



DOWN SYNDROME ASSOCIATION  
OF ORANGE COUNTY

## SUMMER 2015

DSAOC strives to create a place for connection, hope and awareness, for people with Down syndrome and their families in Southern California.

**Our Mission** is to provide the means necessary to empower individuals with Down syndrome to reach their full potential.

# Orange County Buddy Walk



2015 Orange County Buddy Walk - Registration NOW OPEN!

**Register or join a team, become a sponsor, donate to a participant, get involved, be inspired!** [www.dsaoc.donordrive.com/event/bw2015/](http://www.dsaoc.donordrive.com/event/bw2015/) or visit our website at [www.dsaoc.org](http://www.dsaoc.org).

It's always more than a Walk... It's a Celebration!

Mark your calendars for an amazing day for the entire family at the Angel Stadium of Anaheim on Sunday, November 1. Your participation and fundraising efforts support DSAOC's local programs, services and support groups, and the National Down Syndrome Society's (NDSS) national advocacy programs.

First time attendee to the Orange County Buddy Walk?

View photo galleries on our website to learn more about the event:

[www.dsaoc.org/buddy-walk-photo-gallery.html](http://www.dsaoc.org/buddy-walk-photo-gallery.html)

You can also view our "Community Corner" video that highlights the Orange County Buddy Walk:

[www.vimeo.com/78948973](http://www.vimeo.com/78948973)

**2015 Orange County Buddy Walk ONLINE Registration Deadline:**

NOON on Friday, October 30. T-shirt Guarantee Deadline: To be guaranteed a 2015 Orange County Buddy Walk t-shirt, you must register by Monday, October 12.

*The Orange County Buddy Walk is one of DSAOC's largest, most critical fundraisers. Your registration dollars and additional fundraising efforts are very much appreciated and needed. Your support allows DSAOC to provide a place for programs, support, advocacy, connection, and hope for families and their loved ones with Down syndrome. Thank you in advance for your generosity!*



**REGISTER TODAY!**

Get Involved, Be Inspired.

**Orange County Buddy Walk**

Sunday, November 1, 2015  
9 a.m. to 2 p.m.

Angel Stadium of Anaheim

THE OPTIMIST



# Message from the President

Dear DSAOC Families and Supporters:

This year is flying by, so before it gets away from us we wanted to get this Summer Issue of *The Optimist* out to our community. We've already had an amazing year that started off with our Healthcare Conference, "**A Healthful Journey**" – Lifelong Healthcare for Individuals with Down Syndrome. More than 200 parents and care givers joined us for an information packed 1-day conference that was held this past February and included some of our community's foremost experts on health issues relating to children, teens and adults with Down syndrome. Stay tuned for more information on the important topic of health and our loved ones with Down syndrome.

This year we've also seen the support and excitement of our communities as we watched the Special Olympics World Games roll out city by city as the torch made its way to LA. Host Towns worked hard, and many of our DSAOC families were part of that. We are so honored to have been amplifiers for this amazing event, and participate as Fans in the Stands to support the athletes from all over the world.

You've probably heard a new voice on the phone recently, and we are excited to have you meet a new member of our DSAOC team - Meet Alicia Chan!

Alicia is a recent graduate from University of California, Irvine with degrees in Social Ecology and Anthropology. She moved from the San Francisco Bay Area and still calls a piece of that landscape home, but has now firmly established herself in Orange County--taking with her over 6 years of experience in the public sector gained through internships and volunteerism. Alicia is a seasoned world traveler, social justice advocate, and avid dog lover. She is thrilled to be part of the DSAOC team to bring thoughtful and meaningful programming to families and their children with Down syndrome. Alicia is our new **Programs & Outreach Coordinator**. *Please join us in welcoming Alicia Chan to our team!*

STAY CONNECTED to the latest DSAOC news and updates by clicking 'LIKE' on our Facebook page, and also joining our EMAIL LIST by contacting our Center at [admin@dsaoc.org](mailto:admin@dsaoc.org).

Thank you for your time in reading this issue of *The Optimist*. We look forward to seeing everyone at this year's Orange County Buddy Walk!

Sincerely,

Janette Mattson  
President - Board of Directors, DSAOC



We are dedicating this year's amazing programs and awareness efforts to the memory of two wonderful men that both served as DSAOC Board Members and held the position as Board President during their member terms. Gregg Crawford and Tres Heald both served DSAOC and our families with a dedicated and unselfish passion that extended even beyond their time on our Board. They are missed dearly, but will never be forgotten. We continue to pray for their families and wish them the best.

**Gregg Crawford** | **Otis P. "Tres" Heald, III**  
1959 – 2014 | 1965 - 2015



# DSAOC's Program

Enter the DSAOC Center on the 3<sup>rd</sup> Saturday of the month, and you will hear laughter, muffled shouts, and supportive words coming from our Activity Room. Balloons might be popping periodically, and then there is cheering! Welcome to DSAOC's Sibshops - a monthly program for children ages 8 to 12 who have a brother, sister or relative with Down syndrome.

