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A Note From Nancy

Fall is here and that always reminds me of CHANGE. I light my fireplace, bring out my sweaters, and enjoy the vibrant color in the trees. How about you?
I have been through a significant CHANGE this year with the loss of my beautiful Mother and best friend on July 1st. On a daily basis I thank her for teaching me compassion, acceptance, kindness and independence which is the foundation I believe that brought me to the DSCBA as Executive Director. Mom supervised adults with Down syndrome through Goodwill Industries back in the 70's where they spent their weekdays binding books. Before she passed away, she told me her work experience at Goodwill was one of her favorite as the adults with Down syndrome made her smile every day. In honor of my Mother, Ruth Chiavetta, a scholarship fund has been established at the Connection for our teen and adult STEP programs thanks to the generosity of many dear friends of my family.

- As I look forward into 2009 thinking of CHANGE what I see for the Down Syndrome Connection is:
- **GROWTH:** Expanding our organization and programs to new areas that can benefit greatly from our services
 - **EDUCATION:** Further reaching out to Bay Area hospitals/clinics to insure they are educated about Down syndrome and the DSCBA
 - **OUTREACH:** Continue and expand Community Outreach to enlighten and inspire local business people and organizations to give
 - **TECHNOLOGY:** Maintaining an online community forum for our members that fosters sharing and supportive/positive relationships
 - **FUNDRAISING:** Continuously seeking new opportunities and ways to raise funds
 - **BOARD EXPANSION:** Bring on new board members who are committed to growth, fundraising and community outreach and the DSCBA mission

Speaking of CHANGE, we have 2 Board members leaving the Board, Julie Sodestrom and Terry Sylvester. Although, I did not have a lot of time to work directly with these wonderful ladies I know they have given many years to the Connection in several roles and have been the backbone of many successful events. Thank you both for your dedication and service!

To accomplish the CHANGE above I ask that our membership be committed to getting involved in supporting our organization in whatever capacity that may be. Whether it be volunteering to be on a committee for an event, sharing ideas about ways to reach the community or corporations for sponsorship or how about being on the board or recommending someone to be on the board. There are many ways in which you can help and for those of you that give of your time so generously today I thank you.

Happy fall and happy holidays everyone!
Nancy LaBelle, Executive Director

Inside

A Note From Nancy	1	Buddy Walk 2008	8
From the President	2	Buddy Walk Memories	9
Upcoming Events/Raise Your Hand	2	Cajun Fest 2008	10
We're More Alike Than Different	3	Business Owner Making the Connection	11
3rd Annual Golf Tournament	4	In Memory and Gratitude	11
Volunteer Spotlight	4	Enchanted House Celebration	12
A Pretty Special Girl	5	Torin Goes to Hollywood	13
Parent Support Group at the Connection	5	A Great Day of Golf and Fun	14
Shout Out From SF Step and Step Out	6	Express Yourself Takes the Cake	15
Join Us At The Pumpkin Patch	7	Speech Therapy is Back	15
What's In Our Library	7	The Idea Behind Buddy Play	16
National Down Syndrome Congress	7		

WEBSITES AND RESOURCES

National Down Syndrome Society
www.ndss.org

National Down Syndrome Congress
www.nDSCBAcenter.org

Education Research
www.downsnet.org

Special Olympics
www.specialolympics.org

Wrightslaw
www.wrightslaw.com

Disability Solutions
www.disabilitysolutions.org

Down Syndrome Quarterly
www.denison.edu/dsq/

Woodbine House
www.woodbinehouse.com

Regional Center of the East Bay:
www.rceb.org

CARE Parent Network
(925) 313-0999
www.contracostaarc.com

Family Resource Network
(510) 547-7322, e-mail address
0-FRNOAK@inreach.com

MATRIX Parent Network
& Resource Center
(415) 884-3535
www.matrixparents.org

Parents Helping Parents
(408) 727-5775
www.php.com

Support For Families of
Children With Disabilities
(415) 282-7494
www.supportforfamilies.org

Give Books
www.givebooks.org/DSCBA

ADVISORY COMMITTEE

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From the President

As I sit here today and contemplate what I wish to communicate to you as your new Board President, it occurs to me that I would not be here if it was not for those who have come before me and served our community so well. Thank you Julie for her years of service as our previous Board President and Martha for creating this organization and providing us with a place where we can come together to provide each other with the love and support that make this journey we are on a little lighter.

For those of you that do not know me, I am parent of a child with Down syndrome (Amelia), who was called home almost two years ago at the tender young age of nineteen months. I have experienced some of the joys and sacrifices that many of you have and have had to make and had to work through some of the tough decisions as well. Just like many of you, my family came to the DSCBA to get information when information was tough to come by, get fellowship when fellowship was needed, and hope when times seemed hopeless. It is in the hope to give back to the community for all that they have done for me and my family over the years, that I have agreed to take this position.

I am proclaiming this year, the "Year of Community" for the DCBA. In this "Year of Community" we, at the DCBA, are going to do our best to increase the number of community building events, provide better communication, and encourage more involvement from our membership.

