

DSA|OC Programs/Activities/Events/Services for Families & Individuals with Down Syndrome Include:

Please note that this list is not all inclusive, but provides an overview of ways in which DSAOC serves the community.

This list is updated as new opportunities become available through DSAOC.

- **New/Expectant Parent Program:** DSAOC’s support begins as early as prenatal diagnosis and continues throughout the life journey of the individual with Down syndrome. Our New Parent Support Coordinator conducts hospital visits and in-home visits, and either a selected Parent Mentor or the New Parent Support Coordinator will visit the family and deliver a DSAOC “Welcome Baby” basket that has beautiful baby gifts, as well as important resources in the form of a pamphlet, books and a DVD about a variety of topics relating to Down syndrome. We also have support groups and an annual New Parent Luncheon held in the Spring. The **National Charity League-Pacific Coast Chapter** is a generous sponsor of our Welcome Baby Basket program.
- **Parent Mentor Program:** At the request of an expectant parent or new parent, **DSA|OC** connects them with a Parent Mentor (a parent who has a child with Down syndrome that has gone through a special **DSA|OC** parent mentor training program.) **DSA|OC** currently has approximately 30 trained mentors living throughout Orange County and surrounding areas available to expectant and new parents.
- **Parent Education Programs (PEP):** Includes parent education seminars, workshops, healthcare seminars and networking opportunities. Each year, **DSA|OC** provides an average of 20 parent education seminars and 15 parent networking and support groups. In total, these seminars and networking/support groups serve hundreds of parents, grandparents and caregivers each year.
- **Prenatal Diagnosis Support:** Due to the creation and distribution of a new prenatal test that specifically recognizes a fetus with Down syndrome, besides offering our prenatal support services, DSAOC put together a **Prenatal Diagnosis Committee** to create an informational packet for families who receive a prenatal diagnosis. This committee will also stay updated on state and nationwide legislature and resources so we can provide up-to-date and accurate information to hospitals, medical professionals and families.
- **Support Groups:**
 - **Homeschool Friends Social and Networking group** – Held in the **DSA|OC** Center weekly on most Mondays, this group provides important social interaction and developmental opportunities for the children, and provides networking opportunities for parents/caregivers who are currently homeschooling or considering this educational option.
 - **DSAOC ‘Superkids’ 4H program** – Currently, an extension of our Homeschool Friends group, this group meets once per month to conduct and present on a variety of 4H projects and is an official program through the Orange County 4H organization.
 - **Circle of Friends: New & Expectant Parents (0-3 years)** –Held at the **DSA|OC** Center on the first Thursday of each month, this support network currently serves approximately 50+ families per year, and provides parents with the opportunity to make friends and share the challenges, milestones and triumphs as they raise their child. Expectant parents are also encouraged to participate, ask questions and receive support. Parents are encouraged to bring their little ones with Down syndrome to the meetings.

- **Circle of Friends Support & Networking Group (all ages)** – Held at the **DSA|OC** Center on the first Thursday of each month, this program is focused on presenting topics and providing support for parents who have ‘graduated’ from the 0 to 3 group.
- **Circle of Friends Riverside** –Support/networking group for families who live in and around the Corona/Riverside area – DSAOC acts as a support/marketing arm for this group.
- **DSAOC Dads Group** – A support/networking group specifically for fathers and grandfathers of children with Down syndrome of all ages. This group meets a few times annually and they have their own Facebook page at Facebook.com/DSAOCdads.
- **Down Syndrome/Alzheimer’s Support Group** – A collaborative support group coordinated by Alzheimer’s Orange County and UC Irvine Healthcare, and ran out of their Center.
- **Periodic programs include:** Art programs, Improv, sailing days, Signing Time, Skate Nights, play groups, a variety of dance programs, beach/park days, music programs, Girls Night In, and other fun peer mentoring activities hosted by Girl Scouts or other local groups.
- **Young Athletes Program (YAP):** DSAOC is thrilled to collaborate with the Special Olympics Orange County-So Cal to provide their Young Athletes Program (YAP) to our families. This program is held at the DSAOC Center, with each 8-10 week session offered up to twice per year.
- **In-Center Therapy Programs/Services:**
 - Speech/Language Pathology program- provided by Chapman University, conducted in a small group setting, with a social skills aspect, and currently being provided to the DSAOC Homeschool group as an on-going program.
 - Head Start Hearing – provided to DSAOC families by the Communication Sciences & Disorders Program at Chapman University, this is an on-going program that focuses on hearing screenings, and determining hearing issues that may affect speech.
- **Spanish Language programs including:**
 - *Mano a Mano* – Held in the Center once per month, this program enhances student early learning and literacy skills for Spanish speaking families and promotes the participation and support of the entire family during their child’s learning process. An average of 40 families participate in this program each year.
 - *Spanish Language Support Group*- Held once per month, this is a support group for Spanish language families who have children with Down syndrome of all ages.
- **Healthcare Education & Outreach Program:**
 - **Hospital Outreach** – A select group of DSAOC volunteers visit labor & delivery clinics and hospitals throughout greater Orange County and provides them with up-to-date information on Down syndrome, as well as contact information so we can assist families as soon as possible when they receive the news that their baby will have Down syndrome, or after they delivery a baby with Down syndrome.
 - **Healthcare Series Seminars & Conferences** – An educated parent is a better prepared and more confident advocate, especially when it comes to the healthcare needs of their child with Down syndrome. DSAOC works hard to help educate parents on the healthcare guidelines, as well as health issues that relate to their child with Down syndrome. We help educate by providing information, as well as hosting seminars and conferences where specialty care physicians can have discussion with our families and answer questions.
 - **CHOC Children’s Down Syndrome Program** – In 2009, DSAOC entered an alliance with CHOC Children’s to establish a clinic specifically for children with Down syndrome, where doctors who have intimate knowledge about health care for children with Down syndrome can offer

