



TREASURE VALLEY  
DOWN SYNDROME ASSOCIATION

# TVDSA Newsletter

Newsletter Editor: [Celena Auger](#)

January 2014

## In this Issue

Happy New Year from  
TVDSA!

In this issue, you will find some inspirational and research based information to remind each of us the fortunate gifts we have in our lives, by knowing and loving someone with Down syndrome.

A new year is here and TVDSA is back to being busy – be sure to check out the TVDSA Calendar – there is something for everyone!

New for TVDSA in 2014, TVDSA is bringing the iCan Bike Camp to the Treasure Valley to help those individuals with disabilities learn to ride a bike – ages 8 and up will be welcome. More information will come soon. If you need more information now, or would like to help make it a success, please contact: [Paul Auger](#).

Monthly and archived TVDSA newsletters are available on our website at: [www.idahodownsyndrome.org](http://www.idahodownsyndrome.org) for viewing and sharing.

## **I Have Down Syndrome – Know Me Before You Judge Me by: Melissa Riggio**

When I first started to work on this story, I thought maybe I shouldn't do it. I thought you might see that I have Down syndrome, and that you wouldn't like me.

My mom thinks that's silly. "Have you ever met anyone who didn't like you because you have Down syndrome?" she asks me. She's right, of course. (She usually is!)

When people ask me what Down syndrome is, I tell them it's an extra chromosome. A doctor would tell you the extra chromosome causes an intellectual disability that makes it harder for me to learn things. (For instance, some of my classes are in a "resource room," where kids with many kinds of learning disabilities are taught at a different pace.)

When my mom first told me I had Down syndrome, I worried that people might think I wasn't as smart as they were, or that I talked or looked different.

I just want to be like everyone else, so sometimes I wish I could give back the extra chromosome. But having Down syndrome is what makes me "me." And I'm proud of who I am. I'm a hard worker, a good person, and I care about my friends.

### **A Lot Like You**

Even though I have Down syndrome, my life is a lot like yours. I read books and watch TV. I listen to music with my friends. I'm on the swim team and in chorus at school. I think about the future, like who I'll marry. And I get along with my sisters—except when they take my CDs without asking!

Some of my classes are with typical kids, and some are with kids with learning disabilities. I have an aide who goes with me to my harder classes, like math and biology. She helps me take notes and gives me tips on how I should study for tests. It really helps, but I also challenge myself to do well. For instance, my goal was to be in a typical English class by 12th grade. That's exactly what happened this year!

But sometimes it's hard being with typical kids. For instance, I don't drive, but a lot of kids in my school do. I don't know if I'll ever be able to, and that's hard to accept.

### **Dream Job: Singer**

I try not to let things like that upset me and just think of all the good things in my life. Like that I've published two songs. One of my favorite things to do is write poetry, and this singer my dad knows recorded some of my poems as singles.

Right now someone else is singing my songs, but someday, I want to be the one singing. I know it's going to happen, because I've seen it. One day I looked in the mirror, and I saw someone in my head, a famous person or someone who was somebody, and I just knew: I will be a singer.

*Continued on Page 5*

## TVDSA

Calendar of EventsJanuary 4<sup>th</sup>:

**Cool Club** Snow Tubing  
1:00pm- 3:00pm at Bogus  
Contact:  
[Andrew Kopping](#)

January 6<sup>th</sup>:

**Lil Buddies** at Just Kid'n  
Around in Meridian.  
10:00am-12:00pm.  
Contact: [Jennifer Rice](#)

January 7<sup>th</sup>:

**TVDSA Board Meeting**  
7:00-9:30pm at A New Leaf  
Contact: [Kristie Yerger](#)

January 14<sup>th</sup>:

**TVDSA Family Meeting**  
7:00pm-9:00pm at A New  
Leaf, Meridian  
Contact: [Erin Rosenkoetter](#)

January 15<sup>th</sup>:

**iCan Bike Camp Committee**  
**Meeting** 7:00pm, Meridian  
Contact: [Paul Auger](#)

January 16<sup>th</sup>:

