

## “Celebrating Youth” at Danville’s 4th of July Parade



**Kiwanis of San Ramon Valley awarded DSCBA the “Service Business Award” for our participation in the annual 4th of July Parade!**

It all began Saturday June 27th when a group of fifty people came to the float building party at Rich and Jo Kelley’s house. Not only did we have DSCBA families, but we had friends, family, and volunteers from the Carondelet high school cheer team helping to create our “Backyard Pool Party” themed float. Our day consisted of swimming, socializing, float-building and pot-lucking. Everyone pitched in to paint, blow up beach balls and help assemble our joint vision of the float. It was a great chance for families with children of all ages to come together and support each other and support our cause!

On the morning of the 4th a very hardworking team came together in front of San Ramon Valley High School to put the finishing touches on the float. That team worked from 6-9:30am to ensure that the float was ready for the parade. A special thank you to Rich Kelley, Maura Perkins and Brian Garcia for their time that morning! The parade began at 9am and with parking being a concern we were very fortunate to have Martha Hogan and Nancy LaBelle providing a shuttle service to our families from the Hogan’s house to the float itself. Thank you ladies! With parking taken care of, our families were able to easily enjoy the parade without stress. Once everyone arrived at the float, most of the kids hopped on the float and plopped down in the baby pools, beach chairs and bleacher seating. Families and kids alike enjoyed splashing in the pools, squirting each other with squirt guns and waving their flags

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EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

## A Midyear Gratitude Note from Nancy

Many exciting things are happening at the Connection! Thank you to our Staff, Therapists, Teachers, Business Partners and Volunteers for their time and talents. Thank you to the members of our Board for their commitment to our mission and a special thank you to the Foundations that give so generously as our doors would not remain open without them. Thanks to all of our generous supporters whose help allows us to continue to offer Parent Support groups, Prenatal Consultation, one on one Advocacy and Baby Step classes free of charge. We also continue to offer therapeutic Step classes for young ones, teens and adults at a minimum cost to our members. 2009 is full of value added service such as private Speech Therapy with Heather Peterson and Reading Tutor Services with Natalie Hale on site at a discounted rate for our members. Together they are working with more than 25 of our members families with great reviews.

We started a new Step class in Benicia and our membership is up 10% from last year. A new Grant Manager, Linda Plount is on board, and we have long time member and educator Jennifer Cooper partnering with us to offer Special Education Placement services to our members in the Oakland/Berkeley/Hayward areas. Parents can always count on Martha Hogan our Advocacy Director to be at IEP meetings to insure that children of all ages get the education they need and deserve. Kathy Harkins, whom we could not do without, is embracing Quick Books and creating efficiency in the way we do business. Marianne Iversen, our Program Manager, is communicating more than ever about our Step classes and assessing areas of need for additional locations.

*“Using technology ... has made a great difference.”*

We started an In-A-Pinch program as a way for our community to give back to each other, thanks Angie Rettig!

Our website is redesigned and looking great (www.dsconnection.org) thanks to SunDesign Studios. We are excited about the Cajun Fest which will be held on September 12 in Walnut Creek, and equally excited about the Buddy Walk lead by Tammy Garcia at Heather Farms October 11. Both committees are fired up and can use YOUR HELP! This year we welcomed five new board members and we have additional openings on our Board. I remain committed to using technology for fundraising and member communication as it has made a great difference so watch out soon for more good stuff. I look forward to an awesome rest of the year with all of you and I thank YOU for allowing me to continue what I am privileged to do every day.

— Nancy LaBelle



### 2009 DSCBA Board of Directors

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|--|--|
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| Marianne Iversen<br><i>Teacher and Program Coordinator</i><br>iversen4@aol.com | Tamara Reed <i>Teacher</i><br>tamarareed@yahoo.com                    |
|  | Katherine Sefton<br><i>Developmental Therapist</i>                    |

### Useful Links...

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

## THERE'S A NEW STEP GROUP IN TOWN



The Connection is thrilled to say in May of this year a new Step group started in Benicia. A big welcome to Damien Carlson, Ryan Ray, Rachel Warren, Mike Rury, Martin Gonsalves, and Andrew Vasquez!

This group loves to dance and party! We kicked off the summer by having a do-it-yourself pizza party. Napoli, the best pizza parlor in Benicia, donated enough dough balls for each person to have their own personal size pizza. Together we shaped, sauced, and topped our own pizzas ..... and while they baked we danced! The pizzas were beautiful. Each pizza chef shared a slice of his/her creation, and commented on the creative mixture of toppings others used. It was a great way to kick off the summer, and we're already planning a kick-off to Fall!

Many thanks to PACE Solano for donating the facility where we meet weekly. — Tamara Reed



## SIBLING SUPPORT GROUP (Age 8+)

**Anyone interested in a 3 week (4 session) Summer Sibling Support Group in the month of August?**



There would be 4 sessions total that focus on siblings learning particular feelings such as sadness, guilt, embarrassment and anger. There would be a check in and time for each child to share and focus on an art project related to that feeling.

The program would be conducted by Terese Ghilarducci, a licensed MFT and School Counselor who has been working with children with and without disabilities for more than 17 years. Terese is a long time friend of the Connection and a member of our Advisory Board.

Sessions would be held August 4th, 6th, 11th, and 18th. Times will be determined based on interest and availability.

Cost: \$25 per child per class or \$100 for the four week session. If this is something your family would be interested in please contact the Connection at 925-362-8660 or email Marianne at [dscba.step@yahoo.com](mailto:dscba.step@yahoo.com). **Please provide number of siblings and times that work best for you when contacting us!**



## 2009 Advisory Board

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## DANVILLE CHILDREN'S GUILD SUPPORTS THE CONNECTION

**THANK YOU** to the wonderful women of the Danville Children's Guild for hosting a benefit "Poker Night" that raised just shy of \$4000.

