

CONNECTIONS

COFFEE & CONVERSATION

I Will Have Another Cup of Coffee (or Tea)

By Karen O'Connor

When Coffee and Conversation began a few years back I was asked by a new mom "what is it that you talk about at Coffee and Conversation". At first I told her "our husbands". But all kidding aside I explained we simply talk about life. That is, "life" as we know it. It is hard to imagine the day you have your child is the day you embark on meeting new friends and families that you may only have met in passing. Coffee and Conversation becomes a venue where people come together to share everyday experiences, happy and sad, with other moms that can relate to your new and existing "normal". On the second Tuesday of each month we meet moms expecting, new, and
Continued on page 23

Playgroup Gatherings

EASTER EGG HUNT



A DSNMC Happy Hour Clyde's - Rockville

By Sherrell Nicholson

I attended my first DSNMC Happy Hour and I had a great time! It was held at Clyde's Tower Oaks in Rockville at 6:00 on February 16, 2012. I must say that it was nice being out with just the adults for a change even though we love our little ones. The reason I came to the DSNMC Happy Hour was because I thought it would be a good opportunity to meet other parents with children with Down syndrome. Additionally, I wanted to discuss their experiences with finding outside support such as childcare, summer camps, afterschool and weekend programs that were specific to children with special needs or that had inclusion programs. I was also thinking of educational options within MCPS for my child and I wanted to talk to parents about the programs their children attended (their homeschool, LFI, etc.).
Continued on page 23

JUNE 2012

Playgroup Photos

Happy Hour

Coffee & Conversation

Advocacy Update: ABLE Act

Tackle Summer Regression

Perspective: Exit Row

A D.A.B. of Neuroscience

BUDDY WALK & TFS

Soft Skills for Hiring

SHULMAN
ROGERS

GANDAL
PORDY
ECKER

Proud to support the
Down Syndrome Network of Montgomery County
2011 Buddy Walk

Don Rogers
301-230-5202
don@shulmanrogers.com

Scott Museles
301-230-5246
smuseles@shulmanrogers.com

Shulman, Rogers, Gandal, Pordy & Ecker, P.A.
12505 Park Potomac Avenue 6th Floor Potomac, Maryland 20854
ShulmanRogers.com



Advocacy Update

ABLE ACT GAINS COSPONSORS AND MOMENTUM ON CAPITOL HILL

By Allison Wohl
 Advocacy Chairperson
 allison@dsnmc.org

The Achieving a Better Life Experience (ABLE) Act continues to gain support in Congress. Thanks to a recent push by national disability groups, including NDI, National Down Syndrome Society, National Fragile X Foundation, Autism Speaks, Muscular Dystrophy Association, D.A.D.S National, National Down Syndrome Congress, Disability Opportunity Fund, and the Collaboration to Promote Self-Determination, the bill has reached 18 cosponsors in the Senate and 152 cosponsors in the House.

On April 25th, the aforementioned organizations hosted a national call-in day, during which affiliates and members of national organizations contacted members of Congress—calling, Tweeting or posting on members' Facebook pages—and encouraged them to become cosponsors of the ABLE Act.

The questions remains as to whether the ABLE Act can be passed in the 112th Congress, given partisan gridlock. The bill has been endorsed by almost 50 national, state and local advocacy organizations and has not been met with significant opposition. It also has widespread bipartisan support. Currently, the ABLE Act is awaiting a CBO score, and its Congressional Champions are exploring budget offset (or “pay for”) options.



REMIND ME... What is the ABLE Act?

The Achieving a Better Life Experience (ABLE) Act (H.R. 3423/S.1872):

The ABLE Act, introduced in November 2011, would utilize the 529 education saving accounts program to develop ABLE accounts, which could be held by people with developmental disabilities to fund a variety of essential expenses, including medical and dental care, education, community-based supports, employment training, assistive technology, housing and transportation. The ABLE Act provides individuals with disabilities the same types of flexible tax-advantaged savings that all other Americans have through college savings accounts, health savings accounts, and individual retirement accounts without jeopardizing their SSI and Medicaid benefits. This would enable parents and individuals with disabilities to have a savings tool to help them save for the future just as other Americans in the broader population. Developing assets is one way toward improving economic self-sufficiency, and savings will help people with Down syndrome to live full, productive lives in their communities.

From **DSNMC Connections**, *Buddy Walk on Washington*, March 2012.
 Article by Heather Sachs

So can the ABLE Act pass this Congress? Our Congressional Champions are optimistic. The ABLE Act will give individuals with disabilities and their families the ability to save for their child's future just like every other American family, and help people with disabilities live full, productive lives in their communities without losing benefits provided through private insurances, the Medicaid program, the supplemental security income program, the beneficiary's employment, and other sources.

It's up to disability organizations and disability advocates to raise awareness on why this legislation is important. It's not too late to contact your Senator and/or Representative to urge him or her to sign-on as an ABLE Act cosponsor!

Allison Wohl is a mom of three boys, the youngest of whom has Down syndrome. She is the Manager of Government Affairs for the Collaboration to Promote Self-Determination, a coalition of national disability groups that advocate for public policy reform for citizens living with complex disabilities.