health assessments, provide 2nd opinions and give overall care to these children in a comfortable surrounding.

- **Adult Down Syndrome Primary Care Clinic (OPENED March 2016)** – DSAOC has furthered our alliance with the UCI Healthcare System which has resulted in an adult clinic for individuals with Down syndrome. This Clinic is the first primary care clinic of its kind in Southern California for adults with Down syndrome, offered at the UCI Family Health Center in Santa Ana.
- **Educator of the Year Award & Recognition program: Since 1998** - Each Spring DSAOC calls for nominations for teacher(s)/therapist(s)/aide(s)/administrator(s) or an education team whose outstanding efforts and innovations have helped a student with Down syndrome to grow and learn. All nominees are recognized prior to the end of the school year with a certificate and letter, and the winner is provided a plaque, recognition at the school assembly, and further recognition on stage at our annual Orange County Buddy Walk. Additionally, their name will remain on our center plaque for 1 year until the next winner is chosen.
- **Teen & Adult Programs/Activities:**
 - **Social Events**– Includes the annual Red Carpet Ball Dinner & Dance, which has been featured on the Emmy Award Winning A&E docuseries, “Born This Way” (Feb/Mar), the Boo Bash costume party and dance (Oct), and the Adult ‘Singles’ Mixer (18+).
 - **Employment connection and interview preparation support** – DSAOC receives calls from local employers who inquire on hiring an individual with Down syndrome. We provide the details of the job to qualifying individuals and assist them with interview prep. We are also available for the employer to contact if questions arise, however, we always recommend they connect with the already established job coach programs in the area, if needed.
 - **Self-advocate Volunteer Program** – On most Tuesdays and Wednesdays, DSAOC hosts small groups of self-advocates who are available to come to the Center and volunteer. Our interns work with the volunteer groups on program and activity prep, as well as helping with mailings or making copies, providing them experience they can add to their resumes.
 - **Monthly Bowling league** – Held at a local bowling center during the Fall, Winter and Spring, this exciting league for teens and adults with Down syndrome ages 12yrs and up is a great social and fitness activity.
 - **Drama Therapy with Alexis Maron, M.A., RDT**- Held at the DSAOC Center every Tuesday evening, it is an acting and social skills program for special populations, needs and abilities and currently serves teens and adults with Down syndrome ages 15 +. Drama Therapy is the intentional use of drama and/or theater processes to achieve therapeutic goals. Students learn to tell their stories, set goals, solve problems and express feelings. Through drama, the depth and breadth of inner experience can be actively explored and interpersonal relationships and social skills can be enhanced and rehearsed. Behavior change, skill-building, emotional and physical integration and personal growth can be achieved through drama therapy.
 - **Fitness & Nutrition program for teens and adults 15+** – Held at the DSAOC Center 3 to 4 Wednesdays per month, this 75-minute activity is taught by a certified personal trainer and blends a core and cardio workout with discussion on every-day exercise and nutrition.
 - **Yoga with Julie** – Held weekly at the DSAOC Center, this Yoga program is tailored to meet the needs of teens and adults 13yrs and up, and focuses on energy control, breathing and relaxation.

