



DOWN SYNDROME ASSOCIATION
OF ORANGE COUNTY
151 KALMUS DRIVE, SUITE M-5
COSTA MESA, CA 92626
714.540.5794

STAY CONNECTED

- FACEBOOK.COM/DSAOC
- TWITTER.COM/DSAOC
- @DSAOC



THE OPTIMIST

DSAOC WRAPS UP SUMMER 2017

Boy does time fly when you're having fun! DSAOC kicked off the 2017 summer season with our 13th Annual Golf Tournament, two picnics and some amazing summer programs.

Our 13th Annual Golf Tournament Banquet & Auction was another one for the books, with amazing golfers, generous sponsors, and superb weather, we could not ask for a better day! Huge amounts of thanks to Tom Adams and his team at EDM Performance Accessories for continuing to support this annual event that raises necessary funds for DSAOC's programs and services. For a list of sponsors and special guests, please visit our website where you can see more information about this annual event, as well as watch a video that includes sponsor credits. <http://www.dsaoc.org/golf-tournament.html> SAVE THE DATE for next year's tournament - Monday, June 11, 2018.

The DSAOC Summer Picnic in mid-June was enjoyed by more than 300 people. The picnic venue, Atlantis Park in Garden Grove, provides lots of grassy picnic areas, some fun playgrounds, and of course the very popular SPLASH Pad – all the makings for an amazing day! The picnic was a great place to reconnect with old friends, make some new ones, enjoy a delicious dinner from our food sponsor, Charo Chicken, while enjoying the park's amenities. Special thanks to National Charity League-Pacific Coast Chapter for providing support for this event.

The Orange Elks Picnic for DSAOC Families was once again amazing! Thanks to the team of wonderful people with the Orange Elks, DSAOC families enjoyed a beautiful day at Irvine Regional Park that included complimentary pony rides, entrance to the zoo, park style games, and some of the most delicious BBQ. We are so grateful to community sponsors like Orange Elks, who continue to make our families feel extra special and included in the community.

It wouldn't be a summer without our DSAOC Summer Programs which included Art with Brynne, Ballroom Dancing, Teen Book Club and Smart Phone Photography. Huge thanks to all of our families who spent some extra time with us this summer for these exciting programs. Additional thanks to our summer program facilitators and volunteers for making the DSAOC Center a super COOL place to hang out during this hot summer!



17TH ANNUAL ORANGE COUNTY BUDDY WALK

It's More than a Walk... It's a Celebration!
Sunday, October 29
at the Angel Stadium of Anaheim
9:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m.

Register today and join us for 5 hours of FUN on the field and inside the gates of the Angel Stadium. Exciting attractions and exhibitors, FUN Field play, stage performances, awards, live bands and DJ Willpower. Walk as an individual, join a team, or start your own team.



Can't attend? Consider making a general donation, or donate to a team. Thank you!

FOR MORE INFO VISIT:
<https://dsaoc.donordrive.com/event/bw17>

Social Media Safety

For those of you with teens and young adults, social media is probably quite a big part of your life. Whether they are on Instagram, Facebook, Snapchat or all three it is important for them to have the right tools to stay safe and follow the proper etiquette! If you are interested in DSAOC hosting a social media safety course for both parents, teens and young adults Please call | (714) 540-5794 or email Lauren | Programs@DSAOC.org

SAVE THESE DATES

Saturday, October 21
Trick or Trunk at the Garden Grove Elks Lodge

Sunday, October 29
Orange County Buddy Walk at Angel Stadium of Anaheim from 9 a.m. to 2 p.m.

Saturday, December 2
Breakfast with Santa at the Garden Grove Elks Lodge

Thursday, December 7
Circle of Friends Holiday Celebration

Saturday, December 9
Sibshops Holiday Party



MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT



Left: Board President Janette Mattson with Executive Director Kellie Perez-Tuchowski

As the year is winding down, and we will soon be welcoming a new year, it's a great time of reflection. I often reflect on my role as the President of the DSAOC Board of Directors (BOD). Why am I on the BOD? Why did I get involved with DSAOC? Why is there a need for DSAOC? Why did I even call DSAOC in the first place?