Board of Directors

Gena Mitchell, President
gena@dsnmc.org

Tracy Douglas-Wheeler,
Vice President
tracy@dsnmc.org

Open, Treasurer

Open, Secretary

Karen Gee
karen@dsnmc.org

Nancy Forsythe
nancy@dsnmc.org

Mimi Gehres
mimi@dsnmc.org

Chris Hicks
chris@dsnmc.org

Elizabeth Kramer
elizabeth@dsnmc.org

Patricia Keeling
patricia@dsnmc.org

Kathy Myers
kathy@dsnmc.org

Heather Sachs
heather@dsnmc.org

Newsletter Editor:
Elizabeth Totah
elizabethwt@dsnmc.org

Administrative Support:
admin@dsnmc.org

Buddy Walk:
buddywalk@dsnmc.org

www.dsnmc.org
301-979-1112

Happy Summer everyone! The end of the school year is always an incredibly busy time and I hope that things have finally begun to calm down as we head into summer. The first part of 2012 has proven to be a marathon of planning for DSNMC as we operate as a 501c3, and each month has brought exciting new ideas and events. One component of DSNMC that has been a hot topic in every discussion is “who is DSNMC?” This is not about our mission or vision, what we are doing or intend to do, but more importantly, WHO our membership is. It is wonderful to see so many familiar faces at events like the dance and picnic, as well as names on the list serve, but our Board of Directors is committed to uncovering all of the new faces in Montgomery County who may not be aware of this organization.

President's Letter

It is our membership that drives our initiatives and if we are not touching everyone in the immediate bulls-eye, those who have Down syndrome or those families that are raising someone with Down syndrome- then we are not meeting the most very basic need of DSNMC. The growth outside of the bulls-eye will come naturally with extended family, friends, neighbors and colleagues, but we need to work together to identify families that do not know about DSNMC. We need to build our collective voice on behalf of our children and adults with Down syndrome. We also need to continue to build on the foundation of our community that shares knowledge with each other- whether it is potty training advice, academic direction, estate planning or just where to go to camp- these are the precious gifts that we give to each other each and every day.

Another way that we will build our membership is to better understand those who are our existing members. DSNMC currently has a database of members, with minimal information or even out dated information. One of most important initiatives moving forward is to gain information about you. With information we can accomplish the following: apply for grants that require demographic information about our members, apply for company matching programs for fundraising, better understand and target programs/workshops for our members based on age, gender, interests, locations, etc. Our goal is not to invade your privacy, but to empower DSNMC to raise funds, plan programs and best serve your family's needs.

I want to thank you for your participation with DSNMC, whether it has been for one month, one year or has spanned over the last twenty years. I also want to ask that you take a moment to either fill out the enclosed member data form or go online to fill out the electronic version at <https://www.surveymonkey.com/s/DSNMCmembership>. I promise you that your information is confidential and we will never share nor sell it to any third party. If you have any questions, I would be happy to answer them and alleviate any concerns you might have. I also hope to see you at the summer picnic on Sunday, June 24, which will also serve as our second annual membership meeting for DSNMC.

Enjoy your summer!

Gena

New Board Member

KAREN GEE, BOARD MEMBER

Karen Gee joined the board of the Down Syndrome Network of Montgomery County (DSNMC) earlier this year. She has been a member of the organization since the birth of her daughter, Ariana (4), who has Down syndrome. Karen's interest and experience reside in the area of communications and media relations where she brings over 15 years of combined corporate, non-profit and federal experience. Karen received a B.A. from Haverford College, and, in her spare time, enjoys writing, playing the piano, and seeing the world through her daughter's eyes.

HAPPY FATHER'S DAY!

LOVE,
DSNMC & ALL OUR
CHILDREN

Please note any resources that are listed in **DSNMC Connections** are not to be interpreted as recommendations, but resources.

Jim Begg

Real Estate Professional
Long & Foster

Buddy Walk 2011 Sponsor

240.606.4711

4733 Bethesda Ave
Bethesda, MD 20814

<http://JamesBegg.LNF.com>
Jim.Begg@LongandFoster.com

HELP WANTED!

Spanish Speaking Community

DSNMC is participating in a national initiative of the Down Syndrome Affiliates in Action to increase the involvement of Spanish-speaking families in the activities and programs of the Down syndrome community. If you are interested in helping in our area, or if you have questions, please contact Nancy Forsythe at 301.779.3462 or nancy@dsnmc.org.

Professional Outreach Committee

If you are interested in reaching out to the medical community and other healthcare professionals, contact Mimi Gehres at mimi@dsnmc.org

Newsletter Contributions

Do have an idea for an article? Knowledge to share? Can you review a movie, book or conference? If you are interested in submitting a piece or helping with the newsletter, contact Elizabeth at elizabethwt@dnmc.org

Treasurer for DSNMC Board/Executive Committee

Treasurer should be a CPA as required for non-profits. It is not necessary to have a child with Down syndrome to serve on the Board. Please contact gena@dsnmc.org if you are interested.

Buddy Walk Volunteers

If you know of any groups or individuals who would like to be volunteers at the 2012 Buddy Walk, please email buddywalk@dsnmc.org

For the latest information and details on all DSNMC events and news

dsnmc.org



www.eaglebankcorp.com

MD | DC | VA | 301.986.1800



DOWN SYNDROME AND THE BRAIN: A D.A.B. of Neuroscience

By Nancy Raitano Lee, Ph.D. & Jay N. Giedd, M.D.
Child Psychiatry Branch, National Institutes of Health

lnancy@mail.nih.gov
(301)435-4520

Life is a journey, not a destination

-Ralph Waldo Emerson

focusing our column this month on what is known about how the brain develops in typical children in preparation for later columns focused on what we know about the brain in Down syndrome.

So please stay tuned for future columns!

Just like life, brain development is very much a journey. It's a journey that begins well before a baby is born and continues into the early 20s. We will be

DEVELOPMENT AND THE BRAIN: A Primer on Typical Brain Development

While many of the brain's neural processing units (referred to as **neurons**) are present before a baby is born, dramatic changes in the brain's architecture occur in infancy, childhood, and young adulthood. If brain development were a road race, it would best be characterized as a marathon (rather than a sprint). During the brain's 'developmental marathon,' there are periods of neural growth, pruning, and reorganization that are thought to contribute to the development of the complex abilities humans possess.

