessing and Sharing What Matters

I once met with a team of teachers who worked with a student named Jim. While Jim did not have an identified disability, it was clear from conversations between his teachers that some of them struggled to connect with him. Two of the teachers complained about Jim's constant activity. One sighed, “He is a jackhammer- he moves constantly”. Another remarked, “He twists around so much that it distracts the other students”. While most of the teachers nodded in agreement with these assessments, two of the educators at the table seemed confused. The physical education teacher claimed that she didn't have any problems with Jim and that, in fact, he was one of her strongest students. She saw him as an athletic student, a leader, and as an asset to her class. He participated in all activities and seemed to try hard to acquire new skills. The science teacher also described Jim as an active learner and called him “cooperative and inquisitive”.

Perhaps a conversation between members of the aforementioned team could help all teachers see and inspire the strengths in Jim. Teachers who had success with Jim might be able to share useful strategies with those who were struggling. The physical education teacher, for instance, might share her ideas on how Jim learns best. The science teacher might tell or show others about some of Jim's best assignments or class contributions.

Why We Need More Good News: A Rationale for “Strengths & Strategies”

Jim's story illustrates the power of perception in teaching. In this case, Jim's teachers could have reframed and solved their problem simply by sharing their impressions of him and by listening to and learning from the ways in which other colleagues understood him. Jim's teacher might also have learned a lot about their biases by examining how their perceptions influenced their language and how their language may have impacted their practices.

This experience was similar to one I had on my first day of teaching. That first morning of my career, I was told I would be working with a student named Jay. Then I was given dozens of files to review. I marveled at the stacks of reports, evaluations, observations, clinical assessments, work samples, and test results. I couldn't believe a

Continued on page 3

TVDSA Calendar of Events

January 15th:

Adults in Motion and Cool Club
Eagle Island State Park Snow Hill
12:15pm meet; 12:30pm tube.
Contact: [Brenda Taylor](#)

January 26th:

Mom's Night Out!
Cheesecake Factory at the
Boise Town Square Mall.
7:00pm
Contact: [Reme Echevarria](#)

February 6th:

TVDSA Family Meeting
6:30pm-8:30pm at North End
Collective Church Topic: What
Every Parent Needs to Know
about Assistive Technology.
Contact: [Charmaine Thaner](#)

**“Tomorrow is
the first blank
page of a 365
page book.
Write a good
one.”
— Brad Paisley**

Brave mum shares why she almost gave up rare twins with Down syndrome

Local TVDSA family from Nampa featured in [online article](#), including a short video of Milo and Charlie, aka the “Goofball Brothers.”

Maybe you have met Julie McConnel at a Mom's Night Out! or Milo and Charlie at a Lil' Buddies activity or other TVDSA event. In the article, the McConnel's share their journey of learning about their 14 in a million chance of having fraternal twins with Down syndrome, the choices they had, and ultimately their decision and future path ahead of them.



Source: [news.com.au](#),
December 21, 2016



C.K. Quade Law invites All to help Celebrate their 10 year Anniversary



Tuesday, January 10th, 3:00pm
C.K. Quade Law, PLLC Office
600 E Riverpark Ln. #215
Boise, ID 83706



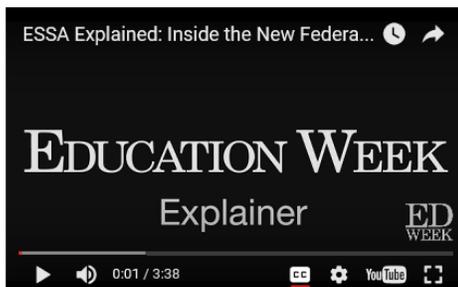
Refreshments, Appetizers, Musical Entertainment, and Great Memories are waiting.

PLEASE go to [our Facebook link](#) and indicate you are coming. We want to make sure there is plenty of food/drink for everyone! We hope to see you!



Education Week: Keys to ESSA Readiness

Virtual Event: Wednesday, February 1st
from 1:00pm-5:00pm



Click video above to learn more.

As state and school district leaders scramble to prepare for the Every Student Succeeds Act's new challenges and flexibility, Education Week provides practical takeaways on ESSA's crucial 2017-18 rollout. The new law resets the relationship between the federal government and other players on K-12 policy, giving greater autonomy—and added responsibility—to state and local officials. This virtual event will outline the state of play on ESSA implementation, including new federal regulations and guidance, timelines, and the capacity lift for state and local officials. Education Week journalists and guests will staff discussion rooms dedicated to specific high-profile topics, including: testing and assessments; whole-child and non-academic factors in weighing school quality; federal regulation and oversight; teacher professional development; and states' capacity and role in stakeholder engagement.

