



familyconnection

Winter 2019 NEWSLETTER

Thank You for Supporting the DSAGSL Mission



The Down Syndrome Association of Greater St. Louis aims to benefit the lives of people with Down syndrome and their families through individual and family support, education, public awareness, and advocacy. The bottom line is, we just couldn't do it without the support of our amazing community.

Year after year, the DSAGSL community steps up to support our programs and events through traditional fundraising, monetary donations, and volunteer time. It never ceases to amaze us just how generous and dedicated our supporters are. In addition to these vital contributions, DSAGSL community members have continued to come up with new and creative ways to raise funds, items, and awareness for the Down syndrome community. Thank you to everyone for your support in 2018! We are so excited to work with you all again in the New Year!

Drives for Family Support Programs

These generous businesses & organizations collected items that will be used in celebration baskets, resource packets, and general support of DSAGSL families! Thank you so much for your contributions to our Family Support Programs! These drives help us keep our costs down, and it raises awareness in the community!

Signature Consultants- Collected Gift Cards to stores like Target, Walmart, & Schnucks at their annual holiday party

Cardinal Glennon Children's Hospital- Donates baby books for DSAGSL new parent packets

Ladue Dental Group- Collected baby items for new family celebration baskets

Drives for Employment Programs

Our friends at **McAuliffe Chiropractic** office have made it a yearly tradition to collect wrapped snacks that will be used as part of the Ready 2 Work Pop Up Snack Shop, a micro-business employed by individuals with Down syndrome. Self-advocates learn on the job customer service skills, teamwork, decision making and problem solving, as well as basic marketing and money handling. Thank you, McAuliffe Chiropractic!

Other ways to support DSAGSL

- Collect items or money for your birthday or anniversary. Facebook makes this really easy and they donate 100%.
- Have a "Dollar Dance" at your wedding, bat mitzvah, or holiday party. Participants pay \$1 to cut in and dance with the person of honor!
- Encourage a scout troop to earn their community service badge by organizing a book or baby item drive.
- Have a "Genes Day" or "PJ Day" at your school or work. Participants are allowed to wear jeans or pj's to school or work, but only if they make a donation!
- Organize a profit sharing day with a local business or restaurant and host a happy hour or dinner.
- Ask your employer if they have a company matching program.

Let us know if you'd like to organize a drive or event, or if you have any questions.

We'd love to hear from you! or you can visit www.dsagsl.org/other-ways-to-help to learn more!

www.dsagsl.org



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DSAGSL

2019

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from the Executive Director



Dear Friends:

I can't believe it's 2019 already! 2018 was another great year for the DSAGSL. Thank you for making it possible!

We welcomed 44 new babies into our family, saw 59 teens and adults rock out with DSAGSL Rocks!, secured paid employment for 5 job seekers, and raised awareness and funds for the community through outstanding events like Step Up for Down Syndrome, Birdies and Bass, and Walk in the Park! We also welcome several new, amazing staff who

are excited to work hard for the Down syndrome community.

We hope you enjoyed every moment with us last year! We are excited to ring in 2019 with the continuation of our outstanding programs and events. We have some exciting new additions and changes in store! Perhaps the most exciting is the combination of our Run for 21 and Step Up for Down Syndrome, being held on Sunday, June 2nd. We can't wait to host the 5k in Forest Park followed by our always amazing SUDS walk and festival. The festival will be even more exciting this year too complete with live music, talent show, and more!

Read through this newsletter for all of the details about this and all of our other programs and events. We hope you join us! As always, thank you for all you do for the DSAGSL and Happy New Year!

Erin Suelmann, Executive Director

meet your new Staff



Amber McWilliams
Director of Special Events

I am so excited to join the Down Syndrome Association of Greater St. Louis team as the Director of Special Events. Many of you might recognize me from my four years as the Program Manager with Special Olympics Missouri. I have a background in non-profit work and am very passionate about advocating for the acceptance and inclusion of individuals of all ability levels. This has driven my long-term involvement working and volunteering with organizations who serve individuals with disabilities for over ten years.

