

Down in the Southland

“Friends Don’t Count Chromosomes” 

Volume 1, Issue 1

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3/17/11 Meeting Information

Some things change, some stay the same

Juliette De Nova

On 3/17/11 Down in the Southland members met at the home of Rob & Rita Barnes to discuss the future of Down in the Southland. I shared with those present that while we are moving forward with incorporating and becoming a 501c3, the primary focus of Down in the Southland (providing lifelong friendship opportunities and working to help our children reach their full potential) will remain the same. We heard a number of great suggestions for things moving forward, and while we are still in our infancy with all of this, it's time to start looking for people who are willing to get things rolling. I think everyone knows the old saying “An organization is only as good as its volunteers!” Look for the articles titled “Down in the Southland wants YOU!” and “Ages and Stages” for more information on how you can become involved in the future of our group, for your child's future! Ω

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Down in the Southland Wants YOU!

Ways you might be able to help your child's future!

Using the suggestions given by those present at our 3/17/11 meeting, we have come up with the following list of volunteer positions to help create what people feel they need or would like to see for their children. Please know that while it is important to be dedicated and committed to completing whatever task you take on in a timely manner, if you feel that you can't do it alone, or would like to have a back-up or 'co-leader' that is fine. Please indicate that in your responses. While we want this group to succeed, we don't want it to be at the expense of you or your family.

Volunteer descriptions:

New Parent Coordinator

- *Receive phone calls from new parents & provide information about our group and Down syndrome in general. Follow up with new families every few months.*
- *Contact local OB/Pediatricians/Hospitals and provide them with information about our group. Magnets are especially effective way to make sure our information is handy.*
- *Provide contact information of new parents to board of directors.*

New Family Coordinator

- *Receive phone calls from new families (not newborns) and provide basic information about our group and facilitate contact with other families in the group with similar experiences (e.g. medical diagnoses, school districts, etc.)*

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First Board of Directors Named

As announced at the 3/17/11 meeting, our Board of Directors will consist of five members. We will have the following positions: President, Secretary, Treasurer, and two 'Members at large'. The three 'founding mothers' of our group, Lisa Pringle, Rita Barnes, and myself, will take on the responsibilities of President, Secretary and Member at Large. Peggy Marchionda will take on the responsibility of treasurer. These individuals will hold their positions on the Board of Directors until they step down. The second member-at-large position will be elected on an annual basis. For our first year, Rachel Thornberry has accepted the nomination and been elected unanimously by the board! THANKS RACHEL!

More information about elections and how our organization will operate will be made available once our by-laws are finalized.

Down in the Southland Walk or Buddy Walk?

Over the past 5 years, we have participated in the Chicagoland Buddy Walk with great success. The money raised at the Chicagoland Buddy Walk is distributed among the following agencies:

NDSS 40%

The remaining 60% is divided among the following groups:

Down in the Southland 3.25% (usually the highest percentage from the walk)

NADS

Gigi's Playhouse

West Suburban Parent Support Group

DsSupport

Historically we have received 3.25% of the total amount raised by the Buddy Walk, regardless of what

our team raised. This has equated to \$3500 every year since we started receiving funding from the Buddy Walk. In 2009 we raised about \$11,000 and received \$3,500, and in 2010 we again raised \$11,000 and received \$2,500. While we still received the ~3.25% of the total proceeds from the walk that we had been receiving, the decrease in our funding was due to an overall decrease in walk donations, even though our families and friends still pulled through with the same dedication they showed in 2009!

While the money we have raised has been donated to local worthy causes, such as NADS, Gigi's Playhouse, West Suburban Parent Support Group and DsSupport, Going forward, wouldn't it be nice to tell your family and friends that donate regularly that 70-75% of the amount that they donate will directly help your son or daughter and his/her friends?!?! Wouldn't it be nice to be able to say "25-30% of what you donate goes to subsidize national educational and medical research, but the rest of your money stays RIGHT HERE and helps "INSERT YOUR CHILD'S NAME HERE" and his/her friends TODAY become all that they can be!" Wouldn't THAT be a motivator in and of itself?

The general consensus was that we should have our own 'walk' for Down in the Southland at our annual picnic in September, instead of walking as a team at the Chicagoland Buddy Walk. This will allow us to still make a generous donation to NDSS and support the medical and educational research that they do to enhance the future of all people with Down syndrome, but will also allow us a remarkable ability to directly, tangibly and generously provide much needed help to positively affect the futures of the children we all love so much!

Please note that just because Down in the Southland will not be walking as a team at the Chicagoland Buddy Walk, your family can still choose to do both!

Our Walk Committee is still being formed, and won't get really active until summer, so if you have a talent that you would like to lend to put on our first Walk, please contact any one of the board members using the email link for the Board of Directors on page 3!Ω

2011 BOARD OF DIRECTORS

JULIETTE DE NOVA

LISA PRINGLE

RITA BARNES

PEGGY MARCHIONDA

RACHEL THORNBERRY

CALENDAR OF EVENTS

'02-'04 MONTHLY PLAYDATE

PLACE: TBA

TIME: 3:30-5:30 PM

Monthly playdate on the last Friday of every month for children born between 2002-2004, or their developmental equivalent.

