



Making The Connection

Fall 2009 • Down Syndrome Connection of the Bay Area

A Beautiful Day on the Bay — Thanks to the Kiwanis Club of San Ramon Valley



Nicole aka Sunshine rates the day



Joey and Christina



Garrison
rocked his
first ETC trip



Erica in the house boat neighborhood



Joey, Erica and ETC volunteer on the Beach



Robbie and Jackson all geared up and ready to go



Nicole and a helpful ETC Guide

On October 3, several lucky DSCBA members were able to experience a wonderful Kayaking trip on the SF Bay in Sausalito in connection with ETC...Environmental Traveling Companions. It was indeed a beautiful day for all who attended. While rowing down the Bay we observed sea lions, pelicans and other bay life while cruising through the many house boats in Sausalito.

There was singing, racing and lots of laughs! The forecast was for high winds but we truly lucked out. It was a picture perfect day on the bay and when we finished rowing we all shared a picnic lunch and reviewed our favorite parts of our day!

Many thanks to the Kawanis Club of the San Ramon Valley for their generous grant to allow this memorable event to happen for those who were able to attend. It will be a day to remember.

— Marianne Iversen

Marianne



Jack and Robbie



— I N S I D E —

From The President	2
Speech and Language Spotlight	3
Safety Day	3
Great Day . . . Great Golf . . . Great Fun!	4
B of A Honors Martha Hogan	4
Series of Fortunate Events	5
The Right Place	5
It never hurts to just ask!	5
For Ana	6
Life with Eli	6
Our Buddy Walk Experience	7
Bay Area Buddy Walk a Big Success	8
A Fabulous Fall Day with Buddy Play	10
Highlighting Abilities	10
Time, Talent and Treasures	14
Endnote from Nancy	15
The Holiday Party is Coming!	16

From the President



My name is Maura Perkins and I am proud to be the newly elected Board President for the DSCBA. My passion to serve on the Board is directly

related to my late Uncle William who had Down syndrome. I grew up in a loving and accepting family so as a young child I never thought of Uncle William as having special needs.

I am grateful to the current Board for electing me into this important position, as I am looking forward to giving back to the community and to serve our members. I had the opportunity to meet many of you at our 2009 Bay Area Buddy Walk. Thank you for being so welcoming!

In my first two months as Board President, I met with all board members to understand their individual and board vision for 2010. In those meetings board members expressed interest in serving our community in many different areas. Based on that feedback, education, advocacy, medical outreach and family support are examples of what we will be developing strong platforms for in 2010.

As the criteria expands and develops for our vision, the Board will need our members, their families and friends to get involved. We are currently looking for a critical role of Vice President for the Board. Remember, you do not have to be a member to be on the Board in any position. We can also benefit from an Event Coordinator and many more volunteers for fundraising events.

As a service organization the Board and staff at the Connection fully realizes that we will not be effective unless we serve our members to the best of our capacity. Please contact me anytime by email mperkins@mkni.com or by phone 888-654-8884 with your interests and suggestions.

Looking forward to hearing from everyone!

— Maura Perkins

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*2010 DSCBA Board Meetings

117 A Town & Country Drive,
Danville CA • 6:45pm – 8:15pm

Jan 19 Feb 16 Mar 16 Apr 20
May 18 Jun 15 July 20 Aug 17
Sept 21 Oct 19 Nov 16 Dec 14

*All meetings are open to members. If you would like to attend or bring a guest please call Board President, Maura Perkins at 888-654-8884.

*2010 Parents' Support Group

Parents of children with Down syndrome are welcome and encouraged to join our monthly support group to exchange information, share common experiences and be encouraged by other parents with similar issues and concerns.

The group meets at the Connection office in Danville, 117 A Town & Country Drive. Please call Martha Hogan if you have questions or to tell her you are coming: 925-362-8660.

JAN 26 FEB 23 MAR 30 APR 27
MAY 25 JUN 29 JULY 27 AUG 24
SEPT 28 OCT 26 DEC 7

*Childcare is not available. Babies under 10 months are welcome. This group is for parents.



Down Syndrome Connection
OF THE BAY AREA

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Useful Links...

1. Down Syndrome Research and Treatment Foundation
www.dsrtf.org
2. Downsed International
www.downsed.org
3. National Down Syndrome Society
www.ndss.org
4. National Down Syndrome Congress
www.ndscenter.org
5. Special Olympics
www.specialolympics.org
6. Wrightslaw:
www.wrightslaw.com
7. Disability Solutions
www.disabilitysolutions.org
8. *Down Syndrome Quarterly*
www.denison.edu/dsq/
9. Woodbine House
www.woodbinehouse.com
10. Regional Center of the East Bay
www.rceb.org
11. CARE Parent Network
(925) 313-0999
www.contracostaarc.com
12. Family Resource Network
(510) 547-7322 e-mail:
0-FRNOAK@inreach.com
13. MATRIX Parent Network & Resource Center
(415) 884-3535
www.matrixparents.org
14. Parents Helping Parents
(408) 727-5775
www.php.com
15. Support For Families of Children With Disabilities
(415) 282-7494
www.supportforfamilies.org
16. The Arc of Alameda County
www.tiw-alameda.com
17. *The Down Syndrome Pages*
www.downsyndromepages.com/

CHEW, CHEW, CHEW!!

Amin Ridzuan is a 9 year old boy who began speech therapy one month ago due to feeding concerns. Amin's mother Norizzah reported that Amin does not chew his food. Upon observing Amin eat, it was apparent that Amin mouthed most of his food until it was soft and then swallowed it whole. This included Goldfish crackers, Sun Chips, apple slices and hotdogs. When asked about his diet, Norizzah reported that Amin eats mostly foods that are crunchy and melt-able like: crackers, chips, and cereals; soft: cake, banana, custard; pureed: apple sauce, yogurt; and thin liquids: hot cocoa, milk. When analyzing the nutritional content of Amin's diet, it was very apparent that he

was missing some very important food groups: fruits, vegetables, proteins, and grains. He was also missing chewy and mixed textures.

