

DSAA Today



The Newsletter of the Down Syndrome Association of Atlanta • May/June 2007

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SAVE THE DATE:

MAY	
15	Buddy Walk Committee Meeting
19	Spring Luau At Lake Lanier Islands
26	AHSDA Family Picnic
JUNE	
15-16	Board Retreat
19	Buddy Walk Committee Meeting
JULY	
17	Buddy Walk Committee Meeting
AUGUST	
3-5	NDSC National Convention In Kansas City
21	Buddy Walk Committee Meeting
22	Board Meeting

My Sister Hane

by Paulette Acevedo

I was always brought up with the sense that you should treat people the same way you yourself would like to be treated: with equal respect and justice that anyone else was given. However, I did not realize that at the age of six I was about to live this philosophy from a completely new perspective. In 1990, my twin siblings were born; my brother, Jan-Paul, who was perfectly healthy, and my sister, Hane, who was born with a developmental disability called Down Syndrome.

If Hane had not come into my life, I know for a fact that I would not be the same person I am today. Years ago, at the hospital the night she was born, I saw my father crying and sensed that something was not right. He took me aside and explained that Hane was "different," and there I realized that we would have to fight for the rest of Hane's life to make sure that the rest of the world would treat her "the way I would want to be treated." There have been various instances when I could see with my own eyes the fear there is of disability, most likely due to a fear of the unknown. My parents taught me to live by the fundamental belief that a person with a disability should be treated just like people without disabilities; after all, a person is a person, disability or not. Without even realizing it, as an older sibling, this was where my advocacy for people with disabilities began.

I chose to attend Georgia State University in Atlanta to study Social Work as an undergraduate because I felt that it would greatly enhance my potential in terms of professional development. I began shadowing two Lobbyists for the "Unlock the Waiting Lists!" campaign for disabilities services at the State Capitol. As a volunteer, I advocated for increased funding for disability services in order to decrease the waiting lists of over 6,000 Georgians with disabilities in need of various services that would allow people to live more independently in community settings. For the first time I was working towards change on a macro level, raising public awareness and educating policymakers so that people with disabilities throughout the state of Georgia could live meaningful lives, just like every citizen.

Because of my volunteer experience, I was then offered a paid position as the Volunteer Coordinator of the "Unlock the Waiting Lists!" campaign. Currently I hold a managerial role, recruiting, organizing, and

training volunteers to lobby and advocate at the Capitol. Even by raising awareness on disability issues among my own volunteers, I am more conscious of the lack of education about disability and the huge difference even a short presentation can make in promoting understanding and acceptance of people with disabilities.

This year I have obtained an internship with Jewish Family & Career Services within the Disabilities Division. I am currently working the C.R.E.W. (Creative, Responsible Adults at Work), a day support program that prepares adults with disabilities to enter the workforce. My main objective at the program is to facilitate the Social Fitness Club, a support group in which the clients can share experiences or problems regarding social relationships and get feedback from others. My internship with the CREW has given me social work experience on a micro level, dealing with clients on both as a group and also a one-on-one basis. I was able to gain the firsthand perspective of my clients, hearing about their issues related to dating relationships, families, caregivers, friends, stereotypes- issues not unlike people without disabilities.

My experiences within the disabilities realm have developed my ideas on institutional settings. Over 44,000 people have died at Central State Hospital in Milledgeville, Georgia. The Smithsonian Museum has a grave marker to commemorate the deaths of these individuals and to serve as a reminder that during the 1970s Central State Hospital was the largest institution for persons with disabilities or mental illnesses in the world. This was a time when there was stigma directly associated with having a disability. Fifty years ago, the prevalent mindset of doctors towards children born with disabilities was that these children should be institutionalized. Be it that my own sister has a disability, she more than likely would have grown up in an institution had she been

born during this era. Historically, institutions have been and in many cases still are known for mistreatment and negligence. For these reasons, I feel it would be difficult for me to work with individuals with disabilities in institutional settings; I find this type of situation emotionally binding to my particular family situation.

