



DOWN SYNDROME ASSOCIATION
OF ORANGE COUNTY

THE OPTIMIST



FALL 2010

Get Involved, *Be Inspired.*

Seeing more than 3,000 people fanned across the field at Angel Stadium of Anaheim – celebrating people with Down syndrome and their unique contributions to our lives and communities – is an awesome sight. If you've never been to the Orange County Buddy Walk – one of the largest Buddy Walks in the nation – make this the year that you cross the finish line with us.



Orange County Buddy Walk
Sunday, November 7, 2010
9 a.m. to 2 p.m.
Angel Stadium of Anaheim

Visit www.dsaoc.org
for registration information.

We look forward to seeing you! →

[More inside]





President's Message

It's 6 a.m. and I am staring at my computer screen trying to figure out how to convey to all of you the size of the opportunity we have at

the Down Syndrome Association of Orange County right now. You see, I am an equity analyst and portfolio manager, and one of the unfortunate parts of this business on the West Coast is that you have to get up before the birds and the bees. I'm watching CNBC and it looks like the market is going to be up today – at least this morning when the market opens.

So, back to DSAOC, I guess the best way to explain our opportunities using the stock market analogy is that we are a screaming "BUY!" There are so many ways for us to help the more than 2,000 families with children and adults with Down syndrome in Orange County, whether it be in health care, education, advocacy, entertainment or employment. This could be the golden age for all people with special needs including Down syndrome. The only constraints are time and money.

Time and money – two interesting words. Money is self explanatory. Many of the programs and services we provide our families are dependent on financial resources. And we understand that people are feeling the pinch financially these days. However, it will always come down to money and we count on you and the Orange County community for our funding. The Buddy Walk is a crucial

source of funds for DSAOC. It's also a fantastic day for families and their loved ones with Down syndrome to shine. Please visit our website at www.dsaoc.org to register your team today for the ninth annual Buddy Walk!

As important as financial resources are, we are also dependant on volunteers to make our programs come to life. I would like to challenge you to find some time to donate to DSAOC. We have many opportunities where you can help – from a couple of hours a week or month at the DSAOC Center – to joining one of our many working committees or even volunteering to serve on the Board of Directors. There is no shortage of opportunity.

Finally, I would be remiss not to thank Matt Wilkins and Fran Brocard for their many years of service to the DSAOC Board of Directors. Matt chaired the Buddy Walk committee for a number of years, started the Klondike ride for Down syndrome, and came up with an innovative Down syndrome art project. He was a pleasure to work with and he will be missed. Fran never missed a DSAOC family event, and her leadership qualities were especially evident during her years as lead volunteer at our annual Buddy Walk and Golf Tournament. Fran, too, will be missed. Our doors are always open to you and your families Matt and Fran!

Otis P. Heald III, Board President

Board of Directors Notes

Welcome new Board members Karen Azling, Matthew Dumas and Richard M. Peterson, M.D.R.

We are currently seeking additional Board members from all walks of life, as well as those who have special skills in legal services, human resources and business management. If you are interested in being considered for a Board position, we would love to hear from you.

Are you interested in learning more about the role of a Board member and the time commitment required? Don't let questions like this keep you from inquiring about this opportunity.

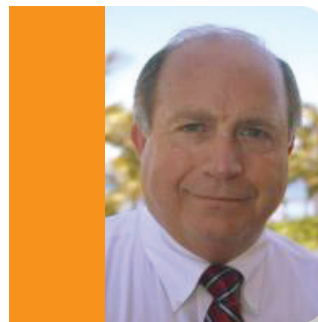
If you're interested or have questions, call the DSAOC Center at 714-540-5794 and leave a message for Board President Tres Heald. ■



Karen Azling



Matthew Dumas



Richard M. Peterson,
M.D.R.