[Register to be a guest](#)

Strengths and Strategies continued from page 1

child so small could have so many "credentials". As I reviewed the files I moved from feeling stunned to overwhelmed to terrified. Jay's paperwork was filled with information about his inability to be a student or a learner. The documents detailed his challenging behaviors, skill deficits, and communication problems. I was devastated to read so much about this individual yet find so little about his abilities, gifts, and strengths.

As these stories illustrate, if every meeting begins with a description of a student's struggles and if every report fails to include student strengths and gifts, it becomes hard to plan for and support that learner. The way that we talk, think, and write about our students impacts our practice. In addition, our perceptions of learners and the ways in which we communicate about them, can serve to strengthen or damage our relationships with families. A parent of a fifth-grader once told me that she was in the education system for six years before any teacher said anything genuinely kind or positive about her daughter. When the teacher off-handedly shared that Rachel, her daughter, had "a beautiful smile and great energy" the mother burst into tears, startling the teacher. After learning of the reason for the mother's reaction, the teacher made it a point to keep sharing information about Rachel's abilities, gifts, skills, and accomplishments throughout the school year.

For all these reasons, I began using a simple document called Strengths & Strategies Pages when I plan with teachers, families, and students. This document (co-developed with my colleague, Michele Dimon-Borowski) can help educators focus on the abilities and strengths of learners instead of only on their difficulties and areas of need.

What Are Strengths & Strategies Pages?

Strengths & Strategies Pages are lists that provide positive and useful information about a learner. One list contains a student's strengths, interests, gifts, and talents. The other list answers the question, "What works for this student?". This list should contain strategies for motivating, supporting, encouraging, teaching, and connecting with the learner.

When Do I Use Strengths & Strategies Pages?

Strengths & Strategies Pages can be used anytime for any purpose. I often use them to begin IEP meetings. They can also be used as an attachment to a behavior plan or as a communication tool for teams who are transitioning a student from teacher to teacher or from school to school.

Why Use Strengths & Strategies Pages?

While this tool is not complex and does not necessarily provide a team with new information, it can help teachers organize the information they have and understand it in a new way. The focus on positive language and abilities can prompt educators to think and talk about students in a more proactive way. It can also help teachers make changes in planning and in their daily practice. Specifically, educators may be able to use forms to:

- plan curriculum and instruction;
 - create curricular adaptations;
 - develop student goals and objectives;
 - design supports for challenging situations;
 - work more collaboratively with and elicit concrete ideas from families; and
 - collaborate and communicate with each other.
- See below for Strengths & Strategies Pages that have been completed for a student in elementary school and for worksheets that can be used to create your own pages.

Strengths & Strategies Profile
Kluth, P. & Dimon-Borowski, M. (2003)

This form can be used as an attachment to a behavior plan or as a communication tool for teams who are transitioning a student from teacher to teacher or school to school. A student's team should work together to fill in this form. Ideally, each list should contain NO LESS than 50 items.



Click here for your copy of the [Strengths and Strategies Profile Form](#)



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Social Groups Page

Moms Night Out!

Hello Amazing TVDSA Moms!

We made it through another year. Thanks for all you did for your family and friends last year. You truly are amazing women for all you do each and every day. 2017 is going to be a wonderful year for all of us, so let's start it out right by getting together for some laughter and talk about what our plans will be for the new year.

We will be meeting at **The Cheesecake Factory** at the Boise Towne Square, 330 North Milwaukee in Boise on **Thursday, January 26, 2017 at 7:00pm**. TVDSA will pay for your dessert.

Please **RSVP** to Reme Echevarria by email at moms@idahodownsyndrome.org or by text 208-866-4095 **no later than January 24th** so I can let the restaurant know how many moms will be coming.

Best Buds & Lil' Buddies



There will be **NO activity** for Best Buds or Lil' Buddies in January. We wish you the best of the beginning of the New Year, and look forward to seeing you at the February event.

If you have any questions about either group, please feel free to contact [Danielle Williams](#) or call: 208-794-8995.

Cool Club & Adults in Motion

The Cool Club and Adults in Motion groups will go **tubing at Eagle Island State Park Snow Hill**. The tentative date is Sunday, **January 15th at 12:30pm** but will be dependent on the weather conditions.

We will first **meet** across the street from Eagle Island State Park at 12:15 pm – 12:30 pm **at The Brim Coffee House** located at 94 N Fisher Park Way in Eagle so we can carpool into the park since there is a park admission fee per vehicle.