**Moms Outing:** to Piggy Pigs  
Pottery in Meridian at 7:00pm  
Contact: [Carrie Ormsby](#)

January 21<sup>st</sup>:

**Best Buds** at Pinz Bowling  
Center in Meridian at 6:00pm  
Contact [Malu Mulholland](#)

January 25<sup>th</sup>:

**Lil Buddies** at Charlotte's  
house in Boise.  
10:00am-12:00pm.  
Contact: [Jennifer Rice](#)

January 28<sup>th</sup>:

**D.A.D.S** at A New Leaf from  
6:30pm-8:30pm to discuss  
the ABLE Act.  
Contact: [Gus Olmos](#)

March 21<sup>st</sup>:

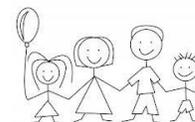
**World Down Syndrome**  
**Day Celebration**  
Contact: [Erin Rosenkoetter](#)

March 29<sup>th</sup>:

**Idaho Stampede Night** at  
7:00pm against Reno  
Contact [Malu Mulholland](#)

## Let's Get Real About Down Syndrome

### by Brian Skotko, MD, MPP



In mere months, pregnant American women might be able to learn if their fetuses have Down syndrome with a simple blood test. The test will be perfectly safe, eliminating the small, but real, chance of miscarriage that comes with current diagnostic options. If these tests become a routine part of obstetric care, thousands of expectant parents will be receiving a phone call from their healthcare provider each year with the message: your fetus has Down syndrome.

That will be a panicked moment, according to women studied in previous research. But what should healthcare professionals say about Down syndrome? What does it really mean to have Down syndrome? Six years ago, Sue Levine, Dr. Rick Goldstein, and I set out to find the answer to that question. Rather than let Rahm Emmanuel or GQ Magazine have the final word on what life is like with Down syndrome, we spoke to the people who truly understand.

We mailed surveys to families around the country, and 3,150 mothers, fathers, brothers, sisters, and people with Down syndrome (ages 12 and over) responded. Here is what we found:

- 99% of people with Down syndrome said they were happy with their lives
- 97% of people with Down syndrome liked who they are
- 86% of people with Down syndrome felt they could make friends easily, those with difficulties mostly had isolating living situations.
- 99% of parents said they love their child with Down syndrome
- 97% of parents said they were proud of their child with Down syndrome
- 79% of parents felt their outlook on life was more positive because of them
- 5% of parents felt embarrassed by their child with Down syndrome
- 4% of parents regretted having them
- 97% of brothers/sisters, ages 9-11, said they love their sibling
- 94% of older siblings expressed feelings of pride
- Less than 10% felt embarrassed and less than 5% expressed a desire to trade them in for another brother or sister without DS
- 88% felt they were better people because of their sibling with DS

All of the survey's results are been published in the [American Journal of Medical Genetics](#).

Parental decisions about Down syndrome present profound and deeply personal challenges to expectant parents. But for the first time, data about real families is available and can be considered by couples when they receive the diagnosis.

[Brian Skotko BLOG](#) – Friday, 23 September 2011

## January Family Meeting

Tuesday, January 14, 2014

at A New Leaf from 7:00pm-9:00 pm

Join us for an **Open Forum Discussion**. Share your ideas, ask questions of other families, and learn more about how TVDSA can serve YOUR family. If you have ideas, suggestions, or questions, this is the perfect opportunity to come share with other TVDSA families. Specific topics include: - Buddy Walk - World Down Syndrome Day Celebration - Current fundraising events - iCan Bike Camp - Anything that YOU want to discuss.  
~ Babysitting available and free ~



## “You Are What You Learn” by Kathie Snow, Disability is Natural

The ability to learn is older and more widespread than is the ability to teach. -Margaret Mead

Check out this wisdom from the blog of Scott Adams, the creator of "Dilbert" ([www.dilbert.com](http://www.dilbert.com)):

"You are what you learn. If all you know is how to be a gang member, that's what you'll be, at least until you learn something else. If you go to law school, you'll see the world as a competition. If you study engineering, you'll start to see the world as a complicated machine that needs tweaking. A person changes at a fundamental level as he or she merges with a particular field of knowledge. If you don't like who you are, you have the option of learning until you become someone else. There's almost nothing you can't learn your way out of. Life is like a jail with an unlocked, heavy door. You're free the minute you realize the door will open if you simply lean into it."

