



DOWN SYNDROME ASSOCIATION
OF ORANGE COUNTY

CHANGING PERCEPTIONS - CHANGING LIVES

THE YEAR IN REVIEW

“2017... What a Year!”

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.

A graphic celebrating 40 years. The number "40" is in a large, black, serif font, with "years" in a smaller, black, serif font to its right. Below the "40" is a ribbon graphic that is orange and white, with the text "Serving our Community since 1978" written in a small, black, sans-serif font on the orange part of the ribbon.

40 years

Serving our Community since 1978

In 2018, DSAOC will celebrate 40 Years of service to the greater Orange County community. Show your support today by making a \$40 donation to DSAOC to support our 2018 programs.

<https://www.dsaoc.org/direct-donation.html>

We look forward to having you join us throughout the year to honor DSAOC’s Founders, past and current Board Members, and our generous supporters who have made it possible for us to continue our Mission.

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

The Year in Review

“2017... What a Year!”

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 4 families with **prenatal diagnosis** support, and a total of **48 new families** this year.

- DSAOC kicked off the new year by attending and supporting a conference with **Alzheimer’s OC** as part of our on-going collaboration with agencies in greater Orange County that help to serve our families. View information and photos here: <https://www.facebook.com/DSAOC/posts/10154391845303507>
- In **January**, we added an amazing **new staff member** to our team, **Lauren Sibus**. She has proven to be extremely valuable, and we hope everyone has had the opportunity to meet her by now, as she comes up on her 1-year anniversary with DSAOC. You can view her welcome message here: <https://www.facebook.com/DSAOC/photos/a.441920308506.212639.97058898506/10154406667783507/?type=3&theater>
- On **February 9**, the Orange Elks Lodge graciously opened their lodge doors to DSAOC to host our annual **Adult Singles Mixer**. The purpose of this Mixer is to connect single adults with Down syndrome to others who are looking for friendship, as well as a date to the Red Carpet Ball. You may have seen this on the Emmy Award Winning show on A&E, “Born this Way”. You can view photos here: <https://www.facebook.com/DSAOC/posts/10154448628608507>
- Also on **February 9**, **UC Irvine’s Women’s Basketball** team sent a special invite for DSAOC families to join them on game night. The families in attendance had a great time, and even got to meet the players. They gave DSAOC a special shout-out during break. You can view photos here: <https://www.facebook.com/DSAOC/posts/10154460645953507>

We provided resources and support to **48 new families** this year - **4** of those families received support through our Prenatal/Expectant Parent Support Program.

- On **February 18**, DSAOC was thrilled to host an informational seminar presented by **Sara Hart Weir, President of National Down Syndrome Society (NDSS)**, to provide updates on NDSS initiatives as well as the status on the California ABLE Act program. See photos here:
<https://www.facebook.com/DSAOC/posts/10154473413518507>
- Saturday, **February 25** was the date of our largest and most popular Teen/Adult event – the annual **Red Carpet Ball Dinner & Dance**. This year the theme was “Midnight in Paris” and had all the ambiance to transport you overseas, including an Eiffel Tower replica. This exciting DSAOC teen/adult event was once again featured on the Emmy Award Winning show on A&E, “Born this Way”. You can view all the amazing photos by visiting our website’s photo gallery page at:
<https://www.dsaoc.org/red-carpet-ball-photo-gallery.html>
- On Sunday, **February 26**, DSAOC’s Executive Director was the keynote speaker for the National Charity League-Pacific Coast Chapter’s Fashion Show that raised several thousand dollars for college scholarships, as well as to help Orange County non-profits through their grant program.
- DSAOC continues our collaboration with Special Olympics So. Cal. by hosting the venue and promoting their **Young Athlete’s Program**. Sessions are held on Saturdays beginning at 9 a.m. Stay tuned for the next session announcement, coming in 2018. You can view photos of the program here:
<https://www.facebook.com/DSAOC/posts/10153933831703507>
- The **World Down Syndrome Day** festivities on **March 21** once again took place at Downtown Disney - DSAOC’s “Downtown for Down Syndrome”. It was a very rainy day and chilly as the evening came upon us, but that didn’t stop more than 100 people from joining us! View photos here, and stay tuned for a change in location for 2018. World Down Syndrome Day photo gallery:
<https://www.dsaoc.org/world-down-syndrome-day-photo-gallery.html>
- In our efforts to have fundraisers that allow everyone to show their thanks and support for DSAOC, even if they can’t write a check and donate actual funds, we started participating in **Clothes for the Cause**, which allows people to clean out their closets and donate in this unique way. This year we raised the most funds yet. Check out the Facebook post, **AND start cleaning out your closets in preparation for the March 2018 fundraiser**. See post:
<https://www.facebook.com/DSAOC/posts/10154608965273507>

