



HEART STRINGS

A bi-monthly publication for families and friends enriched with the Down syndrome connection.

Our children and adults with Down syndrome are the heart of our organization - and our most precious gifts.

November/December 2007

Message from Executive Director

We are deeply saddened by the passing of Shannon Peterson. Shannon was an inspiration to us all, achieving many things in her life. At her memorial service, the pastor spoke of her pure heart and the impact she had on everyone she met. I saw her and David often, having dinner at Ruby Tuesday, date night at Goldie's, hanging out at the mall, and at the Christmas parade. It was always a blessing to see how much they were enjoying life. Shannon will be dearly missed by her friends at GRADSA but her spirit will live on in our hearts.

I attended the National Down Syndrome Congress convention in August. Patricia E. Bauer, a journalist and mother of a daughter with Down syndrome, gave a compelling speech entitled "Stand Tall" about the recommendation by the American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists regarding routine prenatal screening. The text of her speech is included in this issue and is definitely worth the read. GRADSA is committed to reaching out to health care professionals to educate them on the specific medical and developmental needs of individuals with Down syndrome, provide ways to improve the delivery of the diagnosis, and show them how individuals with Down syndrome are contributing members of society. We have received a grant from Catholic Healthcare Partners to bring the **Changing Lives: Down Syndrome and the Healthcare Professional** to the entire 7-county area. If you would like to help in this endeavor, please contact me.

We celebrated National Down Syndrome Awareness Month with another successful Buddy Walk! The Buddy Walk Special Edition newsletter will be out in November. Special thanks to the committee for all their hard work. Please help us say thanks to the many sponsors who support GRADSA by giving them your business when the opportunity arises. The board will be reviewing the 2008 budget in January. Please give us some feedback concerning events, activities, or services you would like to see offered in 2008.

Please remember Elizabeth Stickler as she recovers from a T&A and pneumonia. Also, please pray for Heather Sutton who may be facing eye surgery soon. There are many families that are already experiencing the effects of cold & flu season. It is my wish that each of you have a healthy fall and winter season.

Be sure and check the Calendar of Events for upcoming GRADSA activities. Hope to see you soon!

Cindy Huston

Calendar of Events



Out-of-the-Box Reading Workshop, Saturday, November 10, 8:30 - 11:30 a.m. at Kentucky Wesleyan College (Rogers Hall in the Winchester Center). This workshop will be presented by Denise MacDonald, President and Founder of MacDonald Learning & Resource Centre in Peterborough, Ontario, and Karen Evershed, mother of a child with Down syndrome. This workshop will teach you how to

help your child/student with Down syndrome (and other developmental delays such as autism and dyslexia) learn how to read. **Parents and educators are invited to attend this workshop. Please contact Cindy Huston to register.** Coffee and donuts will be available beginning at 8 a.m.

Christmas Party, Sunday, Dec. 2, 4:00 - 7:30 p.m. *Please note date change.*** Kentucky Wesleyan College (Rogers Hall in the Winchester Center).** Activities begin at 4:00 p.m. with Randy Lanham on hand to lead a Christmas carol sing-a-long. Dinner will be served at 5:30 p.m. and Santa will arrive around 6:15 p.m. **Please RSVP by November 16** so we can have an estimate for dinner.

Successful Learning Approaches, Saturday, January 19, 2008, 9:00 a.m. - 4:00 p.m. at Kentucky Wesleyan College (Rogers Hall in the Winchester Center). This workshop is funded in part by the Opportunities for Family Leadership and the Department for Mental Health/Mental Retardation Services. Workshop will be presented by **Sue Peoples**, an educator for 30 years, research clinician, author of *Understanding How Children with Down Syndrome Learn*, and mother of a son with Down syndrome. This practical session will assist parents and teachers in understanding the instructional needs of students with Down syndrome and other developmental delays. It will identify the instructional design needed to provide remediation for deficits in short and long term memory, transfer of learning, and concept development skills. **Please RSVP to Cindy Huston by January 11.** Lunch will be provided.