Besides team building and trust building games, the group shares about their lives through light-hearted ice-breakers and often finds that their commonality, a sibling with Down syndrome, can be a strength. Why ages 8 to 12? Because those are the years when children begin to recognize some of the developmental differences they see in their sibling. It is a natural time of learning and inquisitiveness. In their development, it is a time when they can understand.

Our Facilitators, Autumn Trail and Renae Eichenmuller each have a sister with Down syndrome. They "get" what the Sibshops participants are going through, in a very personal way. This is a major ingredient in the success of the program. The other ingredient is our collaboration with Don Meyer of The Sibling Support Workshop in Seattle. Autumn attended a training to learn his methodology and we are implementing it through our Sibshops here at DSAOC.

Brothers and sisters will be in the lives of their family members with Down syndrome longer than anyone. They will be there after parents are gone and special education services are a distant memory. Because of the lifelong and important role that siblings can and will play, DSAOC is making a commitment to offer support for siblings. In the future we plan to expand our Sibshops to serve teen and young adult siblings, as well as workshops for adult siblings involved in caregiving.

Stay tuned for our upcoming "Community Corner" video that will highlight the amazing siblings we have throughout greater Orange County, many of which have taken an interest in service professions supporting the special needs community. For more information on the DSAOC Sibshops program, please contact [programs@dsaoc.org](mailto:programs@dsaoc.org).



# Educator of the Year Award & Recognition Program

2015 marked the 16<sup>th</sup> year of the Down Syndrome Association of Orange County's Educator of the Year program.

This year, six nominations were submitted by our families living throughout greater Orange County that wanted to have us celebrate the amazing work of their child's teachers, therapists, aides and administrators who have made a positive and outstanding difference for children with Down syndrome.

DSAOC was thrilled to announce the 2014-2015 Educator of the Year during an assembly at the school. Mr. Chris Reilly, a 2nd grade general education teacher at St. John the Baptist Catholic School defines inclusive teaching and person-centered planning, per Carrie Ro, who nominated Mr. Reilly. Carrie explains that it is a team effort when it comes to inclusive education, and her son, Jonathan, has bloomed due to Mr. Reilly's approach.

Mr. Reilly was recognized at his school by DSAOC and Jonathan's family. He will also be recognized on stage during our upcoming Orange County Buddy Walk, on Sunday, November 1 at the Angel Stadium of Anaheim. Congratulations, Carrie Ro and Mr. Reilly!

All of the nominations were noteworthy, and as always, it was a tough decision for the judging committee to pick just one winner. We appreciate all of our families who took the time to nominate the individual or team whose efforts are making a positive difference for children with Down syndrome. All nominees received a letter and certificate acknowledging their amazing work, and their leadership team was also notified.

***Congratulations to all of our nominees, and "thank you" DSAOC families for letting us know about all the great things happening in our community for our loved ones with Down syndrome.***

We look forward to receiving nominations next year so DSAOC can continue to highlight, affirm and celebrate those in education and professional therapy programs whose outstanding efforts and innovations have helped a student with Down syndrome to grow and learn.

You can help us continue to Change Perceptions and Change Lives by submitting a nomination during next year's cycle, which will open in March of 2016.



## Mark your Calendar for these DSAOC events!

**Saturday, October 10**

Teen/Adult Halloween Costume Dance "Boo Bash" at Mater Dei High School. Details coming soon! (costumes are optional)

**Saturday, October 24**

DSAOC Family Halloween Picnic "Trick or Trunk" at the Garden Grove Elks Lodge

**Sunday, November 1**

DSAOC's Orange County Buddy Walk at the Angel Stadium of Anaheim – REGISTER TODAY  
[www.dsaoc.donordrive.com/event/bw2015/](http://www.dsaoc.donordrive.com/event/bw2015/)

**Saturday, December 5**

DSAOC Family Breakfast with Santa at the Garden Grove Elks Lodge

Save the Dates

DSAOC website: [www.dsaoc.org](http://www.dsaoc.org)

DSAOC Calendar of events: [www.dsaoc.org/events-calendar.html](http://www.dsaoc.org/events-calendar.html)

CHOC Children's Ds program: [www.dsaoc.org/chocs-children-down-syndrome-program.html](http://www.dsaoc.org/chocs-children-down-syndrome-program.html)

Community Corner: [www.dsaoc.org/community-corner.html](http://www.dsaoc.org/community-corner.html)

National Down Syndrome Society: [www.ndss.org](http://www.ndss.org)

National Down Syndrome Congress: [www.ndscenter.org](http://www.ndscenter.org)

Regional Center of Orange County: [www.rcocdd.com](http://www.rcocdd.com)

International Mosaic Down Syndrome Association: [www.imdsa.org](http://www.imdsa.org)

Important Links



## Red Carpet Ball

DSAOC  
Down Syndrome Association of Orange County

## Reflections from our Annual Red Carpet Ball – Teen/Adult Dinner & Dance

The 11<sup>th</sup> Annual DSAOC Red Carpet Ball Dinner & Dance took place on February 14 of this year, and with an abundance of love and friendship in the room, it reminded us it was Valentine's Day... but the theme wasn't hearts. The room was beaming with green, purple and gold, and beautiful feathers on festive masks were everywhere – the Mardi Gras party was in full swing! With more than 200 people in attendance, the night was a celebration of friends and fun.