- Community building events – We are already off to a great start: we marched in the Danville 4th of July parade, are going to the pumpkin patch on October 26th, and are planning trip to a St. Mary's Basketball game early next year. My pledge is to have at least one of these events every quarter.
- Better communication – Again we are off to a great start: our news letter has been spruced up and is something that we can all be truly proud of. Our website has been revamped (although we are still tweaking it) and is being used more than ever before.
- Member involvement – We, as an organization, are here to serve each other. We share a special bond and perspective that can only come from one that has walked in our shoes. I look to you to provide me with guidance on what you needs are and how I can best serve you. However, I also look to you to provide a helping hand. A helping hand can be anything from coming up with an idea for the next community building event, organizing/ helping with a fundraiser, volunteering time at the DCBA, or just calling someone you know is having a hard time to see how they are doing and if there is anything you can do to help.

So these are my lofty goals for the year. That is not to say that we will not be concentrating on increasing our services (we are), but these are just the objectives that we are particularly focused on this year.

Before I go, I want to let everyone know how lucky we are to have such a committed and energized staff working at the DSCBA. Kathy, Martha, and our teachers are all doing a bang up job and it is a pleasure to serve. Our new Executive Director (Nancy LaBelle) has had a rock star beginning and I look forward to her next command, I mean request. In all seriousness, she is doing a great job and she is a big reason that we are already well on our way to achieving our goals for the year.

In your service,

Jim Bibles
Board President

UPCOMING EVENTS – SAVE THE DATE

- October 25th, 2008 – Enchanted House Celebration 1pm-4pm, Oakland (see flyer)
- October 26th 2008 – Clayton Valley Pumpkin Farm 9am-11:30am, Clayton (refer to ad)
- November 13, 2008 – The Spirit of Danville 5pm-9pm – Downtown Danville shopping benefitting the DSCBA – (see flyer)
- December 7, 2008 – The Holiday Party 2pm-5pm – Heather Farms Park, Walnut Creek (watch your email)

RAISE YOUR HAND....FUNdraising is a Team Effort!

Please call the DSCBA office at 925-362-8660 and let us know which committee you can help with:

- Bowl a Rama – March 2009
- 4th of July Parade – July 2009
- Cajun Festival – August 2009
- Buddy Walk – October 2009



“WE’RE MORE ALIKE THAN DIFFERENT”

Last year, the American College of Obstetrics and Gynecology issued guidelines to all of its members recommending that every pregnancy be tested for Down syndrome, regardless of the maternal age factor.

With a new, highly accurate, non-invasive blood test right around the corner, it will soon be as simple to confirm an extra 21st chromosome as to confirm the pregnancy itself.

Already, a staggering 90% of babies who are prenatally diagnosed with Down syndrome are aborted.

Alarmed by the prospect of a world where our children are strangers, the National Down Syndrome Congress (ndsccenter.org), strategized on how to effectively help prospective parents recognize the gifts of people who have Down syndrome and meet the challenge of prenatal diagnostics with a positive response. Thus was born the NDSC’s “We’re More Alike Than Different” campaign. An anonymous member-family generously issued a matching funds grant, to which people from all over responded with donations small and large, and the challenge was met. Although there is a continuing need for financing to air the television spots, production commenced immediately on the print campaign, and four adults in the United States were selected from audition tapes to participate in the production of several 30-second public service video announcements last January in Minneapolis. We were thrilled when our daughter, Christi, was selected to participate. I had submitted an audition tape in which she expressed her driving ambition to be a bride, having been a flower girl, bridesmaid, and maid of honor in her older siblings’ weddings. Endowed with the self-confidence that must reside on the 21st chromosome, giving our kids an extra dose, she couldn’t be more proud of the work she did in that studio, supported by a top-notch professional production team. (And we certainly are “More Alike Than Different,” because I always wanted to be in a commercial!) Christi writes about the experience:

It was a blast being on a room with lots of cameras and lights. Martha did the costume changing and Mary did the make-up. I was one of four stars – they called us “talent.” Steve, the director let me play around with the cameras after the shoot. Mark, Chris, Moira [the other “talents”] and I all became friends.

I hope everyone will see the commercials we made. The campaign is “We’re More Alike Than Different,” because people who have Down syndrome want the same things just like everybody else.

In one of my spots, I share my dream to be a bride. My dreams are coming true! In June, I got engaged when Austin, my fiancé, asked me to marry him and gave me a ring.

And when I see the sparkle on her finger match the sparkle in her eye, I know it’s her self-determination that made this wonderful

thing happen. I’m not sure how we’ll work it all out, or what this modified-and-adapted-marriage will look like, but I am certain it’s what she and Austin want, and that they know as well as anyone does what they are getting into! (Proving once again, we *are* “More Alike Than Different.”)

Christi’s life has been a tapestry of milestones far beyond the grim

picture painted at her birth on Christmas Day, 1978, when we were told we didn’t have to take her home from the hospital. Had we rejected her, we would have been turning down the best gift ever. Just as we approach the point in our societal development where many people with Down syndrome in supportive environments are reading and writing - and texting and emailing, learning foreign languages, earning diplomas, attending college, learning to drive, competing for jobs, giving back through volunteering, establishing their own homes, falling in love and marrying, it is ironic that a pervasive, remnant sense of hopelessness about Down syndrome could condemn them to nearly disappear.

