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DSCBA Wins Community Service Float Award Second Year in a Row!

This year's 4th of July parade was a hit! Our float was filled with children, families, staff, and volunteers all celebrating our cause. The theme of the parade was "Honoring our Everyday Heroes." The DSCBA believes that our heroes come in many forms. Our heroes are the donors that keep our doors open, the teachers that help our children develop, the staff and volunteers that fill the Connection with love, and let's not forget our make-believe super heroes that all of our children adore so much! A special thanks to Rich Kelley for maintaining his "master craftsman" role and building us an AWESOME float! Also a special thanks to: Maura Perkins, Kurt Perkins, Brian Garcia, Jo Kelley, the Hogan family, Nancy LaBelle, Tyler Hailey, Brian Fischer, Karen Peterson, Mark Vukelich, Hallie Foster, and our volunteers and families for your support throughout the process! See you next year! — Heather Peterson, Board Member

Executive Director's Forum

A Note from Nancy



hope you are enjoying the newsletter and that your summer is full of fun with friends and family! We are having another busy year at the Connection as we work towards our 2010 goals. Our annual meeting was so much fun with Kellie, Hank and Carla Greenwald as they all shared so beautifully what comes from Kellie's heart. We also had National Down Syndrome Society President Jon Coleman who gave an informative presentation about what

the NDSS does and what they are currently working on. Thanks to Kathy Harkins and Marianne Iversen for coordinating the event.

Thanks to Board Treasurer Bill Bayliss, in 2010 we are efficiently cruising in Quick Books, giving our Operations Director Kathy Harkins automation of time-consuming tasks and several reporting capabilities.

We are on our way to several fundraisers and I hope you will support us by attending or volunteering. We have two coming up that literally keep our doors open. Our annual Charity Gala will be at the Diablo Country Club on Saturday, September 18. It will be a night of live and silent auctions, dancing to live music from 2endeavor, a delicious dinner and a lot of great fun! Tickets are available on our web site and we still need help obtaining great auction prizes.

The Buddy Walk raises the most money for our organization. This year we will change it up as we will be at the Little Hills Ranch in San Ramon on Sunday, October 3. Thanks to Little Hill's generosity we were able to secure the entire park for the day. There will be swimming, rock climbing, a bouncy house, sports and much more. Little Hills has plenty of parking for everyone and a great trail for our walk. The generous folks of the Walnut Creek Kiwanis club are doing the barbequing and donating the food, and we will have a live concert in the park with the hot Bay Area rock band Public Eye. I need your help... please send out a web page this year to all of your friends, coworkers and family members asking for their support of your walker.

With growth comes the need and desire to assess our programs. We are currently working on a "new parent survey" with the help of member lara Peng to ensure we are giving parents what they need or want at diagnosis. We are also planning new workshops, updating our lending library thanks to the San Ramon Kiwanis club, starting a Grandparents support group and so much more.

The heart of the Connection is its members. I ask you as a member of our organization to join us however you can, whenever you can, and to please forward our requests for help, attendance or donations to your circle of friends and family. What you give or the time you take makes a difference in the lives of so many wonderful families and allows us to keep doing what we are honored to do everyday.

Nancy LaBelle
 Executive Director and Editor

GRANDPARENTS SUPPORT GROUP STARTS

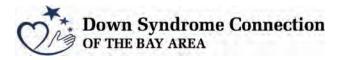
AT THE CONNECTION! This group will meet on one Wednesday a month from 10am – noon, dates to be determined based on interest. For more information please call Martha Hogan at 925-362-8660 or email her at marhogan@sbcglobal.net. This will be a great group for grandparents of children birth to 8 years of age.

Amy Parham takes on Making the Connection

We are pleased to announce that Amy Parham, current Vice-President of the DSCBA Board, will be assuming responsibility for our newsletter, *Making the Connection*, beginning this fall. Amy has 12 years experience in non-profit public relations and communications. She is thrilled



to share the news of the unique abilities and accomplishments of our families, and the amazing activities and programs of the Connection. Amy can be reached at amy@parham.org.



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2010-11 Board Meetings

101 J Town & Country Dr., Danville 6:45pm – 8:15pm

JULY 27 AUG 24 SEPT 28 OCT 26 *** DEC 7

*** No November Meeting 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.

*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, 101 J Town & Country Drive. Please call Martha Hogan if you have questions or to tell her you are coming: 925-362-8660.

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.

Made with Love!

On July 2 the Diablo Valley Quilters of Danville presented the Connection with 15 amazing quilts to be given to families with new babies.

"The blankets will say welcome and congratulations to new parents who come to us for support," says Martha Hogan, DSCBA



founder and advocacy support director.



Dianne Barnett, Linda Patridge, Martha Hogan, Maryann Maiorana and Spencer Brown.

The Diablo Valley Quilters are committed to supporting various local and national charities

and are always looking for people to help with this outreach program.

If you would like to help please call Linda Patridge 925-648-7517,

Baby Vivian – Almost 1-year-old and enjoying her new quilt.

www.diablovalleyquilters.org.

