

DSAOC's **Mission** is to create a place for connection, information and hope for people with Down syndrome and their families throughout greater Orange County, to promote Down syndrome awareness through community outreach, and to offer programs, services and support that aim to empower individuals with Down syndrome to reach their full potential. Our **Vision** is to be a one-stop-shop for all things Down syndrome related, and to be a model organization for community collaboration and Down syndrome awareness, to change perceptions and change lives.

## Looking Forward

**Red Carpet Ball** – Saturday, February 14, 2015

**DSAOC Golf Tournament, Banquet & Auction** – Monday, June 8, 2015

**OC Bike Camp** – August 10 – August 14 at SOKA University

**Saturday, February 7, 2015** –

Healthcare Conference at UC Irvine

**A Healthful Journey:** Life Long Health Care for Individuals with Down Syndrome - Featuring Keynote Presenter, Dennis McGuire, Ph.D.

Register today at: <http://www.events.org/cpage.aspx?e=78760> or download the registration form at:

<http://www.dsaoc.org/pdfs/healthcare-conf-registration-form-2015.pdf>

For more information about DSAOC events  
visit [www.dsaoc.org](http://www.dsaoc.org)

## Activities

### Fitness Class

This is a weekly program, each Thursday, with the exception of the first Thursday of each month.

**NEXT CLASS: Thursday, February 12 6:00-7:00 p.m.**

**KEY OBJECTIVES:** Provides a regular program of activities for teens/adults which focuses on fitness, exercise, healthy choices, and self-esteem, and provides ideas for independent fitness activities at home. A healthy snack is provided after each workout session.

**FEE:** There is a \$35 per month fee paid to the instructor.

For questions, or to RSVP, please e-mail Kellie Perez at [kperez@dsaoc.org](mailto:kperez@dsaoc.org)

## DSAOC's Sibshops

 By DSAOC

This is a monthly program, the third Saturday of each month, from 1 – 4 p.m. at the DSAOC Center. **Starts January, 24.**

**What to Expect:** DSAOC's Sibshops will be decidedly fun to attend. It will provide peer support and information within a recreational context. It may be "therapeutic" to attend, but it is not therapy. It 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.

**Facilitators:** DSAOC volunteers, Autumn Trail and Renae Eichenmuller. Autumn and Renae each have an older sister with Down syndrome.

To register contact Kristi Golden at [programs@dsaoc.org](mailto:programs@dsaoc.org) and please provide the name & age of the interested sibling(s).

## Support/Networking Groups

Circle of Friends: 0 to 3 and 3 to 11

**Thursday, February 5**

**from 7–9 p.m. at the DSAOC Center**

*Both groups meet on the same night!*

**Circle of Friends: 0-3:** Make friends and share the challenges, milestones, and triumphs as you raise your child. Expectant parents also welcome. Child care is not provided, but your little one with Down syndrome is welcome to come along with you.

**Circle of Friends: 3-11:** This group will discuss issues that primarily focus on children 3 to 11, but families with children of all ages are welcome.

Homeschool Friends

**\*\* NEW DAY\*\* Monday, February 9**

**from 12–2:30 p.m. at the DSAOC Center**

For parents of children with Down syndrome that are currently home schooling or are considering this educational option.

Children and siblings are welcome. Join us on our new day and time - the 2nd Monday of each month beginning at 12 p.m.

## DSAOC's Therapy Program, focusing on Feeding and Swallowing

**Facilitator:** Dawn Winkelmann, M.S., CCC-SLP

SESSION 2 will be starting soon – Sign up today!

DSAOC is now forming the registration list for session 2, for families who have babies with Down syndrome ages birth to 24 months.

**Program Info:** Wednesdays, from 10 – 11 a.m. with a tentative start date of February 11. This parent education program will feature a 30 minute parent training and 30 minutes of practical "hands on" with your little one. Cost for the program is \$132 for 8 sessions. Contact Kristi Golden to be placed on the list: [programs@dsaoc.org](mailto:programs@dsaoc.org) or call the DSAOC Center at (714) 540-5794.

## Teen/Adult Red Carpet Ball Dinner & Dance

Red Carpet Ball

**Saturday, February 14 at the Doubletree Santa Ana  
from 5 – 10 p.m.**

Contact the DSAOC Center at (714) 540-5794 or [admin@dsaoc.org](mailto:admin@dsaoc.org) if your loved one with Down syndrome is 15 years or older and did **NOT** receive an invitation.

**If you missed our END OF YEAR report, check out the summary below. We enjoyed serving our community in 2014, and are looking forward to a wonderful 2015. Happy New Year!**