Prior to my career with Special Olympics I worked at United Way of Greater Kansas City as a Donor Relations Manager building relationships and planning special events. In my spare time you can usually find me playing with our three adopted shelter dogs, or fur babies as I call them. The newest fur baby, Bentley, was born deaf so my husband, Kevin and I have spent a lot of our time this past year teaching him basic sign language commands. Aside from my fur children, I take lot of pride in the Special Olympics Cheer and Dance team that I coach. I am so excited to be a part of the DSAGSL community and look forward to getting to know everyone!

Self-Advocate Spotlight

Why I Like Working at DSAGSL by Lindsey Hawkins, Employment Assistant & Community Ambassador

When I came here to work, I had already been a self-advocate for a long time. Now I work here as a staff member 2 days a week. I work with the interns on job skills, and I help the staff members with projects. When I have been here I have been doing a lot of things.

I came up with the "Let's Go Blues" snack box for the Pop Up Snack Shop. I made the label for the box and got to decide what snacks went in. It was a big seller, too. I also did the Birdies and Bass event. It was so much fun. I served drinks to the golfers, and I did fishing and caught a 15 inch catfish at the last minute.

I also did the Walk in the Park around Busch Stadium with the St. Louis Cardinals this year. I am going to miss my favorite manager, Mike Matheny. I am a big fan of the Cardinals team and all the players. I got to interview pitcher Mike Leake when he was on the Cardinals team for the DSAGSL video series, The Scoop. I asked him about what it's like to play baseball and we got messy eating ice cream in the dugout.

I did my first Trivia Night with the DSA team staffers. They put me on serving drinks and food because I have experience working in restaurants. My part-time job is at O26 as a host. I gave out drinks all evening long until the event was over.

I've gotten to go into the community and talk about DSA, too. I get to go pick up donations and talk to volunteers.

We also had a holiday party at DSAGSL for staff, and I saw my wonderful boss lady with her new daughter. She is very pretty like her mom. I gave Erin the best gift, a princess book for both her girls. I hope they enjoy it!

I've done so many things already in 2018, I can't wait to see what else I do while working here. Happy New Year!



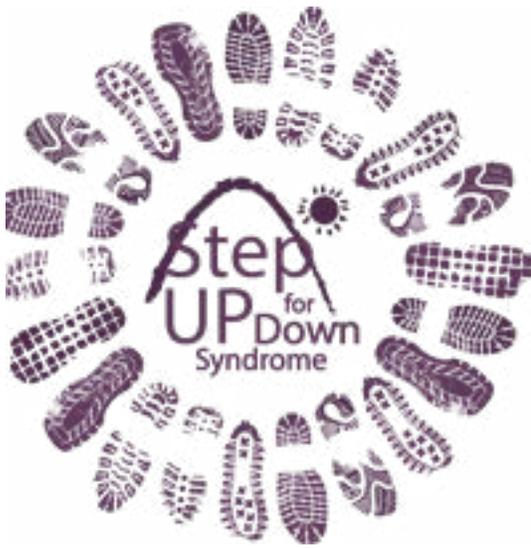
Congratulations to Newly Employed Julie and Paula!

DSAGSL Monday volunteer, Paula Mass, and DSAGSL Tuesday volunteer, Julie Hart, have officially been hired to join the team at US Bank! Julie and Paula filled out applications, visited the work site over the summer, had an interview, and even showcased their skill set for the managers.

Julie's attention to detail landed her a position searching for change of address postcards. Paula has such a positive attitude and learns new skills quickly, making her perfect for the sorting position. Both employees will receive support from a job coach as they learn new skills, routines, and get acclimated to a new environment.

Congratulations Paula and Julie! We are so proud of you!

The DSAGSL MISSION is to benefit the lives of people with Down Syndrome and their families through individual and family support, education, public awareness, and advocacy.



