

Arkansas Down Syndrome Association NEWSLETTER



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“Those who can, do. Those who can do more, volunteer.”

It's been said, “Great vision without great people is irrelevant.” This year has brought a lot of positive changes for the Arkansas Down Syndrome Association (ADSA) in terms of the progress we made in broadening our purpose and vision to encompass a larger scope of objectives.

We are excited to be concentrating our efforts and attention on five new strategic initiatives (**visit our website for more information**) that we believe will truly serve the interests of people with Down syndrome and their families in Arkansas.

On the other hand, we recognize that any success we make in our goals will always be the result of the contributions of our members and supporters—and not just financially. Monetary donations, while certainly important to make any non-profit organization run, are only half the equation. The other half is the contribution of *people*.

For the past 10 years, ADSA has benefited from the investment of time and talents provided by a group of committed volunteers—volunteers like Dawn Adams and Susie Keesling. Dawn Adams, who, most recently served as Vice President, worked with ADSA's Board to accomplish its original vision of ensuring quality healthcare for adults with Down syndrome in the state. Driven to represent the future interests of her son Colin (who was just 2 years old at the time) and his peers, Dawn pulled up her chair with other ADSA charter members to do what needed to be done—and clock as

many hours as she needed to do it. Susie Keesling, a professional with DHS's Division of Ageing and Adult Services, began collaborating with the ADSA in its early years on a grant project involving a



survey on Alzheimer's disease and related dementia in adults with Down syndrome. Susie's heart for the Disabled community compelled her to accept an invitation to serve on ADSA's Board, even after her 3-year grant project was over. Susie's expertise in the field of human services proved to be a huge asset in ADSA's growth as an organization.

There is no overstating the importance that people make, whether they are dedicated parents or caring professionals, in carrying out a vision like that of ADSA's. Without the right people to make it happen, no vision can ever come to fruition no matter how developed it is on paper.

This July, both Dawn and Susie will be retiring from their Board seats after

collectively giving thousands of hours to the work. All who know them for their service in the Down syndrome community know they will be sorely missed, though, as they make their transition, both have expressed hope and assurance that the right people can always be counted on to step up to fill a need.

And they are right. In the same way Dawn and Susie stepped up to the plate in the beginning, we rely on every volunteer to keep the ADSA running strong.

Looking forward, there will be big shoes to fill with Dawn and Susie's departure from the Board. We also know there are some brand new shoes to fill with ADSA's recent restructuring and creation of new Coordinator and Team positions. We need more volunteers!

If you would like more information about the many opportunities for you to volunteer with the ADSA, feel free to contact us at 501-223-3696 or by email at contact@ardownsyntax.org.

To learn more about the ADSA and the work we are doing visit us online at www.ardownsyntax.org.

We want to meet you!

Join us on Saturday, August 29, 2015 at our DS Neighborhood Block Party.

Put a face to a name, enjoy lunch on us, and have some fun!



More details to come online.



Nathan McClain

A lot of people enjoy watching a ball game on TV, tuning in the radio to listen to commentary about a favorite sports team, or checking the latest stats for a particular athlete online or in the newspaper. Nathan McClain, a 20 year old from Little Rock, not only likes to follow his sports heroes during games and in the media, but has succeeded in becoming a hero himself to many who have followed his rising athletic career. Serving his high school football team for four years as a manager, Nathan helped his team members strengthen, train, and heal sports injuries. Nathan learned firsthand the importance of getting back in the game, even when conditions were hard. Weightlifting and training at the gym, he proved to himself that positive results only come with the right investment of sweat and exertion. Riding horses served to teach him the all-important lesson that when you fall off your horse, you have to get right back in the saddle.

It is no surprise that Nathan's ever-present

determination to push himself to the next level has made him a world-caliber athlete in the Special Olympics. What may be surprising to some people is that Nathan happens to have Down syndrome. He has competed in many venues, including the Special Olympics Arkansas Summer Games and multiple sports camps. Nathan has challenged himself to compete in a variety of sports opportunities, but when he was introduced to Aquatics, it became a true passion for him—despite his childhood fear of water!