TVDSA will provide the tubing admission, hot chocolate and snacks for a person with Down syndrome and one guest. Make sure to dress warmly for the tubing activity. Those attending will also need to complete a waiver for the

SNOW



TUBING

snow park which can be emailed to you or is available on their website.

Please text or email your **RSVP** to Brenda **by January 14th** so we know who to look for.

For more information about Cool Club or AIM, please contact [Brenda Taylor](#) by email or text/phone: 208-724-5226.

Mark your 2017 Calendars: TVDSA February Family Meeting

Monday, February 6th

6:30pm-8:30pm

North End Collective Church, Boise

Topic: What Every Parent Needs to Know about Assistive Technology.

Come get a chance to see both high tech and low tech devices that can help your child with communication, academic, and social skills. Families will also learn about favorite apps, that students of all ages can use to be more successful at school.

Childcare will be provided.

Questions? Contact: [Charmaine Thaner](#)



what's

Assistive
Technology?

Conferences, Workshops, Webinars & TVDSA Scholarship Information

IPUL Workshop

Wednesday, January 11th
from 6:00pm-9:00pm
at Idaho Parents Unlimited
4619 W. Emerald, Ste. E, Boise

**Topic: Skills for effective
Advocacy for Parents and Youth
& Power
of a Personal Story**

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.

Also, Parents will learn how to craft an effective personal story tied to an issue, and who can be influenced to make systems changes.

Please RSVP with Jennifer.

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

2017 Conference on Inclusive Education: Strategies for Access, Equity, and Opportunity

Presented by PEAK Parent Center
February 9-10, 2017
Renaissance Denver Stapleton Hotel
Denver, Colorado

Inclusive education is a process of school reform that creates equity in education and increases achievement for ALL students, including students with disabilities! In inclusive schools, students, families, general educators, special educators, administrators, support staff, and community members work together to make curriculum accessible to all learners and differentiate instruction. This conference brings members of each of these distinct groups together to learn and boost capacity and collaboration for inclusive education!

[Click for more information or to register today!](#)

Inclusion Works! Conference February 12-14th Houston, Texas!

The Inclusion Works! provides learning opportunities for parents, educators, and school administrators to improve skills in collaborating to educate students who qualify for Special Education services in the regular educational environment with supplementary aids and services. The ultimate goal is to offer families and school staff information and education about research-based practices so that eligible students are effectively prepared for further education, employment, and independent living according to the purposes of the I.D.E.A.

[Click to learn more information or to register today](#)

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.

Interested in Helping TVDSA?

Here are some current openings to volunteer:



- **Buddy Walk Chair and Committee Members:** Seeking dedicated people to make the 2017 Buddy Walk a success. Please contact [Kristie Oakes](#) or [George Taylor](#) for more details.
- **TVDSA Board Members:** Seeking an individual willing to serve on the board, meet once a month, and help advance TVDSA's mission. For more information, please contact [Kristie Oakes](#).
- **Lil' Buddies Coordinator:** Interested in organizing 6-8 activities / gatherings during the year for children ages 0-5 and their families? Please contact [Andrew Kopping](#).
- **Adults in Motion Coordinator:** Interested in helping organize 6-8 activities / gatherings throughout the year for adults with Down syndrome? Please contact [Andrew Kopping](#).
- **Dinner Auction Committee:** TVDSA needs volunteers to help organize a dinner auction fundraiser in 2017. Interested? Please contact: [Reme Echevarria](#).
- **Technology Committee:** TVDSA needs volunteers to participate in a Technology committee. If you are a professional technology expert or just a self-made techie, we can use your input. If you are interested please contact [George Taylor](#).
- **Golf Tournament Committee:** TVDSA will be hosting another Golf Tournament in 2017 and needs volunteers to help organize the event. If you are interested please contact [George Taylor](#).



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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](#)!

Have you gotten your 2017 TVDSA Calendar?

The 2017 TVDSA Down Syndrome Awareness Calendars are still available \$15.00 each.

What a great way to start the New Year. Perfect for friends, family, your child's doctors, school personnel or church members. Keep awareness of Down syndrome going all year long.

Please contact Kris Goodwin at: fundraising@idahodownsyndrome.org to get yours!



Shop with AmazonSmile and support TVDSA:

AmazonSmile is a simple and automatic way for you to support TVDSA every time you shop, throughout the year, **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 can help support TVDSA 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 Oakes](#)
Vice President: [George Taylor](#)
Co-Fundraising: [Kristine Goodwin](#)
Co-Fundraising: [Reme Echevarria](#)
Self-Advocate Chair: [Dylan Thaner](#)
Board Member: [Charmaine Thaner](#)

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

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](#)