- On **April 2**, Seal Beach Yacht Club once again hosted our annual **New & Expectant Parent Luncheon**, a complimentary luncheon for parents who have children with Down syndrome 0-5yrs, as well as for expectant parents, grandparents and extended family members. View photos here:
https://www.facebook.com/pg/DSAOC/photos/?tab=album&album_id=10154628254808507
- DSAOC hosted the 2nd Annual **“Jr. Dance”** with our friends at Mater Dei High School on Saturday, **April 29**. More than 40 kids, age 10-14yrs, enjoyed dancing and learning some new, fun dance moves, all in preparation for the teen/adult dances they will soon be invited to attend. View photos here:
https://www.facebook.com/pg/DSAOC/photos/?tab=album&album_id=10154684056028507
- This year marks the 18th year of DSAOC’s **Educator of the Year Award & Recognition Program**. We received 12 outstanding nominations, and everyone that was nominated received recognition for their efforts. The teacher chosen for the 2016-2017 school year was Michelle Texeira, 3rd Grade Teacher at Sycamore Elementary School in Claremont. See photos of the award ceremony at the school:
<https://www.facebook.com/DSAOC/posts/10154802518898507>
- DSAOC’s **2017 Summer Programs** started in June and included Teen Book Club, a Smartphone Photography-with an Emphasis on Social Media Training and Safety, our Art Class with Brynne, and a dance class with Dare to Dance. So much fun! You can view photos from each summer class here:
<https://www.facebook.com/DSAOC/posts/10154838029908507> AND
<https://www.facebook.com/DSAOC/posts/10154934719648507> AND
<https://www.facebook.com/DSAOC/posts/10154896326033507> AND
<https://www.facebook.com/DSAOC/posts/10154926997528507> AND
<https://www.facebook.com/DSAOC/photos/a.441920308506.212639.97058898506/10154838357473507/?type=3&theater>
- 196 golfers joined us in **June** for our **13th Annual Golf Tournament, Banquet & Auction** at Los Coyotes Country Club. This event is DSAOC’s 2nd largest fundraiser, and we urge our families and supporters to consider joining us, and/or supporting this event in 2018. Mark your calendar for Monday, June 11, 2018. View the event **VIDEO** here:
<https://www.dsaoc.org/golf-tournament.html> and **view Photos here:**
https://www.facebook.com/pg/DSAOC/photos/?tab=album&album_id=10154858120028507

- DSAOC loves to work with, and support, our local Scout troops. In **June**, we supported **Girl Scout Troop 2429** by helping them coordinate a fun *Girl's Night Out and Fashion Show* for some of our young ladies with Down syndrome. This activity was great for all involved, and helped the girl scouts achieve needed experience and hours for their patch. **Photos attached:**
https://www.facebook.com/pg/DSAOC/photos/?tab=album&album_id=10154811083213507
- More than 250 people joined us in **June** for our annual **Summer Picnic** at Atlantis Park. The Splash Pad was once again a big HIT, and the food provided by Charo Chicken was delicious as usual. The National Charity League Pacific Coast Chapter supported with volunteers and games, and an exciting time was had by all. You can **view our photo album** here:
https://www.facebook.com/pg/DSAOC/photos/?tab=album&album_id=10154861981298507
- In early **July**, our friends at the **Orange Elks Lodge** hosted another awesome Summer Picnic for DSAOC families at Irvine Regional Park. It's always a great party, complete with a delicious BBQ, free train rides and entrance to the Zoo, as well as plenty of games. **View photos** from this event: <https://www.facebook.com/DSAOC/posts/10154872896368507> and also at <https://elks1475.smugmug.com/7217-3rd-Annual-Down-Syndrome-Association-of-Orange-County/>
- In early **August**, **40** children, teens and adults with Down syndrome and other disabilities participated in the annual **Orange County Bike Camp** - a collaboration between DSAOC and UCP-OC. We continue to be grateful to Soka University for being our venue sponsor. As seen on the Emmy Award Winning show on A&E, "Born this Way", the camp is amazing! Mark your calendars for the 2018 OC Bike Camp, taking place at Soka University August 5-10. View our photo album here:
https://www.facebook.com/pg/DSAOC/photos/?tab=album&album_id=10155020346258507
- In **August**, DSAOC was thrilled to partner with NDSS for their **PLAY Campaign**, (Promoting a Lifetime of Activity for Youth). This program focuses on promoting healthy living and to combat obesity in children. Several of our families were able to attend this activity at Dodger Stadium, and even met Clayton Kershaw! View some of the exciting photos here:
<https://www.facebook.com/DSAOC/posts/10155012616533507>