I realize that social workers must have firm boundaries between their professional and personal lives. However, I feel that my values of community inclusion of all people, despite the severity and range of their dis-



If Hane had not come into my life, I know for a fact that I would not be the same person I am today.



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Letter from the Executive Director, Michelle Norweck

IEP Success: Knowledge is Power!

Advocating for your child is something that all of us as parents do because we want what's best for our kids. You do not need to be a Special Education expert or a lawyer to be an effective advocate for your child. Still, there may be bumps along the way. The IEP process can be like a maze filled with technical information, intimidating professionals, and confusing choices. For some families it goes smoothly, yet for others, it is a difficult encounter in which you and your school district cannot agree. For other people, the experience is somewhere in between. In order to have the most successful IEP experience, you have to prepare and get organized. The general strategies for attaining IEP success are not complex and can be easily mastered. The old adage that knowledge is power is absolutely true in the world of special education. So invest in a two drawer file cabinet and begin collecting as much information as you can about IEP's including IDEA law, Special Education regulations and definitions. Please know that the DSAA is here to help you and provide support to you in this inevitable endeavor. Take advantage of the many Parent Network Groups to connect with other parents who have gone through the IEP process. Others who have been through the process before can help you avoid making mistakes or undertaking unnecessary tasks. Most important, they can be a source of real encouragement. The DSAA also offers educational workshops twice a year that cover topics such as IEP's, Special Education Law and Advocacy. If you want another parent to go with you to your IEP meeting or if you would like a Support Parent assigned to you, please contact the DSAA at (404) 320-3233. The DSAA is proud of the collective strength and support that it has offered to parents just like you over the years. Don't hesitate to call and let us know how we can help support you. Below are some steps in getting started on your IEP journey; helpful websites and recommended books that will help you attain your child's education goals.

INITIAL STEPS:

—*Start an IEP Binder or file drawer: keeping all materials in one location will help keep you organized. Materials that you will want to have on file and handy include:*

- Evaluations
- Therapist notes and reports
- Health and Medical Records
- Information on Programs and Services in your school district
- Special Education contacts in your district
- Contact list of all therapists and doctors that have treated your child

—*Know the IEP Cycle: part of successful organizing is having a clear sense of when things happen in the IEP cycle. Keep a calendar and note the following key "IEP Seasons".*

- Fall (September – December) = Information gathering
- Winter (January – February) = Evaluation
- Spring (March – May) = IEP Preparation and IEP Meeting
- Summer (June – August) = Dispute Resolution
- School Begins!

—see pg. 3

Networking Groups

If you are interested in starting a Parent Network Group in your area, please let us know at: contactus@AtlantaDSAA.org

GOOD BOOKS:

How Well Does Your IEP Measure Up?
by Diane Twachtman-Cullen

The Complete IEP Guide: How to Advocate for Your Special Ed Child
by Lawrence M. Siegel

IEP and Inclusion Tips
by Anne Eason and Kathleen Whitbread

GOOD WEBSITES:

These and many more can be found on the DSAA website at
www.atlantadsaa.org/resources/links

A Parent's Guide to Special Education
www.parentpals.com/

Wrightslaw
www.wrightslaw.com/

IDEA Practices
www.ideapractices.org/

Heidi Moore Receives Recognition From The DSAA For Outstanding Advocacy Of Children With Disabilities—

Heidi Moore, Parent Advocate and former DSAA Executive Director presented at the Spring Education Workshop on March 24, 2007. Her topic, Medicaid Waivers, from Confusion to Clarity was rated by 100% of attendees as "Outstanding". The presentation outlined practical steps for ensuring a positive outcome when applying for Medicaid Waiver programs such as Katie Beckett/Deeming Waiver and MRWP. Heidi received an award for her dedication to and advocacy for all children with disabilities in Georgia. To view her presentation go to our website, www.AtlantaDSAA.org and click on the Advocacy page.