As infants and young children interact with the people and places in their environment, they reinforce important brain connections (and also eliminate those that are not important). The reinforcement and elimination of different neural connections are thought to underlie changes in two neural tissue types (white matter and gray matter) that we can see using magnetic resonance imaging (**MRI**). These changes will be described on the next page.

Children and Young Adults with Down Syndrome Have a Story to Tell!

Researchers at the NIH are conducting a research study on brain development and learning in children and young adults with Down syndrome.

All procedures (including brain imaging, learning and memory testing) will be completed on an outpatient basis at the NIH Clinical Center and may be completed over 4 visits. Each visit will take between 4-8 hours.

Children and young adults may be eligible to participate if they are between 3 and 30 years old and have a confirmed chromosomal diagnosis of Down syndrome.

Volunteers will be compensated for their participation. Parent or legal guardian, child, and young adult must agree to participation. There is no charge for research procedures and evaluations.

For more information, contact:

Nancy Raitano Lee, Ph.D. at 301-435-4520
TTY: 1-866-411-1010
email: LNANCY@MAIL.NIH.GOV
<http://patientinfo.nimh.nih.gov>

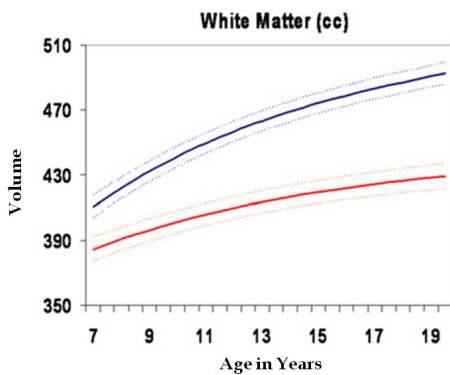


National Institute of Mental Health, National Institutes of Health,
Department of Health & Human Services
Protocol No. 89-M-0006

Increased White Matter from Infancy to Early Adulthood

Axons are long fibers that permit communication between neurons. From infancy to early adulthood, the brain produces a fatty material, referred to as **myelin**, which wraps around axons and serves as a form of insulation. Myelinated axons appear white when captured using MRI. Thus, they are referred to as **white matter** by neuroscientists. Myelin is thought to speed communication between neurons and contribute to the synchronized functioning of different brain regions. As can be seen in Figure 1, white matter increases throughout childhood and adolescence. (In this figure, the dark blue line shows the white matter trajectory for boys and the dark red line shows the trajectory for girls.) Increased white matter is thought to contribute to more efficient brain functioning.

Figure 1.
White Matter Trajectory During Childhood & Adolescence



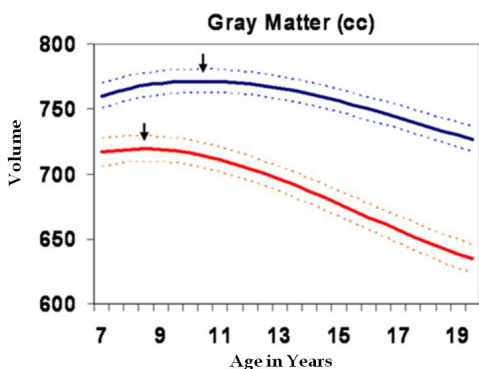


CUSTOM TILE INSTALLATION
 PH: 301-881-8483 FAX: 301-881-2985
 WWW.VALLEFUOCO.COM

Increasing then Decreasing Gray Matter from Infancy to Early Adulthood

The brain's **gray matter** is comprised of **neurons**, **dendrites** (branches of neurons that receive and conduct signals) and **synapses** (gaps where neurons communicate with each other). It is referred to as gray matter because it appears gray when captured using MRI. Before adolescence, gray matter increases in the brain. This is thought to be due to increases in the number and complexity of dendrites and synaptic connections. As can be seen in Figure 2, gray matter increases during most of childhood. However, when adolescence approaches, gray matter actually decreases. Why would this be? It is thought that this is due to **synaptic pruning** – that is, eliminating unnecessary neural connections. Like increased myelin, synaptic pruning is thought to increase communication efficiency in the brain.

Figure 2.
Gray Matter Trajectory During Childhood & Adolescence



RADIO



AMERICA

1540 AM



The Zitelman Group

Merchant and Investment Bankers

CELEBRATING **25** YEARS IN BUSINESS

12250 Rockville Pike, Suite 200
Rockville, MD 20852
www.tzg.com

The Zitelman Group specializes in evaluating, valuing, financing, owning, operating and investing in closely held business and real estate entities as well as other illiquid investments.

P. Richard Zitelman, President - (240) 292-0531 rick@tzg.com
Stuart Bassin, Vice President – (240) 292-0532 stuart@tzg.com

Valuation Services, Inc.

When Value Counts
Clear, Concise, and Supportable Valuation Services

CELEBRATING **15** YEARS IN BUSINESS

12250 Rockville Pike, Suite 200
Rockville, MD 20852
www.valuationservice.com

Valuation Services, Inc. is one of the premiere business valuation firms based in the Washington, D.C. area. We provide a full range of valuation services for estate planning and administration, divorce proceedings, litigation support, succession planning, and mergers and acquisitions. On a full-time and exclusive basis, VSI prepares business valuations of private entities and fractional interests in private entities.