As Jiminy Cricket wisely pointed out, “If your heart is in your dream, no request is too extreme.” It is my fervent hope that parents of young children who have Down syndrome continue to reach for the stars, because more than ever before, we must inspire those making life and death choices to recognize that typical children and our kids *are* More Alike Than Different.

Christi Hockel lives in Walnut Creek where she works for Safeway and volunteers for John Muir Medical Center. She is working on the wedding song list for the DJ.



3RD ANNUAL GOLF TOURNAMENT

SUPPORTING THE DOWN SYNDROME CONNECTION



Last Saturday on Sept. 27th, 2008 my husband, Kevin, son Blair and I had the best time playing in the Knights of Columbus Charity golf tournament that is held for the Down Syndrome Connection each year. This is the second year we have played in this wonderful tournament and it just keeps getting better and better. The golf course was in good shape and was filled with smiling golfers that were there to help all of our kids at the DSC. Each Tee was sponsored by a caring family, friend of the Knights or a generous local business that cares about organizations like ours. Every sponsor wrote a special message to

our families that was posted on a sign on each Tee. For those of you who are not familiar with golf there are 18 Tees. That's a lot of heartfelt messages that were read by 100+ golfers. It was touching to say the least.

The day was hot but the golfers had fun in spite of the heat. We were treated to good food throughout the tournament and had various fun contests on many of the holes. On this day we were all winners and the Knights of Columbus made it a day and evening to remember. The good humor carried over to a wonderful evening at St. Joan of Arc Parish in San Ramon where we all enjoyed good wine, great food and an evening with friends. Our thanks to all the Knights and their families who helped to make this event the best ever.

The Spirit of Danville Holiday Shopping Event

Thursday November 13th from 5pm - 9pm

Tickets are \$ 5 each and can be purchased at the DSCBA or by calling 925-362-8660.

Take your ticket to a store or restaurant downtown and receive a bracelet that will give you: Special discounts, Free Gifts, Entertainment and Holiday Cheer

For participating merchants go to www.discoverdanvilleca.com/events.php



Volunteer Spotlight! Meet Chris Bruno...



Chris Bruno was born and raised in the Danville area, where from a very young age he has been an active participant in the community. Chris recently moved back to the East Bay and feels he was blessed to meet Nancy LaBelle through a local business networking group. Nancy's passion and love for the Down Syndrome Connection inspired Chris to get involved. Chris now volunteers every Tuesday evening helping out Lead Teacher Virginia Bonham with the "Express Yourself" class in Danville. Chris says, "The opportunity to be actively involved in the lives of these amazing young adults has helped me to grow as an individual and I look forward to Tuesday evenings".

Chris works for MassMutual Financial Group where he educates his clients on the subjects of Asset Protection, Wealth Preservation and Maximization, College and Retirement Planning, and Policy Restructuring. At work, Chris Bruno focuses on what he calls "key values"; integrity, respect, and dedication to excellence. Chris works hard to provide every client with the highest level of service regarding their current and future financial needs. If you would like to speak to Chris he can be reached at 925-979-2312 or via email at cbruno@finsvcs.com



A PRETTY SPECIAL GIRL



Rachel is a 17 year old teenager with Down Syndrome! But that's not what makes her special. Rachel is special because she believes the world is filled with lots of special people and opportunities to show love to each other.

She always has a word of encouragement for others so we thought we'd share her Pretty Special Tips with everybody!

Rachel wants everybody to know, it's a Pretty Special World!

Pretty Special Tips – by Rachel Cooperstein

- *“Sometimes we just need relax, and move on. That's life.”*
- *“Too much drama makes too much pressure.”*
- *“We Americans. We have the freedom. Be happy.”*
- *“Sometimes if you have emotions you have to tell us how you feeling.”*
- *“If you hold grudge, it make it hurt more and more. It's okay you let go.”*
- *“Sometimes I think people have choice to make. They might need a hug.”*
- *“World - be nice to each other.”*
- *“Sometimes you have emotional happen and tears go inside your heart. You have be nice to yourself when that happens. That's how you get better. “*
- *“Angels see your feelings when they pass by. Sometimes angels hold your feelings for you so you not get hurt.”*

To see more of Rachel's tips or words of encouragement or to send her an email go to www.prettyspecialworld.com

Parent Support Group at the Connection Danville 7-9pm – Tuesday Evenings

Parents of children with Down syndrome are welcomed and encouraged to join our monthly support group. Exchange information, share common experiences and be encouraged by other parents with similar issues and concerns.



Nada and Oliver

2009 Dates	
	6/30
1/27	7/28
2/24	8/25
3/24	9/22
4/21	10/20
5/19	12/8

*Childcare is NOT available. Babies under ten months are welcome. This group is for parents.

We hope you find these dates and times convenient for your busy family schedules. If you're interested in participating in a support group, please call the office at 925-362-8660. We look forward to seeing you!



Shout Out from SF STEP and STEP OUT!

By Jamie Lantz



Step Out – Oakland

We are back on track and ecstatic to be together again. Everyone was not only present at our first classes, they were on time and beyond ready to go! There's lots of good news about exciting 'firsts' over the summer. Here's the news from SF Step which has an awesome new guy with kickin' dance moves and more, Marcus- Welcome!

