



DOWN SYNDROME ASSOCIATION  
OF ORANGE COUNTY

CHANGING PERCEPTIONS - CHANGING LIVES

## THE YEAR IN REVIEW

*We invite you to read our 2016 "Year in Review"*

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.

### ***Coming in 2017...***

Stay tuned to your Fridge Post, Email, and our DSAOC Facebook Page for updates on all the new happenings in 2017...

- Our "Fitness & Nutrition" program for teens/adults with Down syndrome will kick the year off with a new instructor, and will run EVERY Wednesday beginning January 11.
- Our small group Speech/Social Therapy sessions will continue in 2017, and will expand to include more age groups.
- NEW "Circle of Friends" Support & Social Group "THE BOOK CLUB" for parents/caregivers of teens/adults with Down syndrome "*Give me Friends, some good Books, and a cup of Coffee (& sometimes Wine)*".
- UC Irvine Women's Basketball is inviting our teens/adults with Down syndrome to join them on Thursday, February 9 at 7 p.m. for special seating at a game (this is being facilitated by a DSAOC Intern from UCI. This, and more exciting activities ahead...
- FREE seminar on Saturday, January 21 "Medical, Scientific, and Practical Advances in Down Syndrome & Alzheimer's Disease"
- A Photography program for teens/adults interested in learning about the exciting world of professional and recreational photography.

Stay up-to-date with all the DSAOC happenings... "LIKE" us on Facebook:  
<https://www.facebook.com/DSAOC/>

# The Year in Review

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*We invite you to read our 2016 "Year in Review"*

The Down Syndrome Association of Orange County (DSAOC) had another busy and meaningful year. Besides our regularly scheduled weekly, monthly and annual programs and activities, DSAOC had a great year of outreach, Down syndrome awareness and advocacy, collaborations, parent support and more.

We supported **7 families with prenatal diagnosis** support, and a total of **51 new families** this year.

We provided resources and support to **51 new families** this year - **7** of those families received support through our Prenatal/Expectant Parent Support Program.

- Our "Mano a Mano" early literacy program for children with Down syndrome growing up in Spanish language homes expanded with 2 new sessions in 2016. These additional sessions allowed **26 new students** to join and develop their love for learning. Mano a Mano, which utilizes Terry Brown's *So Happy to Learn* curriculum, now has more than 65 students enrolled who are learning to read and count in English and are 'so happy to learn', and we expect the growth to continue. CHECK OUT THIS AMAZING program by watching the DSAOC "Community Corner" video highlighting Mano a Mano: <https://vimeo.com/193611535>
- DSAOC's very popular "Sibshops" program that began in early 2015 has grown to more than 20 participants, and expanded the age to now include siblings who are 7 years old up to age 13, and now has a small committee of young adult siblings that are facilitating the program at DSAOC. Check out the program here: VIDEO: <https://vimeo.com/141724630>
- "Born this Way": Bunim-Murray Productions who is filming the Emmy Award winning docu-series, "Born this Way", continues to highlight some of DSAOC's programs and services that several of the cast members are involved with. We were thrilled to have our Orange County Bike Camp, Adult Singles Mixer, and the Red Carpet Ball included in episodes, as well as a couple of our seminars. We anticipate having the cameras rolling once again at some of our upcoming teen/adult events, and we look forward to watching Season 3!