Craig Stephanson, President – (240) 292-0533 craig@valuationservice.com
P. Richard Zitelman, Principal – (240) 292-0531 rick@valuationservice.com
Stuart Bassin, Principal – (240) 292-0532 stuart@valuationservice.com
Jeff Bae, Principal – (240) 292-0537 jeff@valuationservice.com

PERSPECTIVE: AMERICAN AIRLINES



By Adrian Forsythe
Self-Advocate

Has anyone ever told you, “You have to be moved from the exit row seat or near the exit row seat to another seat because you are disabled”? If so or if you are interested in this particular issue, then I encourage you to read on.

My parents and I were at the Portland, Oregon airport to go back home. At the check in desk, we were picking up our boarding passes. Anyway airlines check-in staff saw that there was a problem with my parents and me. The problem was that I was seated behind the exit row and my parents were sitting in the exit row. They told us that my parents had to be moved from where they were seated because of my disability. The staff said that my parents would want to help me more than other people on the plane because of my disability.

The problem here is that they thought that I was helpless and can’t do things on my own, that I would need my parents to help me. I have flown on my own independently before. The staff people didn’t ask if I needed help; they just stereotyped me.

Other times, they have not let me sit in the exit row. I told them that just because I have a disability does not mean I can’t operate the exit door and help others to safety.

Here are the rules that everyone has to follow when you are sitting in the exit row:

*Customers must be advised that government regulations prohibit seating passengers in designated exit seat, on any commercial flight, when they answer **NO** to the following question. "The government requires any passengers seated in the exit seat be 15 years of age or older, be willing to assist in an evacuation and have no physical impairments that would prohibit your assistance. Airport personnel will make the final determination. Do you meet this criteria?"*

Are you a self-advocate? Would like to write a book or film review? Would you like to submit a poem, photograph, etc. the newsletter?

*Please send submissions to
elizabethwt@dsnmc.org*

http://www.aa.com/i18n/agency/Booking_Ticketing/Booking/exit_row_procedures.jsp&locale=es_ES

I asked myself if I could meet these requirements.

I know that I can understand the instructions and physically operate the exit door. Really I know that I can follow the rules, sit wherever I want to sit, and not have limits due to disability purposes. However I thought and felt that the American Airlines staff was stereotyping me. They may have thought that I was not physically capable, that I needed assistance, and that I could not understand the instructions

I know that I am physically capable in operating the exit door and that I do not need assistance, and that I can understand the instructions.



SACHS
CAPITAL

Summer Strategy

TIPS TO PREVENT SUMMER ACADEMIC REGRESSION

By Betsy Mull Balicao
DSNMC Member

Summer is here! Now what? There are countless articles and studies (as well as anecdotal experiences we have all had) to show that once we take a break from something, we tend to forget about it. For example, children who are not native English speakers can forget about English (if it is their language of instruction) over the two-month summer recess if they only use their home language. Early readers who have not mastered a level five (MCPS reading levels) will regress over the summer unless they are given regular practice during the summer. This is true for all human beings and especially for our children who work hard to learn a new skill or idea.

During the summer at home, we can continue to practice and reinforce skills and ideas learned during the school year.

What can we do? During the summer at home, we can continue to practice and reinforce skills and ideas learned during the school year. We can continue to keep a schedule or routine that involves reinforcing school skills. Using flash cards, working on word or math drills and reading books are all things we can do routinely to help our children during their time away from school. There are the wonderful computer programs (also termed apps) that offer consistent practice with academic skills! Watching academic shows (I am a big fan of Super Why) can remind everyone of letter names and reading words.

Most schools typically distribute a packet of summer activities. This is another place to get ideas of what to do with your children. In my home, we get the packets and we try to work on it—sporadically, but still a chance to try and remember. (That is the real reason for homework - to recall what you learned that day.) Now that my daughter, who has DS, is about to start kindergarten I feel the pinch for continuing academic gains over the summer. I have enrolled her in speech camp. That will help her to remain in a schedule and will teach her school-like skills. We will be using alphabet and word-wall word flash cards. We will be counting out cheerios and goldfish. We will be writing letters including her name. She will be reading simple books. We will read along with 'books on tape/cd.' Even if we do one of these things each day, I will feel better knowing we worked on it.

It can be stressful as a parent to try to create academic ideas. To help alleviate this, save a few homework sheets from the school year and recreate the worksheets by simply using different names and numbers. Write out a few sample problems similar to past homework or schoolwork your child has brought home. The best thing you can do is to use what your child has seen or knows.

Betsy Mull Balicao is a MPSC Teacher and parent of three (3) children. One of them has Down syndrome.



Refrigerator List

DON'T KNOW WHAT TO DO TODAY...

BETSY'S IDEAS TO PREVENT REGRESSION AND HAVE FUN!

- Re-arrange magnetic letters on a cookie tray (or the refrigerator) to create familiar or new words.
- Use a wet paintbrush and practice writing words (on chalk board or driveway).
- Use sidewalk chalk on your driveway to practice writing.
- Use shaving cream in the bathtub to write out words in the foam.
- Make up stories and illustrate them.
- Cut out pictures from magazines and create a story about the picture.
- Attend story time at the library, get child library card, and regularly check out new books.
- Verbally re-tell or summarize a story (book, movie or TV show).
- Keep a summer journal of activities: your child can just draw pictures in it, write short stories, or verbally remember the events of the day by writing them down or drawing pictures.
- Write letters to family members about the events of the day.
- Create a daily agenda to help your child read, tell time, anticipate change/activity.
- Create a step-by-step list of what you do to leave the house each day. Write it with your child using sequence words (for example: first we put on our shoes). Check off each step as you accomplish the steps.
- Create a goal for an outing. For example, on a trip to the grocery store, ask your child to be responsible for one item. He/she must read around the store to find the item. He/she can also estimate the price. Tell your child how much you plan to spend and they must decide if the price of the item matches your plan.
- Write a shopping list together.
- Create a pretend store in your home. Use real money to purchase the items.
- Cook together (cooking explores fractions, step-by-step directions, reading)
- Go on a shapes scavenger hunt around your home or neighborhood.
- Create art projects to encourage fine motor skills. Children can describe their work to you in writing (or verbally).
- Play traditional classic board games (Memory, Monopoly, Chess, Battleship, Scrabble, Boggle, etc.) are good for counting, reading and logic.
- Identify different road signs, colors of cars, trucks vs. cars, etc.
- Ask your child to identify greater than or less than when sharing snacks. Your child can work on fractions as you pass out pizza slices to family members!