Walk a Mile Support the Down Syndrome Connection of the Bay Area 2010 Bay Area Buddy Walk & Picnic Sunday, October 3rd, 2010 Little Hills Ranch 18013 Bollinger Canyon Rd, San Ramon 10:00am - 4:00pm Walk Starts Promptly at 11:30am BBQ Lunch - Sponsored by the Kiwanis Club of Walnut Creek

> Activities Available: Swimming, rock climbing, volleyball, bouncy house and much more!



DON'T MISS THE CONCERT IN THE PARK WITH BAY AREA ROCK AND DANCE BAND... PUBLIC EYE

Committee Members and Volunteers Needed! Please contact Buddy Walk Coordinator Tammy Garcia: tammygarcia09@yahoo.com

Register Now and Reserve your T-Shirt

\$30 Per Person/Kids 5 and Under FREE!

www.firstgiving.com/dscba

After registering please create a personal webpage. Email it to all of your friends, family and co-workers asking them to sponsor your walker or your team. The Buddy Walk is the DSCBA's largest source of funding. Please help us meet our goal!

Thank you for your support!

President's Corner MAURA PERKINS

Can you believe that over half the year has passed? In that time we've made great strides within our organization.



We have a new office and class-

room space in Danville, which has been phenomenal for our kids and staff. The Open House that was held in March had a huge showing of support with many of our members, donors and fellow Danville Chamber of Commerce members in attendance. Thank you to everyone for helping to make our Grand Opening at the new location a success!

The Bowl-A-Rama event that was held in May was also a huge success! The bowling lanes were filled to capacity and we had some fabulous raffle and auction items donated. Our fundraising goal was met and we couldn't have had a better time.

Our most challenging months of the year are ahead of us for fundraising. Being in a larger classroom space, serving more children and expanding our programs comes with added costs. We ask for your continued support of attending our events, donating your time for our event committee positions, and considering joining our Board of Directors. These are the most effective ways to ensure that our non-profit organization will continue to thrive.

We are looking for Committee Members for events. There are volunteer positions available for the Gala, Buddy Walk and Holiday Party. If you have a few free hours a week and would like to volunteer your time and ideas we'd love to hear from you.

The Board of Directors is also seeking qualified individuals to assist with our fundraising efforts and ideas for new events, or to make our existing events better. If you, a friend, family member, neighbor or work colleague is interested in becoming a Board Member we welcome a visit at our next Board Meeting on August 17th.

Again, thank you to all of our members, donors, sponsors, teachers, staff and board members for making the world a better place for all who take part in our services.

Your calls and emails are welcome at any time. Maura Perkins (888)654-8884 Ext. 1 or email: mperkins@mkni.com.

CALL FOR LOCAL VENDORS

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Mark Your Calendar for October 9th

"THREE BOATS" • TOWN'S VILLAGE THEATRE IN DANVILLE • 7pm – 9pm

Tickets can be purchased at www.villagetheatreshows.com. A portion of all proceeds benefits the Down Syndrome Connection of the Bay Area.

Troupe Names:

Joe Saam, Jon Cordova, Kathy Neubecker, Alice Kwong-Van dusen Eddie Roberts, Andy Bardin Marie Applegate Prasad



Trapped In A Rumor is an eight person ensemble of improvisators who perform a show similar to Drew Carey's television show "Whose Line Is It Anyway." It is based on audience participation and/or inspiration. It is a fast paced, high energy show that involves everyone. No show is the same!



PROUD 2 YEAR SPONSOR OF THE DSCBA 4TH OF JULY FLOAT!



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The Importance of Pre-Feeding Exercises with your New Baby

ongratulations to all of the new parents that have been joining the Down Syndrome Connection in the past few months. We are so lucky to have you! Now that your baby is born, what can you do to ensure the best feeding and future speech development? The answer is "Oral Motor Stimulation." Sarah Rosenfeld Johnson and her company Talk Tools (www.talktools.net) provides a seminar called "Developing Oral Motor and Feeding Skills in the Down Syndrome Population." It is this very influential company that has changed the way we treat our children with Down syndrome in the world of feeding and speech development. The "Pre-Feeding Exercises" in this seminar are easy to do with your baby and can help facilitate good feeding skills throughout their lives, as well as promote good motor movement and overall oral awareness and placement of articulators (lips/tongue/jaw) for the purposes of speech development.

What are pre-feeding exercises?

Pre-feeding exercises are simple exercises you can do on and in your baby's mouth before you feed your baby. These exercises work to normalize your baby's facial tone, oral sensation and mouth structure. They will also help to create the motor patterns necessary for the feed you are about to give, as well as future foods you will be presenting.

Do I need tools?

When your baby is young, very minimal tools are necessary. Most work can be done with your fingers and hands. When your baby gets older, it is advantageous to add some vibration and strength building tools.

When can I start doing pre-feeding exercises?

I have been seeing parents and babies at the Down Syndrome Connection in their 3rd week of life. However, I have also been training parents before their baby is born. Sarah Rosenfeld Johnson and her associates claim pre-feeding exercises can be initiated the second day of life.



Can these exercises hurt my baby?