News



GRADSA extends its deepest sympathy to the family and friends of **Shannon Peterson**, 36, who passed away on October 11. A graduate of Apollo High School, Shannon participated in Special Olympics in swimming, softball, bowling, track and field, and basketball. She also held a black belt in Tae Kwon Do. She enjoyed scrapbooking, latch hooking, going to church, her cat Sam, and playing with her nieces and nephews. Shannon lived independently, worked at Winn Dixie and Kroger, and was engaged to David Fogle.

GRADSA also extends its sympathy to past president **Dwight Beyke** in the loss of his mother, Anna Marie Beyke, on September 23.

We the People - America Speaks 21st Century Town Meeting will be held on Nov. 10 from 9 a.m. - 4 p.m. at the Executive Inn. **Individuals with disabilities and their guardians/family members are encouraged to attend and let their voices be heard!** For more info, call Lindsey Mattingly at 270-852-1458.

The Child King is a new movie coming out in time for the holidays featuring an actor with Down syndrome, Peter Johnson. One of the main characters, Jeremy (played by Johnson), takes charge of restoring his younger brother's faith and belief in things that used to bring him pleasure, before his mom died. They set out on an adventure to find Santa and, with some magical help, overcome numerous obstacles on their successful journey. It is a family film that portrays a positive message about the abilities of people with Down syndrome. For more information, visit www.thechildking.com

Stand Tall by Patricia E. Bauer

The following is the text of Patricia E. Bauer's keynote speech about routine prenatal screening that was delivered at the 35th Annual Convention of the National Down Syndrome Congress, held in Kansas City, Missouri on Sunday, August 5, 2007.

Long ago, my husband and I thought we had the world figured out. We had good educations, good jobs, nice offices, even preferential parking spaces. We thought we had it made.

Then, a little more than 23 years ago, Margaret showed up, providing us with the most important learning experience of our lives. Our first order of business was trying to figure out this whole Down syndrome thing, of course, but ultimately it dawned on us that the effect of an extra chromosome here or there was the least of what we needed to learn. Over time, we came to reevaluate our core values, and to understand that much of what we had been led to believe – about what makes a family happy, what makes a life worthwhile — was misguided. I'm sure I'm not alone in saying that for the first few years of Margaret's life we worked very, very hard to do everything we could to help Margaret become "normal." It was only later that we realized what most families get to eventually: that "normal" wasn't the point. Our real goal was to help Margaret be Margaret. It was only by letting go of the concept of normal that we were able to see our daughter as the delightful person that she truly is, not obscured by some burdensome word, some arbitrary social ideal that had nothing to do with any of us.

Like it or not, though, we have to admit that we as a nation have been sold this concept of "normal" and we've fallen for it. Somehow, while the disability community was out of the room, the world of medicine established a diagnosable standard called "normal" and now we're all trying as hard as we can to achieve it.

Starting this year, it is recommended by the professional organizations representing obstetricians and gynecologists in the United States and Canada that all pregnant women be offered prenatal screening for Down syndrome. All pregnant women. Prenatal screening tests are now well on their way to being standard of care. Insurance companies are covering them. And since Down syndrome is not a condition that can be repaired in utero, it must be fairly assumed that the purpose of this testing is to allow – and urge — women to terminate their pregnancies, which is in fact what has been happening about 85 to 90 percent of the time when Down syndrome is diagnosed prenatally.

This is a painful topic to talk about, I recognize, and it's made more painful by the very ironic fact that these recommendations have come at a time when people with disabilities have more legal protections than ever before.

Not only that, people with Down syndrome are in general healthier and having a better quality of life than at any time in history. This is the first generation to benefit from early intervention, inclusion, improved health care and better educational opportunities, and they are blowing up yesterday's old data. Increasingly, they're completing high school, getting jobs, living more independently. Some are driving; some are getting married. Imagine: I met a woman with Down syndrome the other day who was part of a relay team that swam the English Channel. These are people who are living full lives and making contributions to their communities.