The check was awarded to us on June 25th while our Baby Step class was in full swing with Music Therapy. As you can see in the photo there were many families taking part that day. This money will allow us to continue Baby Steps and other important programs we offer without charge to our beautiful families.

The Danville Children's Guild is an organization of women committed to improving the quality of life for children in Contra Costa County by raising funds for various children's charities and youth organizations.

The Guild can be reached at: [www.danvillechildrensguild.org](http://www.danvillechildrensguild.org)



## GOOGLER'S FOR A DAY

On June 9<sup>th</sup>, excited teens and adults from the Down Syndrome Connection of the Bay Area headed to Google Inc. in Mountain View for what was called "An afternoon at Google."

We arrived at 3:30pm and were greeted by many happy Googler's, as they refer to themselves, to usher us into an auditorium setting with lecture hall type seating. Each participant was paired with their own Google Buddy and a laptop was waiting for them.



An Ice breaker drew out the personality is some very charismatic participants while making those a bit on the shy side more comfortable. Next on the agenda was a tour of the "Google Plex" where outside we saw, sculptures of a shark fin and tail, pink flamingos in the grass, and a T-REX hanging out in the courtyard. As we entered the building we found it was as fun inside as out. There were folks playing pool, airplanes hanging from the

ceiling and a large photo wall of famous people. Snack shelves were everywhere where anyone could grab a free snack and we did! Blair Hogan enjoyed a tub full of plastic balls on our tour led by Andrew, Blair's Google Buddy. As you can see in the photo Blair was very relaxed!



We headed back to the lecture hall where we were greeted with smoothies and took our seats. The most memorable moments were made during the computer and internet basics activity. I couldn't stop taking photo's as the expressions on the faces of those who attended were priceless. The Google Buddies took their participants through Google Earth where they were excited to locate their homes, favorite restaurants, stadiums and other favorite things. They went on to learn how to use Google Search and how to set up and chat via a Gmail account.

When the

participants were asked what they learned that day we heard excitement as the participants shouted, "I found a Vet for my dog Yo Yo", "I heard my favorite song on YouTube", "I saw the USC Campus", "I found my favorite movie Titanic", "I chatted on Gmail and saw my house."

At the end of this educational and enjoyable day each participant was given a certificate of achievement and a symbolic t-shirt marking their participation in this "Afternoon at Google."



There is little question in the mind of this writer that those who participated will remember this experience for quite some time, and that the Googler's lives were enriched by spending the afternoon with the incredible teens and adults who attended that day.

A special thank you to Google's Jason Toff, Cynthia Benin and all the volunteers who shared their time and talent that afternoon.

— Nancy LaBelle

## Meet Linda Plount, Grants Manager

(AKA *the Money Detective*)

I am thrilled to have joined the Down Syndrome Connection of the Bay Area as the new Grants Manager and look forward to the challenge of raising much needed funds for our great programs. When most people think of grants you think of writing a compelling story, but there is another important component of grant writing—I call it private detective work.



While there are as many different foundations and grant requirements as there are charities, as a grant writer I hunt and search for the grants that best match our mission and program goals.

At a charity event years ago I heard the story of a determined volunteer (much like our Martha) who would stop at nothing to support her charity. The story takes place in the 1950s and the only place to find and research grants was in a library at the capital. This dedicated volunteer regularly boarded a bus traveling to Sacramento to find the right match. She wrote letters, made calls and slowly but surely the grants began coming in.

**Fast forward to 2009 ...** There is still the excitement of the hunt for the perfect grant, but, luckily it can be done from a laptop. The sleuthing is what makes the job of grant writer exciting. The grants are the icing on the cake.

It will come as no surprise that giving is down in 2009—whether it be from corporations, individuals and/or foundations—and today there are more charities vying for less money. So doing the research and hunting for clues will increase our chance of receiving a gift.

**A good detective always needs a Watson.**

If you come across any leads using the clues below as you read the paper or talk to friends please contact me at:

[down\\_syndrome@sbcglobal.net](mailto:down_syndrome@sbcglobal.net).

### Clues:

1. Foundations and organizations who give or have given to:
  - Children's Programs
  - Education Programs
  - Medical Programs
2. Neighbors/Co-workers who work for corporations with foundations
3. DSCBA volunteers who work at organizations with a giving program.

# A Letter From Jennifer Cooper

*Jennifer Cooper, MA Ed is Joining Forces with the Down Syndrome Connection. She is a Special Education Placement and Program Consultant Specializing in Developing a Child's Educational Vision*



Jennifer and Eli Cooper

June 2009

## Dear Families,

I am excited to be joining forces with the Down Syndrome Connection and therefore with you! I have been a member of the Connection since its inception and have known Martha Hogan since my eldest son, Eli, was born with Down syndrome 12 years ago. I have an MA in Education along with an elementary teaching credential and have been working in the field of education for 15 years. I have focused on special education for the past five years – working as a Special Education Placement and Program Consultant.

The focus of my work has been to provide an “educational vision” for a child with special needs. This means that I observe children at home and/or school, learn about the public

and/or private school options available and work together with the family to recommend the optimal educational placement and program services for that child. “Placement” refers to the actual school, as well as the type of classroom: fully included or special day class for example. “Program services” refers to the supports; perhaps a child needs a full time instructional assistant (aide), an adapted math curriculum, or an in-class buddy program. These are the types of educational decisions and recommendations that I help families explore. This can be done in a formal report format or through consultation where I help to guide a family along the process.