- In late **August**, DSAOC supported a fellow Down Syndrome group with information and basic training on how to begin their Hospital Outreach program in their area. DSAOC has been conducting outreach for nearly 40 years, and we are honored to be recognized for this, and to be able to support other organizations by sharing best practices. View the post here: <https://www.facebook.com/DSAOC/photos/a.441920308506.212639.97058898506/10155052670463507/?type=3&theater>
- In **September**, DSAOC, along with RCOC, ACL and UCI Mind, promoted and sponsored a **seminar** held at Alzheimer's Orange County, "**Understanding and Caring for Persons with Down Syndrome and Alzheimer's Disease**" A special training for caregivers. <https://www.facebook.com/DSAOC/photos/a.385842373506.166659.97058898506/10154979775648507/?type=3&theater>
- More than 90 teens/adults attended our annual Halloween Costume Party and Dance, the "**Boo Bash**" at Mater Dei High School. Everyone looked festive in their costumes, and had a great time hanging out with sports teams from Mater Dei. The evening included a costume and dance contest, and music powered by DJ Willpower. **PHOTOS Album 1:** https://www.facebook.com/pg/DSAOC/photos/?tab=album&album_id=10155155300613507 **PHOTOS Album 2:** https://www.facebook.com/pg/DSAOC/photos/?tab=album&album_id=10155157676793507 **VIDEO** <https://www.facebook.com/DSAOC/videos/10155150354933507/>
- DSAOC's **Halloween "Trick or Trunk"** had a record number of attendees this year, and we had a blast! NCL-Pacific Coast Chapter hosted a cake walk, with some delectable desserts! American Advocacy Group sponsored our food and beverages, and we had more than 20 cars festively decorated for the trick-or-treaters. The Garden Grove Elks Lodge once again hosted the event at their lodge, and it was so appreciated. **PHOTOS:** https://www.facebook.com/pg/DSAOC/photos/?tab=album&album_id=10155319642543507
- The **Orange County Buddy Walk**, DSAOC's largest annual fundraiser, took place on Sunday, October 29 with 2,300 people, more than 50 exhibitors, entertainment on 2 stages, delicious food vendors, special guests and more! Join us NEXT YEAR on Sunday, October 28 at the Angel Stadium of Anaheim for 5-hours of excitement. **VIDEO:** https://youtu.be/13li_4nzBtg **VIEW the Photo Galleries:** <https://www.dsaoc.org/buddy-walk-photo-gallery.html>