IN MEMORIAL OF:

**Gerald Dobbins
Ed McElligot
Margaret Millikan
Keith Pyles**

Donations were received in memory of the following individuals who are related to a member of the DSAA. The DSAA is grateful for these Memorial Donations and wishes to extend its utmost sympathies to the families who were effected by the loss of these individuals.

Hane — continued from pg. 1

ability, may be a cause of conflict within an institutional workplace. Some view institutionalization no different than segregation of blacks and whites on buses before the civil rights movement. Others can argue that, based on the Supreme Court ruling of *Olmstead vs. L.C. & E.W.* and the Americans with Disabilities Act, institutionalization is a form of legalized discrimination. People with disabilities can be included in the community, go to college, have careers, get married, have families, and live independently with adequate support, which may be in the form of various services. With a graduate degree in Social Work, I aim to change the stigma historically associated with disability and transition it to a celebration of the unique perspective of an individual with a disability.

My experience with the integration of persons with disabilities also applies to my cultural integration, as well. Growing up in a bi-cultural household, my acceptance of cultural diversity began at a young age. My parents are from Puerto Rico and the Dominican Republic; I myself was born in Augusta, Georgia, although Spanish was my first language. During pre-kindergarten I began to learn English. Even by the foods that most of my classmates brought for lunch, like sandwiches, chips, and McDonald's burgers, I realized that I did not have a typical American background. My dinner leftovers, platanos fritos (fried plantains), arroz con gandules (rice with pidgeon peas), and carne asada (typical seasoned meat) set me apart. At times, growing in a smaller town with very conservative, southern values was no easy task. Despite the differences between myself and the majority of my peers, I still cherished my Hispanic culture, loving Hispanic holiday customs and enjoying Latin music and dance, such as salsa, merengue, and bachata. In addition, I have been lucky enough to travel outside the United States, visiting Puerto Rico, Honduras, Spain, France, Panama, Mexico, and the Dominican Republic. In Honduras, I have seen with my own eyes third world poverty, where five year old children, without shoes or clean clothes, are selling produce on the streets for next to nothing in order to make a living. I have also walked through the Louvre, experiencing the intricate architecture and rich art of France, such as Leonardo da Vinci's Mona Lisa. All these experiences have broadened my knowledge and awareness of various ways of life different from my own and have fostered openness within me for varying demographic populations.

Having touched the areas of macro and micro social work, I feel that a graduate degree in Social Work with a Social Policy and Administration concentration will also help me to fulfill my goal of working at the legislative level to influence public policy. This goal is consistent with Florida State University's School of Social Work Mission Statement, and I feel that a background in Social Policy and Administration from FSU would better equip me to promote systems changes through policy and legislation. My practical experiences in lobbying at the state level has contributed to my academic and professional success, though I feel that a Master's in Social Work from FSU would further allow me to progress and to learn not only as an individual, but also as a macro level social work professional.

With Florida State University's location within the state capital, I feel that various avenues will be opened up as far as career choices and educational opportunities following graduate school. I hope to grow in my leadership skills and professional development while putting FSU's academic learning into practice through an internship, broadening my initial experiences in advocacy. I seek new perspectives and exposure to diverse populations, bringing new light on real world experience different from my own. I expect Florida State's Advanced Standing program to be demanding, challenging, and ultimately rewarding. However, I feel prepared to contribute to such a unique program, and hope I will be allowed to do so at Florida State University.



Recently, DSAA Members from the Brookhaven/Decatur/Tucker area enjoyed a family outing and a group picnic at the Yellow River Game Ranch—feeding the animals and more importantly meeting other parents of children with Down syndrome. DSAA Parent Network Groups provide families an opportunity to share similar experiences, lend one another support and create a friendly atmosphere for siblings and children with Down syndrome to socialize. Take advantage of the parent network group in your area. For more information, contact the DSAA at (404) 320-3233

The Emory Connection

by Sallie Freeman

Over the past 18 years hundreds of Atlanta-area families have participated in research based in the Department of Human Genetics at Emory University. The aim of our work is to learn more about how Down syndrome occurs and why children with Down syndrome are at risk for certain medical conditions such as congenital heart defects. Between 2000 and 2005, our group at Emory led the National Down Syndrome Project (NDSP), a nationwide study that enrolled families from Atlanta and five other sites across the country. Our first report from that work was published earlier this year, and, with the publisher's permission, we've included the abstract below (definitions of technical terms follow the abstract).