By presenting why a child's educational vision is necessary, we try to persuade districts to comply. Many of you, however, know that this unfortunately is not always the case. I am not an advocate. I do not fight the district for this vision, I simply help to create and support it. I do think, however, that families can empower themselves when they understand the educational vision and why it is appropriate (and conversely, why an alternate placement might be inappropriate.) I also refer families to special education advocates if that becomes necessary.

In addition to developing a child's educational vision, I love to meet with new families and families in early transitions (i.e. the transition to preschool or elementary school.) I offer support, guidance, and information. I visit families in their homes or communities and help

them adjust, organize and strategize. As many of you know, when we become parents to a child with a disability we also become advocates, secretaries, teachers, and often medical professionals. It is impossible to do it on our own – we need connections and I hope I can be one for you!

Because my experience and community knowledge is largely from the west side of Alameda County (i.e. Berkeley/Oakland/Hayward), that is where I will be conducting most of my work. It is also an area that is more difficult for the DSC to access, due to distance.

I look forward to working with you and your children!

*My best, Jennifer Cooper, MA Ed  
1870 Thousand Oaks Blvd., Berkeley 94707*

**510-917-2284**

**Jennifer Cooper, MA Ed**

**In Conjunction with the  
Down Syndrome Connection**

**Services Offered:**

- Home visits
- Educational consultation: placement and program vision
- Inclusion support
- Instructional Assistant training
- Meeting preparation and/or attendance: intakes, transitions and IEPs
- Information and resource referrals

Fees: Free first hour consult (DSC membership requested). \$40-\$65 sliding scale for subsequent hours.

*Jennifer Cooper is a Special Education Placement and Program Consultant. She has worked with families with children with disabilities for more than five years and enjoys meeting with families and helping them to navigate decisions and transitions in the world of special education. She also loves going into classrooms and consulting with teachers and staff to establish effective strategies for children with disabilities to be included and succeed. She is a longtime board member of the Infant Development Association, serving professionals and parents of children, birth to three, with special needs.*

**A BIG THANK YOU TO:** Judith Clark of Design Elements, 355 Hartz Ave, Danville, (925-837-5839), and The International Furnishings and Design Association for their Donation of Fancy New Blinds for the Connection!

"Proudly donating services to the Down Syndrome Connection for 20 years!"

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Continued from page 1



in the parade. Many families decorated wagons and pulled their younger children, while our older teens and young adults enjoyed waving to their peers in the crowd. There wasn't a face without a smile from ear to ear!

Not only did we have a colorful and kid-friendly float decorated with beach ball balloons, colorful beach towels, baby pools and big white pool umbrellas, we also had banners and signs that read "More Alike than Different" and "Keep your head up when your syndrome is Down." Our claim to fame was our homemade blue and yellow balloon arch! (Blue and yellow are the national colors for Down syndrome.) Our volunteers from the Carondelet cheer team passed out mini-beach balls with stickers on them with the DSCBA website and location. They also passed out DSCBA brochures to help create awareness within our community. A special thanks to our ladies from Carondelet who carried themselves with class and pride, and who helped the DSCBA more than they will ever know. (The GREAT news is that we recruited them to cheer for our walkers at this year's Buddy Walk!)

A special thanks to all of our sponsors: California Sun Dry Foods, Morgan's Masonry Supply, America's Best Battery, MKNI Insurance - Maura Perkins, Precision People's Car Repair, Heather A. Peterson -Speech Language Pathologist, the Kelley Family, and Empact, Inc. who donated more than \$750 dollars to make this event happen! A HUGE thank you to the Kelley family for housing our float for the past few weeks and sharing their home with everyone. Rich Kelley is owed many thanks for being the master craftsman of the float. His craftsmanship was not only perfect, but safe for our children. Other "Thank Yous" go to the Deeter family for helping to shape the vision for our float; Maura Perkins for her unbelievable fundraising efforts and complete reliability, and all of the families who shared their time and energy with us the past few weeks!



## The Day My Life Changed Forever

I found out I was pregnant in October 2005. I was going to be a mom for the first time and I couldn't wait!

The pregnancy was relatively uneventful. For the most part I enjoyed every moment, from the tiny kicks and movements to the excuses for eating that extra serving of Rocky Road. A few months into my pregnancy my OBGYN asked me if I wanted to do the AFP test, I declined. I had every intention of loving my baby no matter what, therefore this test, with a very high rate of false positives, was unnecessary. Now, I wonder if somehow deep down inside I knew that Tyler had Down syndrome.

Tyler was breech, so I was scheduled for a c-section on June 29, 2006. I remember the evening of June 28, 2006 Shaun and I went out to dinner and a movie for one last date night before we officially became parents. That night I was filled with anxiety, I assume it was the fear of any first time mother. Though, now I wonder if somehow I knew something wasn't right. I really had no idea what was to lie ahead.

I remember lying in the OR that morning of June 29th, Shaun squeezing my hand and hearing the doctors scramble around pulling my baby from my womb. I couldn't hear him cry which terrified me. Then Shaun said "he's fine, he's crying, you just can't hear him." His cry was so soft and faint. Shaun left my side to meet our son for the first time, and brought him to me. Tears rolled down my face as I was filled with joy. I remember saying "he's cute...he's really cute!" He was perfect, the most precious newborn I had ever seen. I had anticipated him not being very cute as some newborns are not. But not Tyler he was my little angel. I kissed his forehead and couldn't wait to spend the rest of my life getting to know him.