No, these exercises are based on loving touch, and can help to create a bond between you and your baby. They cannot hurt your baby.

Where can I learn these exercises?

New families are welcome to schedule a free of charge appointment with me to learn the Pre-Feeding exercises at the Down Syndrome Connection (Monday-Wednesday) or in San Francisco (Thursday/Friday).

What is the next step after my baby is a few months old?

When you and your baby are ready to start rice cereal/purees (typically between 4-6 months), scheduling an appointment with an oral motor based speech pathologist to help facilitate appropriate spoon feeding techniques would be a good idea. These techniques will help promote lip closure around the spoon, tongue retraction during your baby's swallow, and safe/appropriate foods to feed your baby.

Please feel free to contact me for a free of charge appointment at happykidstherapy@hotmail.com or 202.425.6874.

- Heather Peterson, MS SLP-CCC Speech Pathologist

Nico G. Barillas – The Rainmaker

There we were in Central America. We were newlywed in our 1st year of marriage when Nico was born. We were living in Panama City, Panama, on a work assignment and his arrival was a life changing experience, as most births are.

As our first child, not only were we learning the ropes of new born parenting, we were also trying to understand what we needed to do since he was diagnosed with Down syndrome in the 6th month of our pregnancy. Looking back, it is very obvious to us that we were not the first couple in this situation, but hindsight has always been 20/20.

Is he too hot, is he too cold? Did he eat enough, did he eat too much? Is he sleeping too much, why won't he sleep? How soon is too soon for early intervention therapies? Numerous calls to Grandmas and our Pediatrician were surely part of everyone else's first few weeks right?. We know these are the basics, but what we didn't know, is that in a few short years later, he would be caring for us in ways immeasurable.

"... my son has Down

syndrome, my wife has MS

and I am happier than most

people I know."

My wife Veronica has Multiple Sclerosis (MS). She was diagnosed seven years ago. MS is an

autoimmune disease that attacks the central nervous system. Her diagnosis is relapsing/remitting. The short version is, it appears with no notice, and wipes out her mobility, vision and speech in various ways depending on the strength of the attack. When this happens, she is in need of immediate treatment via solumedrol infusions for days at a time with many weeks to recover. Unbelievably, we are blessed that with her type of MS, combined with her strength in fighting each attack, she has recovered 100% each time.

We have participated in fundraising for MS with an annual walk in our hometown of Des Moines, IA. The spring event has brought a serious purpose in our fight for a cure. Each year Team V is assembled and



friends and family join us in person, as well as, with very generous donations. Since our team was formed, we have consistently been the #1 fundraising team in the North Central Chapter.

This year, Nico partnered with Veronica's Mom (affectionately referred to as Gaga by her grandchildren) to be co-captains of Team V. With his vast network of contacts and Gaga's leadership, Nico incredibly not only led Team V to the #1 spot for the 7th year in a row as they raised over \$14,250, but he was the #1 individual fundraiser at \$7,880.00!!! He was pushed proudly in his stroller by his mother and along with his Gaga,

> it was three generations of unconditional love regardless of an extra chromosome or the threat of another MS

attack. A 'Rainmaker' is a term used to describe an executive or lawyer with serious income producing abilities and we found that in Nico and then some.

I couldn't be prouder. Our home is one filled with love. Veronica is the type that turns words on a paper into a sweet sounding song. She has a heart full of love and a strength that is unmatched. Nico is the type that makes you melt with a smile and has shown us what life truly is about in less than 28 months. With the footprints of their lives in my heart, I fall asleep every night wondering how it is that my son has Down syndrome, my wife has MS and I am happier than most people I know. – Marty Barillas

Summer 2010 Making the Connection 5



From left: the Roby family; Barrett, Anne, Nick and Brock.

Talking up a storm

Anne Roby shared this poem, written five Ayears ago by Nick Roby about his brother, Barrett, who has Down syndrome. Nick was in 6th grade at the time and his class was asked to write an autobiographical poem where each stanza would be a different year in their 11 year-old lives. Most kids wrote about learning to play soccer, the flute, or something like that, yet Nick wrote about watching his older brother Barrett learn to speak. The poem had a big impact and is a family treasure.

Barrett's Poem

Chapter 1: Age 2 Talking up a storm Quiet one in the back seat My brother can't speak. Sorry for him; I want to help. With a magic wand, I want noise from this mouth. Quiet and not satisfied with what I have.

Chapter 2: Age 3 Saying some words He can't talk in a conversation I try to tell him the ABC's. He can't do it. I feel discouraged. I can't help him. I quit soon after I start.

Chapter 3: Age 4 My brother can talk. He stutters and can't pronounce things well. I try to correct him. He learns but not at a fast pace. I feel good but also sad. I can help.

Chapter 4: Age 10. My brother can talk well But he doesn't really have friends. I help him talk to others. He can't keep it up. I feel happy and persevere. I know he will be social some day.

Chapter 5: Age 11 My brother has his first best friend. He also had his first sleepover, But he talks to imaginary people. I get frustrated and talk to my mom. She encourages me and tells me I helped him talk. Says he copied me to learn. She is right. At the end of the day, I know tomorrow He will talk up a storm.