Over the past month, Amin has used chewy tubes (rubber tubes), goldfish crackers, and red vines (licorice) to help him create strength, jaw grading, and the motor pattern necessary for chewing a variety of foods. At the initiation of therapy Amin was unable to chew 3 times on a single piece of food. Currently, he is able to chew a piece of hard licorice 10 times, as well as a goldfish cracker 4-5 times. Amin has made steady and quick progress due to his oral motor program. Due to Amin's new strength and motor patterns, he

is currently beginning to try some healthier food choices (fruits/vegetables). Congratulations Amin on improving your oral motor abilities and overall nutrition in such a short time!

Studies show.....

Food cannot be digested properly when swallowed whole because the first part of digestion begins in your mouth. Studies also show that digestion is slower in people with Down syndrome due to hypotonicity (percentage of calories burned is 15% fewer at rest. People with Down syndrome are more prone to vitamin and mineral deficiencies. Because of the predisposed conditions our children have, it is very important that we

provide them with healthy diets so as to aide in the absorption of the nutrients necessary for healthy living and brain functioning/development. It is never too late to start an oral motor program for your child!

— Heather Peterson MS SLP-CCC
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202.425.6874



Safety Day

On a warm Saturday morning, The Down Syndrome Connection of the Bay Area held its first ever Safety Day! And what a great day it was. The Connection would like to thank Frank and Monica Wnuk—they successfully bid on a private visit from the San Ramon Fire Protection District and Kinder's Catering at the Knights of Columbus Auction and generously donated the two auctions items to the DSCBA! We were fortunate to receive a 1 hour private visit that included a HUGE ladder truck and a delicious lunch from Kinder's. We were also lucky enough to have an ambulance from NOR-CAL, a police car from the San Ramon Police Department, and Jim and Susan Herzog from Farmer's Insurance that did complimentary finger printing of the children. This day gave the children, and adults, a chance to see the vehicles' up close—we were able to climb in and out of the cab of the ladder truck; we were able to see the inside of the ambulance and sit on the beds; and we were able to sit in the back and front of the police car. This hopefully took some of the fear out of these cars and truck, so if we happen to need one, we won't be as scared. We enjoyed a great lunch of ribs and salads, and had a wonderful time visiting with old friends and making new ones. Thank you also to Lisa Upton who gave her time in taking pictures of this fun-filled day! — Kathy Harkins



Friends of the Connection - Honey & Ron Giblin - Frank & Monica Wnuk



PHOTOS BY LISA UPTON

Great Day . . . Great Golf . . . Great Fun!

On September 28th, the Knights of Columbus St Joan of Arc Council 9206 held their 4th Annual Charity Golf Tournament to benefit the Down Syndrome Connection of the Bay Area (DSCBA). A huge thank you to the 23 Knights on the Golf Committee lead by Robert Porter who have worked very hard to create a fabulous event every year. A sincere thanks to this year's Silver Sponsor, Nixon Insurance Agency and Bronze Sponsor, Earl Anthony's Dublin Bowl. It was very hot that day so the Casa Orozco Margarita hole was big hit. The evening was packed with a BBQ dinner, wine tasting, a raffle and a lot of auction fun! Thank you to everyone who came out to support the DSCBA on this day and to the donors who gave so generously to our friend and Knight Ron Giblin, to make the auction a big success. —Nancy LaBelle



Table for 10



After seeing the movie Julie and Julia my daughter and I decided to host our own monthly dinner party to promote friendship, food and socialization among the teens and young adults that we know. Our first dinner party was a meal of Asian influence and each guest brought a beverage to serve 4 people. We played a short ice breaker game at the beginning of the evening and enjoyed a make your own sundae bar for dessert. A game of Charades ended the evening. — Mary Erickson

Bank of America Honors Local Hero Martha Hogan

On Wednesday October 8th in the beautiful Rotunda Building in Oakland, Martha Hogan was honored with a 2009 Bank of America Neighborhood Excellence Award. Martha was acknowledged for her many years of support and advocacy, and for starting the Down Syndrome Connection of the Bay Area in 1998. Martha's years of contribution to the Down syndrome community has positively impacted the lives of many families throughout the Bay.



Bank of America's East Bay Market President Emily Shanks and Martha Hogan

The celebratory evening was nicely done with a cocktail hour giving everyone a chance to meet passionate people, like Martha from other Bay Area charitable organizations. Then on to enjoy the ceremony as Neighborhood Builders, Student Leaders and Local Hero's were honored. The award night ended with teens from the Destiny Arts Center, a Neighborhood Builder award winner, beautifully expressing themselves through dance.

Martha was awarded \$5000 to donate to her favorite charity and she has chosen the Down Syndrome Connection of the Bay Area as the recipient. It was an inspiring night that reinforced the generosity of our neighbors and the need for more people like Martha Hogan who start something small out of need and continue it big out of love. — Nancy LaBelle

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2009 East Bay Open Studios Artist Directory



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Series of Fortunate Events



August 28th, 2004. A day our lives were changed and thus became our series of fortunate events. We just celebrated our son Joaquin (a.k.a Teenies) Acuna's fifth birthday. Five years of growth...five years of trials.... five years of accomplishments. Accomplishments that we were told we'd never see. Accomplishments to the "typical" eye may not be such a big deal but are miraculous milestones in mine. As a mother we acclimate to whatever life throws our way. We adapt to every situation possible. We learn to keep a brave face as our special child is poked and prodded by the medical professionals while our heart is crying STOP! I have learned to listen to my son without using words. I have learned that my sons eyes have more to say than the speech that so desperately wants to come from his mouth. I have learned that advocacy will be forever engrained in my head because to this day Down syndrome is still so very misunderstood by the public. I have learned that the comments I receive at a grocery store about my child are no longer insults, but opportunities to teach.