*If you're interested...
call the DSAOC Center at
714-540-5794 and leave
a message for Board
President Tres Heald.*

Get Involved, Be Inspired. *[continued]*

The Buddy Walk is DSAOC's largest annual fundraiser. The money raised supports a number of programs that enrich the lives of people with Down syndrome and their families. With your generous contributions, the Buddy Walk makes the following programs possible:

- **CHOC Children's Down Syndrome Program** – a pediatric health care clinic for children and adolescents with Down syndrome;
- **Partners in Education** – a program that connects educators, therapists, paraprofessionals, and school/district administrators with the training, resources and support needed to help educate students with Down syndrome;
- **Mano a Mano** – a program for Spanish speaking families designed to enhance early literacy for children 3-6 years of age, while also helping parents better understand the IEP process and improve their own language skills;
- **Teen Club** – social activities and events for youths ages 12-17 years with Down syndrome; and
- **Friends Up 4 Fun** – a new social club for adults with Down syndrome.

Hot Tips from Buddy Walk Team Captains

Are you looking for new ideas to boost your fundraising efforts this year? Here are some creative ways to go about it.

"Host a fundraiser night at a local restaurant such as Island's, Rubio's or Fatburger, where the restaurant donates 20 percent of the sales to your Buddy Walk team from patrons who bring in a fundraiser flyer."

– Rebecca's Rebels

"Download your entire e-mail address book into the Kintera Buddy Walk site using the easy 'import contacts' feature and send a message to all your contacts."

– Brandon's Buddies

"We got our entire neighborhood to participate in a recycling drive by donating their cans and bottles to our fundraising effort."

– Jenna's Jubilee

"We are having an event prior to the Buddy Walk that will include an auction. We asked for donations from our local businesses, friends, and family. We have 15 baskets to auction off. The winning bidder will place their bid as a donation directly into the Buddy Walk website for our team."

– Team Rusty Sky

"Ask your friends and family to help you raise money."

– Blake's Buddies

"Ask your friends if anyone works for a large corporation that contributes to nonprofit organizations for tax breaks. Suggest DSAOC as a potential recipient and provide them with DSAOC's nonprofit ID number in advance. You might be surprised who might be willing to contribute if you ask."

– The Matt Pack

"Share a link to your team page on your Facebook page and ask your Facebook friends to support your team."

– Allie Cats ■

**Save the Date –
Get Involved,
Be Inspired.
Orange County
Buddy Walk
Sunday,
November 7, 2010
Angel Stadium
of Anaheim**

Healthcare Series Seminars

At DSAOC we believe that individuals with Down syndrome that grow up healthy have better opportunities to reach their full potential. One of the best approaches to ensure this occurs is to provide services aimed at helping health care professionals understand and adequately treat the myriad of complex health issues that can affect individuals with Down syndrome.

Through our alliance with CHOC Children's, we have been able to connect with physicians who have experience in treating patients with Down syndrome. We work with

CHOC Children's to bring these medical professionals to you at our Healthcare Series Seminars.

Seminars are held at CHOC's Wade Education Center in Orange. Seminar topics relate to medical issues in people with Down syndrome of various ages and always end with a brief question and answer period.

Please join us at the next Healthcare Series Seminar taking place on Thursday, October 28. Visit the DSAOC website calendar for more details <http://www.dsaoc.org/events-calendar.html>. ■

Chip'n one in for the kids

DSAOC's 2010 Golf Tournament, Banquet & Auction



It was a beautiful June day out on the links at Los Coyotes Country Club where more than 134 golfers played 18 holes in the annual golf tournament to support the CHOC Children's Down Syndrome Program.

We were delighted to have special guests Former All-Pro NFL Running Back, Chuck Muncie and UFC Fighter, Mark Munoz golfing with supporters. And Lauren Potter, who plays Becky Jackson on the hit FOX TV show, "Glee," greeted guests and signed autographs during the banquet and auction.

Other honorary guests included self-advocates Sean McElwee, Carter Bak, Jenny Skinner and Kevin Van Matre, who performed the tournament's ceremonial first drives.

The tournament also featured a hole-in-one contest, putting challenge and our first ever Helicopter Ball Drop,

sponsored by Shulman Hodges and Bastian LLP, which awarded the lucky winner with \$2,500!

Golfers wound down from their day of golf by meeting up with their guests to enjoy some great food and live music during the banquet and auction, where there were more than 90 items to bid on, including artwork created by individuals with Down syndrome.

This year's Golf Tournament, Banquet & Auction raised nearly \$60,000.

We are truly grateful to our participating golfers, sponsors, guests and volunteers for their support in making this event a success.