SF STEP and "The Best thing about my Summer 2008":

- Nina K.: "Being away from my mom, my sister, my dad and my two little brothers at camp for 12 days. It was my first time at overnight camp-Camp Krem.
- Marissa: I went to a Irish band concert with my mom and dad. I'm going to Camp Krem for Halloween and Thanksgiving. I love the talent show and the cute boys.
- Jackson: I went to Colorado with my dad and his partner. I went on the Alpine Slide ten times.
- Emma Y.: My favorite thing was my birthday party and going to Jackson's house.
- Olivia: I went to Barcelona and Amsterdam and saw all my friends at my 16th birthday party.
- Marcus: Hanging out at my friend Buddha's house playing Nintendo wrestling and basketball.
- Emma D.: Watching movies and the talent show at overnight camp (first time).

Here's the current list of things we want to do in the coming semester (enough for more than the next year!).

Buddy Walk, Drumming & Rhythm circle, Car Wash & Singing, Mexican Food Dinner, Art Cards to Robert, Salsa Party-Music, Dance, Costume & chips and Salsa, Dancing and Singing, Bead making, Paint a garden bench, Create a Recycled Junk Sculpture w/ birdbath and feeder for garden, make a Dios de los Muertos Altar for our Beloved Deceased, Guest artists come help us make cool stuff, Tea Party for our Parents, Solstice Party with candles.

STEP OUT folks had some fantastic news, Teodros loved the Berkshire Music Academy camp he went to for two weeks in MA and plans to go back for a full semester in January. He says, "I loved it, it was fantastic!" Erica and Annika have a new apartment in El Cerrito and love living independently together. When asked what they liked about it they reported, without a pause, "We like EVERYTHING!" We'll hear more about their happy adventures later. We all look forward to warming it up with a "meeting" (i.e. party) there soon. Janis loves her program but misses her Step friends and will be back in January. Tamika liked "going out to a movie and Giant Burger with Teodros". Athena says she's most excited about being a new Auntie again and "I saw Mamma Mia and was dancing in my seat and singing all the ABBA songs." Joey, Athena and I got to see Pirates of Penzance in the Oakland hills and got to help them perform". Bobby liked, "Shorts and Sandals, Trip back East with my family in a rented van-cabin by the lake and crab feast, Winning \$\$ in Reno!"



SF Step – San Francisco

The plan is for walking as a team in Buddy Walk, Kayaking in November, Poetry and more about being active and mature adults, cooking, art cards to Natalie, carwash and fundraiser to help Teodros go to the Music Academy and lots more dancing and celebrating.

We sure look forward to the year ahead. Here's to being back together!



Join Us At The Pumpkin Patch

“A fun event for the whole family to attend”!

WHERE: Clayton Valley Pumpkin Farm,
1060 Pine Lane, Clayton
(www.cvpumpkinfarm.com)

WHEN: Sunday, October 26th

TIME: 9:00 am to 11:30 am

COST: \$10 per child which includes:

- Entrance to Playland
- Train Ride
- A Pumpkin
- Pumpkin Carving Fun
- Morning Snack
- Costume Contest



What's In Our Library at the Connection to CHECK OUT!



Ainsley Dodge

DVD – Discovery – Pathways to Better Speech for Children with Down syndrome by Will Schermerhorn

DVD – Kids with Down Syndrome Staying Healthy and Making Friends by Will Schermerhorn - We also have a few copies for sale.

DVD – What Did You Say? – A Guide to Speech Intelligibility in People with Down Syndrome by Libby Kumin – We also have a few copies for sale.

Book – My Friend Isabelle by Eliza Woloson – “Great book for young kids ages 2-6”.

Book – Welcome To The Great Mysterious by Lorna Landvik – “Fun read and heartwarming story”

Book – The Down Syndrome Nutrition Handbook by Joan Guthrie Medlen – “Overall good book for all ages”.

Book – More Than a Mom – Living a Full and Balanced Life When your Child has Special Needs by Amy Baskin and Heather Fawcett

Much More! If you have books checked out..... please remember to return them when finished.

Don't forget there are many great resources for you on the National Down Syndrome Congress website at www.ndscenter.org

For example there are several informative documents regarding Speech and Language .

To find the speech and language articles go to their website and click on parent resources/in-depth resources/speech and language articles and you will find the following:

Basis for Speech, Language and Communication
First Words and Phrases
Infants and Toddlers
Preschool through Kindergarten
Childhood Apraxia
School age children
Adolescents
Adults
Oral Motor Skill Difficulties



BUDDY WALK 2008

by Kathy Harkins

As Winnie the Pooh would say, "It's a blustery day". And that it was. But that didn't stop the 400 + folks that came out for the 3rd Annual Down Syndrome Connection of the Bay Area Buddy Walk held on Sunday, Oct 12, 2008. We could not have been blessed with a more beautiful day at Heather Farm Park in Walnut Creek. With much gratitude to our members, their families and friends, we were able to surpass our goals in both attendance and money raised. None of this would have been possible without the amazing Buddy Walk committee who worked hard to make this event a success - Jo Kelley, Angie Rettig, Tammy Garcia, Jenn Bornstein, Bernadette Fatehi, Mike and Tracy Cannon, Diane Fambrini, Marianne Iverson and Julie Sodestrom

Thanks to everyone who gave generously to support the walk. Whether you walked on a team, walked as an individual, collected donations or volunteered the day of the event, the DSCBA extends our sincerest thanks to you. We know you have many charitable organizations you can support. We feel lucky to have you as part of our team.