Now at his five year milestone, we are now experiencing the new trials that go along with entering into the public school systems. Yet another journey to learn and grow from. Is it hard? Yes. Is it extremely frightening? Yes. Do I have faith that my son will continue to amaze us? Absolutely! He has been our greatest teacher, he has been our gift. Every year...every year has been our series of fortunate events, through the struggles through the joy, through the humor, through the heartache. We are his parents, his brother, his friend, we are so fortunate to play such an important role in his life! I look forward to his 10th birthday, where I can reflect on this five year acknowledgment and stand in awe at the many more obstacles he will overcome.

Thank you Teenies.....Thank you for being you!! Happy 5th Birthday!!

— Kristy Acuna

The Right Place



As we head out the door for our first day of school, my daughters are bounding in excitement. Hailey, who has Down syndrome and autism, begins kindergarten and Hannah will be in fourth grade. New clothes, cool backpacks and apples for their teachers are all they need to get started on this day. I, however, am dragging my feet in trepidation. Really, what mother doesn't on her youngest child's day of kindergarten? We walk onto the campus at Bollinger Canyon Elementary which is buzzing with activity. Hailey knows exactly where to go as she has been here all summer with her teachers and classmates. I am shaking as I move towards the regular kindergarten classrooms, knowing we have to pass by and proceed to her special education classroom. I am heartbroken, once again, to be reminded that Hailey doesn't fit the mold. But this story brightens Hailey is not sad about it at all. In fact, she doesn't notice and more importantly, doesn't care! Again, for the thousandth time, I think, Hailey has shown me that she is where she needs to be, in the place that's best for her. My sorrow is brief and I melt into feelings of gratefulness and gladness that our school district has been phenomenal in helping us find what works for Hailey, not as the "Down syndrome kid," but for her as an individual. Maybe someday, she'll be in regular education, but I've concluded that it really doesn't matter. I want Hailey to thrive in whatever environment that is best suited to her needs.

The door opens to her classroom, where her teachers and friends await. She gives a loud growl, hangs her backpack in its designated spot and does her signature sideways gallop across the room. My heart breaks again, but in an entirely different way. It breaks wide open with joy that she is happy and is, without a doubt, in the right place.

— Jennifer Bornstein

It Never Hurts to Just Ask!



Last February, it was time to sign Rachael up for Kindergarten. When I talked to her preschool teacher about this, she told me that Rachael would be fully included at a school which was 20 minutes away from our neighborhood school.

I asked, "why wouldn't Rachael be at our neighborhood school?" I was told that they did not have an inclusion program there and she could NOT go to our school. "The teachers are not trained for an inclusion program." Well, I was easily granted a meeting with the Director of Special Education. Which I asked Martha to attend with me and she graciously did so. At the meeting I asked, "why can't Rachael go to our neighborhood school?" I was told that a parent had never asked this question. The Director told me that parents were just so happy that their child would be fully included that they never requested for it to be done at there neighborhood school.

I was completely shocked at this. Rachael would have a much better chance of being fully included going to a school with her siblings and our neighborhood friends. A school were we have the privilege of knowing the families, teachers, and staff. Really sending her away to a school which we really would never be a part of would be "excluding" her in the name of "inclusion." The director asked me for 30 days and he would give me an answer.

Before the 30 days were even up, he called and told me to register Rachael for school at our neighborhood school!!! We are three weeks into school and we could not be happier! The "un-trained" teacher has won the heart of Rachael. She is one of the most considerate, and loving teachers we have ever had. Her willingness to do what is best for Rachael is amazing! She knows more about including Rachael than some of the professionals I have come across. Rachael does have an inclusion specialist from the other school, visiting once a week and she recieves all of her services while at school. We are truly blessed. God can move mountains and school districts!

— Natalie Burbach



Grace Cannon and family do meet and greet with 'The Wiggles' before concert in San Jose.

For Ana



Dear Ana, dear
 Daughter, dear Sister,
 dear Granddaughter,
 dear Niece,

Dearly beloved,
 treasured, wanted
 little girl.....

How proud we are of all the accomplishments you have achieved in your young life! In these first three years you have mastered things others never even need to think about. You managed to be alive, to be born and to be wanted. You managed to breathe, your heart was beating at birth and the little defect healed itself. Your lungs were weak but managed to take responsibility and carry the oxygen so badly needed for your little body to survive.

You left the hospital after only one week and continued to thrive. You started smiling, rolling over, and sitting even though your little brain was in turmoil by terrorizing seizures. Every time your little body was riddled with agonizing spasms you managed to smile. Again, and again 40 times, 70 times. When mom and dad held you to comfort you while trying to make these episodes comfortable for you, you showed your thankfulness through little words. Your lips continued to form sounds and letters, practicing and communicating. You did not give up when the nights were riddled with interruptions. Many, many, many interruptions. You let your cries of protest stop by only a few gentle words after the needles filled with steroids injured your little legs morning after morning. And even though you did stop smiling for a little while you started again, and again.

Thank you my little one. Thank you for your smiles and your kisses and your hugs and your shouts of joy, discovering your life, so precious, so delightful so needed. For, I your mother needed you. God knew! You are expanding all of our territories, every day. Thank you for being so strong,

Life with Eli



When I was about 1 1/2 and almost old enough to talk and I didn't know that Eli had Down syndrome, we were just brothers and best friends. Then at the age of about 4 I learned that he had Down syndrome. I asked a lot of questions and we still had a whole lot of fun together. I was surprised to learn that he had Down syndrome. It wasn't so hard to get used to after a while. He's still the same as I always knew him.