Wow! His words leave me breathless; the message is so commonsense and so very profound, and -- it seems to me -- so doable!

Many of us have reinvented ourselves in employment: some by choice and some out of necessity, as we learn new skills and embark on a new career. Some people take something powerful in their lives -- from a hobby to a life-threatening situation and everything in between -- and turn it into a wage-earning career.

Now let's think about children and adults with disabilities and the words of Scott Adams: "You are what you learn." What does one learn from interventions, therapies, special/segregated programs, and the usual "treatment" doled out to people with disabilities? Conversely, what does one learn from ordinary, inclusive, age-appropriate activities, classrooms, workplaces, community activities, etc.?

At the age of four months, my son, Benjamin, who has cerebral palsy, began receiving intensive physical and occupational therapies, and he was surrounded by other children with disabilities at the clinic. When he turned three, I enrolled him in a "regular" neighborhood preschool, where he was surrounded by children who did not have disabilities, instead of the special ed preschool for children with disabilities. Imagine my shock when four-year-old Benj asked me if his same-aged cousin, Colin, still used his walker. I didn't know what he was talking about and had to ask, "What do you mean," a number of times before I understood.

Because of his years in therapy, Benjamin thought *all* children were taken to therapists and were given a walker, and that's how they learned how to walk. He thought his classmates at the neighborhood preschool -- along with his cousin -- had "finished" with therapy and no longer needed their walkers. I was shocked to my core. This experience caused me to wonder what else my son was learning from "abnormal" experiences that are inherent in "Disability World."

There's an enormous focus on the importance of "early learning." But what if that early learning is not what we want children to learn? What happens when children or adults of any age are learning not what they're "taught," but what they're learning experientially?

To continue to read this 2 page article, please [click here](#)

Source: [Disability is Natural](#), January 2012, *Revolutionary Common Sense* by Kathie Snow

### TVDSA has opened its very own store on Café Press

You are now able to get all your TVDSA merchandise online. We have over 200 awesome items such as: shirts, hats, coffee mugs, plates, baby items, Christmas stockings and ornaments. As an added bonus, a portion of the money goes back to TVDSA. Please visit: [www.cafepress.com/tvdsa](http://www.cafepress.com/tvdsa)

### TVDSA and Idaho Stampede 2<sup>nd</sup> Annual TVDSA Awareness Night

This year we will be teaming up with the Idaho Stampede in March supporting World Down Syndrome Awareness on **Saturday March 29<sup>th</sup> 2014 at 7:00pm** against Reno. A portion of the ticket price will go back to TVDSA when you order through our group so pass it on to family and friends. The more people, the more special activities we will be able to do, including the highlight of last year: the high five tunnel before the game on the floor with the players. Keep an eye out for the order form in the next few weeks on our website.



TREASURE VALLEY  
DOWN SYNDROME ASSOCIATION

## Social Groups Page

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

D.A.D.S. will be meeting  
at A New Leaf  
at 2456 N. Stokesberry Rd,  
Meridian on  
**January 28<sup>th</sup> from 6:30pm-8:30pm.**

Will be discussing the **ABLE Act** and  
have a skype meeting with a sponsor  
from Washington, DC.

This will be an introduction to the  
ABLE Act and questions will be  
answered.

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

### MOM'S Night Out

**January 16<sup>th</sup> at 7:00pm**  
at Piggy Pigs Pottery  
46 E. Fairview Ave, Meridian

TVDSA will cover the studio fee.  
Piggy Pig's is offering a 15% discount  
on all items.

The monthly Moms outing will be on  
the third Thursday of each month.  
For more information or questions,  
please contact: [Carrie Ormsby](#).