We plan for this "methods" paper to be the first of many reports as we analyze the information provided by the almost 2000 families across the country who participated in the project. Currently in the works are two additional papers, one examining the effect of maternal age on chromosome behavior and the other reporting on congenital heart defects associated with Down syndrome. We are extremely grateful to all the families in Atlanta and nationwide who participated in this project, and we welcome questions at any time (contact Sallie Freeman, sfreeman@genetics.emory.edu). We continue to enroll new Atlanta families into our research. Interested parents should contact Helen Smith for details (404-778-8477; hsmith@genetics.emory.edu).

The National Down Syndrome Project: Design and Implementation.

SB Freeman, EG Allen, CL Oxford-Wright, SW Tinker; C Druschel, CA Hobbs, LA O Leary, PA Romitti, MH Royle, CP Torfs, SL Sherman. 2007. Public Health Reports, 122 (1):62-72.

Objective The National Down Syndrome Project (NDSP), based at Emory University in Atlanta, Georgia, represents a multi-site, population-based, case-control study with two major aims: 1) to identify molecular and epidemiological factors contributing to chromosome nondisjunction and the consequent packaging of an extra chromosome into an egg or sperm and 2) to identify risk factors for Down syndrome-associated birth defects.

Methods The six national sites represent approximately 11% of US births. Cases were newborns with Down syndrome (trisomy 21), and controls were infants without major birth defects randomly selected from the same birth populations. Biological samples were collected from case infants and their parents, and genetic markers were typed to determine the parental origin of chromosome 21 nondisjunction. Each site interviewed parents of cases and controls addressing pregnancy, medical and family history, occupation, and exposures. Sites collected medical information on case infants.

Results The NDSP enrolled 907 cases and 977 controls (participation rates: 60.7% cases; 56.9% controls). Participation rates varied widely by site as did important demographic factors such as maternal age, race, and education. Nondisjunction during oogenesis accounted for 93.2% of the cases. Errors in spermatogenesis were found in 4.1%, and 2.7% were post-zygotic errors.

Conclusions This exceptional compilation of questionnaire, clinical, and molecular data makes the NDSP a unique resource for ongoing studies of the etiology and phenotypic consequences of trisomy 21. The combined approach increases study power by defining subgroups of cases by the origin of nondisjunction. This report describes the design and successful implementation of the NDSP.

Glossary:

Nondisjunction:

The failure of chromosomes to separate correctly during egg or sperm production.

Oogenesis, spermatogenesis:

Formation of the egg or sperm, respectively.

Post-zygotic:

Occurring after fertilization.

Phenotypic consequences:

In Down syndrome, this refers to the effects on the individual of having an extra chromosome 21 (e.g. a heart defect).

The Down Syndrome Clinic staff wish to thank the Down Syndrome Association of Atlanta for its continuing support. To find out more about the Emory Down Syndrome Clinic or to make an appointment, contact Shelley Dills, Down Syndrome Clinic Coordinator at 404-778-8524.

Revisiting Resolutions

Every New Year we come up with resolutions that have a familiar ring: I'm going to lose those ten (or more) pounds, I'm going to faithfully work out, I'm going to use the dining room table for something other than that stack of mail.