Sometimes we get in fights, but we always make up and call it brotherly love. His favorite sport is wrestling. When our parents tuck us in at about 8:00pm, we play this game called dominoes, where I stand on my bed and Eli pushes me from his bed and I fall over and other times I stand on top of his bed and he pushes me and I fall off his bed. Then my dad yells and says, "Oliver be quiet!" Then we lie back down for two minutes then we get back up and play again. This is an example of what it's like having a brother like Eli. He's the funniest guy you could imagine.

Here's one of his emails he always sends to me "Yo dog doggy dog dog. Yo dig this bro." And then he attaches a file of my research report mess-up.

He loves Coke and marshmallows and he knows how to squeeze it out of us anytime. He loves some sports. He played on the A's Challenger baseball team for 3 years. We have a basketball hoop that used to be 6 feet. He loves that and he would shoot on that until we raised it to 9 feet; he had no problem adapting to the 9 feet even though it was 3 feet higher. He's a champ at bowling – he's been getting strikes and spares and getting scores of 80, 90 and 100.

Most of all Eli's a great brother. Thanks for your support.

— Oliver Cooper

so filled with joy and excitement. Thank you for enriching our lives. Thank you for loving us even though we are not worthy. There is nothing in our lives that was as hard to accomplish as every little thing is in your life.

You worked hard to make your little legs start to walk. You worked on every step; every single step in your life shows your will power and your desire to strive. You first wanted to live and be with us and now we want you to never leave us again.

How I enjoy hearing your voice echoing in our rooms. And how empty the house is when your big personality is not filling it. You live, feel, and learn whole heartedly. Who would have thought how great it is to learn how to taste and see and feel as you do.

You inspire us continuously! We love you forever! Your Mom, Your Dad, your Sister and everybody who meets you.

— Simone Mueller-Moore

Our Buddy Walk Experience

September 2008

Dear Baby Wonderful, You are amazing! We just found out last night that you have Down syndrome and we are so blessed to have you in our lives. We love you so much and are so thankful for you. We are going to love you always and give you all of the love, support and care you need. We are going to provide you with amazing opportunities. You are so special and we feel blessed that God has chosen us to be your parents. We continue to pray for a healthy heart for you and that the fluid goes away.

We feel so much love and joy for you. We had fun sharing with our family and they are all so excited for us. Our family and friends are praying for us and have so much love for us. We also found out that you are a boy! We are starting to think of names for you and want to pick one with great meaning behind it, a strong name. We will go back in a month to see a specialist about your heart so we have many days to pray for a healthy heart for you while you are still in the womb. We look back at the night that we met and how we discovered that we were both involved in Best Buddies. It is a great organization that provides opportunities for friendships and jobs for individuals with intellectual disabilities. You will be able to benefit from all of the programs Best Buddies has to offer as you get older. Also, we have found some great resources about Down syndrome. There is a Bay Area group that meets for playgroups, parent support group, activities and fundraisers. Next month we are going to participate in the Buddy Walk in Walnut Creek with the Down Syndrome Connection of the Bay Area to raise money and awareness for Down syndrome. Stanford's Children's Hospital has a Down Syndrome Center and there are two national websites for Down syndrome. There is also a Down Syndrome Conference in Sacramento next summer. It is amazing how many resources there are out there for us. You are wonderful and we love you more and more each day. *Love, Mommy and Daddy*



October 2008

Dear Baby Wonderful, We participated in the Buddy Walk and it was so much fun and so inspiring. We met so many incredible families. Children with Down syndrome are amazing! We met Rachel who is trilingual, she can sign and understand English and Spanish. Cloe was a cute little girl with blond hair who really enjoyed her bagel. We saw a young boy in a carrier on his Dad's back who fell asleep half way through the walk. We saw two other boys who were having fun dancing to the music.

Every time we saw a little boy it brought tears to our eyes because we can't wait for you to join us in this wonderful world. We met Tyler who is 2 and his sister Mikayla who is 1 and their parents Raquel and Sean. Tyler was so much fun and so friendly. He was so sweet, he blew us kisses. Then we met Brian who is 7 years old and he was running and climbing and looking for bugs. We could just picture you at each stage and it brought so much joy to our hearts. You are a miraculous gift Baby Wonderful and we can't wait to watch you grow and experience life. We are excited for the Buddy Walk next year so you can

meet everyone and they can meet you. *Love, Mommy and Daddy*

October 2009

Dear Vincenzo (The Conqueror), We were thrilled to bring you to the Buddy Walk this year. It was so much fun to see everyone we met last year and make new friends too. Everyone loved meeting you and they were so happy that you were healthy and strong.



We showed off your badge of courage, your scar from heart surgery to correct Atrioventricular Septal Defect, that is already starting to fade. The turnout was great and the atmosphere was electric. It was such a great celebration. It meant so much to us to be able to see Tyler, his family and friends. We have been looking forward to it all year. Tyler is so big now and so is his sister Mikayla. We enjoyed seeing Martha Hogan who has been so helpful and supportive. It was also fun to meet up with Vivian and her parents Jennifer and Wess. They live in San Francisco like we do and we met them thanks to an introduction from Martha back in November of last year. We get together with them and 14 other families who have children with Down syndrome for a potluck each month. We met Gabriel, his siblings and his Mom Angie and had a great time visiting with them. We also met Heather, Speech-Language Pathologist, and look forward to following up with her. At the end of the event we got to say hello to Tammy and thank her for all of her hard work in making it such a success. We can't wait for next year's Buddy Walk! *Love, Mommy and Daddy*

— Laura and James Stankard





Bay Area Buddy Walk a Big Success

It is safe to say that the Down Syndrome Connection's 4th Annual Bay Area Buddy Walk was a big success! On Sunday October 11th, approximately 450 people came together to promote inclusion, awareness and acceptance of people with Down syndrome. Thanks to the Bay Area Buddy Walk Co-Chairs Tammy Garcia and Jo Kelly, their dedicated committee and many volunteers from the community, Buddy Walkers enjoyed a one mile walk at Heather Farms Park in Walnut Creek. Donned with bright yellow t-shirts donated by the Nakahara family, everyone started together and crossed the finish line with great pride as accomplishments were shouted out with excitement. This year kids and parents were able to explore a fire engine, play carnival games thanks to Boy Scout Stephen Schmitz, get tattooed, win raffle prizes and thanks to Best Buy play Guitar Hero.