If you missed the event this year, please consider joining us next year. Details on the location and date will be announced in January 2011. ■

Our generous sponsors:

Silver Tee Sponsors

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Adams & Sons Transportation
Angels Baseball Foundation

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Chris McCormack
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Jay Azling, DDS
Azling Properties
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PA System & Live Music

Kim Holloway

Hospital Outreach Program Receives Grant Support from the Disney VoluntEARS Community Fund

DSAOC is grateful for the support we have received from Disney VoluntEARS and the Disney VoluntEARS Community Fund over the years. Their most recent \$5,000 grant supports our hospital outreach efforts.

The Hospital Outreach Program is led by a committee of dedicated volunteers who outreach to hospitals in Orange County and surrounding areas. The committee provides resources and informational materials about DSAOC and Down syndrome, so hospital social workers and other medical professionals are better prepared to deliver the diagnosis and/or offer support when a baby with Down syndrome is born in their hospital.

Research has shown that little progress has been made in physicians' delivery of diagnoses of Down syn-



drome, often resulting in inaccurate information to expectant and new parents where only the challenges of raising a child with Down syndrome are presented, rather than the positive aspects of how people with Down syndrome enrich our lives and communities. The committee's goal is to ensure accurate and up-to-date information is available to families in the hospital.

Our 2010-2011 Hospital Outreach Committee is fourteen members strong, up from its original seven members. The additional volunteer manpower has allowed us to reach out to five additional hospitals.

If you have an interest in becoming a Hospital Outreach Committee volunteer, please contact Kellie Perez at kperez@dsaoc.org. ■

What's New At DSAOC?



Friends Up 4 Fun

DSAOC launched a new group for adults with Down syndrome 18 years and up. Friends Up 4 Fun began with a few parents that were interested in starting a program for their adult children with Down syndrome where they could socialize in a fun, safe environment with their peers. Since May, this group has been meeting monthly for various activities including line dancing, game night, a pool party and Boomers.

Ultimately, DSAOC's goal is to address the needs of the adult Down syndrome community by providing resources

for socialization, self appreciation, and empowerment.

This is also a place for parents to network and share what programs and services you would like to see for you and your adult child.

If you would like more information about Friends Up 4 Fun, contact Kristin Abbas at kabbas@dsaoc.org or 714-540-5794.

New Teen Sibling Group

Are you 12 years of age or older and have a sibling with Down syndrome? Do you want to meet other siblings and help plan activities

for individuals with Down syndrome? Then this group is for you! The teen sibling group held its first brainstorming meeting recently and came up with some great ideas on how to enhance our existing Teen Club and Friends Up 4 Fun activities. They also began planning events for teens that have siblings with Down syndrome.

DSAOC applauds this group of teens for their leadership and we look forward to seeing the group grow.

If you are interested in joining the teen sibling group please contact Janette Mattson, at janettemattson@gmail.com. ■

Two Wheels... Because That's How We Roll

This summer, 24 bike campers at Lose the Training Wheels bike camp learned to ride conventional two wheel bicycles and become lifelong independent riders. And 16 other bike campers greatly improved their skills toward learning too.

Michele Smith, mother of ten-year-old bike camper Dylan, shared that her son had been discouraged for years watching his older sister Alyssa zip around on a two wheel bike, while he tried to catch up on his training wheels.

On the last day of bike camp, Dylan shed the training wheels and began riding on two wheels. "It was awesome to see Dylan smiling, riding around and waving to all the bike camp staff," said Michele.



As Dylan rode away on two wheels, he could be heard shouting, "Look at me!"

For three years, DSAOC and United Cerebral Palsy of Orange County (UCP) have made this bike camp possible. The one week camp accommodates 40 individuals with disabilities.

Demand for the camp is

high. Campers are selected through a lottery system and there's been a waiting list every year. DSAOC and UCP are interested in growing the program to two weeks in the future to serve up to 80 campers. If you're interested in providing financial support to help make this possible, contact Kellie Perez at DSAOC. ■

CHOC Children's Down Syndrome Program

Update

The CHOC Children's Down Syndrome Program is nearing its one year anniversary of serving our families. This program has fulfilled an important need for our community, and this alliance between CHOC Children's and DSAOC has proven to be an invaluable resource.

