THE OPTIMIST

DSAOC WRAPS UP SUMMER 2017

Buy does time fly when you’re having fun! DSAOC kicked off the 2017 summer season with our 13th Annual Golf Tournament, two picnics and some amazing summer programs.

Our 13th Annual Golf Tournament Banquet & Auction was another one for the books, with amazing golfers, generous sponsors, and despite weather, we could not ask for a better day! Huge amounts of thanks to Tom Adams and his team at EDM Performance Accessories for continuing to support this annual event that raises necessary funds for DSAOC’s programs and services. For a list of sponsors and special guests, please visit our website where you can see more information about this annual event, as well as watch a video that includes sponsor credits: http://www.dsaoc.org/golf-tournament.html

SAVE THE DATE for next year’s tournament - Monday, June 11, 2018.

The DSAOC Summer Picnics in mid-June were enjoyed by more than 300 people. The picnic venue, Atlantis Park in Garden Grove, provided lots of grassy picnic areas, some fun playgrounds, and of course the very popular SPLASH Pad — all the makings for an amazing day! The picnic was a great place to reconnect with old friends, make some new ones, enjoy a delicious dinner from our food sponsor, Cena Chicken, while enjoying the park’s amenities. Special thanks to National Charity League Friends Coast Chapter for providing support for this event.

The Orange Elks Picnic for DSAOC Families was once again amazing! Thanks to the team of wonderful people with the Orange Elks, DSAOC families enjoyed a beautiful day at Irvine Regional Park that included complimentary pony rides, entrance to the zoo, park style games, and some of the most delicious BBQ. We are so grateful to community sponsors like Orange Elks, who continue to make our families feel extra special and included in the community.

It wouldn’t be a summer without our DSAOC Summer Programs which included Art with Lynne, Ballet Basics, Dancing, Ten Pack Club and Smart Phone Photography. Huge thanks to all of our families who spent some extra time with us this summer for these exciting programs. Additional thanks to our summer program facilitators and volunteers for making the DSAOC Center a super COOL place to hang out during this hot summer!

17TH ANNUAL ORANGE COUNTY BUDDY WALK
It’s More than a Walk... It’s a Celebration!
Sunday, October 29
at the Angel Stadium of Anaheim
9:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m.

Registrations are open today and join us for 6 hours of FUN on the field and inside the gates of the Angel Stadium. Exciting activities and attractions, FUN field play, stage performances, awards, live bands and DJ Willowers. Walk as an individual, join a team, or start your own team.

Can’t attend? Consider making a general donation, or donate to a team. Thank you!

For more info visit: http://dsaoc.donordrive.com/event/17

SOCIAL MEDIA SAFETY

For those of you with teens and young adults, social media is probably quite a big part of your life. Whether they are on Instagram, Facebook, Snapchat or all three it is important for them to have the right tools to stay safe and follow the proper etiquette if you are interested in DSAOC hosting a social media safety course for both parents, teens and young adults. Please call (714) 540-6794 or email Lauren@ProgramsDSAOC.org
MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT

As the year is winding down, and we will soon be welcoming a new year, it is a great time of reflection. I often reflect on my role as the President of the DSACC Board of Directors. Why did I get involved with DSACC? Why do I even call DSACC the first place?

The answer to the last question is easy. Almost 14 years ago, I gave birth to a daughter with Down syndrome. We had no idea what Down syndrome was and how it would affect our daughter or our family. My DJK was diagnosed before birth, so we were not as “prepared” as we are now. My doctor, Dr. Robert Schuler, told us about a group in Orange County that might be able to provide us with some resources and support. That group was called PROUD (Parents Regional Outreach for Understanding Down syndrome). PROUD was founded in 1985 by a dedicated group of parents who felt the need to provide information and support to families and their loved ones with Down syndrome. At that time, Orange County did not have any support in place, so these families worked hard, pounding the pavement to get resources in the hands of parents. Initially, most of the support was eventually in the hands of parents. Meetings were held at kitchen tables, and they had bake sales and garage sales. The database then was a box of files. In 2004 came the name change to PROUD OC and in 2011 the organization hired its first Executive Director. More than 20 years later, DSACC serves approximately 2,000 families in and around Orange County, and collaborates with several organizations, and the original Down syndrome organization serving Orange County. And, to think that all of this started with a passionate, dedicated group of volunteers who understood the needs of those families and wanted to create something special, a place we could belong, a meaningful and supportive organization for individuals with Down syndrome and their families.

So, why did I get involved with DSACC? DSACC helped to provide the “more” that others have been doing for so many years. I wanted to help grow and expand DSACC’s programs. I wanted to help the community. DSACC continues to grow, and we need more volunteers to support these wonderful programs. You can see a majority of programs and services here https://dsacc.org/pdf/dsacc-programs-services-2017-06.pdf

WANT UPDATES ON THE ABLE ACT? VISIT THE NDSS Website for Updates on the ABLE Act: http://www.ndss.org/stateable

WHAT ARE ABLE ACCOUNTS? The Achieving a Better Life Experience (ABLE) Act allows individuals with disabilities to create tax-free savings accounts. The bill aims to ease financial strains faced by individuals with disabilities by making tax-free savings accounts available to cover qualified expenses such as education, housing, and transportation.