Chris Berg and 2endeavour rock the park with a little help from Eli Cooper



This was the 2nd year the awesome band 2Endevour lead by Chris Berg donated time and talent which had everyone up and dancing. Together we raised \$60,000 for the Down Syndrome Connection of the Bay Area (DSCBA). Big thanks to Team E for Eli (the Coopers) who raised \$4,530. The Copen's and Nakahara's were not far behind raising over \$4000 each! The DSCBA is very grateful to the families who took advantage of new fundraising technology which enabled everyone to reach family, friends and co workers near and far by simply emailing a personal webpage. This technology gave over 740 people the opportunity to donate in support of many walkers which gave the Connection the much needed funds to keep the doors open. There is no doubt that the Bay Area Buddy Walk will continue to grow each year and we all look forward to an exciting and fun Buddy Walk in 2010.

— Angie Rettig



PHOTOS BY LISA UPTON



Crossing the Finish Line with Pride and Joy



PHOTOS BY STEVEN SPEDOWSKI

A Fabulous Fall Day with Buddy Play



Buddy Play went to the Shuchmann Family Farm this October. The air was cool the leaves were falling as Buddy Play came face to face with pigs, goats, llamas, roosters, emus and more. After feeding their new friends the children gathered for circle time where they were treated to a visit from a long boa constrictor and a sing-along parrot.

While the kids were happy eating fresh cornbread and picking out pumpkins to take home, our new friends Jeff Mooers and Colleen Callahan presented Buddy Play Coordinator Bernadette Fatehi a very generous check for \$12,000 from the National Association of Independent Life Brokerage Agencies (NAILBA) Foundation.



This grant will ensure many more field trips, hands-on experiences and craft projects for all Buddy Player's in the coming year.

— Linda Plount



Our heartfelt thanks to our new friends at NAILBA and to our old friends the Schuchmann's for a fabulous fall day.

Best Buddies

Nina says, "It was a lot of fun! I got to meet lots of people. I met my favorite character from the Brady Bunch, Marcia, and I was so happy to meet Maria Shriver. I can't believe I got my picture taken with her ...and my Chef was the cutest!"

Check out the video clip at <http://cbs5.com/video/?cid=6> (type *Best Buddies* in the search field)



Nina Krietzman with celebrity Chef Ryan Scott thru the Best Buddies program

Daniel Takes Flight

Daniel has two older brothers who are in college. For the last three years he has dropped off or picked up a big brother at the Oakland airport, but had never been on a plane himself. Taking his Brother's to the airport happened so often he started packing his own bag, including Beanie Babies, in the hopes that he would be able to hop on the plane.



Finally, this August, Daniel got his turn! Thanks to the Take Flight for Kids organization, Daniel and his parents were privileged to take a 20 minute plane ride in a small, private plane. It was a beautiful, clear day. The flight pattern took them up over Fremont and open space beyond the Fremont hills. Daniel got to sit in the front seat, wear a headset and talk to the Control Tower. It was a great day to go flying!

— Julie Sodestrom

DSCBA Logo Pumpkin, Carved by Heather Peterson. Not only a great Speech Therapist but an Artist too! Thank you, Heather.



Hailey goes to the Dentist with a big smile!



South Bay Small Steps Takes Off With Fun

Welcome to our new Teacher Laura DiSessa who since September has been teaching a Small Step class in Los Gatos at the Calvary Church. We started off with eight eager 3-6 year olds, and hope to serve many more in 2010. A special thanks to Amy Parham, Board Member, who assisted me in getting this started! A warm thank you to Joyce Roberts at Calvary.

A lot going on . . . developing core motor skills . . .

In the obstacle course for example you will see: rolling, pushing and working their way through tunnels and balancing with a basket in hand.. with GREAT success! Then off to Listening and learning at Reading Time. For more information about our programs please visit our website at www.dsconnection.org
— Nancy LaBelle



Danville Small Step & First Step students working on fine motor skills



Coloring fun at our Danville First Step class led by the amazing Laura Briggs ... special thank you to our dedicated volunteers Paula Ridley, Amanda Chan and Ashley Hagin



New Oakland Step Class?

We are looking for kids ages 12-15 who may be interested in attending a Step class in Oakland.

Goals of this class are to improve the student's language development, reading comprehension, confidence and self expression. The emphasis is on enhancing socialization skills, building friendships and practicing teamwork, cooperation and respect for self and others.

When: Monday afternoons from 4:00pm – 5:30pm.

Fee: \$25 per class (scholarship applications are available)

Location has not been determined.

If you are interested in this class for your Tween please email Marianne Iversen at dsdba.step@yahoo.com or you can leave a message for her at 925-362-8660.

We need Volunteers: If you are interested in volunteering and or being a Peer Role Model in this class please let Marianne know.

Class will only start if there is enough interest. We will keep you posted!

NEXT STEP... The New Class in Town

On Sept. 18th, Next Step, a new class for tweens ages 12-15 started in Danville. Our participants include Patrick Harkins, T.J. Crawford, Tatiana Casadont, Emma Tippet, Julianna Portoni and Sai Kota. We are also very fortunate to have 3 wonderful peer volunteers in our class, Macee LeMoine, Lauren Bruno and Katie Kallick and together we are having great times!