Since opening last October, the clinic has evaluated 78 children with Down syndrome. The leading primary referral indication has been general assessment, followed by behavioral, neurological, endocrine, dental, orthopedic, gastrointestinal and urological issues. Specialty referrals have been made in more than half of the patients and included the specialties of ophthalmology, neurology, orthopedics, audiology, psychiatry, occupational therapy, endocrinology, urology and genetic counseling.

Community support continues to be essential to this effort. Expansion will be necessary to meet the growing list of children waiting to be assessed or needing second opinions regarding their medical issues. You can show your support today by making a contribution to DSAOC designated to this alliance. ■

CHOC Children's Down Syndrome Program

Clinic Hours:

Wednesdays 8 a.m. to noon

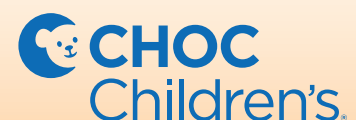
Clinic Location:

**CHOC Neurology Center
1120 W. La Veta Avenue,
Suite 125**

Orange, CA 92868

Appointments:

714-532-7986





**Chad Dominguez,
Self-Advocate**

Self-Advocate

Loving life, giving back to his community and enjoying time with friends and family are just some of the attributes that describe Chad

Dominguez. He is definitely someone you would love to know – someone who may cause you to look inward to see if you are living your life to its fullest potential.

Chad is 22 years old, and although he is mostly non-verbal, that doesn't stop him from living a busy lifestyle and making his likes and dislikes known. Chad's patient demeanor and ability to use simple words, gestures, or sign language, allow him to always get his point across.

Chad is involved in a number of activities including swimming with the Irvine Eagles, bowling and Boy Scouts where he's working on becoming an Eagle Scout. He volunteers on a regular basis for non-profit organizations, including DSAOC. He attends Creative Identity, an adult development program that offers learning through the use of various art forms.

Chad's sister Kris describes him as, "pure sunshine" and anyone who knows him would have to agree. His smile and personality make him a joy to be around because there's no doubt that he loves life and wants us all to join in on the fun. ■

Spotlights

Volunteer

Melinda Mergelsberg began volunteering at DSAOC in September of 2007. She has an older sister with Down syndrome and wanted to contribute her time to an organization that served the Down syndrome community.

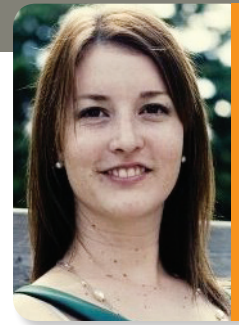
"Our family has always believed in giving back where you have received, and while I haven't received directly from DSAOC, we have received support through the years through organizations such as DSAOC."

A family friend of Melinda's is involved with the Down Syndrome Association of East Tennessee, so she decided to look for a similar organization in Orange County and fortunately, she found DSAOC. Melinda has volunteered at numerous Teen Club and adult activities and has also been a key volunteer for our Buddy Walk, Red Carpet Ball and Health Conference.

"Melinda is always up to any challenge we throw at her and exceeds our expectations every time. She is full of great ideas and is always thinking of ways to improve our events and activities," said Kristin Abbas, Manager of Administration/Volunteers.

"I have been blessed to see the other volunteers who give of their time and energy at each event. I also love getting to know the participants more and more and learn about their passions," said Melinda. "It's been a joy to volunteer and I always look forward to the next event."

Thank you Melinda! ■



**Melinda Mergelsberg,
Volunteer**

Mark Your Calendars

There's a lot happening this fall at DSAOC. We look forward to seeing you at these upcoming events.

For more information, please visit www.dsaoc.org and view our website calendar.