The day started out with bagels, donuts and coffee. The 2008 Buddy Walk t-shirts were awesome and worn with pride! We stretched out our muscles and the walk began with high fives from the Oakland A's Stomper! Our mile walk took us up and down hills, over creeks, thru fields where we saw wildlife and enjoyed the sunshine. We ended at the finish line with triumphant cheers and medals and then headed to the picnic grounds for a wonderful BBQ lunch. Old friends gathered and new friends were made. There were games for the old and young, including Guitar Hero hosted by Best Buy and good ole' hula-hoops. The DSCBA 'solid gold dancers' showed off their stuff while rocking out with Chris Berg and his band 2Endeavor, a fabulous group that has always supported the Connection. Our raffle was very popular this year, with an Xbox and Guitar Hero as top prize. Whether you had a gray or orange ticket, everyone waited patiently for their named to be called!

Thank you to all of the parents, friends and family members with beautiful walkers who embraced our online sponsorship process and took the time to send out emails that I will say caused a FRENZY of giving and raised over \$20 thousand dollars.

Congratulations to the top 5 money raisers:

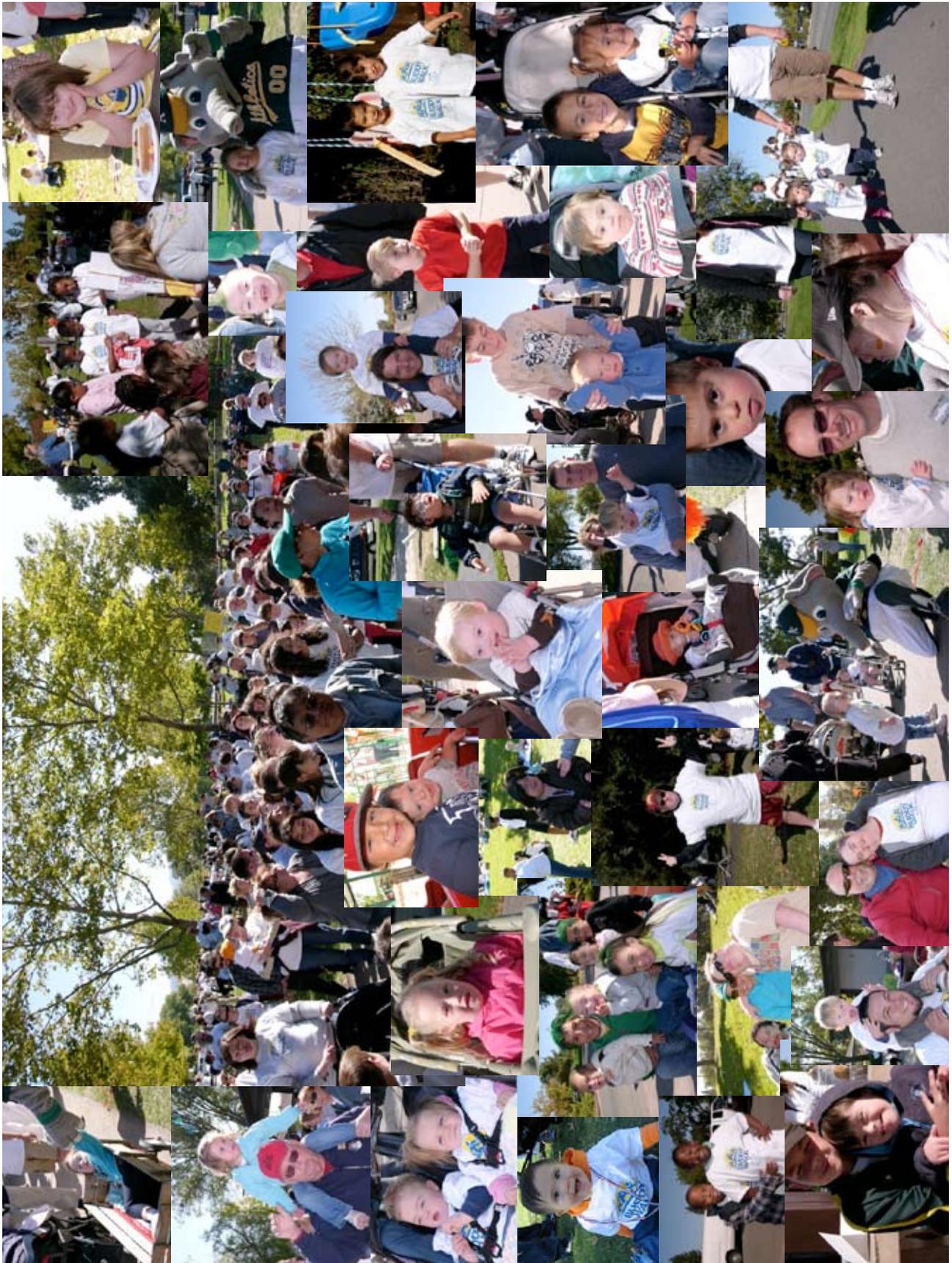
- 5th place - Patrick Harkins - \$787
- 4th place - Gabriella Saieh - \$1340
- 3rd place - Oliver Nakahara - \$1786
- 2nd place - Leah Quintella - \$2950
- 1st place - Ainsley Dodge - \$6590