Seventy-two hours passed, no one told me he had Down syndrome, but in my heart I felt something was wrong. Tyler did not pass his miconium, he was not feeding well and for a split second I thought I saw Down syndrome in my son's face. I put the thought out of my mind the moment it entered it. I was terrified, as time passed I became more and



more uneasy. Finally, the on call pediatrician made a decision to have Tyler transferred to the NICU at UC Davis Children's Hospital. I was devastated. The evening and days ahead were even more excruciating.

Our first morning at UC Davis Shaun and I were at Tyler's bedside when a team of interns and a resident explained to us that they believed our son had Hirschsprung's Disease and Down syndrome. In that second my heart was torn from my chest. I felt like I couldn't breathe. All my dreams for my "perfect" son were shattered. This was my worst nightmare unfolding right before me. Little did I know then what I know now: this wasn't the "end" of my world, it was the beginning.

It's been three years since that day. Along the way we have faced a number of challenges. However, attending Baby Steps classes made my terrifying journey a lot easier. I knew I wasn't alone in my walk. As a group we celebrated the milestones and supported one another during the difficult times. Baby Steps helped me come to realize that my son is perfect. He may not be perfect in the sense that I had originally thought, but as I have grown I have come to realize perfection is in the eye of the beholder.

Tyler is the most loving and friendly boy I know. Everyone who meets him falls in love with him instantly. He smiles, waves, and blows kisses to everyone! People I don't even know, know me because of Tyler. I wish I could have his sweet and unfailing heart. I wasn't sure why God chose me to be Tyler's mother, but now I think I may understand a little more clearly. Tyler has taught me so much about myself

He's taught me to be a fighter, to be strong, and to love unconditionally. He's taught me life isn't always "perfect" but to embrace what God's given you and be grateful for what you have, to smile when you feel like crying, and to take life one second at a time. I now thank God for choosing me instead of questioning why he chose me. It's not been an easy journey and I know I have many challenges that lie ahead, but with every new day and every new challenge I become a little bit stronger. That little boy has given me strength and courage that I didn't know I had. He's just absolutely amazing.

— Raquel O'Keefe

### My Life with Tatiana

My name is Marco Casadont and I have a sister who was born with Down syndrome named Tatiana. She really likes baseball and likes to go to games almost as much as I do. This picture shows her and I with my friends and dad at the Giant's stadium.

Sometimes I think life would be lame without Tatiana. Why? because she keeps me energetic and makes me laugh a lot. She surprises me by making my bed and getting it ready for me to sleep (like at a hotel).

I have learned not to stare at people who look or act different and I have a lot of patience. My friends learn just like me when they are with Tatiana. In the car on the way to the Giants game my friends and I watched "Elmo in Grouchland" and listened to "Supercalifragilisticexpalidocious" very loud and that was okay!

And I love her very much. — Marco Casadont



# Highlighting Abilities

## Marissa Erickson – Alameda High School

Congratulations to Marissa Erickson. Marissa has completed four years of high school at Alameda High and has a long list of achievements to be proud of. Some of her highlights include being an officer in the Best Buddy Club, playing on the girls JV basketball team and receiving the honor of Jr. Homecoming Princess. She also works part time at a local pizza restaurant and preformed Irish dancing in her school talent show.

After graduation Marissa has been accepted to Creative Growth art studio where she will pursue her passion for art as well as attending classes at Alameda Community College. She is looking forward to the next exciting stage of her life after high school!



## Olivia Byers-Straus and Marcus Griego-Paraiso heading for Marcus' senior prom at Washington High School, San Francisco

## Austin Burks

Austin just completed his Senior year at Castro Valley High School and graduated on Thursday evening, June 11, 2009.

Some of Austin's favorite things during his High School years were his English, Drama, Art and Regular Education P.E. classes. He also enjoyed using the school library. Austin loved spending lunch socializing with his friends. He and his friends would then take a bus to their Eden Area ROP Job Training Program. Austin enjoyed having a job three days a week and earning a paycheck at the end of each month. He is very proud to have graduated and is ready to move on into his adult transition program in the Fall.

Austin will be attending the Creative Growth for Art summer program in Oakland this summer. He joined a local Dance Studio and is getting ready to perform at the Alameda County Fair this summer. He plans trips to Great America and Santa Cruz, taking swimming lessons and doing recreational swimming, bowling with his friends, gearing up for the Soccer season and is most looking forward to going to the Miley Cyrus Concert in September! He is her biggest fan!



## Hats Off to Deven

From his first day of life to his first words to his first steps to his first day of Kindergarten, each milestone has been celebrated with tears of joy, shouts of excitement and tons of pictures to capture the memories! Now here we are celebrating his last day of Kindergarten! Time flies when you're having fun! Our Deven is an energetic, happy and funny 6 year old. He likes to run, jump, climb, practice kung fu, sing, dance and laugh. He will miss his teachers and his friends during his summer

break but is looking forward to getting on an airplane and going to Hawaii!!! He loves the water! Though we are celebrating the end of one thing we are embarking on the beginning of many others.

We love you D! Congrats Grad! You did it!

## Emily Graduated Preschool

Emily graduated from Collins Elementary Special Day Class in Pinole and she will be attending Kindergarten also at Collins Elementary in a K-3 Special-Ed class with minimal mainstreaming. Emily's favorite thing about school is being challenged at just the right pace. Her strength is definitely being a social butterfly at school. Emily is looking forward to attending summer school with some of her previous classmates. She will also be traveling south to watch her Daddy compete in wrestling in the Western

Police/Fire Games. Summer for Emily will also bring; taking a couple of short camping trips to Donner Lake, attending the National Down Syndrome Congress Convention, and special weekly outings with her older brother Christian and Mom on Fridays. Emily will especially love her nce-a-week summer time trip to Krispy Kreme Doughnuts! Yummy! Summer time is here. It's time for fun!!