- Contact local school districts, park districts, special rec and attend expos to share information and promote our group
- Provide contact information of new families to board of directors.

Newsletter

- Coordinate group information from multiple sources and publish a monthly electronic newsletter using stories written by other members or self

Down syndrome used materials swap organizer

- Find out what materials members have that they would like to offer to others (e.g. Woodbine books), and catalog. Make catalog electronically accessible to group members.

Sib-shop Coordinator

- Determine needs of group based on ages of siblings
- Organize & present 1-2 sib-shops per year per age group (5-9yo, 10-13yo, 14+)

Education Workshop Coordinator

- Determine needs based on input from parents
- Oversee securing presenter, venue etc.
- Put on at least one workshop per year

Math Program Committee – more to come in the future on this

Reading Tutoring Committee (we have 2 of 3 needed volunteers for this committee)

- Recruit volunteers to tutor & provide their training
- Coordinate time & place for tutoring
- Monthly check with parent and tutor to monitor progress & success of program
- Provide material making kit for parents to create tutoring materials
- Find substitute tutors for cancellations

Please use the email links on page 3 to volunteer!

MORE WAYS TO BE ACTIVE 'DOWN IN THE SOUTHLAND' AGES AND STAGES COORDINATORS NEEDED

AGES AND STAGES COORDINATOR '01 AND EARLIER

- ***ORGANIZE AND SET UP REGULAR MONTHLY PLAYDATES AMONG CHILDREN IN THIS AGE RANGE.***
- ***PROVIDE INFORMATION REGARDING ACTIVITIES FOR THE NEWSLETTER***
- ***DETERMINE DEVELOPMENTAL NEEDS OF CHILDREN OUTSIDE OF AGE RANGE THAT MIGHT BEST FIT WITH CHILDREN OF THIS AGE RANGE, AS BROUGHT TO LEADER BY PARENTS***

AGES AND STAGES COORDINATOR '05-'07

- ***ORGANIZE AND SET UP REGULAR MONTHLY PLAYDATES AMONG CHILDREN IN THIS AGE RANGE.***
- ***PROVIDE INFORMATION REGARDING ACTIVITIES FOR THE NEWSLETTER***
- ***DETERMINE DEVELOPMENTAL NEEDS OF CHILDREN OUTSIDE OF AGE RANGE THAT MIGHT BEST FIT WITH CHILDREN OF THIS AGE RANGE, AS BROUGHT TO LEADER BY PARENTS***

AGES AND STAGES COORDINATOR '08-'10

- ***ORGANIZE AND SET UP REGULAR MONTHLY PLAYDATES AMONG CHILDREN IN THIS AGE RANGE.***
- ***PROVIDE INFORMATION REGARDING ACTIVITIES FOR THE NEWSLETTER***
- ***DETERMINE DEVELOPMENTAL NEEDS OF CHILDREN OUTSIDE OF AGE RANGE THAT MIGHT BEST FIT WITH CHILDREN OF THIS AGE RANGE, AS BROUGHT TO LEADER BY PARENTS***

QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS

Q: How can I help the future of Down in the Southland for MY child?

A: Speak up and volunteer! See the article "Down in the Southland Wants YOU!" for a list of leadership opportunities. You can also volunteer to help with the Walk/picnic. If you don't have the time to volunteer right now, that's ok too! Just make sure that you respond to notes with your input and ideas when notes are sent asking for input!

Q: Are we doing the 2011 Buddy Walk?

A: Down in the Southland will not have a team in the 2011 Chicagoland Buddy Walk, as we will be having our own Walk Down in the Southland to raise funds directly for our group. This doesn't preclude anyone from participating in the Chicagoland Buddy Walk as a family.

Q: Why is Down in the Southland incorporating and becoming a 501c3?

A: In a nutshell, for financial reasons. Family and friends who donate in honor of our child every year, would like to see more of the money they donate go directly to their

loved one with Down syndrome. By becoming our own 501c3 we can still donate to the worthwhile work of NDSS, but also contribute more directly to even greater successes, programs and benefits to help OUR kids with Down syndrome, right here, Down in the Southland!

Q: Will donating to the Down in the Southland Walk be as easy as the Chicagoland Buddy Walk?

A: HOPEFULLY! We are in contact with the same provider that sets up the on line donations for the Buddy Walk and hopefully they can provide an affordable product for us to use to provide a simple, seamless transition for all of our generous family and friends who donate!

Q: How was the Board of Directors determined? How can I serve in the future?

A. The three moms who started Down in the Southland were given the choice of how they wanted to serve. Peggy's dedication to the group and accounting background made her a perfect fit to serve as Treasurer. Rachel was asked to serve as 'member-at-large' for our first year because of the age of her son, and her business administration background. Next year, we plan to ask for nominations for 'member at large' from the group...plus there will be PLENTY of committees to serve on in the upcoming months/years!