- By popular demand, DSAOC hosted several activities throughout 2016, including a morning just for us at Rockin' Jump, a private tour with 'Inside the Outdoors' at Newport Back Bay, special group seating at Segerstrom Center to see the play 'Cinderella', fun at Dave & Busters, a music Camp and more... stay tuned to the 2017 calendar for more fun activities! **PHOTOS:** [https://www.facebook.com/pg/DSAOC/photos/?tab=album&album\\_id=10153466080283507](https://www.facebook.com/pg/DSAOC/photos/?tab=album&album_id=10153466080283507)
- Our largest turn-out EVER at the 2016 **Red Carpet Ball Teen/Adult Dinner & Dance**, where nearly 300 teens/adults with Down syndrome and their guests were transported to the savannah for a "Sunset Safari" themed night, complete with animals, a safari tent, and even a safari jeep photo-op! More than 85 parents and caregivers joined the 'Parent Mixer' in a separate room of the hotel for their very own delicious meal, as well as an informative presentation from **Sara Hart Weir**, President of the National Down Syndrome Society (NDSS), who was our special guest. She talked to the parents about the ABLE Act legislation, and answered questions. View **PHOTOS:** <http://www.dsaoc.org/red-carpet-ball-photo-gallery.html> Learn more about DSAOC's Annual Red Carpet Ball by watching the **VIDEO** on this page: <http://www.dsaoc.org/community-corner.html>
- Prior to the Red Carpet Ball this year, we hosted our first annual "**Singles Mixer**" for adults with Down syndrome 18yrs and up. We had an amazing turn-out! We were thrilled to provide an event that allowed for some 'friend' connections to occur, and two of the connections resulted in a few of our adults finding a date to the Red Carpet Ball. You may have seen some highlights from this event on an episode of "Born this Way". **PHOTOS:** [https://www.facebook.com/pg/DSAOC/photos/?tab=album&album\\_id=10153496683538507](https://www.facebook.com/pg/DSAOC/photos/?tab=album&album_id=10153496683538507) Stay tuned for the date/time of the 2017 Singles Mixer...
- Just over 100 families joined us on **March 21** for the 2016 **World Down Syndrome Day** celebration at Downtown Disney - "**Downtown for Down Syndrome**". Families connected, shopped together, and combined groups and had dinner at one of the Downtown Disney restaurants. Of course, the highlight is always getting everyone together for the group photo! Thank you Erica Adams for being our photographer. See you all on 3/21/17! **PHOTOS** <http://www.dsaoc.org/world-down-syndrome-day-photo-gallery.html>
- We hosted our first annual **DSAOC Jr. "Just Dance"** party for ages 10-14yrs with our friends at Mater Dei. This event allowed us to prepare this age group for upcoming DSAOC hosted dances, and other dances they might attend at their community school, church etc. We worked on appropriate

behaviors and they even learned some dance moves! Check out **PHOTOS:**  
[https://www.facebook.com/pg/DSAOC/photos/?tab=album&album\\_id=10153689695718507](https://www.facebook.com/pg/DSAOC/photos/?tab=album&album_id=10153689695718507)

- More than 65 people, made up of new parents, grandparents and close family members and friends, joined us for the **New Parent Luncheon** in April at the beautiful *Seal Beach Yacht Club*. Thank you, Hans, and Walt for your hospitality! We also had a group of young adults host a 'baking day' in which they made all the desserts for the families attending the luncheon. Thank you Sara and Jessica for your leadership on this project. Additional thanks to our special guests from NCL, ICEC and Comfort Connection. **PHOTOS:**  
[https://www.facebook.com/pg/DSAOC/photos/?tab=album&album\\_id=10153664056858507](https://www.facebook.com/pg/DSAOC/photos/?tab=album&album_id=10153664056858507)
- From May through August, DSAOC hosted a monthly “**Ask Jacqui**” meeting, for families who wanted to meet with Jacqui Knudsen from the **Regional Center of Orange County** (RCOC) and ask questions, and/or learn more about the services provided that could benefit their child with Down syndrome. Many of our families appreciated this opportunity, so we will work on offering this service again in 2017.
- 2016 marked the 17th year of the **DSAOC Educator of the Year Award & Recognition program**. This year, seven nominations were submitted by 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 difference for individuals with Down syndrome. DSAOC was thrilled to announce the 2015-16 Educator of the Year during an assembly at the school. Ms. Jaime Bennett, nominated by the Parsons family, is a first grade, general education teacher at Montevideo Elementary School in Mission Viejo. She was also recognized later in the year on stage at our annual OC Buddy Walk. **READ THE STORY:**  
<http://www.dsaoc.org/pdfs/optimist/2016-summer-optimist-newsletter.pdf>
- Our **Summer Programs** that take place from late May until early August, consisted of “Yoga with Julie”, "Art with Brynne", a “Teen Book Club”, and an “Improv” Class. We also had a short music program and the summer session with "Free 2 Be Me Dance". Due to popular demand, the Yoga, Improv and Teen Book Club programs continued beyond summer. We also hosted our first ever **PRIVATE Skating Party**. Check out the **PHOTOS**  
[https://www.facebook.com/pg/DSAOC/photos/?tab=album&album\\_id=10153900084698507](https://www.facebook.com/pg/DSAOC/photos/?tab=album&album_id=10153900084698507)