The answer to the last question is easy. Almost 14 years ago, I gave birth to a daughter with Down syndrome. We had no idea what Down syndrome was and how it would affect our daughter or our family. We have never been a "Why Us" type of family, so we went straight to "What Now". Our pediatrician told us about a group in Orange County that might be able to provide us some resources and support. That group was called PROUD (Parents Regional Outreach for Understanding Down syndrome). PROUD was founded in 1978 by a dedicated group of parents who saw the need to provide information and support to families and their loved ones with Down syndrome. At that time, Orange County did not have any support in place, so these families worked hard, pounding the pavement to get resources in the hands of hospital social workers, and eventually in the hands of parents. Meetings were held at kitchen tables, and they had bake sales and garage sale fundraisers. The database back then was a box of files. In 2000 came the name change from PROUD to DSAOC, and in 2001 the organization hired its first Executive Director. Now, nearly 40 years later, DSAOC serves approximately 2,000 families in and around Orange County, and collaborates with several organizations, and is the original Down syndrome organization serving Orange County. And, to think that all of this started with a passionate, dedicated group of

volunteers who understood the needs of these families and wanted to create something special, a place we could belong, a meaningful and supportive organization for individuals with Down syndrome and their families.

So, why did I want to get more involved with DSAOC? I wanted to help provide that "something special" that others have been doing for so many years. I wanted to help grow and expand DSAOC's events and programs. I wanted to help make DSAOC's Buddy Walk and World Down Syndrome Day the most amazing Down Syndrome Awareness days of each year. I wanted to help others see the value of our children in schools and society. I wanted more for my daughter and I believed that DSAOC was going to help make that happen. After serving on the board for several years, I can truly say that I have helped DSAOC, and DSAOC has helped my daughter. DSAOC continues to grow and add events and programs to support more individuals and reach a wider age group. You can see a majority of programs and services here: <http://dsaoc.org/pdfs/dsaoc-programs-services-2017-06.pdf>

Why are you involved with DSAOC? Would you like to become more involved? Do you have a special gift or career that could assist the organization? There are many opportunities to become more involved. From joining an event committee, volunteering, being part of our Advisory Committee, being a Parent Mentor, or even joining our Board of Directors. The donation of your time is a great value to DSAOC, and we'd love to hear from you. Whether you are a DSAOC parent or a supporter of DSAOC, we need you. What can you do for DSAOC?

Please contact the DSAOC Center 714-540-5794 for more information. Thank you!

Sincerely,
Janette

CONGRATULATIONS RACHEL OSTERBACH

On September 14, the DSAOC Executive Director, Kellie Perez, was given the honor of inducting Rachel Osterbach into the Edison High School's Hall of Fame. This is an honor bestowed upon Alumni who have distinguished themselves in their career or vocation. Kellie has known Rachel and her family for nearly 10 years and has had the opportunity to watch Rachel bloom into the amazing woman she is today. Besides creating global Down syndrome awareness as a cast member on the Emmy Award Winning show on A&E, "Born this Way", Rachel is a natural leader and role model in her programs. It's attributes like these that make Rachel stand out as a great candidate when certain opportunities present themselves. In 2011 and 2014, DSAOC sent Rachel on interviews for an employment position, and to be an appointed representative for individuals with disabilities on the Area Board State Council. She nailed both interviews and is still working hard in both positions today, as well as participating in Special Olympics, the Toastmasters Gavel Club, remaining active with DSAOC, and much more. We are so proud of Rachel, and thrilled that we were able to witness this very special moment.



TESTIMONIAL TUESDAY

Each Tuesday we share a testimonial on our social media channels and we would like you to be part of the fun. Don't stress, the testimonial only has to be a few sentences on how DSAOC has impacted your life, and if you have a fun picture to go along with it, that is a major plus. Please see just a few of our testimonials from weeks past. Send your testimonials to Lauren at Programs@DSAOC.org and tell others why DSAOC is important to you



"DSAOC is one of my favorite resources to go to for CHOC Health Alliance families. They offer amazing programs and provide much needed support for the families. I work specifically with blind Samira and we are caring and work diligently to contact the families we refer to the program. Thank you DSAOC for the hard work and dedication you provide to our children with Down syndrome!"

Mia Olson
ICSM - CHOC Health Alliance



"The social aspect at DSAOC, to be with others with Down syndrome during various classes, is so important! Willie is involved in Fitness on Wednesdays and he loves it and looks forward to it, he has already worked a full day and yet he jumps into those fitness clothes and comes to DSAOC!"

Lisa Pestolesi
Former Board Member
& DJ Willpower's Mother



"I love DSAOC because this is where I make really good friends, it's the best place to be socially because I get to love everyone here. I take drama therapy, where we practice scripts and do exercises. Drama therapy challenges me to be a better person and actress! I also enjoy book club because I love reading books and stuff. Each year I attend the OC Buddy Walk, which is an event to help support and raise money for DSAOC. The Buddy Walk also just makes me feel so loved and inspired to love having Down syndrome. I love DSAOC!"