We laugh at our house every time we see some article in the media about how people are "suffering" from Down syndrome. Margaret, my daughter, has just moved into her own apartment with a couple of her girlfriends. She's sure not suffering. And just the other day, self-advocate Audrey Wagnon delivered the same message in her speech to the full NDSC convention. Here's how she said it: "I'm having the best life ever!"

But – oddly — we live in a time in history in which the faces of our loved ones have come to symbolize something in the public mind that is very much at odds with our life experience. People see our family members and think what they've been taught to think. They think our children are tragedies. Yet we who are privileged to live with them know that, despite some of the frustrations of day-to-day existence, our lives are also filled with possibility and love and joy.

So why the disconnect between our lives and society's vision of them? Perhaps we should start by acknowledging the obvious: prejudices, biases and fears of disability run deep in our society, nourished by years of history and reinforced among other things by ignorance, gaps in the healthcare and educational systems and negative media images.

Physicians tell me that women want prenatal screens because they are very fearful of having a child with a disability. Among other things, they fear that the financial burden would crush them or that they wouldn't be able to get a decent education for their child. They're afraid, too, that they would be held accountable for having a child with a disability, and that there would be people who would blame them for failing to prevent the birth of such a child. They are afraid of stigma and ridicule. Sadly, these are not unreasonable fears.

But that's only one piece of the puzzle we face. Here are few more:

– Puzzle piece number two. Prospective parents are suing their doctors if they don't get a so-called "perfect baby," leading to skyrocketing insurance costs and doctors who want to run every test possible to prevent litigation. Not long ago, a Florida jury awarded a couple more than \$20 million because their doctor failed to warn them that their son would be born with a genetic syndrome.

– Puzzle piece number three. Physicians, nurses and other health care providers are giving their patients negative, outdated, biased or incomplete information about Down syndrome, depriving them of the ability to make their own informed choices based on accurate information instead of negative stereotypes.

– Puzzle piece number four. Financial demands on doctors mean they have to process more and more patients in less and less time, giving them scant opportunity to discuss tests and deliver diagnoses in a sensitive, thoughtful compassionate way. Women are reporting that these rushed interactions feel coercive.

– Puzzle piece number five. Medical schools don't offer clinical training about people with intellectual disabilities.

Stand Tall continued

– Which brings us to puzzle piece number six. Let's not forget that prenatal diagnostics is a profitable industry, in which hundreds of millions of dollars are spent each year. A substantial portion of that cash flow swells the accounts of the obstetricians and gynecologists who see pregnant women. By contrast, I should point out, the amount of money spent on research into treatments and processes to improve the lives of people with Down syndrome is minimal at best.

All these factors, I'm sorry to say, have combined to create an atmosphere in which there is a growing presumption that pregnant women should be tested for Down syndrome – a presumption, stoked by ignorance and stereotypes, that children like ours are expendable, that children like ours are without value, and that children like ours impose an unwanted cost on society. Somehow, without our knowledge or participation, a cost-benefit analysis has been applied to our children and they aren't measuring up.

You may be wondering: How did we ever get to this point? For the purposes of this conversation, let's start back in the '50s. Most of you won't remember it, but people with disabilities then had not been granted the right to go to public school. Doctors didn't think that people with intellectual disabilities were capable of learning, and routinely recommended that they be sent away to institutions. During the '50s in this country, an estimated half a million children were institutionalized, often under the most abusive and degrading conditions.

So when a French geneticist named Jerome Lejeune discovered the extra 21st chromosome that causes Down syndrome in the late '50s, his discovery caused many to hope that treatments would soon be found. As you of course know, that didn't happen. A far more straightforward task, from a scientific point of view, was the development of tests that could be used for prenatal diagnostics. Those tests really took off after abortion was legalized in 1973.

Doctors and scientists took a public role in recasting the definition of healthy fetuses and legitimate abortions, and what were called "therapeutic" abortions came to be regarded as a legitimate and desirable way to prevent or eliminate Down syndrome. It was in some ways just an accident of history that these so-called therapeutic abortions became well entrenched before our society was able to see what individuals with Down syndrome, given a chance, could do.