- More than 190 golfers joined us for our **12th Annual Golf Tournament, Banquet & Auction** at Los Coyotes Country Club. This event is DSAOC's 2<sup>nd</sup> largest fundraiser, and we urge our families and supporters to consider joining us, and/or supporting this event in 2017! It's a great day... **PHOTOS** [https://www.facebook.com/pg/DSAOC/photos/?tab=album&album\\_id=10153783014293507](https://www.facebook.com/pg/DSAOC/photos/?tab=album&album_id=10153783014293507) **VIEW EVENT VIDEO:** <http://www.dsaoc.org/golf-tournament.html>
- We had another amazing **Summer Picnic** at Atlantis Park, complete with friends, food, clowns, crafts and the exciting *Splash Pad!* **VIEW PHOTOS:** [https://www.facebook.com/pg/DSAOC/photos/?tab=album&album\\_id=10153794076563507](https://www.facebook.com/pg/DSAOC/photos/?tab=album&album_id=10153794076563507)
- Our friends at **Orange Elks** continue to be wonderful to DSAOC and our families. During the summer, they hosted a huge picnic at Irvine Regional Park, complete with a delicious BBQ, free entrance to the Zoo and free train rides! They also had games, face painting, a graffiti wall for families to sign and kids to draw pictures, and of course Elroy the Elk was there to say hello. **PHOTOS** [https://www.facebook.com/pg/DSAOC/photos/?tab=album&album\\_id=10153815366048507](https://www.facebook.com/pg/DSAOC/photos/?tab=album&album_id=10153815366048507)
- We had a FULL Camp this year, with **40** children, teens and adults with disabilities, including Down syndrome, participating in the annual **Orange County Bike Camp** - a collaboration between DSAOC and UCP-OC - in August at Soka University. You saw the 2015 Bike Camp highlighted in an episode of *"Born this Way"* on A&E. Mark your calendars for the 2017 OC Bike Camp, taking place August 7-11 (Mon-Fri). **PHOTOS:** <https://www.facebook.com/DSAOC/posts/10153927449258507>
- FUN FALL and Halloween activities included our annual **"Trick or Trunk" Halloween Picnic** at the Garden Grove Elks Lodge, where almost 200 people joined us for food, a bounce house, picnic fun, and of course, Trick or Trunk! **PHOTOS:** [https://www.facebook.com/pg/DSAOC/photos/?tab=album&album\\_id=10154126831528507](https://www.facebook.com/pg/DSAOC/photos/?tab=album&album_id=10154126831528507)  
We also had our annual Teen/Adult Halloween dance, the **"Boo Bash"** at Mater Dei High School. Almost 60 teens/adults joined us for dancing, friends, snacks, and hanging with DJ Willpower. **PHOTOS** [https://www.facebook.com/pg/DSAOC/photos/?tab=album&album\\_id=10154065109928507](https://www.facebook.com/pg/DSAOC/photos/?tab=album&album_id=10154065109928507)