- **Book Club for Teens with Down syndrome** – With sessions held 2-3 times annually, this program started out as a Summer program, and due to popular demand, has been on-going since 2015.
- **Book Club for Adults with Down syndrome** – This Book Club/Social Activity for adults with Down syndrome age 18yrs and up runs for approximately 8 weeks each session, and uses guidelines from Next Chapter Book Club, and Try Reading Again.
- **Orange County Bike Camp** – A collaboration with UCP-OC - Held at Soka University each summer, this week-long program teaches children, teens and adults with disabilities (8 years old and up) how to ride a conventional 2-wheel bike using the specialized equipment provided by iCan Shine, Inc.
- *Adult programs coming soon...* Adult literacy program, Social Skills building, Weight Mngmt.
- **Annual Conferences & Mini-Conferences:** Conferences with multiple presenters relating to Education Resources and Advocacy as well as Healthcare topics are held at local conference centers and hotels. Most ½ day mini-conferences are held at our Center in Costa Mesa and focus on education advocacy, IEP consulting, Conservatorship, Financial Planning and Special Needs Trusts, as well as topics covering the current needs families express.
- **DSAOC Jr. “Just Dance” Party:** By popular demand, DSAOC launched an annual dance and social activity for individuals with Down syndrome ages 10-14yrs. This dance activity is meant to be fun, but also has a purpose to prepare this age group for school dances and other community dance activities. During this event, they work on proper social behaviors, learn appropriate dance moves and gain some independence. This event is currently held at Mater Dei High School, and they provide much of the volunteer support.
- **DSAOC Sibshops:** This is a monthly program held on the 3rd Saturday of each month at the DSAOC Center, for **siblings** of individuals with Down syndrome ages 7-13yrs. DSAOC’s Sibshops are decidedly fun to attend. The program provides peer support and information within a recreational context, and may be “therapeutic”, but it is not therapy. This program is a wonderful blend of making friends, having fun, receiving information, and sharing their lives with others. Friendship will be a cornerstone component, as these siblings will likely support one another over the years.
- **Family Activities:** Held at various locations throughout Orange County, annual family activities include: Summer Picnic, Halloween Picnic & “Trick or Trunk” and Breakfast with Santa. Groups such as the *Orange Elks Lodge* also hold annual events for DSAOC families that provide yet another opportunity for our families to connect to others on the same journey.
- **Summer Programs:** DSAOC holds annual Summer Programs in June, July and August including, dance classes, photography, social media (safety) classes, improv, art classes and more...
- **Community Awareness Events & Fundraisers:**
 - **Golf Tournament, Banquet & Auction** – Held in June each year, DSAOC hosts an annual Golf Tournament, Banquet & Auction to bring together families, supporting organizations and businesses for a great day on the links. The annual tournament is a very special event in which members of our community can engage in the spirit of sportsmanship while contributing to Down syndrome awareness efforts, support programs, and resources. Typically bringing together more than 250 people, this event provides a great opportunity for business networking and sponsorship recognition, as well as Down syndrome awareness.
 - **Orange County Buddy Walk** – The Buddy Walk was initiated in 1995 by the National Down Syndrome Society to unify parent organizations across the nation and raise awareness about people with Down syndrome. DSAOC hosts this annual awareness and fundraising

event each fall at the Angel Stadium of Anaheim. The Orange County Buddy Walk brings the community together for a great day, and is the largest fundraising event for DSAOC. Participants create teams and recruit members, as well as solicit for donations. The event is 5 hours of fun, and always includes exciting exhibitors, attractions, musical entertainment, special guests, and the opportunity to play ball on a major league baseball field.

- **World Down Syndrome Day** - Held annually on March 21 (3/21) DSAOC and our families recognize this day by holding an awareness activity in a public place. Since 2013, this activity has been held at Downtown Disney. “Downtown for Down Syndrome” is a chance for our families to gather in a public place and socialize, while bringing awareness to Down syndrome by wearing Down syndrome awareness colors and other awareness clothing. We gather together for a large group photo and individual photos under a banner, then we meet in groups and enjoy the day/evening at Downtown Disney.
- **Multimedia Resource Library:** Open to the community; books, DVD’s, learning programs/resources and more, highlighting many topics surrounding raising a child with Down syndrome or other special need.
- **Volunteer Opportunities and Intern Program:** DSAOC offers a variety of volunteer opportunities annually, providing meaningful experience and service hours to teens and adults in our community. We also collaborate with local colleges and universities and provide a comprehensive Intern Program, supporting more than 20 students each year.
- **Outreach/Awareness Programs:** Includes **DSA|OC**’s Hospital Outreach, Speakers Bureau, attendance at resource fairs and school activities, Social Media (Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, LinkedIn), Comprehensive/Interactive website, and the **DSA|OC** Blog.
 - **Optimist Newsletter** – DSAOC’s bi-annual Newsletter highlighting programs, activities, community news and anything upcoming that we need to promote to our families.
 - **“Community Corner”** - a video project highlighting stories about individuals with Down syndrome, and the people and organizations making a difference in their lives. “Community Corner” can be viewed from the homepage of our website at www.dsaoc.org.

Would you like to support DSAOC’s programs and services, or do you have an idea for a needed program, service, activity or event? Please contact the DSAOC Center. We look forward to hearing from you!

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