Sensational sibling support

Smart, super, sensitive, silly, stupendous are just some of the words I would use to describe the wonderful siblings that I was able to work with last summer and fall.

I had a lot of fun leading activities to foster discussion about feelings and attitudes about having a brother or sister with Down syndrome. I felt so honored to spend time with such an intelligent and wise group of young people.

My name is Terese Ghilarducci and I am a Marriage and Family Therapist and a former DSCBA Board Member. For the past ten years, I have been a high school counselor; I am currently at a continuation school. Although, I do not have a sibling with a disability, I have been blessed to be a part of Blair Hogan's life.

During the summer of 2009, I piloted a support group at the Connection for siblings ages 8-13 years-old. During the fall, I worked with two children, both age 9, who bonded and communicated beautifully with each other. We did a lot of art activities designed to talk about feelings, such as shame, anger, embarrassment, guilt and sadness, but a lot of happy feelings were discussed as well.

One of their favorite activities was answering questions and giving advice to other siblings who wrote about their concerns to "Aunt Blabby." This was an activity from the SibShop Workbook from Don Meyer.

Here are some of the problems that my friends solved that we would like to share with other siblings and parents out there.



- Explain that you don't like the word "retard" and explain what Down syndrome is.
- Tell your friends before they come over about the special needs of your sibling and then, if they don't want to come over, invite two other friends
- Try to do things that you can play together like hide and seek.

How to communicate to your parents

- Tell your parents that baby-sitting is okay as long as you don't feel pushed into doing it more than once or twice a week, and when your are old enough get your own part-time job.
- Talk to your parents calmly, asking for alone time with them, but don't act out at school because you will get in trouble.
- Nobody is a "superkid" and your parents shouldn't expect perfect grades.
- Sometimes siblings are embarrassing and it's okay to tell your parents that you have these feelings.
- Ask your parents to put a lock on your door so you can do your homework in peace and they won't mess up your room.
- If you don't like your sibling's style of dress then ask your parents if you could help take them shopping to places like the Gap and Tilly's.

I really don't think I could have said it better myself. If you are interested in learning more about my work with siblings, please email me at teresemarieg@ comcast.net or contact Marianne Iversen at the Connection. – Terese Ghilarducci, MFT





New Parent Group! Focusing on School and Educational Needs

A re you a parent of a school-aged child with questions about your child's educational plan? Do you wonder if a special education classroom or a general education classroom is the right placement for your child, or wonder how other parents have handled the many concerns we share in educating our children and meeting their unique needs? We've learned so much in talking with other parents, we thought it might be worthwhile to start a parent group to share experiences, knowledge, concerns, etc. in order to help each other with school decisions, in working with districts, and in developing successful programs for our children in general.

If you may be interested in joining this group, send an email to Laurie McGrath at LaurieMcGrath@ymail.com, or to Martha Hogan at marhogan@sbcglobal.net. We'd love to hear from you!

BOOK REVIEW The Little King and his Marshmallow Kingdom

have read many books over the years written for families and for children by a family member that has a child born with Down syndrome. I have read books that have been written to help fathers and to help others understand how our kids are so capable in so many ways. This book by far is one of the very best. It is heartwarming, insightful, entertaining and educational. The Father's journey in the back of the book is truly inspirational. It is a must read and a book to be shared with many. Enjoy!



Comments by others about the book;

"The father's journey make me cry and touched me deeply."

"I love bubbles after reading this book."

"So great for families to read who have a relative or friend who has Down syndrome"

"Oh My!!"

– Martha Hogan

For our families: The DSCBA has several copies for sale at the Connection and one in our library to check out.

Clown Syndrome

Robert Humphreys is a 24-year-old adult with Down syndrome. He lives in San Francisco with his parents and works at Cow Hollow preschool in the Presidio. He is intelligent and very articulate.

Robert has a large interest in drama and enjoys acting in live theater. Recently, he performed



with a "clown therapy" group for adults lead by Christina Lewis (teacher of SF Step). Although Christina taught this class, this was not a class solely for adults with disabilities. In fact, Robert was the only person with Down syndrome in the class. The purpose of the group is to give adults a positive outlet for their everyday stressors through the art of "clowning."

Robert took part in many skits in the hour-long performance that included both individual and group interpretations. What amazed me most about Robert, especially from my "speech pathologist" perspective, was Robert's body language and facial expressions. He was witty and charming and right on the mark. Robert is an obvious inspiration to his classmates as well as to the audience who came to enjoy the performance. It was Robert's idea to name the show "Clown Syndrome." How cool is that?! – Heather Peterson, MS SLP-CCC

Mural completed by local artist and friend of the Connection

f you haven't been to the Connection lately, come on down and see the amazing walls in our family room.

Helen Doronkina, local artist and friend of the Connection donated her time to make it all happen. Helen's vision was to involve our students in her creation using words that tell a story with focus on our mission such as; Encouraging, Community, Friendship and Laughter. There is also a strong message about ABILITIES in the hand painted pictures that depict children playing together, doing activities such as baseball, golf, soccer, and dancing.