It is, as author Michael Berube has written, a bitter paradox: even though we have barely begun to explore the ways in which we could include people with disabilities in our society, we are devoting precious time and resources to developing better ways of spotting and eliminating these people before they are born.

Particularly troubling is the fact that this shift – to preventing Down syndrome by attempting to prevent the births of children who have it – was largely engineered by members of the healing professions, the very people who are charged with the responsibility of protecting vulnerable populations.

So now we are left with a harsh reality indeed. The implicit message the American College of Obstetricians & Gynecologists seems to be sending is this: even though racial, cultural and ethnic diversity are valued and supported in our society,

genetic diversity is not. It seems that it's more important to be "normal" than to be "human." Or maybe we should view this as less a philosophical discussion than a pragmatic one. For OB/GYN's, it's better for business to deliver only babies that the medical profession calls "good outcomes."

Somehow, along the way, the professional organization representing these doctors has failed to notice that they have embarked upon the elimination of an entire class of people who have a history of oppression, discrimination and exclusion.

I know we empathize with today's young parents. Their finances are limited. They have grown up in an era of fear, taught to be afraid of strangers and wary of the strange. In the obstetrician's office they trade their fears for the illusion of control — but in the process they are giving away much of what defines America at its best: a society that assumes responsibility for those who are vulnerable, a society that accepts those who are different, a society marked by generosity, liberty and freedom of thought.

These may sound like abstract concepts, but they're not. The consequences of all these uninformed individual decisions, made in the privacy of the obstetrician's office, are being played out before our eyes every day. We see them when our family members are the subject of unwanted stares. When people talk about how someone "had" to get rid of a pregnancy because it wasn't perfect. When people tell us that special ed kids "cost too much." When people ask us, sometimes in ways that seem unfriendly, whether we had "the test." Or even why we didn't have "the test." When medical professionals look at our beloved children and say "that shouldn't have happened."

Let's face it: people with Down syndrome have a catastrophic PR problem. The doom and gloom talk has gone largely unchallenged for far too long.

It gives me great pain to tell you all this, because I know you love your family members as much as my husband and my son and I love Margaret. I know, too, that you share our vision that people with Down syndrome are valued, contributing and vibrant members of our families and our communities.

We come together at reunions like these to affirm the value of our family members' lives, secure in the knowledge that their extra chromosome is NOT the most important thing about them. They belong; they dream big dreams; they contribute; they deserve respect. What makes their lives difficult is not their genetic makeup; it's the uninformed attitudes of others.

We know this, of course, but it's not enough for us to share the message with one another. We need to put it out where all the world can see.

Let's start with what we can do as individuals. As I've gone around the conference, I've heard about some great things that people are doing in their own communities. Things like:

–Helping to educate the doctors and genetic counselors in their area by visiting their classes or professional meetings.

–Building relationships with hospitals and talking with families who have a fresh diagnosis.

Stand Tall continued

– Monitoring their local news media, and holding them accountable for their coverage and their use of language about people with disabilities.

These are great steps, but let's not stop there. Let's dream even bigger. It's time for us to insist that our organizations advocate forcefully on behalf of people with Down syndrome in ways that are targeted to reach decision-makers, to reach medical professionals, and of course to reach the general public.

Here are some of the things we need to do.