Innovative Financial
and
Insurance Solutions

6500 Rock Spring Drive
Suite 500, Bethesda, MD 20817
301.581.7300
www.meltzer.com



Securities and investment advisory services offered through MML Investors Services, Inc. member SIPC, The Washington Group, 6500 Rock Spring Drive, Suite 400, Bethesda, MD 20817, 301-581-7200. Meltzer Karlin Property & Casualty is not an affiliate or subsidiary of MML Investors Services, Inc. Qualified Registered Representatives.

PLAY GROUP
BROOKSIDE NATURE CENTER
May 26, 2012



"Enjoy the little things, for one day you may look back and realize they were the big things."

- Robert Brault

You CAN reach out to potential Buddy Walk sponsors!

Use a customized version of this letter

+

Sponsorship Opportunities/Form (inserted in this newsletter)



DATE

Dear **SPONSOR'S NAME**:

On behalf of the Down Syndrome Network of Montgomery County ("DSNMC") and the many people with Down syndrome and their families living in Montgomery County, please accept this invitation to participate as a corporate sponsor of our 8th Annual Buddy Walk®, which will be held on Saturday, October 6, 2012 at Hadley Park in Potomac, Maryland. This event is much more than an awareness walk. The day's carnival-like atmosphere will include amusement activities, arts and crafts, games, music, refreshments and sponsor displays from 10 am to 2:30 pm.

The goal of the annual Buddy Walk is to promote awareness and acceptance of people with Down syndrome in Montgomery County and beyond. The Buddy Walk is also the primary fundraising activity of DSNMC, a support network, advocacy group and information provider to families whose lives have been touched by Down syndrome. We are a volunteer organization, and 100% of the funds we raise go directly to support the programs and services of DSNMC and the National Down Syndrome Society.

The DSNMC aims to be not only the best resource in Montgomery County for parents, but also for its community. That is why we have created initiatives and programs that provide support, education and awareness to our teachers and health care professionals, as well as for our parents. However, in order to continue and expand these initiatives and programs, we need your support.

Enclosed you will find a registration form, a list of the sponsorship levels, and the benefits included at each level. If you would like to sponsor the event, participate in the Buddy Walk, and/or make a monetary donation, please complete the form and return it via mail, email, or fax. You can also register online at www.dsnmc.org. Please make sure to keep a copy for your tax records however you will also receive a formal tax letter after the Buddy Walk. Please help us to acknowledge your sponsorship by our program deadline of **September 23, 2012**.

Thanks very much for your consideration. If you have any questions, please contact **Susan Mordan (301) 502-2041** or buddywalk@dsnmc.org. For more information about the Down Syndrome Network of Montgomery County or the Buddy Walk, please visit the Web site at www.dsnmc.org.

Sincerely,



DSNMC is a 501 (c) 3 nonprofit organization.
P.O. Box 10416, Rockville, MD 20849
www.dsnmc.org

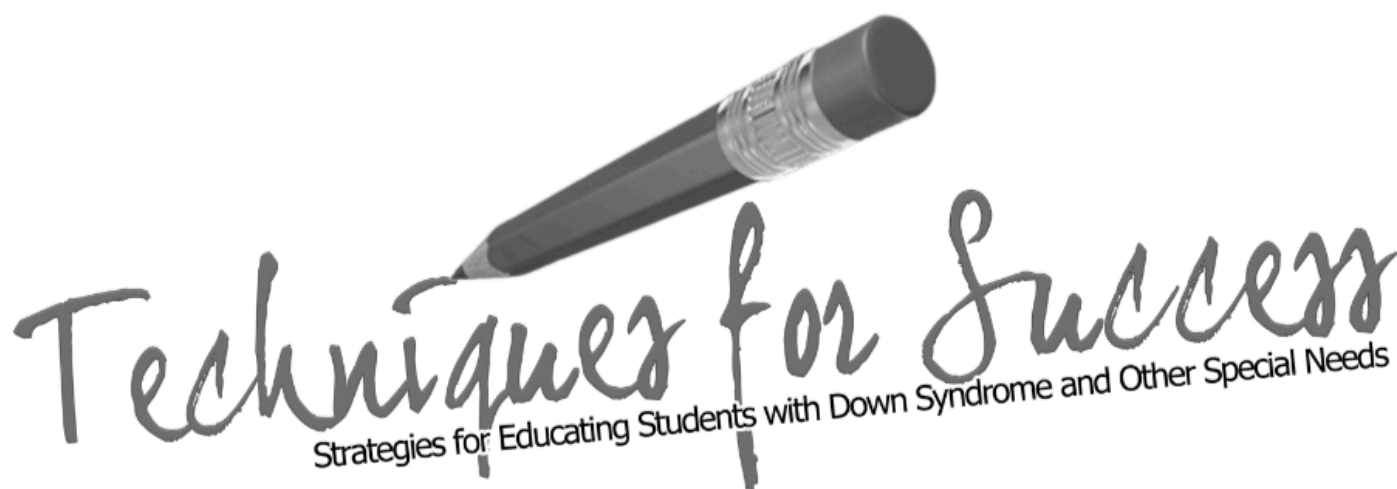
1. Make a list of potential sponsors
2. Go to dsnmc.org
3. Download this letter and customize it
4. Reach out to your potential sponsor with letter and Sponsorship Opportunities/Form (see insert or dsnmc.org)

Any questions, email buddywalk@dsnmc.org or call 301-979-1112.