All students from all Step classes created a masterpiece in the form of a heart or star. The wall came to life when Helen strategically placed them.

Helen also created a tree for us to use as a way to thank the foundations and community groups that give to us so generously each year. This tree reminds us every day of the wonderful people that support our mission, and as the tree continues to bloom so will our gratitude!

Helen is a professional artist. She was born in Russia where she got her education in art. She is a member of Alamo Danville Artist Society. She received an award at the 32nd Gala Spring Art Show in 2009 at Pioneer Art Gallery and continues to show her work at local art shows in the area.

Helen's motto is "Life is too short for white walls." She specializes in faux finishes and amazing canvasses that come to life using venetian plaster and acrylics. She also loves to create colorful murals in children's rooms. If you would like to contact Helen about her work she can be reached at 925-708-1586 or you can see her work at www.fauxforyourhome.com. – Nancy LaBelle











NEWS FLASH — *Coming this fall, Pinole Step Class for 20+ Adults. Are you interested?* Email Program Coordinator Marianne Iversen at dscba.step@yahoo.com or call the Connection at 925-362-8660.



Bowl-A-Rama!





Bowl--Rama! Fun for everyone and a successful fundraiser

What a fantastic day we had! Visiting with old friends and making new ones. We had a great raffle and a fun-filled silent auction thanks to the board of directors who donated amazing baskets. Special thanks to Maura Perkins for getting a large donation of baseball tickets and to Bill Bayliss for setting them up so beautifully.

Thanks to the Bowl-A-Rama committee: Chair -Luz Maria Moreno, Bill Bayliss, Tim Hogan, Angie Rettig & Lisa Rigby.

A big shout out to Earl Anthony's Dublin Bowl for their generosity!

A huge applause to the Casadont Family who raised and donated the most money, and to Catherine Cannon who raised the most money in sponsorships the 'old fashioned way.' Largest team goes to all the fans of Brandon Garcia!

The Bowl-A-Rama" would not be successful without our sponsors!

Business sponsors:

MCC Realty Group, California Sun Dry Foods,The CAC Group, Huether Insurance, The Engineering Enterprise and The Book Shop.

Family sponsors:

The Casadont's, the Bayliss & Perkins families, Javed & Zainab Shah, Gary Smith, the Elliott family, Janet Gundersen, the McLaughlin family, the Wong family, the Hogan family, James & Kathy Zolnier and the McGrath family.

Looking forward to seeing everyone next



Buddy Play!

Buddy Play day camp meets a variety of needs

I decided to test the waters of "day camp" with the Buddy Play kids this summer. Using our home studio, backyard, and large side patio, I planned the schedule to include camp activities to meet a wide variety of needs. As always with Buddy Play, the mini day camp was open for all children to participate (with or without special needs).

One of our sensory art projects was making "bird seed sticks." The kids spread peanut butter over large popsicle craft sticks and covered them with wild bird seed, then threaded varn through a hole in the stick to make a hanging loop. Of course, this was great messy fun and ended with most of the birdseed scattered on the ground! Other options were water color painting, jewelry box making, and a shaving cream play station. There was also a waterplay station set up with plenty of fun, tactile toys for those who wanted to cool off!

for those who wanted to cool off! Our gross motor skills were tested as we climbed up the dirt path to reach the chicken coop. There, the kids hand-fed "Daisy" the chicken and "Lucky" the duck their favorite cracked corn. The kids also practiced hitting a target by throwing nuts into the center of a hula hoop. There were a lot of happy squirrels and blue jays waiting for

We enjoyed singing the "Signing Time" songs together while practicing all the signs! That

the crowd to clear!

covered our music and fine motor activities, and the kids loved it! Some of them even drummed along on a real drum set and strummed a guitar, performing for the rest of us!

Making fruit smoothies was a big hit on Thursday. One boy even declared that they tasted better than Jamba Juice. Is that possible? But,

the highlight of my week (and I think others too) was cooking our famous "Vegetable Meatball Soup." Each child had a chance to add fresh ingredients to our big pot and stir it up. This was also a great sensory activity, as they touched and smelled chopped parsley, garlic, carrots, cilantro, and much more. And yes, when the soup was finished cooking, we all had it for lunch. Dumplings and noodles too!

All in all, I think everyone had fun at camp. It was a challenge at times,

given all the unique personalities and needs. But I think each of us that helped run the camp can agree the children enjoyed themselves and each other every day they came. We, of course, loved having all of them. They were wonderful, smart, cute, funny, helpful, excited, surprising, carefree, determined, and much more. Thank you for bringing your children, and I hope we can do mini-camp again soon!

> — Bernadette Fatehi Buddy Play Coordinator









HIGHLIGHTING ABILITIES 📩







Step Out Summer Wishes

The Step Out group in Oakland and the SF Step in San Francisco wish everyone a fantastic summer. Remember this key thing: CALL YOUR FRIENDS!