This year, consider those resolutions that will have a lifelong impact on your child. While it's often unclear what the future holds for our children, here are a few ideas that you may find helpful:

- *Take a good, honest look at your child. What do you see now and what do you see down the road? Will your child be able to work? Live alone? Live in a group home? Write down your observations.*
- *Consider the type of help will your child need. Financial help? A full or part time care-giver? Special transportation? How or who will provide these?*
- *Think about what you can do to prepare for your child's future needs and make a list.*
- *Explore what type of benefits your child may be eligible to receive. Many individuals with disabilities are eligible for various types of state and federal benefits. These benefits have specific age and income rules? Are you familiar with them?*
- *Review your own legal documents. Are your wills/trusts up to date? If not, now is the time to make the changes.*
- *If you have not already done so, decide who will care for your child should something happen to you. Once it's been decided, make sure it is in your legal documents.*

These are some things that can be worked on throughout the year. Take them one at a time and start a checklist or journal, checking off your accomplishments as you go along. Revisit them throughout the year and note any changes. While some of these tasks may appear daunting, once you start completing them, you will rest easier knowing that you are succeeding in planning for your child.

He is the Son I was Meant to Have

I was 34 in 1979 when my first and only child, David, was born. The hopes and dreams I had about being a father were suddenly shattered when, within an hour after his birth, I found myself standing in the hospital nursery listening, in shock and disbelief, as the pediatrician described the various signs of Down syndrome that my baby had. My mind filled with images of some of the children with Down syndrome who had been my students before I decided to become a psychologist. I was filled with dread about meeting with my wife for the first time the next morning. My world had fallen apart.

The actual first meeting with my wife resulted in a sense of relief. It came when the nurse brought David from the nursery and handed him to Mary Ann. She received him into her arms with obvious mother love. I immediately relaxed a bit and felt the earth beneath my feet again. I had never experienced such an intense mixture of conflicting feelings as I did then. I was filled with love, terror, and profound grief. It was the beginning of a long journey that would take me places I never imagined.

What followed was a long period of deep grief and depression that was pervasive in our house. Getting through the days was a challenge. Work was difficult to focus on, and beginning to learn what was required to take care of and help David seemed overwhelming. Telling others about the birth of a baby with Down syndrome was very painful and made it feel more and more real. The pull to isolate was strong and much time was spent feeling alone and different in the world.

The sense of isolation began to change when we found our way to the Down Syndrome Association of Atlanta. Meeting other parents of children with Down syndrome was very helpful and started to normalize the situation. Getting to know families with older children who were carrying on with life and living into the world was encouraging and instilled in us a sense of hope and possibility. Though I long since lost contact with many of those people, I still remember them with fondness and appreciation.

David was the most important teacher I ever had. With him I learned to love completely, with my whole heart. That capacity has reached far into my life and into all of my relationships. He taught me a great deal about being open to the joy of being alive and embracing opportunity without reserve. He taught me about trusting my intuition. He sized up the essence of others very quickly and knew who was trustworthy and who wasn't. He taught me to appreciate differences rather than judge or be afraid of them. He lived his life with passion and abandon. He loved his friends and family without reserve. And, he taught me to appreciate the simple things in life.

In 2004 we were shocked and devastated again when David was diagnosed with leukemia. This turn of events came out of the blue in a way that felt similar to his birth. He met the challenges of treatment with courage and strength. He won the hearts of the doctors and nurses who took care of him and charmed the pretty nurses. He had a period of remission, which gave us hope that he could survive the illness. In the end, however, he lost the battle. He asked the same question we all ask about the mystery of death: he wanted to know why. I wish I knew and could have given him an answer. He maintained his dedication to being fully alive until the very end of his life in November 2005.

So, life with David ended with profound grief and depression just as in the beginning. There's a real difference now, however, because I have the blessing of having known him and have such sweet memories of him. I can't imagine never having known him and am grateful for the time we had. He is the son I was meant to have.

In recent months, I have found a concrete way to honor my relationship with David. I have made a commitment to devote more of my professional energy and time to helping and supporting other families with children with disabilities and to those who have lost a child. I'm finding tremendous meaning and satisfaction in this endeavor and know that David is smiling in support of it.