SAVE THE DATE!

November 9, 2012 – Parent session
November 10, 2012 – Conference for educators

The 4th Techniques for Success (TFS) conference will take place in November 2012. TFS focuses on practical strategies for educating students with Down syndrome and those with other special needs. This year, there will be a special session for parents in the evening of Friday, November 9 (location to be determined) and an all day conference for educators on Saturday, November 10, at the Gaithersburg Marriott in the Washingtonian Center. **Please save the date and ask staff at your child's school to do the same!** Inviting your child's teaching team is a great way to show support for them and to spread up-to-date knowledge about Down syndrome within our school system.



The educators' conference is appropriate for general and special education teachers, paraprofessionals, therapists, counselors, administrators and homeschooling parents. The specific topics and speakers change each time so it is worthwhile to attend every year. This year's topics will include technology, behavior issues and an interactive session about accommodations, modifications and strategies.

The conference is offered **free of charge**, THANKS TO THE BUDDY WALK DONATIONS. Watch the DSNMC listserv and website for details about registration, which will open in the late summer.

TFS is a joint effort between DSNMC and the F.R.I.E.N.D.S. of Frederick County. If you would like to become a part of the Planning Committee, please contact Heather Sachs, TFS Planning Committee Co-Chair, at heather@dsnmc.org.

REMINDER!
DSNMC
EDUCATION RESOURCE GUIDE
AVAILABLE ON WEBSITE!

Patton Boggs LLP
proudly supports the
Down Syndrome Network
of Montgomery County.

We salute DSNMC's mission to empower individuals with Down syndrome and their families, and to educate the community through awareness and advocacy programs.

Sean P. Clancy
2550 M Street, NW
Washington, DC 20037
202.457.6018
sclancy@pattonboggs.com

Edward D. Gehres, III
2550 M Street, NW
Washington, DC 20037
202.457.6016
egehres@pattonboggs.com

PATTON BOGGS LLP
www.pattonboggs.com

“Courage is being scared to death - and saddling up anyway!”
-John Wayne



DSNMC EVENTS

DSNMC Summer Picnic!

Black Hill Regional Park

Sunday, June 24, 2012

11:00 AM-2:30 PM

Join us for fun and games for all ages!

A delicious BBQ lunch will be catered

by Red Hot & Blue. Please RSVP by

June 18 with the number of adults

and children attending to:

rsvp@dsnmc.org or 301-979-1112.

Coffee and Conversation

will resume in September on the

2nd Tuesday of each month

9:30am – 11:30am

Montgomery Mall - Caribou Coffee

(1st floor near Crate and Barrel)

Contact Karen O'Connor at

301-972-5138 or tkrbmo@verizon.net

Board Meeting

Contact Gena at gena@dsnmc.org

Play Groups

If you would like to join a

playgroup, please email

info@dsnmc.org, or you can

call (301) 979-1112, which is our

general number.

HAPPY HOURS are happening! Stop by for a quick drink or spend the evening. Swing by after work, make it a portion of your date night, schedule it with a haircut or manicure. Bring a friend, a partner or come alone.

3rd Thursday of each month

Contact admin@dsnmc.org for location and exact timing.

PARENT WORKSHOPS related to Kindergarten and Middle School being planned for the Fall! These are co-sponsored by DSNMC, The Arc Montgomery County & The Autism Society of Montgomery County

SAVE THE DATES!

Buddy Walk - Oct 6

Techniques for Success –

November 9 & 10

COMMUNITY EVENTS

The **NDSC** conference will be held in D.C. this summer.

July 19 – 22, 2012

Check out www.ndsccenter.org for more information

Potomac Community Resources, Inc.

PCR provides innovative therapeutic, recreational, social, and educational programs for teens and adults with developmental differences.

PCR is a private, nonprofit organization that encourages and supports the inclusion of persons with developmental differences into the life of our community.

Register for programs now!

www.pcr-inc.org
[301-365-0561](tel:3013650561)

What lies behind us & what lies before us are
tiny matters compared to what lies within us.

-Ralph Waldo Emerson

SUCCESS PROGRAM ACCEPTING APPLICATIONS FOR FALL SEMESTER

Post-Secondary Education Program Partnership between MDOD and UMBC

Applications are now available for the SUCCESS program, Maryland's first four-year post-secondary education program for students with intellectual disabilities. A partnership between the University of Maryland, Baltimore County (UMBC) and the Maryland Department of Disabilities (MDOD), the SUCCESS program will enable Marylanders with intellectual disabilities to develop their independence, critical thinking, problem-solving and employment skills in a university setting. The four-year college experience will also give them the opportunity to interact with their peers through a wide array of inclusive, educational, social and recreational campus-based activities. The program will be housed in the Shriver Center at UMBC. The first group of students will begin classes in the Fall 2012. Students will be responsible for their room and board as well as any additional costs not covered by the Division of Rehabilitation Services (DORS) and the Developmental Disabilities Administration (DDA). To be eligible for the SUCCESS program, students must meet specific criteria. (Extracted from Press Release, 13 June 2012)

For more information about the SUCCESS program, call the Maryland Department of Disabilities at [410-767-3660](tel:410-767-3660) or send an email to mdod@mdod.state.md.us OR Chelsea Williams University of Maryland, Baltimore County (UMBC) 410-455-6380, chelseah@umbc.edu.