Last but not least a big thank you to the following people..... without their support this event would not have been nearly as much fun:

Dan Nakahara - Yes Press - Donated the printing on our t-shirts
Best Buy - For volunteering and bringing out the Guitar Hero booth
National Charity League - For your donation of time and delicious cookies
Zip Realty - Generous cash donation
Peets - for the donation of coffee
Stomper with the A's - for getting us pumped up
Gagnon's catering - for the yummy fruit salad donated
Production logic - for donation of the PA system and Generator
Steve Smith with IM=X Pilates in Alamo - for donating time to warm us up.
Chris Berg and the band 2endeavour - for donating the great entertainment here today
Tattoo and Face Painting folks - Lauren Rose and Ashley Covington



BUDDY WALK MEMORIES 2008



Cajun Fest 2008 (A Memoriam for Amelia Bibles)

By Jim Bibles

Thank you to all who attended and/or worked on the Cajun Fest 2008, it was the best year yet! The weather was perfect, the place was impeccably decorated, and Jules and his band, as always, did a great job keeping booties shaking out on the dance floor (Blair was working up a sweat). A shout out to Mike Cannon honoring us with his annual tribute to Leonard Skynard (has Mike ever even seen Alabama?) and the Kelly/Gagnon clan for closing the place down.

Top five we learned from the Cajun Fest:

- 5) Too much spice is a good thing
- 4) Beer is a food group
- 3) The DSCBA staff are dancing fools
- 2) Cajun is a state of mind
- 1) People will do anything for a good cause

Seriously though, every year we put on this event I am humbled that so many are willing to give so graciously of their time and money to support the Down Syndrome Connection and celebrate the life of my beautiful child and this year is no exception. Special recognition for this event goes to Gus Jullien (my long time partner in crime), Erica Robertson (the Auction Queen), Nancy LaBelle (organizer extraordinaire), Kathy Harkins (the little engine that could) , and Sun Design Studios (Sunshine and Kimo) for setting up the website and designing the brochures. I also want to recognize those who showed up early to set the place up (you know who you are). Last but not least, a very special thank you goes to my wife Katarzyna who constantly contributes from behind the scenes and picks up the slack around the house as I run off to yet another meeting!



Thanks to friend of the Connection, Laura O'Brien, for her generous donation.

Business Owners Giving and Making a Connection



Laura O'Brien

A Residential Realtor, Bay Area native and Alamo resident. She understands that her clients, both buyers and sellers are making significant financial decisions and listens carefully to their needs and desires. She respects their wishes and pursues all avenues to make their dreams of homeownership a reality.

Laura is a self-motivated entrepreneur, having started and owned a thriving business prior to Real Estate. Her negotiating skills, attention to detail and customer service have provided her with satisfied clients who have helped her real estate business grow, largely through referrals.



lauraobrien@apr.com
925.314.111 office
925.330.4187 cell

Laura will donate \$1000 of her net commission to the Down Syndrome Connection from transactions with our members!

A big thank you to local Danville Attorney Denise Hannan for her generous donation to the Cajun Fest!

Denise Hannan is a local real estate lawyer and professional mediator. Ms. Hannan assists individuals and businesses with all types of real estate issues, business disputes and potential resolution through mediation. She can be reached at drh@sbj-law.com or 837-2317. More information about Ms. Hannan is available at www.diablomediationservices.com.

In Memory, Honor & in Much Gratitude!

In Memory of Ruth Chiavetta (Nancy LaBelle's Mother). The following people have donated to a scholarship in her name.....

Amein Punjani, Adam and Jen	Krista Veri
Christie Gillison	Liz Paiva
Connie Hong-Smith	Marge Namba
Dan & Linda Smith	Marie & Eric Huffman
Ed & Lois Oda	Mary Robbins
Evelyn Ferro	Nick Maringahon
Gail Churillo	Peggy & Chris Anthony
Gary Thompson	Sean McClelland
George & Dee Chiavetta	Stacy Tredennick
Jacque & Walt Lietz.	Steve Beaken
Joe & Ava Carr	Susie Dodson
Joe & Pat Carrisalez	The Ellis Family
Joyce Crawford	The Harkins Family
June Sasaki	The Lowen Family
Karen & Stephen Campbell	

Donation by Rosemary Cannon in Memory of Naomi Staudt

Donation from the Montclair School Staff

In memory of Eileen McKenney (Grandmother of Garrison Peare)

Grants funded by the following Foundations:

- Noll Foundation
- Woodlawn Foundation
- Thomas J. Long Foundation
- Wayne and Gladys Valley Foundation
- Windermere Foundation
- Target Stores Community Giving Program
- Marin Community Foundation (The Benton Family)
- Barr Family Foundation
- Y&H Soda Foundation
- Anonymous Foundation
- Kiwanis of San Ramon Valley