At Next Step we take our time getting to know one another and in the process learn wonderful things about each of our interests.

We also teach each other spectacular dance moves as well as participate in creative art projects. The last few weeks we have been making paper mache pumpkins and we had a birthday celebration for Sai. All of us having fun in Next Step are looking forward to the continuation of this class and the wonderful friendships that will continue to grow.

— Marianne Iversen



Step Out Carwash a Big Splash!

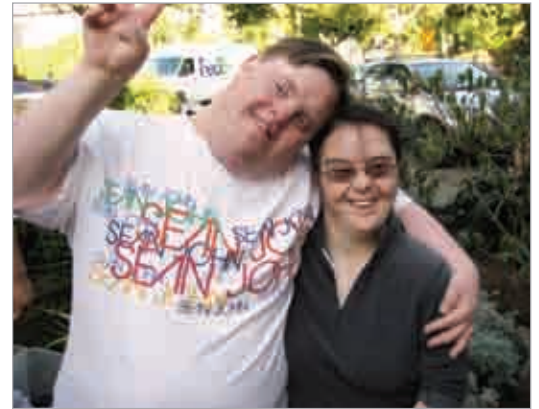
The Step Out Team in Oakland had a phenomenal carwash in October and raised a record-breaking amount. We will have enough for our pizza dinner but as you can see by the pictures, working with our friends on a common goal is the real fun. We have been doing carwashes for ten years and we practice important techniques: promoting the event to friends and family, practicing our 'moves' in advance, safety tricks including how to keep dry, and most importantly "start high, go low, watch what your doing, check your work, use two hands and use big arm movements". It is our expertise in these last areas that has given us a reputation as a great work team. We had two new students who took to it like pros, welcome aboard, Nicole and Robbie. We also initiated our PAL Harold who passed initiation when he came back the next week. Thank you Harold, Hannah and Virginia (who helped support the event) and all the parents who made this carwash such a delightful successful.

Many families supported us even though they couldn't come and those who came even gave us tips.

We couldn't do it without you, thank you. We have already begun planning our budget for Lanesplitter Pizza...

Go Step Out Team!

— Jamie Lantz



Below:

Nicole, JR, Teresa, Stacy, Blair and Katrina LEFT TO RIGHT



Working Hard for the Money

STEP IN Team holds fundraiser on a nice sunny day to have a Pizza Party!



Nicole, JR, Teresa, Stacy, Blair and Katrina LEFT TO RIGHT

Spring Dance

Spring Step Dance Partiers had fun celebrating Athena's birthday dancing and putting on a talent show!

Photos — Jamie Lantz



At left: Athena (BD Girl) and Nina
LEFT TO RIGHT

Below: Marissa, Nina M., Teodros, Bobby CLOCKWISE



Above: Marissa, Teodros, Erica RIGHT TO LEFT



Meet Andrew Vasquez

Former Benicia Step Student

I went to Jesse Bethel High School for 5 years. I graduated and now I am in an adult program through the school district. I work at the farm by my school, we clean the horse stables and we also work to keep the farm clean. I learned how to make homemade pickles at the farm.

On Thursdays we cook at my school. We make soups, sandwiches, rice, and chicken. We take the city bus to different stores in our community and we have a good time. I like my new school but I miss my old friends.



Katrina Taylor, Artist

Katrina Taylor, 27, an artist at Creative Growth Art Studio in Oakland stands proudly by two of her original art works which sold in the gallery this fall. Katrina has attended the program two days a week since December 2008. The artists get to keep half of the sale proceeds and receive their check quarterly.



Team Cool – Enjoying Hip Hop Lessons from a Generous Pro!



Seventeen year old Cameron Banayat is a senior at Liberty HS in Brentwood Ca. In October, Cameron came to a Team Cool class and gave his time and talent to our awesome students and teachers. The all learned classic hip hop moves such as popping, locking and breaking. Cameron then had them put it all together to a song. They loved it!

Cameron lettered in varsity football and track but his passion is dance. He took up hip hop dancing about six years ago. Starting out as a street dancer then joined a dance studio where he learned how to dance to choreography. He has 2 national titles and performs all over the US with a hip hop company called Oakland Future Shock. Cameron got a chance to teach at an elementary school last year and loved it. Now he teaches hip hop to anyone who wants to learn.

Cameron also sells IBN Motion t-shirts for all of you who like to move — and part of the proceeds go to a "good cause." He surprised us with a check from his recent sales.

If you would like to order a IBN Motion t-shirt please call 925 550-0500. They come in several colors and are \$20 each.

— Nancy LaBelle

For Your Time, Talent and Treasures We are Grateful...

Chevron Humankind Matching Gift Program **Cajun Fest Gratitude**

Robert Alfrey
Paul Casadont
Scott Truger
Mark Janke
Ms. Claire A. Levay-Young

Nancy LaBelle
Martha Hogan
Barb Benton
Kasie Robertson
Luz Moreno
Terese Ghilarducci
Kshama Perera
Laurie McGrath
Cathy Humphrey's
Meribeth Farmer Catering
Dennis McCormac – Auctioneer
Matt Corrado – Emcee
Diana Serrano
John and Judi Garcia
Jay Briggs
Jules Broussard Band
Clear Channel Communications,
Gerry Dove
J&J Event Design
La Czar Winery
Kevin Hogan
Heather Peterson
Shadelands Art Center,
Jacquie Lietz
Linda Plount
Bob Caldwell
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The Bibles Family