### Lil' Buddies (age birth-5 years) Update:

#### January Playdates:

Lil' Buddies will be having two play dates  
in January.

**Monday, January 6<sup>th</sup> at Just Kid'n Around**  
in Meridian from **10:00am-12:00pm.**  
TVDSA will pay for the children with Down  
syndrome. Remember to bring your  
socks!

**Saturday, January 25<sup>th</sup> at Charlotte's  
house** (located at 12067 Golden Rod  
Ave, in Boise) from **10:00am-12:00pm.**

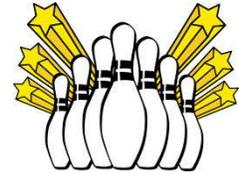
Need more information on **Lil' Buddies?**  
Please contact [Jennifer Rice](#)

### Best Buds (6-11 years of age) Update:

#### January Gathering:

Best Buds will be going bowling at **Pinz**  
Bowling Center located at 1385 S. Blue  
Marlin Ln. in Meridian on **January 16<sup>th</sup> at**  
**6:00pm.** TVDSA will pay for 2 games for  
each child with Down syndrome and  
snacks to follow. Everyone will be  
responsible for their own shoe rental.

Need more information on **Best Buds?**  
Please contact [Malu Mulholland](#)



### Cool Club (12-17 years of age) Update:

#### January Outing:

Cool Club will be going tubing at **Bogus  
Basin Pepsi Gold Rush Tubing Hill** on  
**January 4<sup>th</sup> from 1:00pm-3:00pm.** Cost is  
\$12.00 per person for a two hour session.

Each family will need to make their  
reservation either at the Sales office or  
[online](#). If you walk up the day of, you  
may not get a tube.

For Bogus Basin Tubing hill  
information, [click here](#).

TVDSA will provide Hot  
Chocolate/Cider and snacks after  
the tubing session.

Need more information on **Cool  
Club?** Please contact: [Andrew  
Kopping](#) 208-350-9908



### Adults in Motion Update

AIM will not be meeting in January.

Help Wanted: If you would like to help  
organize monthly outings, community  
outreach projects, and fun activities for  
adults with Down syndrome in the  
Treasure Valley, please contact [Malu  
Mulholland](#). We are looking for a new  
coordinator to take over.

We would like to thank Freddie Gallas  
for all of her hard work, organizing  
and dedication she has made to AIM  
over the past 4+ years. She will be  
hard to replace and greatly missed.

Need more information on **AIM?**  
Please contact [Malu Mulholland](#)

## Conferences, Workshops, Webinars & TVDSA Scholarship Information

### Idaho Miss Amazing Pageant

**February 8, 2014**

Boise State University

Ages 5-35 with disabilities  
[missamazingpageant.com](http://missamazingpageant.com)

### The Arc of Texas 21<sup>st</sup> Annual Inclusion Works! Conference

Engaging ALL students in  
Inclusive Classrooms

**February 9-11, 2014**

Arlington, Texas

[Registration](#) Now Open

### PEAK Conference on Inclusive Education February 13-14, 2014

Denver, Colorado

[Registration](#) is now open!

### [Wrightslaw Conferences](#)

Special Education Law  
and Advocacy

Various dates and locations  
across the U.S. including  
**April 3, 2014 in Boise, ID.**

### 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 everyone is eligible.

Please see our [Scholarship application](#) for the guidelines and how to apply today.

### Down Syndrome Affiliate in Action Leadership Conference

**February 28<sup>th</sup>-March 2<sup>nd</sup>**

Washington D.C.

[Registration](#) is now open!

### 9<sup>th</sup> Annual All Born (in) Conference

**April 5, 2014**

Portland, Oregon

[Registration](#) opens soon.