HIGHLINE

WEALTH MANAGEMENT

is proud to support the
efforts of



The Down Syndrome
Network
of Montgomery County

At most banks, green means money.
 At Congressional Bank, green means even more – being good to our environment. We’ve made the switch to using clean energy and



green power at our Maryland and DC branches. Now, we are proud to be the **first bank** in Montgomery County to become a Certified Green Business.

A truly “green” bank.
 (Now *that’s* distinctive.)



Member FDIC. An Equal Housing Lender.

Potomac 7963 Tuckerman Ln. 301-299-8599	Herndon Elden Plaza 703-796-9151	Rockville 5274 Randolph Rd. 301-984-6000	DC 2101 K St., NW 202-331-4000
---	--	--	--------------------------------------

www.congressionalbank.com

THE CLEANING AUTHORITY IS A PROUD SPONSOR OF THE DOWN SYNDROME NETWORK OF MONTGOMERY COUNTY



**EVERY MOTHER WANTS A CLEAN HOME.
 EVEN MOTHER NATURE.**

The Cleaning Authority has diligently cleaned Montgomery County for many years with our proven Detail-Clean Rotation System. We would love to clean your home as well.

- We’re reliable, thorough & affordable
- Our employees are bonded and insured
- Our cleaner training is comprehensive and we inspect our crews routinely
- We have upgraded our housecleaning products to include Green Seal Certified® cleaning products*



EXPERIENCE THE CLEANING AUTHORITY DIFFERENCE, CALL TODAY!

866-827-0062

Visit us online at Columbia.TheCleaningAuthority.com

*Available at the Columbia, MD office of The Cleaning Authority. Not all franchised locations will use Green Seal Certified® or EPA-registered cleaning products. Contact your local franchised office to determine what types of products and services are offered in your area.

Coffee & Conversation

continued from the front page

Coffee and Conversation becomes a venue where people come together to share everyday experiences, happy and sad, with other moms that can relate to your new and existing “normal”. On the second Tuesday of each month we meet moms expecting, new, and moms that we haven’t seen in a while at the Caribou Coffee Kiosk at the Westfield Montgomery Mall in Bethesda sharing in conversation about planning for the future, sharing from the past, issues from school, activities, tricks to potty training. You name it; we have probably talked about it. With every time we meet we hope the moms leave with a refreshed idea, a certain trick to try, another avenue to explore, and an overall feeling that they feel welcome to join us anytime for another cup of coffee.



HAPPY HOUR

continued from the front page

HAPPY HOURS are happening! Stop by for a quick drink or spend the evening. Swing by after work, make it a portion of your date night, schedule it with a haircut or manicure. Bring a friend, a partner or come alone.

3rd Thursday of each month

Contact admin@dsnmc.org for location and exact timing.

During the evening I met some fantastic parents who were all passionate about making sure their children were in appropriate and positive environments. I learned about theater classes that included children with special needs, and I shared information about a softball league for special needs children called the Miracle League. I was very interested in my child attending his homeschool and I was able to speak with parents who had their child attending their homeschool. Everyone was very nice and very willing to share information. I even reconnected with a parent that had a child in my son’s PEP program and we discussed scheduling a play date!

The only regret of the evening for me was that I had another meeting that I needed to attend for my older son so I had to leave early. I hope DSNMC continues to provide this much-needed informal social outlet for parents with children with special needs. I would strongly recommend attending this event. It is a great way to gain practical

information and meet wonderful people. I plan on being a regular attendee at the DSNMC Happy Hours and I hope you will come too!

SELF-ADVOCACY STARTS EARLY

PREPARING CHILDREN FOR FUTURE EMPLOYMENT

By Nancy Forsythe
Self-Advocacy
Chairperson
nancy@dsnmc.org

The US Department of Labor’s Office of Disability Employment Policy (ODEP) recently published a curriculum that serves as an introduction to the workplace interpersonal and professional skills—the ‘soft skills’—that people need to be successful on the job, but that people with intellectual disabilities often lack. The publication, called *Soft Skills to Pay the Bills*, has met with great enthusiasm among professionals in the field of supported employment, advocates, and families. The lengthy curriculum includes activities that can be readily implemented to develop the particular skills in the targeted age groups.

Soft skills cannot be taught in a vacuum and they are not skills acquired in the same way as reading, numeracy, or computer literacy. They include things like personality traits, manners and social graces, and attitudes and habits; they develop over a long time; and they are practiced in all settings. They must be introduced, developed, practiced, polished, and reinforced so that they are internalized and come naturally; this allows the individual, once employed, to focus on other aspects of the job and not to get bogged down in problems related to getting along and cooperating on the job.

The ODEP curriculum is targeted to youth ages 14-21. However, as you will see, there is no need to wait until a child is 14 to begin developing these skills in your child, and there is good reason to begin much earlier. Since these skills take a very long time to develop, the earlier, the better, and they are, of course, skills that will help your child to succeed in school, with friends, at home, and in the community.

The soft skills curriculum focuses on the following **6 KEY SKILL AREAS**: communication, enthusiasm and attitude, teamwork, networking, problem solving and critical thinking, and professionalism. I will discuss two of the six here, and I encourage you to review the publication.

Instilling in your child the idea that s/he will work, like everyone else, is as important as preparing your child with the skills to be successful in the workplace. Parents’ expectations for their children with intellectual disabilities are critical factors determining who works and who doesn’t. Combining your own high expectations for your child with the skills that employers are looking for in employees is a recipe for success.