AT&T Employee Giving Campaign

Raymond Rhodes
Joanne Leach
Ana Marsh
David Kimble
Krista Veri

Kaiser Community Giving Program

Mary Kimble

Recognizing Local Business

Autonomic Software - Darren Nicholson
Calvary Church-Los Gatos - Joyce Roberts
Franciscan Communications, Liana King
Jay-Marie Insurance-
Jay Marie and Ron Garcia
John O'Connell High School
Kendall Financial- Monica Shaw
MKNI Insurance-Maura Perkins
PACE Solano
SunDesign Studios-Sunshine & Kimo
Temescal Arts Center

Niro Perrera
National Charity League,
Lamorinda Chapter
Mom's Club of Danville
Madeleine Thomsen
Alyssa and Orion Panis & Friends
Mike Arwine
Janet Gundersen
Dave Hagstrom
Janice Javier
Rick LaBelle
Jeset Sidore
100+ Generous Auction Donors
Many Wonderful Volunteers

Buddy Walk Gratitude

Tammy Garcia
Jo and Rich Kelley
Angie Rettig
Jenn Bornstein
Leslie Gray
Joanne Leach
Luz Moreno
Raquel O'Keefe
Suzy Suchon
Kiwanis of San Ramon Valley
Best Buy
St. Matthews Church
Stephen Schmitz & Family

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General Donations and Pledges

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Jeanne Karabin
Eugenia Carter
Larry Solomon
Cameron Banayat
Bob Cummings – St. Joan of Arc
Youth Ministry
Danville Children's Guild
Knights of Columbus/St. Joan of Arc
Elliott's Bar and Grill – Dale and Cindi
Linda Jones
Amy & Sean Parham
Melinda Voogel
Ann Beymer
Anna Stenger
Pamela Brady

DSCBA Programs Can Only Continue with Your Help!

43% of our Funding comes from donations and fundraising events.

CASH DONATIONS Send a check to: Down Syndrome Connection of the Bay Area, 117-A Town and Country Drive, Danville, CA 94526. Phone: 925-362-8660

DONATE WITH PAYJUNCTION The DSCBA is a member of PayJunction a free service which allows you to purchase or donate using your credit card on a secure website. PayJunction deposits your donation directly to our account. Visa and MasterCard are accepted at www.dsconnection.org/donate

DONATE AN AUCTION ITEM TO THE CAJUN FEST This is a great opportunity to showcase your business products and services or to give a great tax deductible item to be auctioned at one of our events. Some past items that are popular are wine packages, vacation homes, sports memorabilia, fine art, jewelry, spa packages etc.

SPONSOR AN EVENT Sponsor an event at a level that works for you. Publicize, advertise and show off your company logo while giving to a worthwhile cause. Have a booth and speak at our event.

HOLD A FUNDRAISER TO BENEFIT THE CONNECTION We are looking for community service organizations or businesses to hold a benefit in our name. One way to do this is to have a Charity Golf Tournament, Auction/Dinner or Crab Feed to name a few. Have ideas? Please call the Connection.

VOLUNTEER Do your community service with us! Volunteer your time and work at an event, spend time in one of our classes, come help out with newsletter mailings and other project. Call us for more information.

CORPORATE GIVING AND MATCHING GIFT PROGRAMS Sign up for your corporate giving program at work which automatically can be taken out of your paycheck. Some companies even have matching programs which doubles your giving ability.

ATTEND A FUNDRAISING EVENT We would love to see you at our fundraisers such as the Bowl-A-Rama, Cajun Festival and the Buddy Walk. Your participation and support makes a huge difference and our events are a lot of fun!

DONATE YOUR CAR Call us at the Connection at 925.362.8660 to find out how you can donate your car and in turn give back to the Connection. You may also call (877)700-GIVE or visit www.carsforcharities.com/DSC.htm

SIGN UP FOR THE ESCRIP PROGRAM eScrip is an easy way to give back to the Connection! Just register your grocery, debit or credit cards at merchants such as Safeway, Macys, Nordstrom or EBAY for example. A portion of your purchase will be donated to the Connection. Visit www.escrip.com to get started. ID#4843658.

USE GOODSEARCH.COM AND GOODSHOP.COM WEBSITES Choose the Down Syndrome Connection of the Bay Area at www.goodsearch.com and start your search engines running! The more you use this site as your search engine, powered by Yahoo, the more money the DSCBA raises. You can also use www.goodshop.com and when you shop you donate too!

TAX ID# 91-1904304

How Can You Help Us?

2009 Grants Awarded

Bank of America
Barr Family Foundation
CVS Caremark
Jam Handy Character Building
Foundation
J M Long Foundation
Kiwanis Club of Pleasanton
Kiwanis Club of San Ramon Valley
Marin Community Foundation
NAILBA Charitable Foundation
The Noll Foundation
The Peter Musto Charitable Trust
Quest Foundation
Thomas J Long Foundation
Wayne & Gladys Valley Foundation
Woodlawn Foundation