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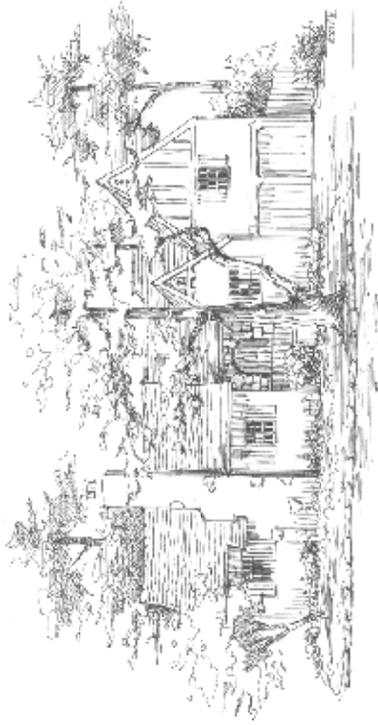
A sincere thank you to all of the wonderful families and volunteers who generously give from the heart



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Torin Goes to Hollywood

by Pam Wallace (proud mom)

What an experience! A few weeks ago, my son Torin (who just turned 2 last month) and I were flown out to LA, put up in a fancy (definitely not kid-proofed) hotel and taken by our “driver” to Paramount Studios to tape an episode of “The Doctors”. The focus of the show... what it is like to raise a young child with Down syndrome? Who would have thought just two short years ago, that I would be ready to not only discuss my experience as a new mom of a child with DS on national television, but relish the opportunity to share this with families going through the same thing, educate the lay public on just how “typical” these children can be and most amazingly, burst with pride at the chance to introduce Torin to them all.

It all started with a phone call from one of the producers of the show who wanted to ask me a few questions regarding what it was like raising Torin. I was surprised at how easily it all just flowed out of me. The passion I felt as I conveyed my message amazed even me. I wanted them to know that these children are more like everyone else than they are different. Down syndrome describes certain characteristics of Torin and children like him, but it does not define who he is or what he will become. An hour and a half later, having talked with three different producers (I guess they were sending me up the food chain), they asked if I would be willing to fly down to LA with Torin to be on their show. We ended our conversation with them asking me to send some photos of Torin interacting with his three older siblings (Gavin 7, Kieran 6 and Colin 4) during that first year.

The next day, the executive producer called and said that they would like to do a feature on our family which would require them to send a field crew to our house to interview myself, my husband (Mike) as well as film Torin interacting with his three siblings. They wanted to do it in two days... as many of you can imagine the first thought that came to mind was Oh NO!!! Well unfortunately, redecorating and painting the house were out, but I had

a shot at getting the three boys haircuts, finding something for all the kids, Mike and myself to wear, making sure Mike mowed the lawn and getting the house presentable. So at 8:45am when they arrived the whole family was “camera ready” (as they called it). The whole filming process took 5 hours from which they were going to create about a 3-minute montage. I have to say that from the moment that they all arrived at our home, they showed us such appreciation for allowing them to invade our lives that although the process was lengthy, it felt purposeful and was actually quite enjoyable.

The following Thursday, Torin and I were flown to LA to tape the show. The following morning we were picked up by our “driver” and taken to the studio like a couple of celebrities. At the studio, Torin was assigned a state mandated advocate to accompany him whenever I was not there. His advocate Lil, happened to have been Kelly Martin’s teacher for all those years on the set of “Life Goes On” with Chris Burke. (How ironic that we would meet someone connected to that show. My husband and I will tell you that before Torin, “Corky” played by Chris Burke was the only exposure we had to someone with Down syndrome). So while they whisked me off to hair and make-up, Torin quickly endeared himself to the whole production staff, other guests and even a few soap stars lucky enough to have dressing rooms close to ours as he went with Lil and said hello, offered high five’s and tried to engage them all in some sort of conversation.

When the moment of truth arrived and it was time to tape my segments, Torin stayed



Pam Wallace, Actor and Advocate John McGinley and Torin Wallace

behind with Lil in the Green room until it was his turn to come on set. On stage, I was joined by Travis Stork, MD (host and former hunky bachelor from ABC’s “The Bachelor”), Jim Sears, MD (cast pediatrician) and special guest, his father, well known author of many pediatric parental advice books, William Sears, MD. The elder Sears has 7 children, the youngest of which has Down syndrome. This son as well as the mother were members of the audience. The segment began with the montage. I have to say this actually almost brought tears to my eyes as it was so wonderfully put together and made me so proud of Torin. We then began our discussion and honestly, I was so nervous, I don’t remember a whole lot about what I said. I do remember saying that often as a parent when you first find out that your child has down syndrome, you mourn that picture of the “perfect” family you had in your head, but over time, by educating yourself along with the support of family, friends and other parents who have faced the same news, you realize that you still have the “perfect” family, it’s just not that initial picture. They then brought Torin out and he went and sat right on the elder Sear’s lap. He was cute and adorable (of course, I am not biased) and ended the segment giving everyone a high five.

cont'd on page 14



A Great Day of Golf and Fun!