In June 2014, Nathan impressed his fans even further by competing in the Special Olympics USA Games in Princeton, New Jersey, where he won a gold medal and three bronze medals! His gold medal was earned in the 50 meter Butterfly!

This year, Special Olympics Arkansas proudly announced that three athletes and two coaches from Arkansas have been named to Special Olympics Team USA for the 2015 Special Olympics World Games, to be held in Los Angeles, California—including Nathan McClain!



Nathan is set to compete in the 50m Butterfly, 100m Freestyle, and 400m Freestyle relay.

The ADSA wishes to congratulate Nathan and his other Arkansas Special Olympic team members who have earned the honor of proudly representing their state and country as they step onto the world athletic stage. Watch for Nathan and his teammates online, on TV, and in the papers!

Do you know a person with Down syndrome or a supporter of people with DS who deserves to be "In The Spotlight"? If so, let us know!



Down Syndrome Conference 2015

When Terri Couwenhoven began her presentation in May for our annual Arkansas Down Syndrome Conference, hosted in partnership with the University of Arkansas for Medical Sciences (UAMS), she didn't take long to connect with her audience.

Immediately after starting her slideshow, she stepped around the podium and past the stage lights so she could see the parents and professionals in attendance eye-to-eye.

"Why are you here?," Terri asked—in her usual, down-to-earth style. "Tell me what you are hoping to learn today."

With a conference title that identified "Puberty Issues and Sexuality in Adolescence" as the main topic of the day, it's understandable why the group hesitated a few seconds to respond.

After prompting a conference organizer to pass around a wireless mic, hands reluctantly started to raise.

One mother helped break the ice by stating, "I have questions related to how to prepare my daughter for when she starts her period."

Another mom then raised her hand. "How

do I handle things when my teenager discovers their sexuality?"

A professional raised her hand, "I supervise professionals who work with adults with cognitive disabilities. We need to learn how to address these subjects as professionals."

Terri smiled—anticipating the nature and variety of questions—walked back to the podium, and clicked her slideshow to the first slide. "Ok then, let's get started."

Terri is a nationally-known sex educator and author. She specializes in the design and implementation of sexuality programs and resources for people with cognitive disabilities, their parents, and the professionals who support them. Her talk addressed many of the concerns and questions shared by conference attendees.

Important points shared with audience members included:

- Sexuality, Puberty, and Dating are important and natural aspects of development for adolescents with Down syndrome.
- Puberty and sexual development are not delayed in children with Down syndrome. Fertility is possible for both males and females with Down syndrome.
- Honest, concrete, visual and comprehension-level appropriate information is needed to



help people with Down syndrome learn necessary social and hygiene skills.

- Identity and independence in sexuality are important parts of adolescence for people with Down syndrome; dating, and appropriate privacy, are necessary for healthy development.
- Sexual safety education is highly important for all people with intellectual/developmental disabilities.

As the audience listened throughout the day, some were relieved at Terri's answers and expressed gratitude that they felt armed with new knowledge—and much more prepared for helping their loved ones through those daunting adolescent years.

You can learn more about Terri's work online at www.terricouwenhoven.com, by phone at 262-284-5043, or e-mail tcouwen@execpc.com



ON THE CALENDAR

The ADSA is committed to remaining a healthy and active organization. Keeping an annual calendar scheduled with opportunities for you and your family to benefit from is among our cherished priorities.

We hope you take note of our list of scheduled events and consider participating in as many of interest to you:



Annual BBQ/Picnic

Join DSCNWA on Sunday, August 30, for the annual BBQ/Picnic. For more information, visit www.dscnwa.com




War Memorial Park

On Saturday, August 8 at 5 p.m., bring your own picnic and blanket and join Central Arkansas Buddy Talk to enjoy the beautiful scenery along with slides, swings and a vast water system to be enjoyed by all ages. Located on the left-hand side of the road across from the Little Rock Zoo on Jonesboro Drive. For more information



visit www.arbuddytalk.org.