→ **Wednesday, October 13 from 6-9 p.m.**

Understanding Assessments and the Roles of the IEP Team seminar at the DSAOC Center, 151 Kalmus Drive, Suite M-5, Costa Mesa, CA 92626

→ **Friday, October 22 from 6-9 p.m.**

Teen/Adult Halloween Dance at Mater Dei High School, 1202 West Edinger Avenue, Santa Ana, CA 92707 92868

→ **Thursday, October 28 from 6:30-8:30 p.m.**

Healthcare Series Seminar on Down Syndrome Through the Ages: Focus on Adulthood, CHOC's Wade Education Center, 455 S. Main Street, Orange, CA 92868

→ **Saturday, October 30 from 11 a.m. to 2 p.m.**

DSAOC Family Halloween Picnic at KiwanisLand, 9840 Larson Avenue, Garden Grove, CA 92844

→ **Sunday, November 7 from 9 a.m. to 2 p.m.**

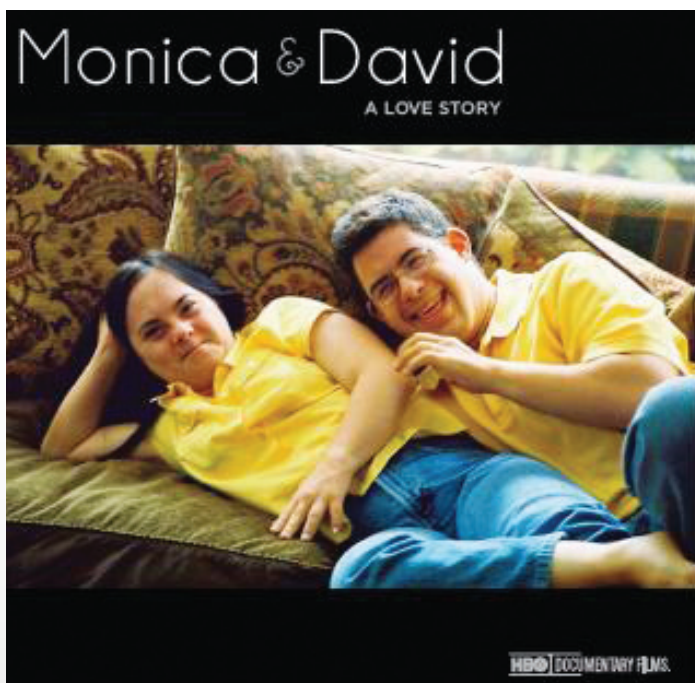
Orange County Buddy Walk, Angel Stadium of Anaheim, 2000 Gene Autry Way, Anaheim, CA 92806

→ **Saturday, December 4 from 9-11 a.m.**

Breakfast with Santa at CHOC's Wade Education Center, 455 S. Main Street, Orange, CA 92868

See the Acclaimed Film "MONICA & DAVID"

at the Anaheim International Film Festival



The Down Syndrome Association of Orange County is proud to partner with the Anaheim International Film Festival (AIFF), debuting October 13-17. The AIFF marks the addition of a world-class cultural event to Orange County and the international film festival circuit. The Opening Night Gala on October 13 will feature four films, including Alexandra Codina's MONICA & DAVID, which premieres nationally on HBO October 14. DSAOC is proud to be the

Official Presenting Sponsor of MONICA AND DAVID, which took home the Jury Prize for Best Documentary Feature at the 2010 Tribeca Film Festival.

Directed by first time filmmaker Alexandra Codina, MONICA AND DAVID explores the marriage of two adults with Down syndrome and the family who strives to support their needs. Monica and David are blissfully in love and want what other adults have: an independent life. Full of humor, romance and everyday family drama, the film weaves together intimate footage with personal interviews, revealing the complexity of their story. While Monica and David are capable beyond expectations, their parents, who worry about rejection from the mainstream world, have trouble letting go. Although marriage is sometimes uncommon for adults with intellectual disabilities, throughout the film Monica and David become a model for love and challenge what it means to be an adult. For ticket information, please visit www.anaheimfilm.org. To learn more about the film, visit www.monicaanddavid.com. ■

**ANAHEIM INTERNATIONAL
FILM FESTIVAL**

October 13-17, 2010

**UltraStar Cinemas
at Anaheim GardenWalk
321 W. Katella Avenue
Anaheim, CA 92802**

www.anaheimfilm.org



DOWN SYNDROME ASSOCIATION
OF ORANGE COUNTY

151 KALMUS DRIVE, SUITE M-5
COSTA MESA, CA 92626
714.540.5794

To be good stewards of the environment and DSAOC's financial resources, we'd like to communicate with you more through e-mail. Please call 714-540-5794 or e-mail kabbas@dsaoc.org today and make sure we have a current e-mail address for you. Thanks!