## Tumbling Sami – My little Tumble Bug



Sami and I moved to Placer County in January of 2009. I knew once we moved I wanted to get her enrolled in a gymnastics class. We play at home quite often and I managed to teach her how to do a forward roll. She practices all the time! I checked into a gymnastics place called Flip 2 It Sports in Roseville. I spoke to the owner, who happens to work with children with disabilities. I explained that Sami had Down syndrome and I was wondering if they had a class for children with special needs? She said they did - it was a Mommy and Me class and that we were welcome to come and try it out. When we got there, Sami could barely sit still... I had to hold her back from running onto the floor. She was so excited. She was the only girl in the class and the smallest. The teacher set up an obstacle course consisting of a trampoline, balance beam, and things to jump over. Sami did great as she went through the course. The teacher was pleasantly surprised and told me that Sami does not need to be in the Mommy and Me class. She told me she should be in the "Tumble Bugs" with the typical developing children. I was so happy... so proud. Her teacher's name is Flavio and he has so much patience. Sami now goes to gymnastics every Wednesday for 45 minutes. There are about 9 kids in the class. I have seen a HUGE



improvement in Sami's motor skills. When she first started, it was difficult for her to jump on the trampoline and keep her balance. Now she is not only jumping up and down, but she is starting to jump and move forward at the same time. Her favorite thing to do is the bars. Flavio helps her spin around and pull her self up and she always does it with a smile. She can walk across a balance beam with little or no help and Sami can do one forward roll after another consistently. She surprises me every time we go with not only her positive attitude and willingness to learn, but her ability to do what the other children are doing. She often runs to me during her class and gives me a hug - her teacher has come to learn that this is going to be a frequent occurrence. Sami makes me so proud and each week I look forward to watching her learn and try new things. I couldn't be happier with my choice to put her in gymnastics. I think we'll stay for a while.

— Diane Fambrini

## What a Year!



WHAT A YEAR!! Patrick had an awesome 8th grade-from beautiful art work to gaining computer skills; dances, working in the library and a wonderful Leadership program. Middle school flew by-great friends and wonderful memories were made. I'm going to miss the tight, safe community we felt there. But on to high school with new challenges and experiences! Patrick was nominated for a special award from the Physical Education Dept.. I received a phone call letting me know that he was chosen as "Student of the Year." Patrick had no idea, and it was kept a surprise till an evening ceremony. It was tough getting back to school at night! Two other 8th graders received this same award, a little speech was given about each one by the teacher; when Patrick's name was called, he was so surprised-talk about a red face! How proud I was to watch him walk up, in front of a large crowd, shake the P.E. teacher's hand, and receive his award. Way to go Patrick! The graduation ceremony was a mixture



of emotion-and we're only talking about 8th grade here. He walked into the local high school football stadium with his class, sat with his buddies, listen to the speeches given, and then walked up the ramp to receive his promotion certificate. Tears flowing all around me. However, I failed to mention that the ramp moved on the way down. Whoa-hold the horses!! We had NO MOVEMENT on the ramp for awhile-but he figured it out. How proud I was of him, again. So-check off another hurdle on my list and moving on to the next. GO WILDCATS!

— Kathy Harkins

## An Opportunity of a Life Time

The envelope arrived the beginning of January. It contained an invitation for Peter to attend a People to People Ambassadorship meeting. We had no idea what P2P was. After reading about the organization online we felt this was something Peter possibly could get involved in. The end of January Peter, Garry and I were off to the introductory meeting. Many would attend but few would be able to go.

All the families at the meeting had typical kids-Peter was the only child who was challenged.

It was clear that we were different. After the meeting I took just a moment to talk with Dr. Irizary. He saw no reason for Peter not to go, and they did have a non-discrimination clause.

So we submitted our application. We didn't have to wait long for a response.

I must say Dr. Irizary helped us along the way. He helped us by opening doors and minds for us. And he was encouraged by his friends and family to help Peter. Peter's paperwork had to go before the Medical Department to be sure he could keep up with the level of activity.

And he had to be able to self-medicate himself. Well that was not happening!!!

So we went to Plan B—Mom was to be his Aide. And that wrinkle was taken care of.



Things are now all set. Peter and I are off to Vienna, Austria on the 4th of July. Peter will represent the USA in the Bowling Division. He will be trained by world class coaches and bowl in an International Tournament with typical 11 - 18 year olds. This will give him the opportunity to teach other children from our country and around the world that being disabled may mean you learn slower, but you are still ABLE. — Nancy Scherbert



**A Memorial of  
Amelia Bibbes Benefiting**



**Down Syndrome Connection  
OF THE BAY AREA**

**September 12th**

**Grab Your Date, Call the Girls or Gather Up Your Co-workers and  
Support the Down Syndrome Connection of the Bay Area.**

**Jazzed Up Food & Drink**

Enjoy wine, cocktails and a delicious Cajun dinner buffet presented by Meribeth Farmer Catering of Walnut Creek.