By Nancy LaBelle

They then took Torin back to the Green room and had me join the Sear's family in the front row as they brought on what for me was a surprise guest. John C. McGinley, who is an actor most recognized for his role as the mean attending on the hit show "Scrubs", came out to talk about his experience as the father of a 10 yr old son with Down Syndrome. Mr. McGinley is also the spokesperson for the National Down Syndrome Society. The coolest part for me was that after he finished his segment and I had been escorted off set, he came out of his way to introduce himself to me. He complimented me on how articulate I was out there and how all of my comments resonated with him. He especially liked my description of my "DS moments" (you know like how you feel when you think your cool with it all and then you see your kid next to a same aged "typically" developing peer on the playground). It made me feel good knowing that my appearing on the show might be able to help a new parent out there or dispel some stereotype the lay public may have regarding children with down syndrome.

When I went to get Torin I was told by the assistant producer that the whole time I was on set, Mr. McGinley was in the Green room playing with Torin. He was singing songs to Torin, playing peek-a-boo, and they were making animal sounds together. The assistant producer said I should ask if I could take a picture of Torin with John, so I did and he said of course. Afterwards, I told Torin to say thank you (which he signed) and to give Mr. McGinley a high five. John accepted both, but said he preferred hugs and reached out and gave Torin a big hug. What a great day! What a great experience!

The Doctor's is on KTVU Channel 2 at 4pm M-F. Check out their website for upcoming shows. www.thedoctorstv.com

We will let you know when Pam and Torin will be on as soon as we know.

Columbus Day was a gorgeous day in Danville as folks started to show up to register at Crow Canyon Country Club for a full day of golf and giving. It was the 6th Annual Charity Golf Tournament for Summit Financial Group and this year it benefitted the Down Syndrome Connection of the Bay Area thanks to the partners Steve Wilcox, Dan Ledoux, and Nathan Bennett who were touched by our mission. The day was a great opportunity for us to meet 100 golfers/great people and get the word out about our organization. The entire day was incredibly organized by Kimberlee Kelso with Summit who didn't miss a beat. Thanks to the folks from Ricoh who volunteered to help where needed. There was a marshmallow drive, super scratch off tickets, a putting contest and a chance at a \$100k hole in one! After a long day of golf everyone was invited to a delicious dinner, a successful raffle (thanks to Chris Wilcox) and a silent auction with items donated by generous local merchants. Local merchants including a friend of the Connection Dr. Jess Pontious of Pontious Chiropractic. Thanks to the Hogan's for suffering through another tournament w/Blair having a great game! Our own Patrick Harkins rode in a golf cart and hit some great putts.....a couple he put right in the hole! Whoo Hoo!



EXPRESS YOURSELF TAKES THE CAKE

With the help of our Lead Teacher Virginia Bonham who is also a Executive Chef for a catering company, the Express Yourself group had a great time learning to decorate cakes!

What did the teens think about decorating those cakes.....

Barrett and Brandon say, "I liked making cakes, AWESOME. I never made cake before".

Tricia Bowles and Garrison say , "Is cool and Whoa.....I like cake".

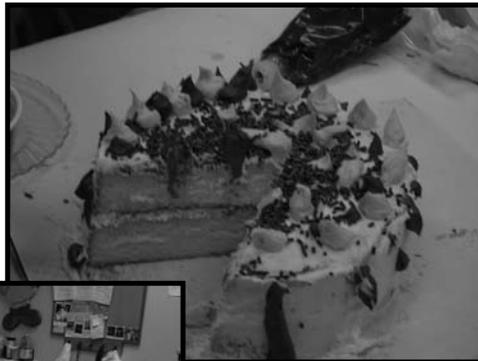
Tracy says, "she liked the sprinkles".

Taylor says, "she liked wearing the chef hat".

Asking the class what they like most about Express Yourself.....

Barrett said, "Express yourself is fun, make new friends. Favorite things are movement, we made a video, making wishes for friends".

Tracy likes dancing and Tricia likes singing.



By Popular Demand... Speech Therapy at the Danville Connection!

Heather Peterson, a nationally and California certified speech-language pathologist has returned from her travels on the east coast to re-settle back in the bay area. We've listened to your feedback and invited Heather to utilize our facilities at the Connection. Heather will be treating babies, toddlers, children, teens, and adults. Heather is a long time friend of the Connection due to her dedication throughout her teen years to our beloved Challenger Baseball program. Heather has years of experience with sign language, oral motor therapy and the use of Picture Exchange Communication Symbols (PECS). We are so happy to have Heather available to our families, offering private therapy services based on the individual needs of the children at the DSC. Therapy will be available on Mondays and Tuesdays. Please contact her for your first therapy session free of charge. Email: happykidstherapy@hotmail.com Phone: (202) 425-6874





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of the Bay Area**

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The idea behind this playgroup:

“Inclusion of children with special needs in all environments in which typical children participate is critical to their development and achievement of their potential.”

Quote from Unknown Source

It is natural for children to learn from each other. Younger siblings have always aspired to do and be like their older brothers or sisters. Likewise, when any child is with a group of peers, he or she will have an opportunity to mimic or practice behaviors and skills that they will use throughout life. It is my opinion that any time children with special needs and “typical” children come together as one group, both sides can learn a great deal from each other!

*Bernadette Fatehi
www.buddyplay.org*