We had a great end of the semester with singing, dancing, sign songs (all at the same time, too!) and special treats. Thanks to the parents of SF Step, the teachers and students in this group even celebrated with a meal together at a Mexican food restaurant. We wish you all a terrific, relaxing summer. And when you call your friends...make a plan to get together! Happy Summer! – Jamie Lantz





Next Steppers, Emma, Alexandra and Tatiana showing off their pretty flower pots which were given to their Mom's for Mother's Day along with cards they created with love.

Emma Yungert and Olivia **Byers-Straus** performed in June with the Steppin' Out Dance Studio's annual teen showcase. Olivia has taken classes at Steppin' Out for 14 years, since the age of three, and Emma joined the studio two years ago, after taking classes at another school for several years. Both of these young women love to perform and it really shows in their dancing. Brava, Emma; brava, Olivia! – Lily Byers



Technology making a difference at The Connection

Students in the Next Step class had the opportunity to work on a laptop for the their Mother's Day card project. What a wonderful experience! The kids loved being able to type up their special sentence about their mom on the computer and then to see it up on the big screen. It was so much fun and helped so much with the project. We are having a great time with the Wii as well, especially Wii Dance! What a great addition that has been for our class. Thank you to Connection friend Buffy Wachs for her generous technology donation in 2009! It's truly a gift that keeps on giving! – Marianne Iversen

Step Out Father's Day Poem

Dad, Daddy-O,

Papa, Bumpy and Big Bucks We call you many things but most importantly

We call you when we need a steady hand, comfort, help and love.

We celebrate you on Father's Day and everyday.

Thank you for being my Dad.

You are a good hugger, kind, sweet, nice Intelligent, charismatic and caring.

You helped me wash my hair and change my clothes when I needed you.

I like it when you tease me 'cause I tease you too.

I love cooking with you. You're a great cook.

I like it when you take me bowling, to the free market and to restaurants.

If I could do anything for you...I'd: Take you to CATS in New York City Clean for you Create your own Golf Tournament and Poetry Festival.

I'd give you:

Peet's Coffee and Tea's chocolate covered almonds with powdered sugar Lots of dark Ghirardelli chocolate Men's t-shirts, polo shirts and white shorts.

Happy Father's Day...I LOVE YOU DAD!

SF Step's Father's Day Poem

I'm so glad, you're my Dad, 'cause you're rad.

Even when you're mad you're never bad.

- Without you I'd be sad.
- Thank you for being my Dad.
- You're the best Father.
- Never ever a bother.

Pop, You're the top You make me want to hop

Maybe even mop

You definitely make me want to shop

My heart goes flip flop

So fast we might have to call a cop Don't ever stop!

If I could do anything for you...Spend a lot of time with you, I'd clean your car, clean my room, help you with your work, take you fishing...

I'd give you...a chocolate cigar, tickets to the Giant's game, hugs, lots of lovin', my artwork...

Happy Father's Day...I LOVE YOU DAD!

Step Out's Poem for Mothers

We call you: Nona, Bunny Rabbit, Chocolate Muffin We call vou: Roxanne, or Joyce Lee Bellot Whether we call you Mom, Ma or Mother Dear Whether we call you Mommy or our Mammacita, You are the best, unlike any other You are the most beautiful loving Mother. If you were a dance you'd be the: Cha Cha Samba Macarena If I could give you anything I'd give you: Lots of red roses and tulips Pink and purple daisies A spa weekend for a month Green lemonade and mums A gold watch and a mother's day card Silver and gold -with your birthstone-jewelry I'd take you to dinner at a fancy Mother's Day restaurant On a trip to Paris or the Caribbean To Italy and Greece Whatever I call you

Wherever we do or do not go You are the best mother And I wanted you to know... I Love You!

SF Step's Mother's Day Poem

I call you Mommy or I call you Mom I call you great when you help me with the prom

You are the best, my loving mother You let me be myself and you never smother

We have a love that fits like a glove

You are the best In all of the West

You make me glow

When you go with the flow

You even make me smile when I'm feeling low

Hey! Have a happy Mother's Day... On the Bay – Whatever way

You are better than just OK I just gotta' say – Yay!

Please stay this way You are the best, unlike any other

Thank you for being the world's greatest Mother

*Rhymes and poem by SF Step, May 2010

Step Classes 2010 Fall Schedule

Baby Steps - Facilitator: Martha Hogan Location DSCBA Danville Wednesdays 10:00 a.m.-11:30 am Sept. 8, 22 Oct. 6, 20 Nov. 3, 17 Dec. 1, & 15

Small Steps - Teacher: Laura Briggs Location DSCBA Danville Mondays 3:30 p.m.-5:00 p.m. Session I- Sept. 13, 20, 27 & Oct. 4, 11, 18 Session II - Nov. 2, 9, 26, 30 & Dec. 7, 14

South Bay Small Steps - Laura DiSessa Location & Dates to be determined

First Steps - Teacher: Laura Briggs Location DSCBA Danville Wednesdays 3:30 p.m.-5:00 p.m. Session I Sept. 15, 22, 29 Oct. 6, 13, 20 Session II Nov. 3, 10, 17 Dec. 1, 8, 15