**Slam'N Music**

Dance to the hot sounds of Bay Area favorite and Louisiana-born Jules Broussard and his "BAMME award-winning" band. ([www.broussard.com](http://www.broussard.com))

**Tickets & Info**

Tickets are \$55 per person and can be purchased on line at [www.dsconnection.org/events/cajunfest](http://www.dsconnection.org/events/cajunfest) or by phone at 925-362-8660.  
After September 1, 2009 tickets will be \$65 per person and can be purchased at the door.  
(VISA and MasterCard accepted)

**WHEN:** Saturday, September 12, 2009 | 6:00 p.m.–11:00 p.m.  
**WHERE:** Shadelands Art Center, 111 N. Wiget Lane, Walnut Creek  
**COST:** \$55 per person / \$65 at the door after Sept. 1, 2009

**VIP Sponsor Tables**

Round up your friends and co-workers and purchase a VIP table for 10 for \$1500 or more and receive wine on your table, a "thank you" gift, a reserved parking spot and acknowledgement in event advertisements. (*Tax ID and Receipts available*)

**Live & Silent Auction, Wine Raffle & More**

Join in on the bidding and end up with fine art, great wine, delicious cakes, fun items from Bay Area businesses, TV and Radio Stations and much more.

**For tickets and more information please call 925-362-8660  
or visit us online at [www.dsconnection.org/events/cajunfest](http://www.dsconnection.org/events/cajunfest)**





Bowl-A-Rama PHOTOGRAPHY: LISA UPTON

## BOWL-A-RAMA 2009

Thanks to everyone who made DSCBA's 6th Annual Bowl-A-Rama a great success. The day started out grey, with rain showers pelting bowlers as they arrived at Earl Anthony's Dublin bowl on May 3rd. Once inside, one couldn't help but feel the warmth of more than 150 bowlers, friends and volunteers.

Thanks to everyone who collected pledges both on and off-line in honor of bowlers and teams and who gave generously to support the event. Thanks also to the DSCBA Board of Directors and Staff who donated many of the fabulous raffle prizes, which ranged from sports tickets to Nintendo games and iPods.

Special thanks also goes out to Virginia Bonham and Marianne Iversen and the Express Yourself and Step In classes, who designed all of the beautiful lane signs for the event, and to Nancy's good friends Krista Veri and Jill Enders, who added the final touches. Thank you to our friends at the National Charity League, who brought volunteers to man the T-shirt and raffle ticket tables.



### WITH GREAT APPRECIATION TO THE FOLLOWING FAMILY AND BUSINESS LANE SPONSORS FOR THEIR CONTINUED GENEROSITY AND SUPPORT:

- Earl Anthony's Dublin Bowl
- Engineering Enterprises
- Huether Insurance Agency
- G&B Trophies & Awards
- PDQ Printing
- MCC Realty Group, Inc
- Rago & Son, Inc
- The Casadont Family
- The Chatowski Family
- The Elliott Family
- Roxanne Loera
- Tom & Marise McIntosh
- Gary Smith
- The Sodestom Family

Everyone's hard work paid off with one fantastic event.

See you next year!

— John Chatowski



## STEP OUT OAKLAND CELEBRATES APRIL FOOLS DAY IN "STYLE!"



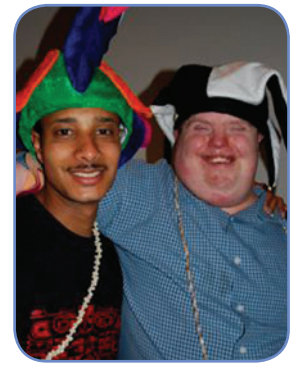
Janis with a Little Help from Her Friends



Tamika and Erica



The Step Out Team



Teodros and Bobby

# STEP CLASSES

Fall  
Schedule  
2009

**Baby Steps** - Facilitator: Martha Hogan - Location DSCBA - Danville

Wednesday's 10:00 a.m.-11:30 a.m.

Sept. 2, 16, 30 Oct. 14, 28 Nov. 4 & 18 Dec. 2 & 16

**Small Steps** - Teacher: Laura Briggs - Location DSCBA- Danville

Monday's 3:30 p.m.-5:00 p.m.

Session I - Sept. 14, 21, 28 & Oct. 5, 12 & 19

Session II - Nov. 2, 9, 16, 30 & Dec. 7, 14

**First Steps** - Teacher: Laura Briggs - Location DSCBA-Danville

Wednesday's 3:30 p.m.-5:00 p.m.

Session I - Sept. 9, 16, 23, 30, & Oct. 7, 14, 21

Session II - Nov. 4, 18 & Dec. 2, 9, 16

**Team Cool-(Formerly Express Yourself)** Teacher: Virginia Bonham-Location DSCBA-Danville

Tuesday's 4:00 p.m. - 5:30 p.m.

Session I - Sept. 8, 15, 22, 29 & Oct. 6, 13 & 20

Session II - Nov. 3, 10, 17 & Dec. 1, 8, 15

**Step In** - Teacher: Virginia Bonham - Location DSCBA-Danville

Thursday's 4:00 p.m.-5:30 p.m.

Session I - Sept. 10, 17, 24, Oct. 1, 8, 15, 22

Session II - Nov. 5, 12, 19 & Dec. 3, 10, 17

**Step Together** - Teacher: Tamara Reed - Location: Albany HS-Albany

Monday's 3:30 p.m.-5:00 p.m.

Session I - Sept. 14, 21, 28 & Oct. 5, 19

Session II - Nov. 2, 9, 16, 30 & Dec. 7, 14

**Step Out** - Teacher: Jamie Lantz - Location: Remescal Arts Center-Oakland

Wednesday's 4:00 p.m. - 5:30 p.m.

Session I - Sept. 9, 16, 23, 30 & Oct. 7, 14, 21

Session II - Nov. 4, 18, Dec. 2, 9, 16

**S.F. Step** - Teacher: Jamie Lantz / Christina Lewis

Location: John O'Connell High School of Technology, S.F.

Tuesday's 4:00 p.m. - 5:30 p.m.