- The **Orange County Buddy Walk** is DSAOC's largest annual fundraiser. We call on all our families to rally their family members, friends, and other supporters to attend and/or make a donation to DSAOC. In return, we provide an exciting 5 hour event, packed with amazing entertainment, exciting and informative exhibitors, awesome attractions, special guests and more! It's a wonderful way to unify and see all our wonderful children with Down syndrome having a great day with their family and team members. The event is held at the Angel Stadium of Anaheim, where registered participants can walk on a major league baseball field, run bases like the Angels, and take photos in the dug-outs. We were thrilled once again to have the lovely and talented **Jamie Brewer** as our Grand Marshal. She was joined by special guests, Rachel Osterbach, Steven Clark, Jared Kozak, Cole Sibus and Caley Versfelt – cast members of the A&E docu-series, "Born this Way". **PHOTOS** <http://www.dsaoc.org/buddy-walk-photo-gallery.html> Learn more about the OC Buddy Walk by watching the Buddy Walk **VIDEO** <http://dsaoc.org/community-corner.html>
- DSAOC's annual end-of-year Holiday celebrations included our **Circle of Friends Support & Networking Group's Holiday "PAJAMA PARTY"**, our **SIBSHOPS Holiday Party**, and our popular "**Breakfast with Santa**" which not only had Santa this year... but Sean McElwee from "Born this Way" as Santa's helper, and Princesses and Batman! **Circle of Friends PHOTOS:**  
[https://www.facebook.com/pg/DSAOC/photos/?tab=album&album\\_id=10154241240928507](https://www.facebook.com/pg/DSAOC/photos/?tab=album&album_id=10154241240928507)  
**Sibshops PHOTOS:**  
[https://www.facebook.com/pg/DSAOC/photos/?tab=album&album\\_id=10154280838173507](https://www.facebook.com/pg/DSAOC/photos/?tab=album&album_id=10154280838173507)  
**Breakfast with Santa PHOTOS:**  
[https://www.facebook.com/pg/DSAOC/photos/?tab=album&album\\_id=10154241278178507](https://www.facebook.com/pg/DSAOC/photos/?tab=album&album_id=10154241278178507)
- DSAOC was honored to attend the **2016 UCI Mind Gala**, in which our very own Board Member, Dr. Lott, received the "**UCI MIND Award**". This award is the Institute's most distinguished honor bestowed upon an individual who exemplifies the mission of UCI MIND and has made exceptional contributions to the field of Alzheimer's disease research. Dr. Lott is the Director of the UCI MIND Down Syndrome Program and Professor Emeritus at UC Irvine School of Medicine, as well as being on our Board of Directors. Congratulations, Dr. Lott! Thank you for all you've done and continue to do for our wonderful children with Down syndrome. **SEE POST**  
<https://www.facebook.com/DSAOC/posts/10154241234263507>

- DSAOC was thrilled to work with the Pujols Family Foundation to bring another exciting dance to our community! The 1st Annual PFF/DSAOC Prom was held on Friday, November 11 at Saddleback Church in Anaheim. The Saddleback Church pastor and his team were AMAZING with our group! It was a wonderful evening of friends, food, fun, and of course dancing the night away. Stay tuned for the date and location for the 2017 Prom. **PHOTOS** [https://www.facebook.com/pg/DSAOC/photos/?tab=album&album\\_id=10154295190018507](https://www.facebook.com/pg/DSAOC/photos/?tab=album&album_id=10154295190018507)
- We supported **11 Interns** through our comprehensive *Intern Program*, providing students an opportunity to experience the non-profit workplace, as well as gain experience working with our families and their children, teens, and adults with Down syndrome. See **POST**: <https://www.facebook.com/DSAOC/posts/10154244021423507>
- DSAOC Staff, Interns and Board Members attended **42 outreach and awareness activities/events** this year, promoting DSAOC's programs & services, and Down syndrome awareness.
- We supported **51** new families this year with Welcome Baby Baskets, parent mentors, support and networking groups and resource materials. We provided **Prenatal Support to 7** of those families, as well as additional support when their baby was born.
- We added **Yoga with Julie** and an **Improv** class to our weekly program offerings for teens and adults. We also added a **Teen Book Club** to our schedule. Watch our monthly calendar for start dates for these and other weekly/monthly programs, and mark your calendar - Yoga will start up again in February of 2017!
- We continue with our *weekly* and *monthly* programs: **Drama Therapy** with Alexis, **Book Club for Adults**, **Free 2 Be Me Dance**, **Bowling**, **Sibshops**, **4H Group DSAOC Superkids** and **Mano a Mano**.
- Our on-going *monthly* support & networking groups include: **Circle of Friends** (for new & expectant parents and for families who have children of all ages), **Homeschool** Group, and the **Spanish** language support group. Stay tuned for our **newest** Circle of Friends Support & Social Group “**THE BOOK CLUB**”, specifically focusing on social time and support needs of parents/caregivers who have teens/adults with Down syndrome. “Give me Friends, some good Books, and a cup of Coffee (& sometimes Wine)”.