Jim Foulks, Ph.D. 404.892.0062



Special Olympics
Georgia

Attention DSAA Parents — Special Olympics Georgia Family Action Network Needs Your Help!

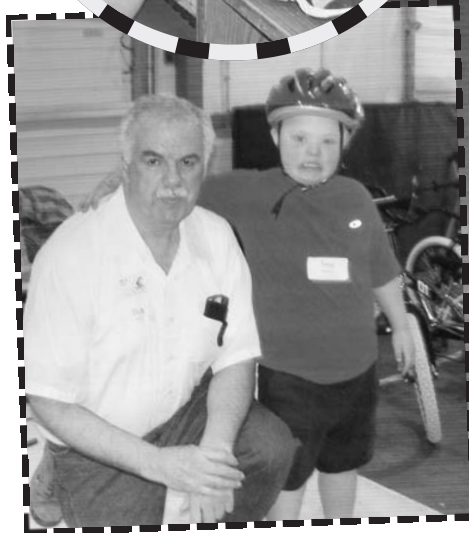
The Family Action Network (FAN) is seeking volunteers for the upcoming Special Olympic Georgia Summer Games. The games will be held May 25 - 27, 2007 at Emory University in DeKalb County. We need volunteers to help sell Special Olympic merchandise at the opening ceremonies Friday night and at various sports venues on Saturday and Sunday. Most volunteers only need to commit to a 2 hour time frame but if you can give more time it would be appreciated. This is a great way to experience the games and volunteer at the same time. The Family Action Network (FAN) uses the funds raised from the merchandise sales to donate sponsorships to Special Olympics Georgia, Sponsor the Spring Family Camp, Provide the Winter Games Family Social and provide help and support to SOGA families in general.

If you can volunteer for this wonderful event please contact **Debbie Carlisle** at **770-493-9240** and leave a message or email her at debcarlisle@bellsouth.net. Schedules will be flexible and any help you can offer will be appreciated. If you work for a company that would like to provide volunteers as well that would be a great opportunity for them get involved with Special Olympics.

TROY'S SPRING BREAK AT BIKE CAMP

Our family has just returned from a wonderful adventure with our son, Troy, who is nine. Troy joined 38 other children in Charlotte, NC for a bike camp called "LOSE THE TRAINING WHEELS" (LTTW). This is a week long camp for children with special needs who have not learned to ride a two wheeler. This program specializes in adapted bicycles and bicycle instruction (*more information can be found at www.lose-thetrainingwheels.org*). In the past, Troy has been very hesitant to get on a bike or even want to ride for more than a short period of time without assistance. Troy showed up the first day excited and eagerly got on the bike that was chosen especially for him. The concept is so amazing and advanced. Dr. Klein uses a set of adjustable rollers, along with adjustable sprockets to teach our kids to balance the bike with minimal assistance. The camp directors and volunteers were very supportive and encouraging. Troy especially enjoyed riding the tandem (bicycle for two) with Dr. Klein. It was a proud and emotional moment when, by Thursday, we saw Troy on a two wheeler without the training wheels for the first time. Troy was especially proud and grinning ear to ear when he received his certificate and trophy on Friday. Troy's dad, sister and I look forward to the day in the near future when we all go riding as a family.

Robin C. Millikan, DSAA Member



ADVENTURE



... **YES WE CAN!!!**

9th Annual Swing for the Children Golf Tournament and Fundraiser

The golf tournament and fundraiser took place April 23, 2007 at Brookfield Country Club in Roswell. The day was absolutely beautiful with the temperature hitting 80 degrees with sunny skies. This year we had 89 golfers participating. The day started out with box lunches provided by Loco's Deli, beverages provided by Coca-Cola and Atlanta Beverage Company. During the round of golf we had 4 Hole in one contests with the grand prize being \$20,000.00 for anyone who was able to get a hole in one on the par 3, 8th hole. Unfortunately nobody was able to sink this challenging shot. We also had 4 closest to the pin contests on the par 3 holes. The winners, Chad Alexander, John Stephens, Brent Maddux, and Bob Hrehor all received a large frozen gift pack of select meats and groceries provided by Blue Ribbon Foods. The long drive competition was won by Steve Chamlee. He received a gift certificate to the Pro Shop at Brookfield Country Club.