Session I - Sept. 8, 15, 22, 29, Oct. 6, 13, 20

Session II - Nov. 3, 10, 17 & Dec. 1, 8, 15

**Benicia Step** - Teacher Tamara Reed - Location: Pace Benicia-Benicia

Wednesday's 4:00 p.m.-5:30 p.m.

Session I - Sept. 9, 16, 23, 30 & Oct. 7, 14, 21

Session II - Nov. 4, 18, Dec. 2, 9, 16

**Parent Support Group** - Facilitator: Martha Hogan - Location - DSCBA - Danville

Tuesday's 7:00p.m.-9:00 p.m.

Sept. 22 Oct. 20 No Nov. Mtg Dec. 8

## Family Picture Day

In exchange for a donation to the Down Syndrome Connection of the Bay Area, you will receive a mini family photo session.

Your mini session will include a half an hour of picture time with your family. Those images will then be edited and touched up and placed on a CD for you to enjoy. CD's will be ready for Pick up at the DSC 2 weeks after picture day.

- Saturday, August 15, 2009
- Heather Farms Park in Walnut Creek
- 9am to 4pm
- Please RSVP for a session by August 6th via email at [redbride05@aol.com](mailto:redbride05@aol.com) or call 925-575.1942

The time for your session will be given after you RSVP.

Heather Farms Park is dog friendly, so please feel free to bring all members of your family.

Please make checks and money orders payable to: Down Syndrome Connection of the Bay Area.

## 2009 SF STEP CLASS



From left: Nina K., Nina M., Emma Y., Jackson, Marissa, Marcus, Olivia, Emma D., Mercy

## 2009 CVS CAREMARK COMMUNITY GRANT SUPPORTS BUDDY PLAY

The CVS Caremark's All Kids Can™ program strives to make life easier for children with disabilities. Its goal is to create more inclusive environments for children with and without disabilities to build self-esteem, lasting friendships and social skills, and to help children without disabilities learn diversity and tolerance.

CVS has awarded the Down Syndrome Connection of the Bay Area (DSCBA) a generous gift of \$2000. This will allow the DSCBA to continue the important work we do at "Buddy Play" which is all about encouraging play between children with and without special needs and creating lasting friendships through interactive fun.

Our most recent Buddy Play groups have been a big success! We all had a great time going on an "Outdoor Scavenger Hunt!" On foot, by tricycle or wagon, we followed a map with numbers, words, and pictures to find the items we needed to do our art project at the end of the trail. The kids also enjoyed meeting "Nelson," a wonderful therapy dog and his escort Nancy who came to volunteer!

"Water Works" was equally fun, and a nice kick off for summer. We had an "ocean" and a fresh-water "pond" to play in. Our duck mascot "Queen Alina" got a chance to take a bird bath and then have a snack right out of the children's hands! Talk about a sensory experience!

It's so rewarding to see families of children with and without special needs, come together to play! Stay tuned for more Buddy Plays to come. Visit our website for more information and a schedule of future playgroups at [www.buddyplay.org](http://www.buddyplay.org)

**Thank you CVS Caremark!**

## BUDDY WALK

Sunday October 11

Walnut Creek

- Come walk with us at Heather Farms during National Down Syndrome Month & promote acceptance & inclusion!
- A mile walk, live music, bbq lunch and raffle!

## DON'T MISS OUT

Join the 2009 Bay Area Buddy Walk!

On Sunday October 11th the Down Syndrome Connection of the Bay Area's (DSCBA) members, friends, family and concerned citizens will walk a mile for Down's at Heather Farms Park in Walnut Creek.

The Buddy Walk is a national event that promotes acceptance and inclusion of people with Down syndrome. This is one of three fundraisers that the DSCBA puts on to keep their doors open.

### How can you help?

- Join the Buddy Walk Committee and help us make this the best year ever!
- Volunteer for the day of the event to help with logistics, registration, raffle etc.
- Gather up a walk team, register, collect pledges and walk with us.

*Details are at*

[www.dsconnection.org/events/buddywalk](http://www.dsconnection.org/events/buddywalk)

For information about volunteering and walking, contact

Tammy Garcia at 510-579-1541 or you can call the Connection at 925-362-8660

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

## In Memory of Emma Krumwiede

Kevin L. Krumwiede  
Jason Hooker  
Lisa Tamak  
Vy Hyman  
Shimizu Ryo  
Jo Ann Krumwiede  
Paul Burnett  
Elisabeth Cook  
Kevin and Sandra Krumwiede  
Barbara and Agelito Arangcon  
Lora Crosslin  
Michelle and Anthony Walsh  
Gap Inc. -Matching Gift Program

## In Honor of

Katie Buckman- from Erika Walters  
Dexter Foong- from Elizabeth Tedja  
Mason Zolnier- from  
Victor VandenBerghe

## Scholarship Fund – Remembering Ruth Chiavetta

Philip & Carol Chiavetta  
Nancy & Rick LaBelle

## Chevron Humankind Matching Gift Program

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

## AT&T Employee Giving Campaign

Raymond Rhodes  
Joanne Leach  
Ana Marsh  
David Kimble  
Krista Veri

## Kaiser Community Giving Program

Mary Kimble

## Recognizing Local Business

Albany Unified School District  
Design Elements, Judith Clark  
Kendall Financial, Monica Shaw  
Jay-Marie Insurance  
Temescal Arts Center  
John O'Connell High School  
SunDesign Studios, Sunshine & Kim  
Eric's Computers, Eric Hansen  
PACE Solano  
G&B Supply, Roy Mapplebeck  
Mechanics Bank, Danville  
MKNI Insurance, Maura Perkins