DSCNWA Buddy Walk 2015 Designer Genes 5k

Don't forget to mark your calendars for Saturday, October 10 for the annual DSCNWA Buddy Walk and Designer Genes 5k. For more information visit www.dscnwa.com.




Clinton Buddy Walk

Saturday, October 17. Registration tables opens at 9:30am. The early registration cut off is September 25 to guarantee a Buddy Walk t-shirt.

Cost: Adults - \$10
Kids (ages 2 & older) - \$5
Persons w/ DS – FREE

For more information and registration forms visit www.clintonbuddywalk.com.



DS Neighborhood Block Party



On Saturday, August 29, the ADSA will host a **FREE** DS Neighborhood Block Party to meet and greet friends and families of the Down syndrome community. The event is to be held in the Commons Building at Camp Aldersgate from 10am-2pm. We'll supply lunch and activities for the kids. Come join the FUN!
More details to come online.



Gettin' Down for Down Syndrome Dance

ATTENTION: The *Gettin' Down For Down Syndrome* dance will be moving on our event calendar to the month of March in an effort to better promote World Down Syndrome Day. That means there won't be a dance this October. The next *Gettin' Down Dance* is scheduled for Saturday, March 19, 2016.



Down Syndrome Options Conference

On September 11-13, 2015, "Arkansas Children's Hospital and Down Syndrome OPTIONS bring you therapeutic ideas, educational strategies and research supporting translational medical interventions that can improve the symptoms seen in those with Trisomy 21." To find out more visit www.downsyndromeoptions.org




Lake Willastein Park

On Saturday, September 12, at 5 p.m., Central Arkansas Buddy Talk will be meeting up for a picnic/play date. Bring a picnic dinner for your family and come enjoy a fun evening with old and new friends. Located on Lake Willastein Drive, Maumelle. For more information visit www.arbuddytalk.org.



4th Annual Central Arkansas Buddy Walk

On Saturday, October 17, at 2-5 p.m., the 4th Annual Central Arkansas Buddy Walk will be held at Lake Willastein Park, Maumelle. **Cost:** Adults - \$10; Kids (ages 5-12) - \$8; Persons w/ DS – FREE
For more information visit www.arbuddytalk.org.



Amazon Smile Fundraiser

If you shop much on Amazon.com, you can start supporting the ADSA with your purchases. All you have to do is use the link smile.amazon.com when you log on and select our organization. Every dollar makes a difference!



Kroger Card Fundraiser

Simply register your Kroger Plus Card online at



krogercommunityrewards.com using the # 80386, and ADSA will receive \$5 for every \$100 that you spend for groceries and gas. Thank you to everyone who participates!



Monthly Webinar Series

Each month, the NDSS provides a free educational web-based seminar, or webinar, to anyone interested in learning more about Down syndrome and related topics, such as health, education, research and family life.



Visit www.ndss.org to learn more.



A Call for Volunteers

The ADSA wants to hear from you if you are interested in volunteering to help us continue to make a strong impact in Arkansas. Whether that's fundraising, event planning, or public awareness, e-mail us at volunteers@ardownsyndrome.org and tell us about your interests and availability.





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Special thanks to Horton Brothers Printing for printing our newsletter.

Want to receive a free copy of our newsletter?

Let us stay in touch with you as we keep our Down syndrome community connected and informed. When you register to receive our quarterly newsletter and special mail outs, you will always be kept up to speed.

Visit us online to register.



Want to become a member of the Arkansas Down Syndrome Association?

By becoming a member of the Arkansas Down Syndrome Association you take the rewarding step of partnering with us in our vision. Members of the ADSA are not spectators, nor are they merely supporters, of our organization. To be a member of the ADSA is to be a true contributor and champion for Down syndrome interests in Arkansas.

Visit us online to learn more.



Want to find a list of other Down syndrome groups, sponsoring businesses, or Down syndrome family businesses in Arkansas?

We think it's important to foster a spirit of appreciation and mutual support within our Down syndrome community. Therefore, we point you to a listing of those groups and businesses in Arkansas we want to acknowledge, and think you might enjoy too.

Visit us online to begin your search.



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