Volunteer photographers were catching memories, our photo booth was busy, and DJ Willpower kept the tunes turning, adding that extra excitement to this annual teen/adult event. Our staff, Red Carpet Ball Committee, and wonderful volunteers did an outstanding job once again. We are extremely grateful to all the donors who continue to support this popular annual event. Stay tuned for the date and theme of the 2016 Red Carpet Ball!

View the 2015 DSAOC Red Carpet Ball video on our "Community Corner" web page: [www.dsaoc.org/community-corner.html](http://www.dsaoc.org/community-corner.html).

### DSAOC's Teen/Adult Programs – EXPANDING

DSAOC's programs for teens and adults have been expanding since 2007. We find that this is the age when many families look to us for additional activities and support. Current programs for teens (beginning at age 12yrs) and adults include; Drama Therapy, Book Club, Fitness Class, Monthly Bowling, and our very popular dances – the Red Carpet Ball and the Boo Bash Halloween Party.

By 2016 we will be expanding programs to include a Social Skills class, an Adult Literacy program (focusing on basic reading) and a therapy program using art and music. Stay tuned...

### SPEAKING OF OUR AMAZING TEENS and ADULTS...

Each year at DSAOC's annual Golf Tournament, Banquet & Auction, we have a group of teens and adults that help us kick off the event. They are our "Ceremonial Drivers" – they are individuals with Down syndrome that enjoy golfing with their families and/or with their community sports teams, i.e. the Special Olympics, and they hit the first drives of the day. Many of them stay to volunteer, and a few of them golf in the tournament.

This year's Golf Tournament was once again filled with amazing and supportive individuals that believe in our Mission and understand the value that children, teens and adults with Down syndrome bring to our families and community. Check out the highlights from this year's tournament, including the awesome hits by our Ceremonial Drivers, by visiting our website at:

[www.dsaoc.org/golf-tournament.html](http://www.dsaoc.org/golf-tournament.html).



**Stay Connected**

Visit us on Facebook - [facebook.com/DSAOC](https://www.facebook.com/DSAOC)

Follow us on Twitter - [twitter.com/DSAOC](https://twitter.com/DSAOC)

Visit our Website - [dsaoc.org/blog](http://dsaoc.org/blog)

Share with us - #DSAOC

DOWN SYNDROME ASSOCIATION  
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## Did You Know...



The CHOC Children's Down Syndrome Clinic has supported more than 500 children with Down syndrome and their families since its inception in October of 2009, and the lead Clinic Physician, Dr. Anne Tournay, was recently recognized with a SPOTLIGHT AWARD by the Regional Center of Orange County for her dedication, knowledge and compassion for individuals with developmental disabilities.

The CHOC Children's Down Syndrome Program represents a strategic alliance formed in 2009 between CHOC Children's and the Down Syndrome Association of Orange County. This alliance was formed in response to the concerns expressed to DSAOC by many families who were in need of a clinic where they could take their children with Down syndrome to be evaluated by healthcare professionals that are compassionate and knowledgeable about the medical issues prevalent in these children.

The Clinic Director is Ira T. Lott, MD, and the Clinic Physician is Anne Tournay, MD. The clinic's Professional Coordinator is Eric Doran, MS and the Administrative Coordinator is Alicia Hernandez. The clinic is assisted by a CHOC Children's Specialty Clinic Manager, Sarah L. Flores, MS, RN-BC, as well as a team of nurses, social workers and other staff from CHOC Children's. Together the clinical team has over 50 years' experience in providing care for individuals with Down syndrome.

Currently, the primary reasons for visits are overall wellness checks, with a secondary reason being behavior related issues. The clinic has also seen several patients with severe disorders and has been strategic in creating a plan of action to diagnose and treat these issues.

**With a growing number of patients, we are thrilled to announce that the Clinic has a new home!**

For more information, please visit: [www.dsaoc.org/chocs-children-down-syndrome-program.html](http://www.dsaoc.org/chocs-children-down-syndrome-program.html)  
[www.choc.org/neuroscience/down-syndrome-program/](http://www.choc.org/neuroscience/down-syndrome-program/)



**CHOC Children's Neuroscience Center**  
CHOC Commerce Tower  
505 S. Main St., Suite 350, Orange, CA 92868  
Clinic Hours: Wednesdays 1 p.m. to 5 p.m.  
Appointments:  
Phone: 888.770.2462 Fax: 855.246.2329