1. We need to provide disability awareness training and accurate information directly to obstetricians, to gynecologists, and to the professionals who assist them. They need to hear the nuanced, compassionate message that is at the core of diversity and human rights: all people have value and dignity and are worthy of celebration. We've told them this nicely. Now perhaps it's time to turn up the volume.
2. We need to put out lots and lots of well-designed materials that will teach doctors how to discuss prenatal screening and diagnoses with their patients. Senators Kennedy and Brownback have recently reintroduced their bill on this topic. Whether it's this bill or another one, we need to find a way for doctors to get the materials they need.
3. We need to improve medical school curriculums, which include almost nothing about children with disabilities.
4. We need to hold publishers accountable for the editorial content of their pregnancy handbooks. Take a look in your local bookstore, and notice what those books say about our young people. If they carry anything at all, it's more than likely a cold, clinical list of symptoms and diagnoses, guaranteed to strike fear in the heart of any pregnant woman. We must change this.
5. We need to use technology to convey our message. Where does your average 20-or 30-something look for medical information? Right. The Internet. If we truly want to help people make informed decisions, we need to get involved in the Internet in a big way, both in print and in video. Our content needs to be useful and modern.
6. We need to enable prospective parents to see that people with disabilities live good lives, and that they have warm, sustaining relationships with their families and friends. Presently, that information is only coming to them anecdotally, if at all. Imagine how different things would be if people could be referred to a website that allowed them to click on videos that would show them footage of people with Down syndrome, of all ages and ability levels, going through their daily lives. America's teenagers are communicating actively through You Tube – why shouldn't we?
7. We need to speak up to challenge the old stereotypes about our family members and ourselves. We're not victims. We're not heroes. We're just ordinary people sharing slightly extraordinary lives with people we love and who love us.

I talked earlier about people who sometimes ask us about whether we had "the test." Here's what I think they really want to know. Did you, or would you, choose this person to be in your

family? Let me tell you my answer to that question.

When my husband and I decided to have children, we were kids. (Okay, we were in our early 30s. But viewed from a distance, that sure looks young now!) Sure, we had lots of education, degrees and experiences, but there was a lot we didn't know:

- We didn't know what it meant to be a parent.
- We didn't know that there was no such a thing as normal.
- And we sure didn't know that it was possible to have a happy, thriving, loving family with a child who was not the same as everybody else's.

Fortunately for us, we have learned a thing or two at the University of Margaret since then. We learned

- No child is "normal" — and neither are we;
- We, like all parents, need to get over the notion of our children meeting some arbitrary standards of perfection that we couldn't possibly achieve ourselves; and
- We choose our children, and each other, over and over, every day of our lives.

In short, my husband and I have been privileged to share our lives with someone who is a constant reminder of some essential truths: the importance of family, the strength of unconditional love, the dignity and value of vulnerable people, and the fact that IQ points are not a good predictor of personal happiness or quality of life.

As we all ponder how to carry these messages to the outside world, as we get ready to leave the safe haven of our reunion today, let's remember that we are all stronger together than we are separately.

But talking among ourselves, while important, won't get the message out. We have to communicate directly with those not in this room.

A couple of years ago, a newspaper running a piece I'd written asked for a family photo, including Margaret. I gulped, feeling exposed, and called my husband to ask his thoughts. He said, "Stand tall; run the picture." We did.

That is my message to all of us: Stand tall; get out the message.

People will listen. We can do it. Together.

© Patricia E. Bauer - www.patriciaEBauer.com

Patricia E. Bauer is a journalist who has served as senior editor of the Los Angeles Times Sunday Magazine; special assistant to the publisher of the Washington Post; reporter and bureau chief at the Washington Post, and pundit on public affairs television in Los Angeles. Her articles have appeared in the Washington Post, the New York Times and many other publications.

Bauer and her husband are among the founders of the Pathway Program at UCLA, a post-secondary program for young adults with intellectual disabilities. They are the parents of two young adults, one of whom has Down syndrome and is a survivor of leukemia.

Charity Golf Scramble

The **Owensboro Association of Insurance and Financial Advisors** hosted its 2nd Annual Charity Golf Scramble on August 24, raising \$3,297 for GRADSA. Special thanks to Tim Wills and his group for organizing the event. Thanks also to the following sponsors: **American General, John Worth Insurance, Sam's Club, and Kohl's**.



Tim Wills and **Paula Hayden** present Cindy Huston with a check to GRADSA for \$3,297.



Fifty-two golfers participated in the event, including a team of GRADSA dads. Left to right: **Jeff Winstead, Eric Sherrard, Mike Isbill, & David Huston**

Poker Run

Johnny B's hosted a Poker Run in August to benefit GRADSA, raising \$1,775. Special thanks to **Kathy Keller** and **Jay Mahoney** for organizing this fundraiser! GRADSA members **Tony & Dana Hamilton** (below) participated in the event.