- We continue to publish the **Optimist Newsletter** as another way to help keep our families and community informed. Check out the latest Newsletter here, as well as the **NEWSLETTER ARCHIVES**: <http://dsaoc.org/optimist-newsletter.html>
- We produced **1 Community Corner** video this year, adding to our library of videos that share the stories of individuals with Down syndrome, and the people and organizations making a difference in their lives. We invite you to view **DSAOC's Community Corner Down Syndrome Awareness Series**: <http://www.dsaoc.org/community-corner.html>
- DSAOC continues to put a focus on **Healthcare for individuals with Down syndrome** and has been active with UCI and CHOC Children's, ensuring we have a list of primary care and specialty care doctors who know about the health conditions that are prevalent in children, teens and adults with Down syndrome. We are also **collaborating with Alzheimer's OC** on their seminars and conferences, as well as their monthly support group for parents/caregivers who have adults with Down syndrome that are showing signs, or have been diagnosed with, dementia/Alzheimer's. Mark your calendar for the **FREE** seminar on Saturday, January 21 at Alzheimer's OC: <http://www.alzoc.org/events/downsyndrome/>
- **NEW Adult Down Syndrome PRIMARY CARE Clinic!** DSAOC was thrilled to be involved in the collaboration that helped to create the first Down syndrome specific Adult Primary Care clinic, created in alliance with UC Irvine Health. The clinic opened in March of this year and is managed by Dr. Emily Dow, the Chief Medical Officer of UC Irvine Family Health Centers in Santa Ana and Anaheim. **Read the STORY** on our **BLOG**: <http://www.dsaoc.org/blog/?p=2074> You can also view information on our 2016 Summer Optimist Newsletter <http://www.dsaoc.org/pdfs/optimist/2016-summer-optimist-newsletter.pdf>
- The **CHOC Children's Down Syndrome Clinic**, an *alliance between CHOC Children's and DSAOC*, continues to care for hundreds of children with Down syndrome annually. Since the inception of the Clinic, they have conducted 813 patient evaluations (371 new patients and 442 return patients). **INFORMATION AND VIDEO**: <http://www.dsaoc.org/chocs-children-down-syndrome-program.html>
- We continue to offer **Self-Advocates volunteer opportunities** on Tuesdays and Wednesdays at the DSAOC Center, and this has even resulted in a job at a local company for one of our volunteers!




The Down Syndrome Association of Orange County would like to extend a very special THANK YOU to our major Corporate, Foundation, and Individual Sponsors in 2016:

Valero Wilmington Refinery, The Albert & Bettie Sacchi Foundation, FedEx, Northgate Markets, Medtronic, The Bandai Foundation, National Charity League – Pacific Coast Chapter, La Salle Medical Associates, CHOC's Neurology Clinic, Shulman Hodges & Bastian LLP, EDM Performance Accessories, Law Office of Chambers Noronha & Kubota, the Jensen Family, the Leeman Family, and several more that believe in our Mission, love our children, and support our families. ***We appreciate you!***

Please consider an **END-OF-YEAR** tax-deductible **Gift** to support the meaningful programs & services provided to our community. Thank you!

For more information on DSAOC, please visit our website at [www.dsaoc.org](http://www.dsaoc.org) For a list of current programs & services please visit: <http://www.dsaoc.org/pdfs/dsaoc-programs-services-2016-07.pdf>



DOWN SYNDROME ASSOCIATION OF ORANGE COUNTY


**A PLACE FOR**  
connection  
**hope**  
awareness

The **Down Syndrome Association of Orange County** has been serving people with Down syndrome and their families in the greater Orange County community for more than 35 years—since 1978. Our programs, services and support begin at prenatal diagnosis, and continue throughout the entire life journey.

Please join us on this journey to a world where every person with Down syndrome is a valued member of society. **Help us change perceptions and change lives** by making an end of year, tax-deductible donation to support our many initiatives that benefit our community as a whole.

**TO MAKE A SECURE DONATION, PLEASE VISIT DSAOC.ORG TODAY**

**DSA|oe**  
DOWN SYNDROME ASSOCIATION  
OF ORANGE COUNTY  
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