In Honor Of

Mason Zolnier:
Margaret VandenBerghe
Mark VandenBerghe
Ronald VandenBerghe

In Memory Of

Doreen Ellis
Phil and Carol Chiavetta
Nancy and Rick LaBelle



Cajun Fest Fundraiser Nets 17k for the Connection

THANK YOU TO EVERYONE who volunteered, participated and donated to our jazzed up night and celebration of Amelia Bibbes at the Walnut Creek Shadelands Arts Center on September 12th! The evening started out with a cocktail hour and beautiful piano music played by Niro Perera. Our Emcee who donated his time that evening Matt Corrado started up the silent auction fun. We had over 90 great items on display thanks to the generosity of the local community as well as a great wine basket worth over \$700 to raffle. As the silent auction ended everyone entered the main room dressed up with awesome Mardi Gras decorations and hopping with the sounds of the Jules Broussard Band. Meribeth Farmer Catering prepared 4 delicious stations beautifully displayed and the Cajuntini's were flowing. The live auction began with Dennis McCormac leading the charge. Everyone was excited as they raised their paddles to support the Down Syndrome Connection of the Bay Area. We had a wonderful week stay in San Jose Del Cabo to auction thanks to Kasie Robertson who donated her timeshare to the event. The evening ended with decadent desserts donated by many local restaurants and bakeries, and everyone out of their seats to dance the night away! A special thank you to Kevin Hogan and John and Judi Garcia for donating all of the beverages, and to a wonderful anonymous family who donated \$5000 to the event. Thank you to Bob Caldwell who donated 10 tickets to give out to members and to Gerry Dove with Clear Channel Communications who donated thousands of dollars in advertising. Last but not least my incredible Cajun Fest committee who was the best! Never short of good ideas and energy to make it all come together..... Martha Hogan, Barb Benton, Kasie Robertson, Terese Ghilarducci, Kshama Perera, Cathy Humphrey's, Laurie McGrath, Luz Moreno, and Meribeth Farmer.

— Nancy LaBelle

A BIG thank you to my friend Jay Briggs from American Pacific Mortgage of Walnut Creek who was our "Highest Bidder" of the evening!



EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S FORUM

DSCBA's Growth & Passion



When I think about 2009 coming to an end at first I say where did the time go? Then I stop and reflect on all that has been accomplished and it becomes very clear. Despite the economy, 2009 has been a good year at the Connection. We are excited about our full classes and expanding into new territory.

Our hard working Staff and Board have been busy with the growth of our membership serving more families than ever. Our ability to serve continues thanks to wonderful foundations such as the Wayne and Gladys Valley Foundation and many others who believe in our mission.

In 2009 we were blessed with generous grants and with donations from members, their family and friends who wanted to help. We saw this with the Buddy Walk where 50 families gave the opportunity to 750 people . . . raising over sixty thousand dollars. Thank you, members, for embracing our new fundraising technology!

Here's a look at some of the highlights of 2009.

Together, we . . .

- Started new STEP Class in Benicia for adults, Los Gatos for ages 3-6 and Danville for ages 12-15
- Welcomed new part time employees: two Teachers, a Program Coordinator and a Grant Manager
- Built a Community Blog on our professionally redesigned website
- Delivered new teacher training, volunteer training as well as teacher to teacher training on topics of behavior and sign language
- Took our awesome teens and young adults on a Kayak experience in Sausalito with a grant
- Held three successful fundraisers: Bowl-a-Rama, Cajun Fest and Buddy Walk
- Received money from a new benefit held in our name: Danville Children's Guild Poker Night
- Purchased new online fundraising technology
- Sent four colorful newsletters to all members and donors
- Conducted our Annual Board Meeting Dinner with guest speakers
- Built a 4th of July float and walked proudly in the Danville parade
- Held a Safety Day luncheon with fire, police, ambulance and fingerprinting
- Welcomed a new Board President and several new board members
- Received new grants from foundations such as the Quest and Thomas J. Long Foundation
- Brought in private Speech Therapy and Reading Tutor Services on site
- Made progress regarding inclusion in public schools
- Proudly have a partnership with a Special Education Placement and Program Consultant
- Continue to provide prenatal consultation, Baby Steps and Parent Support groups without fees
- Happily provided eleven STEP classes in six locations throughout the Bay Area
- Awarded nine scholarships to families for STEP classes in 2009

I look forward to 2010 where my focus will be on keeping up with our organization's growth and our member's needs. I will, with passion, continue to teach the general public about Down syndrome. I will, with conviction, share the importance of everyone being regarded as "people first." **Have a wonderful holiday season!**

— Nancy LaBelle



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In Spring 2010 the Bay Area will unite to host its first JOY PROM. This community-sponsored event is a full-scale, first-class prom for people with special needs. Through volunteerism, donations and corporate sponsorships, these often-overlooked individuals will have a night to **SHINE**. 150 Special-Needs Guests (ages 16 through senior citizens) will enjoy a free prom and be treated like kings and queens. At Joy Prom, each guest:

- ★ Is paired with an escort for the duration of the evening (a trained volunteer)
- ★ Gets their make-up and hair done (ladies); or their shoes shined (gentlemen)
- ★ Is given a corsage or boutonniere
- ★ Receives a royal welcome and is formally introduced to the crowd
- ★ Proceeds down the red carpet walk of fame, surrounded by paparazzi
- ★ Is asked to sign autographs and pose for pictures
- ★ Has formal prom portraits taken against a spectacular backdrop
- ★ Enjoys a tasty meal at a banquet table
- ★ Dances the night away to a live band
- ★ Leaves with a gift bag, photos and memories that will last a lifetime

Find out how YOU can be part of this special night for your neighbors with special needs, please contact Kim at: joypromcpc@gmail.com
Also visit <http://joypromsf2010.blogspot.com>



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The Holiday PARTY is coming!

The Holiday PARTY is coming!



Cole Kelley with Santa in 2008

WHEN: Sunday, December 6th
TIME: 1:00pm – 4:00pm
WHERE: Danville Veterans Hall
400 Hartz Avenue
(Parking on Front Street)

Don't miss out on a visit from Santa, music, arts and crafts, yummy treats, photo opportunities and an auction full of great baskets.

For those of you that have never been to this event, it is a lot of fun for the entire family. Bring the grandparents, aunts and uncles too!

If you would like to help out with this committee, come early to decorate, stay late to clean up please email Jenn Bornstein at mamabornstein@sbcglobal.net. She would be grateful for the help!

PLEASE RSVP BY DECEMBER 1ST

to the Connection at down_syndrome@sbcglobal.net or call 925-362-8660

When RSVP'ng please leave your name, how many in your party and the ages of children attending

Suggested Donation is \$10 per Family.

HOPE TO SEE YOU ALL THERE!