Start a team in honor of your loved one with Down syndrome, and join us for the largest celebration of Down syndrome in the Greater St. Louis area!! The day starts off with the Run for 21 5k race, followed by a one mile awareness walk, and an afternoon of food, music, dancing, crafts and activities for all ages.

www.support.dsagsl.org/stepup2019

Step Up for Down Syndrome & Run for 21

Sunday, June 2, 2019

8am - 12:30pm

Upper Muny Parking Lot in Forest Park



New in 2019: Run for 21 Race Has Moved!

The Step Up for Down Syndrome celebration day will kick off with the Run for 21 race, a 5k through beautiful Forest Park! Create a team in support of your loved one with Down syndrome and fundraise to cover your race fee!



WELCOME CORPORATE TEAMS!

Enhance your company image and increase your visibility and recognition!

Sponsorship Opportunities Available:

- Presenting Sponsor \$10,000
- Extra Mile \$7,500
- Pace Setter \$5,000
- Making Strides \$2,500
- Big Step \$1,000
- First Step \$500

Corporate Team Opportunities Available:

- Recognition Banners
- Logo on Event Shirts
- Website Recognition
- Social Media Shout Outs
- Game Booth
- Food Booth



For more information about Corporate Teams or Sponsorship Opportunities please contact Amber McWilliams: 314.961.2504 - amber@dsagsl.org

Save the Date

Happy 2019!

Mark your calendars for these upcoming programs & events!

ANNUAL CELEBRATION

February 7th from 5:30-7:30 at Spazio Westport

APPLICATION PERIOD OPENS FOR EMPLOYMENT IN THE POP UP SNACK SHOP

January 30th at www.dsagsl.org/programs/employment

DSA ROCKS CONCERT & WORLD DOWN SYNDROME DAY CELEBRATION

March 23rd from 12:00-4:00 at Tin Roof

SPRING PICNIC & PHOTOGRAPHY EVENT

April 28th from 10:00-1:00 at Faust Park

BIRDIES & BASS GOLF TOURNAMENT

May 13th at Persimmon Woods Golf Club

INFANT & TODDLER PLAYGROUPS

February 8th from 9:30-11:00 at the DSAGSL Office

April 22nd from 9:30-11:00 at the DSAGSL Office

YOUNG FRIENDS BOARD- 21 CLUB EVENTS

Check back for more details!

STEP UP FOR DOWN SYNDROME & RUN FOR 21

June 2nd from 8:00-12:30 at Forest Park

DSAGSL POP UP GIFT SHOP CRAFT CLUB

Second Thursday of each month from 10:00-12:00 at the DSAGSL Office

SILVER STEPS SUPPORT GROUP FOR CAREGIVERS OF AGING ADULTS

Fourth Tuesday of each month from 10:30-12:00 at the DSAGSL Office





PLEASE JOIN US AT OUR
ANNUAL CELEBRATION

Thursday, February 7, 2019

5:30-7:30pm

A time to formally recognize and honor our donors, volunteers, and all those who have contributed to the growth and success of DSAGSL in 2018.

We will also be voting in new board members and taking a look at all we've accomplished in the last year. Join us for drinks, appetizers, and a few special announcements. Childcare not provided, however children are welcome!

Spazio Westport Garden Room

12031 Lackland Road, St. Louis, MO 63146

Please RSVP to rsvp@dsagsl.org or 314-961-2504 x6

DSAGSL / IN ACTION

NEW MOTHER'S LUNCHEON

Over 50 moms and their babies attended the annual New Mother's Luncheon in September. The DSAGSL cohosts this event with the Pujols Family Foundation. The new moms were inspired by parents Linda Strobel and Lori Cobb who shared their experiences of life and love of their children.



DINE OUT FOR DOWN SYNDROME

Many thanks to the awesome restaurants that participated in Dine Out for Down Syndrome in October! The Pat Connolly Tavern raised over \$750 during their Dine Out Event and TAPPED raised \$1750 during their week of fundraising for DSAGSL!

EMPLOYMENT ACADEMY & ACADEMY JR.

6 bright young adults participated in the Academy and Academy Jr. during the Fall 2018 session. The next sessions of Academy and Academy Jr. will be announced in late January.