## Annual Meeting

Katherine Sefton, MDT  
Regina Marie Lewis, Attorney  
at Law  
Robert Kosloff, Attorney at Law  
Loren Spina  
Gagnon's Catering  
Jo and Rich Kelley  
Julie Sodestrom  
Moraga Valley Presbyterian Church  
National Charity League

## 4th of July Parade Sponsors & Organizers

Morgan's Masonry Supply – San Ramon  
California Sun Dry Foods – Danville  
Empact, Inc – Walnut Creek  
Precision People's Car Repair, Inc.  
America's Best Battery, Steve Biro  
Ken Shapiro and Jackie Turnshak  
Maura Perkins  
Heather Petersen  
The Kelley Family

## Pledges & Other Donations

Pamela Brady  
FRG Waste Resources, Inc  
Erica Santos  
Franciscan Communications  
Ian & Debbie Copeland  
David Manion – Farmers  
Insurance  
Christopher Paterno  
Jay Briggs – American Pacific  
Mortgage

## 2009 Grants and Gifts

Wayne & Gladys Valley Foundation  
The J. M. Long Foundation  
Quest Foundation  
Kiwanis Club of San Ramon Valley  
Bob Cummings-St. Joan of Arc  
Youth Ministry  
CVS Pharmacy  
The Peter Musto Charitable Trust Fund  
Danville Children's Guild

*Thank you to all of the volunteers who give so freely and who we have not mentioned above.*

## DSCBA PROGRAMS CAN ONLY CONTINUE WITH YOUR HELP! 43% OF OUR INCOME COMES FROM DONATIONS AND FUNDRAISING EVENTS. HOW CAN YOU HELP US?

### 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 PAYPAL

The Down Syndrome Connection is a member of PayPal, a free service which allows you to purchase or donate using your credit card or PayPal account on a secure website. PayPal deposits your donation directly to our account. PayPal is FREE to you, the donor. Visa and MasterCard are accepted. Visit our site [www.dsconnection.org/donate](http://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.carstorcharities.com/DSC.htm](http://www.carstorcharities.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](http://www.escrip.com) to get started.

### USE GOODSEARCH.COM AND GOODSHOP.COM WEBSITES

Choose the Down Syndrome Connection of the Bay Area at [www.goodsearch.com](http://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](http://www.goodshop.com) and when you shop you donate too!



***Please join us on Saturday, September 26, 2009  
for the 4th Annual St. Joan of Arc Knights of Columbus  
Golf Tournament to benefit our lead charity the  
Down Syndrome Connection of the Bay Area***



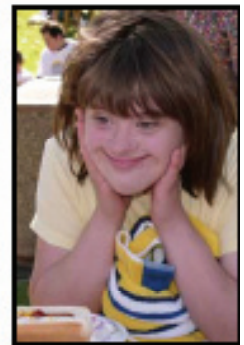
**Alexandra**



**Gabriel**

**Cole**

**Tatiana**



**Nora**

**All the kids and staff at Down Syndrome Connection  
send their love and thanks for your support!**

**The event includes golf at San Ramon Golf Course, and  
dinner, wine tasting, raffle & auction immediately  
following at the St. Joan of Arc Gymnasium**

**Duffers are welcomed, but if golf isn't your thing,  
come join us for an evening of fun!**

**\$140 for golf and evening events**

**\$40 for evening events only**

**For further information please visit the St. Joan of Arc  
Knights of Columbus web site: [www.kofc9206.org](http://www.kofc9206.org)  
or call (925) 263-1776**



**Down Syndrome Connection**  
OF THE BAY AREA

117-A Town and Country Drive • Danville, CA 94527  
Phone 925.362.8660 • Fax 925.362.8663

[www.dsconnection.org](http://www.dsconnection.org)

ADDRESS SERVICE REQUESTED

— Step Classes —

FALL SCHEDULE

See page 12

**SAVE THE ENVIRONMENT AND  
GIVE TO THE  
CONNECTION**



***Clean out those garages and closets!***

What if I told you that you can drop off your used cell phones, laptops, hand held devices, desktop computers, remote controls, etc. at the Connection? **Starting today YOU CAN!** Bring your used electronic devices to the Danville Connection they will get recycled appropriately which will contribute to saving the environment.

eWASTE also gives the Connection a cash back donation based on recycle value. Tell your friends, family and neighbors..... **Thanks!**

NONPROFIT ORG.  
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DANVILLE, CA  
PERMIT NO. 185

*Upcoming Events . . . . . Mark Your Calendars!*

**saturday, september 12**

**CAJUN FEST**

Come party with us. 100% of the proceeds support the DSCBA'S programs

See flyer, page 10

- Tickets are \$55 each
- Live music, dancing, great food, cocktails, silent & live auction and more!
- For more information and to purchase tickets: [www.dsconnection.org/events/cajunfest](http://www.dsconnection.org/events/cajunfest)
- We need volunteers and auction items

*If you can help please call Nancy at the Connection 925-362-8660*

**saturday september 26**

**KNIGHTS OF COLUMBUS GOLF TOURNAMENT  
and AUCTION DINNER**

- 100% of the proceeds support the dsdba's programs
- San Ramon golf course — \$140 includes a round of golf, auction and dinner
- Information: [www.kofc9206.org](http://www.kofc9206.org) or call 925-263-1776

See flyer, page 15

**sunday october 11**

**BAY AREA BUDDY WALK** *walnut creek*

- Come walk with us at heather farms during National Down Syndrome month & promote acceptance & inclusion!
- A mile walk, live music, bbq lunch and raffle

See flyer, page 11

[www.dsconnection.org/events/buddywalk](http://www.dsconnection.org/events/buddywalk)

*We need volunteers. If you can help please call Tammy Garcia at 925-362-8660*