During the round, golfers stopped by the practice green to take part in a putting contest for a pair of AirTran Airways tickets. Another pair of tickets was given away as part of the raffle during the wonderful BBQ buffet dinner. This year the team from Ambush Boarding Company took home the prize for low gross score, also known as the best score. This is the second year in a row Chuck Morrow, Adam Blank, Johnny Lee and Joe Henry have outpaced the competition.

During the buffet dinner a silent auction was taking place and several prizes were handed out. In addition to the above winners there were beautiful 11x14 framed prints of classic golf photos with the DSAA logo imbedded in the matting presented to the 3 flight winners. The first flight winners were Gary Smith, Mark Maness, Kirby Fiveash and Jim Horan from Consultants and Builders. The second flight winners were Steve Lindstrom, Kurt Alexander, Mark Villa and Andy Brown from Northampton Subdivision. The third flight winners were Venus Newton, Tim Farr, Neal Howard, and Greg Griffith from Chubb Insurance. Dr. David Leadbetter gave a speech about the Down Syndrome Clinic at Emory University and self-advocate Patrick Essen gave a short speech thanking all the golfers. A special recognition award was presented to Russ Plugge, 2006-2007 Golf Chairman for his outstanding service to the DSAA Golf Tournament and gift certificates were presented to his committee chairs, Gib Durden and Brent Maddux.

Our volunteers, Michelle Norweck, Cara Plugge, Joan Essen, Stefanie Baumblatt and Sue Quinby all DSAA members, and Helen Smith, Shelley Dills, and Tracie Rosser from the Emory Down Syndrome Clinic made the day go smoothly. All in all it was a great day on the golf course with over \$12,500 being raised.

The golf committee would like to thank all the volunteers, golfers and team sponsors for their participation in this year's golf tournament and fundraiser. A listing of all sponsors can be found on the DSAA website.

Russ Plugge

The Nominations Committee is searching for a few good members to fill three vacancies within the DSAA Board of Directors.

Membership Director

Programs Director

Fundraising Director

Volunteers must be willing to actively participate in board meetings 5 times per year, assist with fundraising and program development. If interested and for more specific position responsibilities please call: 404-320-3233.

Historically, the DSAA has hosted the kick off dance for the Larry Bregman Educational Conference. This year was no exception. To the delight of the participants, Sammy Rosenberg was the deejay for the evening. He knows how to get the crowd up on their feet and out on the dance floor. DSAA also provided the snacks, beverages and chaperones for the dance. The Bregman Series, put on by Jewish Family and Career services, is a two day annual event for adults with developmental disabilities and their parents and caregivers. For many of the adults, it serves as an opportunity

One Starry Night In Atlanta

by Susy Martorell



www.bregman.org

The Bregman Dance For Young Adults

DANCE PARTY FUN!!!!!!!!!!!!!!



It was something of a "hen party", partly a "business women's meeting" and something of a "town hall meeting", flashing between English and Spanish all night long! A Friday night dinner, April 20th, was mostly a high spirited celebration of a team of women who had dedicated the last eight months to bringing the powers of the DSAA's Spanish support group, AHSDA (Asociacion Hispana de Sindrome de Down en Atlanta) to a higher level. A two year grant funded by Healthcare Georgia Foundation and initiated in September, 2006, has brought to fruit the establishment of a firm base of leadership from within AHSDA. Seven "Madres Guia" or "Mother Guides" joined DSAA Executive Director, **Michelle Norweck** and President, **Stephanie Meredith** at the home of the Project Coordinator, **Susy Martorell**, to celebrate the blessings and accomplishments of the first year of the grant.