**LIVE Webinar series** sponsored by the Center on Disabilities and Human Development in collaboration with the Idaho State Department of Education

- **Comprehensive Planning for Students with Autism** – Feb. 13<sup>th</sup>: 4:00-6:00pm
- **Universal Design for Learning: Curriculum for ALL Learners** – April 9<sup>th</sup>, 16<sup>th</sup>, 23<sup>rd</sup> 4:00-6:00pm

<http://www.idahotc.com/forcredit.aspx>



Melissa Riggo shares her thoughts about Down syndrome.  
 Photograph by Anne Griffin Bee

## Know Me (continued from Page 1)

It's true that I don't learn some things as fast as other people. But that won't stop me from trying. I just know that if I work really hard and be myself, I can do almost anything.

### See Me

But I still have to remind myself all the time that it really is OK to just be myself. Sometimes all I see—all I think other people see—is the outside of me, not the inside. And I really want people to go in there and see what I'm all about.

Maybe that's why I write poetry—so people can find out who I really am. My poems are all about my feelings: when I hope, when I hurt. I'm not sure where the ideas come from—I just look them up in my head. It's like I have this gut feeling that comes out of me and onto the paper.

I can't change that I have Down syndrome, but one thing I would change is how people think of me. I'd tell them: Judge me as a whole person, not just the person you see. Treat me with respect, and accept me for who I am. Most important, just be my friend.

After all, I would do the same for you.

### What Is Down Syndrome?

Down syndrome is an intellectual disability that about 5,000 babies in the United States are born with each year. A person with Down syndrome has 47 chromosomes, microscopic structures that carry genetic information to determine almost everything about a person. Most people have only 46 chromosomes. It's the extra chromosome that can cause certain physical characteristics (such as short stature and an upward slant to the eyes) and speech and developmental delays. Still, people with Down syndrome are a lot like you: They are unique people with strengths and talents.

Source: National Geographic Kids



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](http://www.idahodownsyndrome.org)

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

## 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](http://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](http://smile.amazon.com) and select TVDSA as your favorite charity "BEFORE" you start shopping and TVDSA will receive 0.5% of the purchase price from your eligible AmazonSmile purchases.

## It's time to get ready for WORLD DOWN SYNDROME DAY CELEBRATION 2014!

**VIDEO CONTEST** - Put together a 2-3 minute video (slideshow, PowerPoint, etc) that shows "How someone with Down syndrome has inspired me or changed my life." Anyone that has been influenced by a person with Down syndrome is welcome to submit a video (to include siblings, grandparents, parents, friends, teachers, etc.). PRIZES will be awarded, and the top three videos will be shown at our celebration! Please submit your videos to [community@idahodownsyndrome.org](mailto:community@idahodownsyndrome.org)  
**Videos are due by March 15th. 1st place - \$200 2nd place - \$100 3rd place - \$50**

**TVDSA got Talent-** Calling all talented persons with Down syndrome! We want YOU to show off your talent at our celebration. You can play an instrument, sing the alphabet, recite a poem, dance, show a special painting, tell a story, or any other special talent you would like to share. Please contact [Erin Rosenkoetter](#) for more info.

## TVDSA 2014 Calendars are AVAILABLE!

2014 TVDSA calendars are now available for purchase.

Please contact [Erin Rosenkoetter](#) or complete an [order form online](#) to order. Calendars will also be available at the January TVDSA Family Meeting.

Reminder: TVDSA Notecards are also still available. You can purchase a set of 11, with one of each of the prints, or a set of 10, of a single print. **Cost: \$7.00** per set.

### **New for the 2015 TVDSA Calendar:**

The 2015 TVDSA Awareness Calendar will include a special page dedicated to those with Down Syndrome that we have lost. **If you have lost a loved one with Down Syndrome** and would like them to be recognized in the 2015 Calendar, please submit a picture and a brief statement (no more than one paragraph) to Kristie Yerger at [president@idahodownsyndrome.org](mailto:president@idahodownsyndrome.org). Please submit no later than April 15, 2014.



*The mission of 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](#)

Community Outreach Chair: [Erin Rosenkoetter](#)

Marketing Chair: [Paul Auger](#)

Vice President and Programs Chair: [Malu Mulholland](#)

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

Buddy Walk Chair: [George Taylor](#)

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](#)