Soft Skills to Pay the Bills can be found at ODEP’s website, <http://www.dol.gov/odep/topics/youth/softskills/>.

6 KEY SKILL AREAS

CRITICAL FOR FUTURE EMPLOYMENT

1. COMMUNICATION

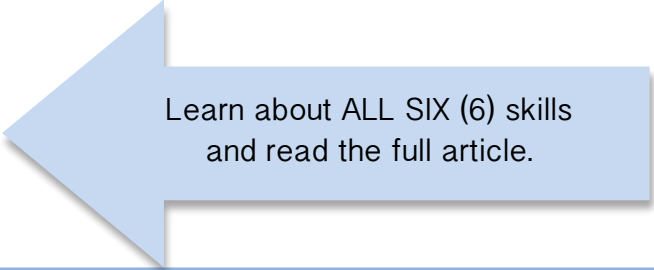
2. ENTHUSIASM & ATTITUDE

3. TEAMWORK

4. NETWORKING

5. PROBLEM SOLVING & CRITICAL THINKING

6. PROFESSIONALISM



Learn about ALL SIX (6) skills
and read the full article.

2 OF 6 KEY SKILL AREAS

CRITICAL FOR FUTURE EMPLOYMENT

COMMUNICATION

Employers consistently rank good communication skills at the top of the list for potential employees, all employees, with and without disabilities. Two of the basic skills that communication on the job entails are active listening and knowing when and how to ask for help.

- Active listening involves verbal and non-verbal forms of communication. Active listening skills include maintaining eye contact, having good posture and facing the speaker, and being still. They also include engagement, both cognitive and emotional, with what is being said. Working on active listening as part of speech and language development is advantageous, and can be tailored to your child's strengths and needs.
- Knowing when and how to ask for help is important and, as the child ages, must be balanced with taking initiative and demonstrating problem-solving skills. This balancing act is very sophisticated, and takes an extended period to begin to master. Developing the self-awareness that underlies knowing when to ask for help is a good first step. Having the child try to problem-solve on their own should be encouraged, and followed by helping the child to recognize that, under the right circumstances, asking for help is appropriate.

PROBLEM SOLVING & CRITICAL THINKING

- Problem-solving and critical thinking are very complex skills but they do have a foundation in basic skills practiced by young children. Of course, all the soft skills bear on one another to some extent so that problem-solving and critical thinking depend on communication skills.
 - Problem-solving and critical thinking begin with sharing thoughts and opinions. The ability and the confidence to express an opinion is the basis for making judgments and decisions.
 - Introducing the concept of alternative solutions to a problem, deciding which best fits the situation, and thinking out loud about how to decide is a valuable addition.
 - Finally, coaching a child in gathering the requisite information for decision-making and in thinking through consequences to various solutions develops higher-level skills needed for good problem solving.

Every day I get up and look through the
Forbes list of the richest people in
America. If I'm not there, I go to work.

- Robert Orben

"Do not let the behavior of others
destroy your inner peace."

- Dalai Lama



M&T Bank. Understanding what's important.



At M&T Bank, we strongly believe that it is our obligation to contribute our resources toward improving the quality of life in all the communities we serve.

This commitment, coupled with innovative banking solutions, personal attention and understanding our customers' needs, has earned us the reputation as one of the strongest and most highly regarded regional banks in the country.

Find out what it's like to work with a bank that works with you. Stop by your nearest M&T branch or visit us online at www.mtb.com.



www.mtb.com ©2010 M&T Bank. Member FDIC.

Are you part of the listserv?

DSNMC@yahoogroups.com... HOW MEMBERS OF DSNMC COMMUNICATE REGULARLY

Joining the DSNMC listserv is the best way to receive information on DSNMC news and upcoming activities. The listserv is an easy way to communicate with other families, ask questions and share information.

Select one of the options below, and follow the instructions. If you have questions please contact Deirdre Kelly at admin@dsnmc.org or 301-979-1112.

OPTION 1

Create a Yahoo account. If you already have one, make sure you are logged in. Go to <http://groups.yahoo.com/>.

Use the search box to find the DSNMC group (search on DSNMC).

Click on the DSNMC name/logo and you will be redirected to the group's main page.

1. Click on the "Join This Group" button, located in the top, right corner.
2. Verify that you are joining with your correct profile.
3. Select the email address that you would like to use.
4. Select your preferred options for frequency and format of messages. Type in the text for the word verification.
5. Press "Join."

OPTION 2

If you would prefer to have DSNMC send you an invitation to join the group, please send an email to: info@dsnmc.org

In the subject line of your email use the phrase "Request to Join Listserv." DSNMC will send you an invitation with a link to join the group.

OPTION 3

Subscribe to a group's mailing list only

If you're not sure you want to join the group, you can sign up to only receive email messages from the group. This option allows you to receive messages but will not allow access to the group's web features (photos, files, attachments, links, polls, and calendar).

To subscribe to the group's mailing list via email:

Send a blank email to: dsnmc-subscribe@yahoogroups.com



DSNMC
P.O. Box 10416
Rockville, Maryland 20849
www.dsnmc.org
(301) 979-1112

*Lee este Boletín en Español?
Si es así, avísanos quienes son!*

Para ahorrar dinero en imprimir y recursos naturales, consideramos un edición distinto... lo mismo contenido y formato, en español.

NOMBRE:

DIRECCIÓN:

EMAIL:

NUMERO DE TELEFONO:

Manda su información a: admin@dsnmc.org

O manda por correo esta porción de la pagina a:

DSNMC
P.O. Box 10416
Rockville, MD 20849