The purpose of the grant is to strengthen internal leadership in order to better meet the demands of providing support and guidance to new Spanish-speaking families with children with Down syndrome in our community. The "Madres Guia" or "MGs" as they are affectionately known in our acronym crazed language, have worked diligently to keep in regular contact with newly referred families, inviting them to monthly meetings, reassuring them with understanding hearts and helping them to connect to valuable resources for their children.

Though the dinner was essentially to have fun and relax, the MGs didn't waste time and buzzed with ideas for upcoming events that will wrap up our first grant year. Part of their duties include integrating the Spanish speaking families into DSAA events, not an easy task due to language and cultural barriers; getting AHSDA families to attend the Spring Luau is the current priority. May 26th marks AHSDA's 7th Annual Picnic at Mason Mill Park and one MG after another, tossed out ideas for picnic day fun. Stephanie surprised us all, piping in on the chatter, in Spanish, with ease and clarity! Michelle was intent, watching and listening, and grasping the spirit if not the verbiage of the evening at all times.

Not to say we didn't chatter on about babies, husbands, places of origin (Uruguay, Utah, Decatur), favorite foods and the like. The intimacy of a private dinner with soft light, comfortable friends, relaxed arms (most husbands on childcare duty), lends license to shifting conversations and shared vulnerabilities. Bonds were tightened and satisfactions were shared. Many walks of life shared a Friday night dinner and the stars shown brighter in Atlanta, GA.

On March 17th Chase Riggott had his first birthday. We asked that instead of gifts that our party goers donate to the Down Syndrome Association of Atlanta. Afterwards I realized some checks went directly to DSAA, and I had an incomplete list of who to thank. I would like to express our sincere thanks all the people who donated in Chase's honor.

Thanks, Trina Riggott

... Thank You Chase!

Happy Birthday Wishes!!!

May

Elijah Adrien
Daniel Auwaerter
Stephanie Avad
Austin Bean
Gavin Blackstone
Jackson Bowers
Nia Bradley
Noah Burgamy
Donovan Canter
Grace Frances Carter
Carly Craig
Corbett Dishman
Joshua Eaton
Nathaniel Eliis
Hunter Estep
Jeremy Foster
Bannie Galletly
Noah Gazaway
Caitlin Gleason
Pamela Gomez

Lindsey Hales
Carly Elizabeth Ingram
Jake Jeffries
Christina King
Michael Kozicki
Michelle Martos
Araïna Milagro
Brian Pate
Carlos Pineda
Quinton Pressley
Estefania Ramirez
Angel Rodriguez
Katie Rouille
Manuel Ruiz
Megan Sanders
Claire Schell
Victoria Sparks
Sean Stevenson
Darby Taylor
Lily Von Schmeling
Javonni Washington
Emily White

June

Tuan Ameen
Max Bartholomar
Katie Bender
Laura Marisol Benitez
Joshua Bostic
Dutch Chandler Jr.
Nicolas DeBarros
Kylie Raye Dennis
Jennie Linn Dunn
Maeve Dooley
Nathan Dooley
Karla Estrada
Jim Foster
Iris Gonzalez
Mason Gray
Noah Gray
Angelica Guterrez
Karol Ann Hart
Abby Hendrick
Courtney Brooke Jones
Andrew Kirkland

Jacob Knight
Daniel Knobloch
Kathleen Lewis
Raaj Mann
Araceli Martinez
Kyara Morris
Katie Norris
Christian Michael Pate
Dale Potter
Mary Catherine Price
Jessica Rayon
Madison Sherrer
Julia Ruth Shriner
Daniel Skandera
Alayna Skidmore
Jada Smith
Nathan Sykes
Lily Turner
Hector James Ubaldo
Evan Usher
Joseph Vieira
Victoria Paige Webb
Ciara Zachary



Happy Birthday Chase Riggott!

—see pg. 7

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DSAA Today

... Heidi Moore
Receives Recognition
For Outstanding
Advocacy.

—see pg. 3



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