Jessica Morgan
Self-Advocate
Actress

2017 OC BIKE CAMP

Another amazing week went by at Orange County Bike Camp 2017! 100% of riders that attended the full five days of camp rode on two wheels by the end of the week or earlier. In collaboration with UCP-OC this camp teaches children, teens and adults with Down syndrome and other disabilities to ride conventional 2-wheel bikes without training wheels, using a curriculum and ultra-stable trainer bikes provided by iCan Shine, Inc. This week is filled with hard work, some tears, laughs and a whole lot of inspirational moments!

We would like to thank *Inspired by Drive* for their generous sponsorship that allowed 13 riders to attend camp via scholarships. The sponsorship meant the world to these families that otherwise would not have been able to attend.

If you are interested in sponsoring a rider, making a donation, volunteering or learning to ride please contact Lauren at Programs@dsaoc.org. Stay tuned for 2018 dates, which will be announced soon!



WANT UPDATES ON THE **ABLE ACT** for CA?
VISIT the NDSS Website for Updates on the ABLE Act:
<http://www.ndss.org/stateable>

What are ABLE Accounts? The Achieving a Better Life Experience (ABLE) Act allows individuals with disabilities to create tax-free savings accounts. The bill aims to ease financial strains faced by individuals with disabilities by making tax-free savings accounts available to cover qualified expenses such as education, housing, and transportation.



2017 RED CARPET BALL

On February 25th 2017 over 220 teens and adults with Down syndrome met at the Embassy Suites in Brea, to dance the night away to the tunes spun by DJ Willpower. The theme was Midnight in Paris and with a ten-foot Eiffel Tower magically tucked into the corner of the room, you may have actually thought you were on the Champ de Mars. The night began with photos of friends, then dinner, and ended, you guessed it, on the dance floor!

This magical night could not happen without the creative vision and help of our Red Carpet Ball Committee, which includes Linda and Jillian Leeman, Tatia and Marco Huipe, Laurie Flibbert, Pat Wiggins, Brynne Palmer, Laura Marcum, Leah Guillen, Nathan Bush and Cindy Lysek. They take the time out of their busy schedules throughout the year to put together this wonderful night! We are also thankful to the Orange Elks (Mike and Rosie Cash) JB Interiors Drywall, Sean Rosenthal from Within a Dream photography, the Leeman Family and AVMS Lighting for their generous contributions to this event. The 2018 Red Carpet Ball will be at The Phoenix Club in Anaheim and take place on March 17, 2018, where we will travel to the East on a magic carpet ride for an enchanted Arabian Night!

For more information about the Red Carpet Ball and to view photos, please visit www.dsaoc.org/red-carpet-ball.html

EDUCATOR OF THE YEAR AWARD & RECOGNITION PROGRAM

"A good education can change anyone; a good teacher can change everything" - unknown

Each year we take time to recognize educators that make a positive difference in the lives of students with Down syndrome, through the DSAOC Educator of the Year Award and recognition program. Nominations are sent to DSAOC so we can recognize and honor educators that go the extra mile to inspire students with Down syndrome so they can reach their full potential. 2017 marks the 18th year of our Educator of the Year Award program, and we were thrilled to receive 12 nominations.

Our DSAOC 2016-2017 Educator of the Year Award winner was Michelle Texeira, a third-grade general education teacher from Sycamore elementary. During the last week of school, we surprised Mrs. Texeira with the award, which she accepted amongst her students, family, co-workers, and the school board. Nominated by the Jovel-Acock family in support of their son, Gabriel, Mrs. Texeira is described as a model example of what it means to include a child with Down syndrome in her classroom. She has added American Sign Language time to the class schedule for the other students to be able to communicate with Gabriel. It is the hope of DSAOC that teachers like, Mrs. Texeira, will encourage others to follow in her footsteps by using creative methods of inclusion with a willing attitude to positively impact the lives of students with Down syndrome.

We receive so many wonderful nominations, it's always difficult for the judging committee to pick just one winner. We would like to thank all the families who took the time out of their busy schedules to share their stories and experiences with us about those making a difference in the lives of children with Down syndrome. Each nominee received a letter of recognition from DSAOC, and their leadership team was also notified of his or her nomination.

You can help us continue to Change Perceptions and Change Lives by submitting a nomination during next year's cycle, which will open in March 2018.