Through **Kohl's Cares for Kids Program**, they have sponsored three GRADSA events this year: Golf Scramble, Poker Run, and Buddy Walk. In addition to supplying volunteers for each event, they donated \$500 each time. We are very thankful to Kohl's for their support of GRADSA!

Book Review: Memory Keeper's Daughter

From anger to laughter, and sadness to pride, I think this book brought the whole gamut of emotions to the surface. From the first few pages, all the way to the last, I felt myself wanting to reach out and touch the characters in this book. The **Memory Keeper's Daughter** is a novel that starts in Lexington, KY in the late sixties. A young couple longing to start a beautiful family is immediately touched with Down Syndrome. The decisions that follow in the first few pages send the characters of this book on a journey through life that some will cherish and some regret. It is a story of love, will power, pain and deceit.

As a mother of a child with Down syndrome, I found myself feeling thankful that the world is easier in some ways than it was just half a century ago. We do not have to fight for our children to get a public education or opportunities to be successful in life, or do we? While my son is only six, I have already spent many long hours at the school making sure he is getting every opportunity possible to learn and grow. We have spent weekends at the YMCA hoping that he would be accepted and able to participate in basketball at a young age. Our experiences, although trying at times, have been pretty good.

This story also made me look to the future. What will life be like for my little boy in twenty years? Will I still be here to take care of him, or will he even NEED me to take care of him? So often I feel torn between ideas that are my dreams for Mitchell verses what he may want for his own life. No matter what, this book made me appreciate the life we have and a new willingness to fight even harder for the life he may want in the future. I think this book is a must read for everyone. I have already begun passing it to family and friends.

Heather Hensley

Editor's Note: The book "The Memory Keeper's Daughter" is being made into a film for the Lifetime Channel to be aired in the spring of 2008. They are looking for a baby girl born in October 2007 (or weighing under 8 pounds) to appear in the film as the newborn Phoebe. For more information, please contact Gail Williamson at 818-242-7871 or email at gail@dsala.org.

A Reason to Celebrate

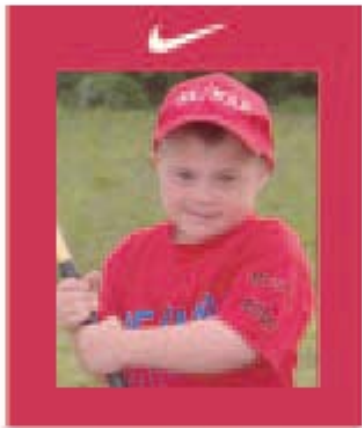
GRADSA invites readers to share their reasons for celebrating! The event doesn't have to be momentous for anyone other than your family, but other readers are likely to relate and share your joy. Please send your submission to Cindy Huston at P.O. Box 2031, Owensboro, KY 42302, or email to: cindyhuston@roadrunner.com.



Elizabeth Stickler donated over 7 inches of hair to Locks of Love. She loves her new "do" and walks around flipping her hair. Both her Dads love her new SHORT hair as well.



Caleb Lancaster, 9-year old son of Leslie and Jim Lancaster of Hopkinsville, is quite a sports nut. He was selected by Hibbits as an outstanding athlete and featured in their July catalog. Hibbits also donated \$1,000 to the local Special Olympics group. There was a great article in their local newspaper which can be viewed at: www.gradsa.org/news/16



Caleb Lancaster, Age 9
Hopkinsville, KY

A perfect role model of sportsmanship, Caleb gets just as much enjoyment out of supporting others as he does playing himself. Not letting Down Syndrome get in his way, Caleb plays baseball for his local youth league with non disabled kids as well as participates in Special Olympics sporting events such as track and field, bowling, softball and basketball.



Ruby Hidalgo recently celebrated her 1st birthday. She loved the mirror from GRADSA and spends many hours watching herself. Happy Birthday Ruby!