- On Friday, **November 10** we once again collaborated with the Pujols Family Foundation for the 2nd Annual **PFF/DSAOC Prom**. This event was once again hosted by Saddleback Church in Anaheim. The Saddleback staff and volunteers are amazing and certainly helped make the evening a great experience for all. This year, the Pujols family attended, and everyone loved the opportunity meeting Albert and his family. You can view photos here: https://www.facebook.com/pg/DSAOC/photos/?tab=album&album_id=10155250969148507
- 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 very popular "**Breakfast with Santa**" which not only included Santa, ... but Rapunzel stopped by, and we had Sean McElwee from the Emmy Award Winning show on A&E "Born this Way" who attended again as Santa's helper. We were thrilled to welcome singer, musician and the youngest member of Disney's Mouseketeers on Club Mickey Mouse, Sean Oliu, who walked around with his guitar and sang with our families in both English and Spanish. Check out the wonderful photos!
Circle of Friends PHOTOS:
https://www.facebook.com/pg/DSAOC/photos/?tab=album&album_id=10155304983878507
Sibshops PHOTOS:
https://www.facebook.com/pg/DSAOC/photos/?tab=album&album_id=10155314575358507
Breakfast with Santa PHOTOS:
https://www.facebook.com/pg/DSAOC/photos/?tab=album&album_id=10155305061078507
- DSAOC's "**Mano a Mano**" early literacy program for children with Down syndrome in Spanish language homes continues to expand to serve more children. This program helps develop their love for learning, utilizing Terry Brown's *So Happy to Learn* curriculum. With nearly 80 children enrolled, they are learning to read and count in English, and parents are becoming more comfortable with curriculum in English and are more engaged in their child's learning. We expect the growth of this program to continue. Students from Mater Dei help to support this program and we are grateful. This program is primarily support by generous grant funds from **Valero** Wilmington Refinery. **View photos** from the end-of-year holiday party here: https://www.facebook.com/pg/DSAOC/photos/?tab=album&album_id=10155317102053507 You can also **CHECK OUT THIS AMAZING** program by watching the DSAOC "*Community Corner*" video highlighting Mano a Mano: <https://vimeo.com/193611535>

- DSAOC's most popular Teen/Adult in-Center program, **'Drama Therapy with Alexis'**, grew in participant numbers this year, with 20 students currently enrolled, and a growing wait-list. More than 70 people packed the DSAOC Center on December 12 for the Fall 2017 Showcase. Once you check out these videos and photos, you will see why this program is so awesome!
PHOTOS:
https://www.facebook.com/pg/DSAOC/photos/?tab=album&album_id=10155319364918507 **VIDEO:**
<https://www.facebook.com/DSAOC/videos/10155317720118507/>
SLIDESHOW and VIDEO:
https://photos.google.com/share/AF1QipPU9NCd07Mh8RwDM-_Y6PjZ2OSSs8kt4dfhKkGTefrtoISPRHJPGA0baitUt5JxPg?key=bnlKVmd5alZsVDRjT19Tb2NkM2Z0WURIQ3ILVVZn
- We want to give families information and options of who they work with when **planning for the future** of their loved one with Down syndrome. In 2017, we hosted **2 seminars** that focused on future planning. Stay tuned for the 2018 calendar if you would like to attend one of these seminars. Thank you to the Morgan Law Group and to Jim Gilmore & Rich Dutrisac, for presenting this important info to our families in 2017.
- We supported **19 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. This year we had 3 interns from UC Irvine and 16 from Cal State University Fullerton. Some intern posts:
<https://www.facebook.com/DSAOC/photos/a.441920308506.212639.97058898506/10154463267598507/?type=3&theater> **AND**
<https://www.facebook.com/DSAOC/photos/a.441920308506.212639.97058898506/10154745455203507/?type=3&theater>
- DSAOC Staff, Interns and Board Members attended **32 outreach and awareness activities/events** this year, promoting DSAOC's programs & services, and supporting Down syndrome awareness. Outreach included resource fairs, meetings with hospitals, meeting with companies, traveling to Sacramento for the State Council on Developmental Disabilities year end meeting, and attending other community networking/engagement meetings.
<https://www.facebook.com/DSAOC/photos/a.441920308506.212639.97058898506/10155111255388507/?type=3&theater>
- We supported **48** new families this year with **Welcome Baby Baskets**, parent mentors, support and networking groups and resource materials. We provided **Prenatal Support to 4** of those families, as well as additional support when their baby was born.