- In 2014, DSAOC Staff and Parent Mentors supported 73 new babies with Down syndrome, and their families. We distributed "**Welcome Baby Baskets**", informational books and DVD's, and provided emotional support individually, and through our Circle of Friends Support Group. We also provided information and support to 4 families receiving a prenatal diagnosis.
  - We brought back the newsletter, *The Optimist*, which will now be distributed biannually in electronic format, and will also be sent in the mail to our families and supporters. You can view the newsletters on our website – [www.dsaoc.org](http://www.dsaoc.org)
  - On February 1, we were thrilled to partner with DSF to bring an **Education Conference** to Orange County that featured Down Syndrome Education International, and served almost 400 parents and professionals.
  - DSAOC's **Mano a Mano** (*hand in hand*) program, an early language and numbers program using the "So Happy to Learn" curriculum for children with Down syndrome growing up in Spanish language homes, has grown tremendously over the last year. We've been able to expand the program to cover a larger age range, offering 3 classes monthly, growing from approximately 16 children, to now serving almost 30 children.
  - Our Spring events included the **Teen/Adult Red Carpet Ball & Parent Mixer**, and our **New Parent Luncheon**, with guests from ICEC and RCO who networked with our new and expectant parents. We also had our largest turn out at the World Down Syndrome Day event, **Downtown for Down Syndrome** at Downtown Disney on March 21.
  - We released 3 "**Community Corner**" Down syndrome awareness videos this year that highlighted the lives of individuals with Down syndrome, and provided valuable information on our CHOC Children's Down Syndrome Clinic. These can be viewed at [www.dsaoc.org](http://www.dsaoc.org).
  - The **CHOC Children's Down Syndrome Clinic**, an alliance between CHOC Children's and DSAOC, conducted 103 patient evaluations with 45 being new patients and 58 return visits. The age range of patients is 3 weeks to 18 years, with the average age around 5 years old. The leading primary referral is for general Down syndrome wellness assessments, followed by behavioral and neurological issues.
  - We recognized and celebrated our **Educators of the Year** for 2013-14: LAURIE STOTZ and ALTA PRIMUS from Robinson Elementary School, nominated by the Unter family. Celebrations occurred at the school, and a special presentation took place at the Buddy Walk. Nominations will open in February for the 2014-2015 Educator of the Year.
  - We brought back our **Summer Programs** and offered Science Camp, an Art Class, Hip Hop Dance, and our Book Club, which was extended due to popular demand, and will continue through the end of this year before picking up again in the new year.
  - DSAOC was thrilled to bring the LA based **Free 2 Be Me Dance program** to Orange County, and due to popular demand, these classes are continuing into the new year, and participants will have the opportunity to participate in the Miss Amazing Pageant in March 2015!
  - Other summer events included our **Family Summer Picnic**, the **Golf Tournament, Banquet & Auction** and our **Orange County Bike Camp**, a collaboration with UCP-OC. We also held a **Saturday mini-conference** for our families with presenters covering topics such as Special Needs Trusts, Estate Planning and Conservatorship.
  - The American Legion Yacht Club proposed a sailing day for DSAOC families. We tested out this new program, **SUDS** (Sails Up for Down Syndrome), with the Sea Gate Yacht Club in September and invited a small group of families. We plan to offer this in 2015.
  - A new relationship was created with the Garden Grove Elks Lodge, and they hosted a fun **DSAOC Family Day** at the end of June at their beautiful facility. Look for more from our new friends in 2015!
  - DSAOC was able to respond to the needs of several of our families by starting a "**Feeding & Swallowing Therapy Program**", facilitated by Dawn Winkelmann, M.S., CCC-SLP. This is a small group therapy program where families share the cost, and DSAOC utilizes grant funds to cover a portion of the professional fees, providing a low-cost, valuable, supplemental therapy program to educate parents on proper feeding, and target feeding issues and work toward solutions.
  - Our regular weekly and monthly programs took place during the year; Programs included our **Teen/Adult Theradrama, Book Club for Adults with Down Syndrome**, and the **Teen/Adult Fitness** program, as well as our **Circle of Friends** and **Homeschool Friends Support & Networking Groups**, and our monthly **Mano a Mano** program, **Arcoiris** Spanish support group, and **Teen/Adult Bowling League**.
  - Our Fall activities and events included our popular **Teen/Adult Boo Bash** dance, hosted by our friends at Mater Dei, our **Halloween Picnic and Trick or Trunk**, and our largest awareness and fundraising event, the **Orange County Buddy Walk**, where we enjoyed the day with more than 3,400 participants and their loved ones with Down syndrome. You can view photos at [www.dsaoc.org](http://www.dsaoc.org)
  - DSAOC was thrilled to recommend and support one of our amazing self-advocates to go through the interview process to be a participant in the **Area Board XI of the California State Council on Developmental Disabilities**. We knew she would do well, and we were honored to announce that our very own **Rachel Osterbach** was indeed appointed in August, and now sits on this very important Council.
  - Our staff and interns took part in several **community events/resource fairs** to distribute information about Down syndrome and DSAOC.
  - DSAOC's Interns and Board of Directors attended the **American Academy of Pediatrics Conference** in October to network and share prenatal diagnosis resources, as well as informational and support materials about Down syndrome and DSAOC.
  - We were very excited to be 1 of 10 Orange County non-profits selected by the Festival of Children to participate in their "**Carousel of Possible Dreams**" event, held at Disneyland in November. Our team of families, board members and corporate supporters had a great morning while raising funds for DSAOC's programs.
- We ended the year with our annual **Breakfast with Santa** held at CHOC Children's. This event is a family favorite that kick starts the spirit of the holiday season. This year's focus was definitely 'giving', as we were blessed to have the **National Charity League - Pacific Coast Chapter** - as our hosts and volunteers. They gave their time, energy, and talents to make it great for our families. *Thank you!*