Luke Stone is on his way! According to his mom, Stephanie, it is a miracle to have him finally walking after enduring so many health issues in the past 4 years. Not many kids have to walk around 50 feet of oxygen tubing. Way to go Luke!

GRADSA members had fun at Holiday World.



Alec Skipworth enjoyed the day with his family.



Lilia Gray rested on her new GRADSA beach towel.



Sam Fenwick is ready for the Hot Dog Roller Coaster!



Robbie Sherrard says "Choo Choo" while riding the train.



Eli Rose and his twin brother, Isaac, enjoyed their ride on the rocket.



Paxton Hocker took a break from lunch to pose for a picture.



Joseph Clements takes a break from the rides.



David Leonard and his mom Tammy got wet on Ragin' Rapids.



George Stayer enjoyed the log ride.



Hannah Hardesty sits in Santa's lap.

Nov./Dec. Birthdays

Steven Ballard, 41 years old on Nov. 30
Michael Castlen, 54 years old on Nov. 19
Hannah Hardesty, 3 years old on Dec. 27
Paxton Hocker, 12 years old on Dec. 26
Matthew Huston, 7 years old on Nov. 10
Lukas Mahoney, 8 years old on Dec. 15
Christina Martinez, 4 years old on Dec. 6
Joey McAtee, 22 years old on Nov. 25
Tammy Sears, 39 years old on Dec. 8
Ana Lilia Sedillo, 16 years old on Nov. 8
Ann Swtizer, 7 years old on Dec. 28
Mark Vollman, 47 years old on Dec. 28
Zeb Wells, 2 years old on Dec. 17
Jonathan Whittaker, 13 years old on Nov. 4
Alan Wood, 37 years old on Dec. 16



Fazoli's Birthday Club - Fazoli's, 5060 Frederica Street, is treating individuals with Down syndrome to a

free meal to celebrate their birthday. Children ages 12 & under can choose a kids meal while teens & adults have their choice of a small spaghetti with marinara or meat sauce. To receive your free meal, show this column to the cashier during the month of your birthday.

Mission Statement

GRADSA's mission is to enable families enriched with the Down syndrome connection to share resources, build friendships and advocate together for the future of individuals with Down syndrome.

Services

GRADSA, an affiliate of the National Down Syndrome Society and the National Down Syndrome Congress, is a non-profit, 501(c)3 organization that provides its members with a bi-monthly newsletter, educational workshops, social activities, a website (www.gradsa.org), a new parent outreach program, and a hospital outreach program. There are no membership fees to join.

Policy Statement

GRADSA does not promote or endorse any specific therapy, treatment, or educational setting. We provide a variety of information and viewpoints, however, each family must make an individual choice.

Printing of Articles

GRADSA welcomes articles from parents, professionals, and other interested parties. Material for consideration should be sent to Cindy Huston. Articles written for *Heart Strings* may be reproduced if credit is given to the author and GRADSA. Permission to reprint articles not original to *Heart Strings* should be acquired from the original source.

Board Members

Matthew Williams, *President*

Home: (270) 689-1695

Cell: (270) 929-6348

E-mail: Matthew.Williams@aleris.com

Stephanie Stickler Smith, *Pres.-Elect*

Phone: (270) 683-9100

E-mail: sticklersl@omu.org

Michele Cecil, Director

Steve Hagan, Director

Tony Hamilton, Director

Deanna Isbill, Director

Lori Marksberry, Director

Jamie Mullins, Director

Tonya Murphy, Director

Paul Puckett, Director

Brenda Walker, Director

Cindy Huston, *Executive Director*

Home: (270) 771-4945

Cell: (270) 314-3676

E-mail: info@gradsa.org

The next board meeting will be held on Tuesday, Nov. 13, 6 p.m., at the Family YMCA. All board meetings are open to the general membership.

Owensboro, KY 42302
P.O. Box 2031

GRADSA
GREEN RIVER AREA
DOWN SYNDROME ASSOCIATION