Next Step - Teacher: Marianne Iversen Location DSCBA Danville Tuesdays 4:00-5:30 p.m. Session I Sept. 14, 21, 28 Oct. 5, 12, 19 Session II Nov. 2, 9, 16, 30 Dec. 7, 14

Step In - Teacher: Virginia Bonham/Tamara ReedLocation DSCBA DanvilleThursdays 4:00 p.m.-5:30 p.m.Session ISept. 9, 16, 23, 30Oct. 7, 14, 21Session IINov. 4, 18Dec. 2, 9, 16

Step Out - Teacher: Jamie Lantz - Harold BurnsLocation: Temescal Arts Center, OaklandWednesdays 4:00 p.m. - 5:30 p.m.Session ISept. 8, 15, 22, 29Oct. 6, 13, 20Session IINov. 3, 10, 17Dec. 1, 8, 15

SF Step - Teacher: Jamie Lantz / Christina Lewis Location: John O' Connell High School of Technology, SF Tuesdays 4:00 p.m. - 5:30 p.m. Session I Sept. 7, 14, 21, 28 Oct. 5, 12, 19 Session II Nov. 2, 9, 16, 30 Dec. 7, 14

Pinole Step - Teacher: Tamara Reed Location dates and times to be determined

Benicia Step- Teacher: Tamara ReedLocation: Pace Benicia, BeniciaWednesdays 4:00 p.m. - 5:30 p.m.Session ISept. 8, 15, 22, 29Oct. 6, 13, 20Session IINov. 3, 10, 17Dec. 1, 18, 15

Emma Tippett's First Year on the Yankees



This is Emma Tippett during her Challenger baseball season. her first year on the Yankees. She had a wonderful time. Her family is very proud of her! – Erika Tippett



On the job at the Exploratorium

Jackson Soderquist started work at the science museum- The Exploratorium in the spring of Spring 2010. He is a High School Explainer. He works 3 days a week as a support staff. This includes explaining to visitors about magic card tricks, the dynamics of the baseball, cow eyeball dissection and other special science exhibits along with helping visitors with directions and general museum business. The program is for regular education students, but they took a chance on Jackson. He went through the interview process and is matched up with same age peers in this program. The staff has been open and supportive in working with Jackson. He has learned so much and is delighted to be working with science exhibits. – Jane Steiner

Amador Valley High School Senior Ball



On May, 15, 2010, Theresa Blakeslee and 6 classmates attended the Amador Valley High School Senior Ball at the San Francisco Design Center. They rented a limo for the evening and went as a group to the dance.

The Graduates



Emma Yungert graduated from Wallenberg High School in San Francisco on June 2, 2010. In August she will enter into the Transition Program in San Francisco. She is very excited for this next step - one step at a time to learn and grow. Before school starts up Emma and family will attend the National Down Syndrome Conference in Orlando, FL next month. We are staying longer to visit Disney World and other exciting venues. We are very excited about this upcoming trip. – Monika Yungert



Tatiana, at left, graduated from middle school this year and she made us so proud! It was a challenging year but Tatiana was awesome thanks to the great therapies and classes at the Connection. We

all survived! This fall, Tatiana will attend Doughtery High School in San Ramon. Although she will miss good friends who will attend a different school, her friends Patrick and Brett will be her classmates once again. We thank all of you who are always there when we need you. Here's to a new beginning! - The Casadont's

Step Together participant Jackson Soderquist, a graduate of Galileo High School in San Francisco, and his sister Shaney. Jackson is wearing

his Lincecum Jersey he got for graduation. We are so proud of him. He will attend a new program starting through SFUSD. The Step parents were instrumental in advocating for this program which is more in line with academics. life skills and vocational education. Wish us luck.

- Jane Steiner

The kids were invited on stage to dance and one of the most wonderful videos I have ever seen was taken of all of them dancing and the rest of the Senior Class cheering them on. They had a great time and got home at 1:00 a.m., tired but happy. Their teacher and two of her staff went along to chaperone but let the kids have the limo experience to themselves and followed behind in their own car. We love that they make sure the kids participate in all of the school activities and are so giving of their own time for these events. – Anita Blakeslee

Pitchin' In

Our family was getting ready for a graduation party in our backyard and Mr. Patrick was haul'in dirt with the rest of us. However-bribery was a great motivator! Steak, pasta and ColdStone for dinner! - Kathleen Harkins



Best Friends



Best friends. Is there anything as special as the one person that knows us better than we know ourselves that isn't our mom? For many with disabilities, having support and opportunity for budding friendships can be challenging. Most do not have the freedom of movement of typical teens and depend on special activities parents and caretakers arrange.

Katrina Taylor and K. Leigh Alfrey have grown up coming to classes and activities at the Down Syndrome Connection. Recently, Dona Taylor and Layne Alfrey watched their daughters as they laughed and teased each other at the Grand Opening celebration. They reminisced how over the years the two families bonded while watching their daughters grow, and how their families became great support systems for each other. Dona Taylor said, "I treasure their friendship very much and feel blessed to have the whole Alfrey family as part of our lives. We are always there for each other when needed. I work full-time and also travel abroad to visit my family quite a bit; Layne has always been available to assist us with Katrina's care while I am gone. We also have KL stay at our house when the Alfreys leave out-oftown and for many overnight visits as often as we can fit in the busy schedules. K. Leigh is really part of our family. Both girls just had a fun and exciting overnight outing with Katrina's grandparents who live in Berkeley. We also have taken several family vacations together over the years."