- Thanks to support from the **Decorative Arts Society** and some of our families, DSAOC purchased material for a mass mailing to greater Orange County OBGYN offices and Planned Parenthood facilities providing them with resources to support the Congress approved “**Prenatally and Postnatally Diagnosed Conditions Awareness Act**” (referred to as the “Kennedy-Brownback Act”) which had broad bipartisan support. The Act requires the federal government to arrange for the collection and dissemination of up-to-date, evidence-based information about the conditions subject to prenatal and early postnatal diagnosis, which includes Down syndrome. DSAOC’s objective is to ensure that those giving the (prenatal) diagnosis can share updated/accurate information and direct the families to the proper local resources where they can continue to gather information regarding their baby’s diagnosis. With the support we received, we prepared almost 300 of these mailings to cover the 278 locations that will receive this information. For more information: <http://journalofethics.ama-assn.org/2009/09/oped1-0909.html>
- We continue with our *weekly* and *monthly* programs: **Book Club for Adults, Drama Therapy with Alexis, Yoga with Julie, Fitness and Nutrition Class, 4H DSAOC Superkids, Teen/Adult Bowling League, Sibshops, Mano a Mano** and our programs that run quarterly, **Mano a Mano Book Club** and **Signing Time**.
- 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 Friends** Group, and the **Spanish** language support group.
- We continue to publish the **Optimist Newsletter** as another way to help keep our families and community informed. Check out the latest Newsletter here: <https://www.dsaoc.org/pdfs/optimist/2017-dsaoc-optimist-newsletter.pdf>
NEWSLETTER ARCHIVES: <https://www.dsaoc.org/optimist-newsletter.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 also **collaborate 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.

- **REMINDER Adult Down Syndrome PRIMARY CARE Clinic.** DSAOC is thrilled to be involved in the collaboration with the UCI Family Health Clinic in Santa Ana that is the first Down syndrome specific Adult Primary Care clinic, created in alliance with UC Irvine Health. The clinic opened in March of 2016 and has been meeting with several patients monthly. Managed by Dr. Emily Dow, the Chief Medical Officer of UC Irvine Family Health Centers in Santa Ana and Anaheim, she continues to focus on ways to ensure our adults with Down syndrome have access to primary and specialized care. **Read the STORY** on our **BLOG**: <http://www.dsaoc.org/blog/?p=2074> You can also view information in our 2016 Summer Optimist Newsletter: <https://www.dsaoc.org/pdfs/optimist/2016-summer-optimist-newsletter.pdf>
- **REMINDER 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 more than 800 patient evaluations. **INFORMATION AND VIDEO**: <http://www.dsaoc.org/chocs-children-down-syndrome-program.html>
- Take some time today to view DSAOC’s “Community Corner” video series. You won’t be disappointed! <https://www.dsaoc.org/community-corner.html>
- We continue to offer **Self-Advocates volunteer opportunities** on Tuesdays and Wednesdays at the DSAOC Center. This has resulted in one of our adults accepting a job at a local software company, and we’ve been able to send a handful of others out on job interviews. We are always thrilled to receive calls from employers who are interested in adding adults with Down syndrome to their interview list.

The Down Syndrome Association of Orange County would like to extend a very special THANK YOU to our major Corporate, Foundation, and Individual Sponsors, as well as collaboration partners in 2017:


Ingram Micro, Valero Wilmington Refinery, FedEx, EDM Performance Accessories, Jensen Family, National Charity League – Pacific Coast Chapter, FREEMAN Co., VCI Event Technology, Disney VoluntEARS Community Fund, Brown Metals, CHOC Children’s, Decorative Arts Society, Thomas Goodwin, Grit Cycle, Knights of Columbus, Union Bank, La Salle Medical Associates, United Stationers, ABA Water, Soka University of America, UCP-OC, Mater Dei High School, Garden Grove Elks Lodge, Orange Elks, Pic Me Entertainment, Orange Lutheran, Inspired by Drive, UC Irvine Health, Thales Avionics, The Darden Sisters, DJ Willpower, Pujols Family Foundation, Hans Whitten, Alejandra Mejia and Family, Seal Beach Yacht Club, American Advocacy Group, Alzheimer’s OC, RCOC, Down Syndrome Foundation, 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. Or, you can contribute in the new year and help us kick off 2018! Thank you.

To make your tax-deductible contribution to DSAOC, please visit:
<https://www.dsaoc.org/direct-donation.html>

For more information on DSAOC, please visit our website at www.dsaoc.org For a list of current programs & services please visit: <https://www.dsaoc.org/pdfs/dsaoc-programs-services-2017-06.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

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