CONGRATULATIONS RACHEL OSTERBACH

On September 14th, the DSACC Executive Director, R. Rachel Osterbach, was given the honor of inducting Rachel’s program into the Edison High School’s Hall of Fame. This is an honor bestowed upon Aluminis who have distinguished themselves in their career or location. R. Rachel and her family for nearly 20 years and had the opportunity to welcome Rachel Osterbach into the amazing Edison High School. Today, those who attended Down syndrome awareness events at Edison High School had the opportunity to watch the amazing Rachel Osterbach as she was inducted into the Edison Hall of Fame. She is a true role model and an inspiration to all.

The first thing Rachel said was “It’s an honor to be among some of the best and brightest minds in the world.” Rachel then went on to say “Thank you for this amazing opportunity. I am truly humbled to be here tonight amongst all of you.” Rachel is a true inspiration and an inspiration to us all.

TESTIMONIAL TUESDAY

Each Tuesday we share a testimonial on our social media channels and we would like you to be part of the fun. Don’t stress, the testimonial only has to be a few sentences on how DSACC has impacted your life, and if you have a fun picture to go along with it, that is a major plus. Please see the call for our testimonial winners next week! Send your testimonial to Lauren at Programs@DSACC.org and tell others why DSACC is important to you.

EDUCATOR OF THE YEAR AND RECOGNITION PROGRAM

A good education can change anyone; a good teacher can change everything.”

Each year we take time to recognize educators that make a positive difference in the lives of students with Down syndrome through the DSACC Educator of the Year and recognition program. Nominations are due to DSACC so we can recognize and honor educators that go the extra mile to inspire students with Down syndrome so they can reach their full potential.

2017 OC BICE CAMP

Another amazing week was held at Orange County Bike Camp 2017! 100% of riders that attended the five-day Bice Camp ride on two wheels by the end of the week. In collaboration with UCLA-OCSC, the camp teaches children, teens, and adults with Down syndrome and other disabilities to ride conventionally; two-wheel bikes without training wheels, using a curriculum and ultralight stiff-tire bikes provided by Van Shim. This week is filled with fun rides, team, rides, and a whole lot of inspiration moments.

We would like to thank Drive for their generous sponsorship that allowed us to attend camp via scholarships. The sponsorship meant the world to our families that otherwise would not have been able to attend.

2017 RED CARPET BALL

On Friday, February 24, 2017 over 200 teens and adults with Down syndrome met at the Embassy Suites in Brea, to dance the night away to the tunes of DJ Willson. The theme was Midnight in Paris with a tented Eiffel Tower magically backed into the corner of the room. You may have actually thought you were on the Champs-De-Mars. The night began with photos of photos, then dinner, and ended; you guessed it, on the dance floor.

This magical night could not happen without the creative vision and help of our Red Carpet Ball Committee, which includes Linda and Jillian Lowen, Pat and Lauren Shipman, Tom Wiggins, Brynna Palmer, Laura Marcum, Lisa Grant, Rachel McDermott, and Sandy Lysak. They take the time out of their busy schedules throughout the year to put together this wonderful night. We are also thankful to the Orange Eats (Mike and Rosie Cdel), JB’s Deli, Sean Rosenthal from Within A Dream photography, the Lowen Family, and MuniSport Imports for their generous contributions to this event. The 2018 Red Carpet Ball will be held at the Phoenix Club in Anaheim and take place on March 17, 2018, where we will travel to a new and exciting place for our annual Red Carpet Night.

For more information about the Red Carpet Ball and to view photos, please visit www.dsacc.org/red-carpet-ball.html

"A good education can change anyone; a good teacher can change everything.”

Each year we take time to recognize educators that make a positive difference in the lives of students with Down syndrome through the DSACC Educator of the Year and recognition program. Nominations are due to DSACC so we can recognize and honor educators that go the extra mile to inspire students with Down syndrome so they can reach their full potential. 2017 marks the 18th year of our Educator of the Year Award program, and we were thrilled to receive 12 nominations.

Our DSACC 2016-2017 Educator of the Year Award winner was Michelle Tieskot, a third-grade general education teacher from Sacramento Elementary. During the last week of school, we surprised Mrs. Tieskot with the award, which she accepted amongst her students, faculty, colleagues, and the school board. Nominated by the third-grade team, Mrs. Tieskot is a model example of what it means to include a child with Down syndrome in her classroom. She has added American Sign Language to the class schedule for the other students to be able to communicate with her. It is the hope of DSACC that teachers like Mrs. Tieskot will encourage others to follow in her footsteps by using a creative method of inclusion with the willingness to positively impact the lives of students with Down syndrome.

We receive so many wonderful nominations, It’s always difficult for the judging committee to pick, but one nominee. We would like to thank all the families who took the time of their busy schedules to share their stories and experiences with us about those making a difference in the lives of children with Down syndrome. Each nominee received a letter of recognition from DSACC, and their leadership team was also contacted for her nomination.

You can help us continue to Change Perceptions and Change Lives by submitting a nomination during next year’s cycle, which will open in March 2018.