Dona added, "I work in this field and can honestly say how special and unique this friendship between Katrina and K. Leigh is! Their names even sound so similar: Katrina Lynn and Katherine Leigh!

Loneliness and inability to make close friendships is one of the main complaints I hear from families and students alike."

In talking to Layne and Dona I realized how lucky we are to have the Connection. It is a place that has helped nourish and support families with babies all the way up to adults with Down syndrome. It is a great resource for families to get together and become support for each other. And along the way become great friends.

- Virginia Bonham

Who's in "Seussical, the Musical?"

This past spring Olivia Byers-Straus appeared as a Who in "Seussical, the Musical," performed at Ruth Asawa San Francisco School of the Arts High School, where Olivia has just finished her junior year. This beautifully produced show was performed publicly 15 times over 3 weekends, as well as several times for visiting schools. At the carnival preceding each performance, Olivia's mom sold green



eggs and ham (tortilla chips with guacamole and salsa) and schlop with a cherry on top (a brownie topped with vanilla pudding, whipped cream and a cherry)! - Lily Byers

Dream Connection





The passion to paddle, stroke after stroke, is just one of the "connections" that unites 32 year-old Karen Gaffney of Portland, and 50 year-old Ken Harmon of Danville. Both swimmers structure their busy work schedules in hopes of slipping into a pool for an hour or more of vigorous exercise to clear their mind and body from the pressure/gravity of life on land. And both swim advocates are training hard, not just for personal wellbeing, but to break barriers, set new records and, most importantly, to inspire others to overcome set-backs and pursue lofty goals.

While Karen is nationally recognized as the first relay or solo swimmer with Down syndrome to cross worldfamous bodies of water, Ken was the first, fastest and oldest man to swim the entire 22-mile length of Lake Tahoe, unaided, in 11 hours, 19 minutes, without a wet suit. The two record-setting adventurers met in 2007 when Karen found Ken via an internet search for help in planning her dream swim across Tahoe's width. Ken became her mentor to guide her preparation, layout a 9-mile course, give advice on event nutrition and he even joined her as a swim companion. The experience was bonding for them both.

With Ken's support, Karen achieved her goal and Ken met his match in determination and mental toughness. It takes a unique human capacity to endure the loneliness and monotony of endless hours of open water swimming. With only the thrash of splashing water and the mind's internal dialog, the solo swimmer must draw on deep inner strength. Lake Tahoe's icy water and high altitude add another challenge, especially for Ken who never has, and never will, wear a wet suit.

Now three years later, Karen will become the cheering mentor for Ken as he attempts a 24 hour Ultimate Tahoe Challenge: a double Tahoe length swim of 44-miles without a wet suit. The dynamic duo are joining forces to make Ken's record breaking swim a nationwide fundraiser for Best Buddies International, the Down Syndrome Network of Northern Nevada and the Karen Gaffney

Foundation. Bring your family, friends and buddies to North Shore Tahoe's Hyatt Incline beach front on August 21st to witness their launching and anticipated finish late on August 22nd. Even if you miss the beach party, we invite you to show your support and dive into our fundraising effort today at www.bestbuddies.org/tahoechallenge to make a tax-deductible donation, or explore Ken's bio and details of the swim at www.swimfar.org. Stay tuned for a post-swim hero's party TBA in Danville, CA. – Marcia Harmon

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Would you like to be part of a Father's Support Group? If interested, or want more information please contact Martha Hogan at 925-362-8660 or email Martha at marhogan@sbcglobal.net.

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, 101-J 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 web site. PayJunction deposits your donation directly to our account. Visa and MasterCard are accepted at www.dsconnection.org/donate

DONATE AN AUCTION ITEM

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.

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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.

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We would love to see you at our fundraisers such as the Bowl-A-Rama, Charity Gala 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.

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- 8/7 Amore Marketing & Events Charity Car Wash to benefit DSCBA, 11am-4pm, in the parking lot behind the Connection. Steppers come out and wash with us! For more information, email acancilla070@gmail.com.
- 9/18 Charity Auction Gala Diablo Country Club See page 14.

Down Syndrome Connection of the Bay Area

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9/25 Knights of Columbus Golf Tournament and Benefit San Ramon Golf Club See below.

Making The

- 10/3 2010 Bay Area Buddy Walk Little Hills Ranch, San Ramon See page 3.
- 10/9 Trapped in a Rumor Improv Benefit Town's Village Theater, Danville See page 4.
- 12/5 Holiday Family Party

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For further information please visit the St. Joan of Arc Knights of Columbus at www.kofc9206.org or call (925) 263-1776



Gabriel and his brother

Alexand

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

The event includes morning golf at San Ramon Golf Club, with an evening wine tasting, dinner, raffle and auction 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!

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