DSAGSL ROCKS

The DSAGSL Rocks! Concert on November 10 at Tin Roof had over 250 people in attendance! Everyone danced and cheered as 23 rockers took the stage. The next session begins the week of January 20 and the concert is March 23.



CELEBRATION BASKETS

11 Celebration baskets were delivered to new families at the hospital or their homes, to welcome them to the DSAGSL community.

WALK IN THE PARK

Thank you to all the families, friends, volunteers, and sponsors who participated in the 2018 Walk in the Park at Busch Stadium. It was an amazing event, celebrating the abilities of our family members and friends with Down syndrome with over 40,000 fans in attendance. A big congratulations to our field slot winners from 2018 Step Up for Down Syndrome: Elijah Haith, Jacob Szczepan, Cricket Abounader, Pierce Canfield, Andrew Marzucio, Wesley Eller, Delaney Burke, Henry Russell, Jessica Jansen, Joseph Niemeyer, John-John Hartweger, Olivia Klaus, Anna Reineri, Henry Wright, Wyatt Sevic, Ella Agnew, Braden Fridley, Ordia Ikuenobe, Shane Muckerman, and Lexi Rohr.



SCHOOL PRESENTATIONS

DSA presented on Ability Awareness to over 200 students at area elementary schools and a Girl Scout troop over the last 6 months. 65 teachers and educators also learned valuable information on the learning and education of students with Down syndrome.



9TH ANNUAL TRIVIA NIGHT

The 2018 Halloween-themed Trivia Night was a record breaking year! The event raised more over \$40,000 for programs and services with 432 people in attendance and more than 50 volunteers helping to make the night a scary success.

SILVER STEPS

The Silver Steps Support Group for caregivers of aging adults with Down syndrome celebrates its 1 year anniversary this January, and continues to grow and evolve. The group meets at the DSAGSL office on the 4th Tuesday of the month and anyone is welcome to stop by, no RSVP needed!

POP UP SNACK SHOP

The DSA's micro business and job training program, Pop-Up Snack Shop, had a very busy 2nd half of the year! Between August and December, the Snack Shop "popped up" at Stifle Financial Corporation, RBO Print Logistix (our third time with them!), Kelly Ruby State Farm Office in Eureka, Enterprise Fleet Management, Express Scripts, and Lashley Baer, Attorneys at Law. Thanks to all who have invited us to their businesses!



21 CLUB MOVIE PARTY

The Young Friends Board of DSAGSL debuted their new social group, the 21 Club. Their inaugural event in December 2018 was an ugly sweater party, happy hour, and private holiday movie screening at Ronnie's Theater. The event sold out and raised \$750 for DSAGSL! The group was formed so that adults 21+ of all abilities have the opportunity to get to know one another. Keep an eye out for details about upcoming events in 2019!



HOLIDAY PARTY

Over 400 people enjoyed crafts, visits with Santa, dancing and catching up with friends at the annual DSAGSL Holiday Party.



INFANT & TODDLER PLAYGROUPS

DSAGSL hosted playgroups in August, October, and December with over 20 babies and parents attending each group! In August, kids had fun with water. In October, we celebrated Halloween and in December, Santa stopped by for photos!

VISUAL SCHEDULES WORKSHOP

Eight parents attended our Visual Schedule Workshop in September. They created various types of schedules to help with routines and tasks at home.

DOWN SYNDROME AWARENESS MONTH

Packets of information including inspirational posters, person-first language guides, how to talk with kids about Down syndrome, and other resources were sent out to more than 100 schools in the Greater St. Louis area in preparation for Down Syndrome Awareness Month. A letter was included asking the schools to talk to students about Down syndrome, schedule a DSAGSL presentation, and hang the posters around their campus.

21 SUN SALUTE YOGA FOR DOWN SYNDROME

In October, 100 yogis, volunteers, community organization representatives, and self-advocates with handmade items to sell gathered at the beautiful World's Fair Pavilion in Forest Park to enjoy a morning of group yoga, shopping, and celebration. The event raised awareness about the unique abilities and amazing talents people with Down syndrome have to share with the world.



Thank You for your support!

We want to celebrate all of the new partnerships established, volunteers, donors, sponsors, and new families welcomed, as well as all the individuals with Down syndrome and their families that we were able to serve over the last 6 months. Together, we raised essential funds for programs and services that fulfill our mission to benefit the lives of people with Down syndrome and their families. Not to mention, you all logged more than 1,000 volunteer hours! Our sincerest thanks to everyone who contributed their time, energy, and resources.

Grants Awarded

The DSAGSL is so pleased to have been awarded grants from the following foundations.

St. Joseph Catholic Parish of Cottleville - \$3,000 for new parent programming

Enterprise Holdings Foundation - \$5,000 for DSA Rocks

Wayne C. Kaufman Foundation - \$20,000 for employment programming/agency strategic planning

Trio Foundation - \$7,000 for programming related to aging

Third Party Fundraisers Benefiting DSAGSL

Thank you to the following groups for your support in 2018!

Dine Out for Down Syndrome at TAPPED

Dine Out for Down Syndrome at Pat Connolly Tavern

Cookie Cutters Haircuts, The Shepherd Family

Lemonade Stand, Lila Solomon & Family

Item Drives Benefiting DSAGSL

Thank you to the following groups for collecting items to be used in DSAGSL programs!

McAuliffe Chiropractic

Ladue Dental Group

DSAGSL Families & Community Members at the Annual Holiday Party

Signature Consultants

Cardinal Glennon Children's Hospital



UPCOMING VOLUNTEER OPPORTUNITIES

Spring Picnic & Photography Event

Volunteer Photographers & Helpers Needed
Sunday, April 28th at Faust Park
10:00am - 1:00pm

Birdies & Bass Golf Tournament

Self-Advocate Anglers Needed!
Monday, May 13th at Persimmon Woods Golf Club
various shifts available

Step Up for Down Syndrome

Sunday, June 2nd at Forest Park
8:00am - 12:30pm

Contact Abigail@dsagsl.org or 314-961-2504 x6 for more information or to sign up!

Family 2 Family

Family2Family is a network of volunteers who are willing to help other families by using their common experiences. These volunteers have experience or knowledge in a variety of areas, such as medical or educational, or families looking to connect for social opportunities. If you are interested in this opportunity or have questions, contact Christy at (314)961-2504 or at christy@dsagsl.org.

PROGRAM ITEM DONATION WISHLIST

Colored Paper (8.5"x11")

Cardstock Paper (8.5"x11")

Craft Supplies (stampers & ink pads, stencils, stickers, etc.)

Gift Cards to Target, Wal-Mart, Grocery Stores

Postage Stamps

Baby Socks

Baby Washcloths

Bibs

Infant Toys

Stay Connected

Are you receiving our regular e-news blast in your inbox? Don't miss out on the latest news and upcoming events from DSAGSL. Visit www.dsagsl.org/signup to register today!

Follow us on social media for event notices and update, pictures, stories, and more!

BECOME A DSAGSL CHAMPION OF CHANGE

Honor a loved one, dedicate a birthday, or host your own fun event with a personal fundraising page benefiting DSAGSL. Visit: <http://support.dsagsl.org/champions>

Create a lasting legacy and honor your loved one with a Legacy Wall Tile. Donations to our legacy wall provide year-round services, supports and programs for individuals with Down syndrome in our community.



Large Tile with Color Photo - \$1,200 or \$100 per month for one year

Medium Tile - \$480 or \$40 per month for one year

Small Tile - \$250 or \$21 per month for one year

A life that touches others goes on forever - Always on my mind, Forever in my heart

Contact Barbara Arnold, 314-961-2504 or Barbara@dsagsl.org for more information.



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DSA ROCKS! CONCERT & WORLD DOWN SYNDROME DAY CELEBRATION!

Saturday, March 23, 2019

Celebrate World Down Syndrome Day with DSAGSL by rocking out to awesome tunes performed by the rock bands of DSA ROCKS! There will be something for everyone including games and activities for all ages and abilities!

Festivities begin at 12pm at the Tin Roof!

www.dsagsl.org/wdsd