

April 2012 Newsletter

Issue No 11

HAPPY EASTER

PLEASE JOIN US ON TUESDAY, APRIL 3RD FOR OUR MONTHLY MEETING & EASTER EGG HUNT- STARTS AT 6:30PM

Kids can come decorate bags & attach handles to make their Easter basket between 6:00 – 6:30pm. The Easter Egg Hunt will start at 6:30pm. Pizza will be provided by FRIENDS. Feel free to bring a yummy treat to share.

RSVP: Tracy Barnard, 301-606-4644 or tbarnard02@gmail.com

VOLUNTEERS NEEDED

F.R.I.E.N.D.S. is actively looking for sincere and responsible individual's ages 18 to 80 to help throughout the year in various meetings and activities. Volunteer responsibilities would range from child activities (as mentioned above), helping with fundraising events and mailings, and/or providing various professional expertises that would benefit our families. For more information on being a volunteer, please contact Denny Weikert at 703-928-2494 or email dweikert@friendsoffredco.org

SAVE THE DATE: 11TH ANNUAL BUDDY WALK DATE SET FOR SEPTEMBER 22ND, 2012:

Much preparation is going to be needed to accommodate our ever growing group and outreach programs, so PLEASE, if you have not been involved in previous years or are new to the group, we NEED YOU!!! There are many volunteer opportunities available and needed to make this day a HUGE success for our group and our Down syndrome awareness efforts. Committees are forming now, contact Denny for more information.



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HEALTH AND WELLNESS

DIVORCE AND DOWN SYNDROME

Did you know that parents of children with Down syndrome have a lower divorce rate? Part of the reason for this, researchers believe, is due to the “Down Syndrome Advantage” as it is called, which is where most married couples that have a child with Down syndrome are older, more educated, and have been married prior to having children. The personality of children with Down syndrome also helps to hold the couple together, rather than tear them apart as noted with other children with different disabilities (or with no disabilities at all). Children with Down syndrome are also usually the last born into a family, so families (and the marriages at the core of the family) are already well established.

It is important to note, that most divorce occurring within a marriage after having a child with Down syndrome typically occurs within the first two years of the child being born. Expectant parents should be made aware of the struggles and be given coping skills to help strengthen their marriage during these first two years of transition. Support groups such as F.R.I.E.N.D.S. plays an important role in guiding and supporting these couples in their new journey. Retrieved from <http://www.emaxhealth.com/24/20156.html> on March 2012.

This research is not to suggest that divorce or single-parenting cannot (or does not) occur. It is also vitally important to recognize the struggle of those parents, and help support them in any way possible, as well as the impact their situation would have on the child with Down syndrome.



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HEALTH AND WELLNESS (CONT)

BREAST FEEDING A CHILD WITH DOWN SYNDROME

We all know the benefits of breast milk for infants, but is there a special advantage to breast feeding a baby with Down syndrome? Babies with Down syndrome experience special benefits from breastfeeding beyond the many advantages to typical newborns. Here are some of the interesting facts about breast feeding an infant with DS:

- Breast milk provides extra protection against infections and bowel problems, which are more common in babies with Down syndrome.
- Breastfeeding improves mouth and tongue coordination, giving a child with Down syndrome a real developmental advantage.
- The act of breastfeeding provides additional stimulation for your baby.
- Extra patience and reasonable expectations are critical when breastfeeding a baby with Down syndrome. Low muscle tone and a weak suck can impede the baby's ability to breastfeed.

Here are a few tips that may help you breastfeed your baby:

- Because babies with Down syndrome are often sleepy and placid, you may need to interest your baby through frequent breast-feedings throughout the day, wake him fully before breastfeeding, or provide extra touch and stimulation to keep him alert.
- Pay extra attention to positioning your baby at your breast. Try to keep your baby's body elevated near your breasts with his ear, shoulder and hip in a straight line and use extra pillows for support. See LLLI FAQ "[How Do I Position My Baby to Breastfeed?](#)" for more information.
- If gulping and choking are problems, try positioning your baby so that his neck and throat are slightly higher than your nipple.
- If poor muscle tone makes it difficult for your baby to latch on well, try holding your baby with the arm opposite the breast you'll be offering. Using the hand on the same side as the breast you are offering, cup your breast with your thumb on one side of the breast, palm beneath, index finger pointing outward, and the other three fingers on the other side of the breast. Use your index finger to support your baby's lower jaw while nursing. As your baby's muscle tone improves through breastfeeding and maturity, he will become able to support himself and breastfeed more effectively.
- If your baby is unable to latch properly, expressing breast milk via a pump and feeding your baby with breast milk in a bottle is a great alternative to formula.

Retrieved from <http://www.llli.org/faq/down.html> on March 2012



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SOCIAL AND POLITICAL AWARENESS

WORLD DOWN SYNDROME DAY

F.R.I.E.N.D.S. had a successful World Down Syndrome Day Awareness Fund-raiser campaign on March 21, 2012. Included in the participants were Twin Ridge Elementary that raised \$65 and had around 20 teacher participants; Kempton, although they were not able to participate because of short notice, however Paige Barnard's teacher still made a donation to the cause.

Stulz of Frederick, MD raised \$211.36 through a bake sale (rather than a Dress Down Day since their dress policy is already relaxed throughout the work week).

World Down Syndrome Day is a great opportunity for F.R.I.E.N.D.S. to reach out into the local community and help raise awareness to our special children as well as help raise much needed funds for our out-reach programs. Hopefully one day, 3/21 will be "as easy to recognize as the wearing of green on St. Patrick's Day" states Cathy McMorris, Congresswoman for Washington (her son has Down syndrome). Read about Cathy and her use of her public forum to further awareness of person's with Down syndrome:

<http://mcmorris.house.gov/index.cfm?sectionid=343§iontree=343>

Please take a minute to read some of the great information that is available on the World Down Syndrome Day website, especially touching are the personal stories that are posted about how the day has affected others, benefited those with Down syndrome, and the struggle to get the day officially recognized by the UN.

Next year let's strive to get all of our work place, schools, doctors, retail establishments involved and really make 3/21 a memorable day.



Retrieved March 24, 2012 from <http://www.worlddownsyndromeday.org/content/down-syndrome-international-announces-recipients-2012-world-down-syndrome-day-awards-down>

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UPCOMING EVENTS AND ACTIVITIES

APRIL 2ND - DADS NIGHT OUT AT GLORY DAYS IN FREDERICK

Come eat, drink, and catch the championship game with the guys.

When you dine at Glory Days during the month of April, the restaurant will contribute 10% of your total food purchases to FRIENDS. Simply ask your server for a copy of your guest check (not credit card receipt) and mail to: FRIENDS, PO Box 641, Middletown, MD 21769.

RSVP: Denny Weikert, Denny.Weikert@federal.blackbox.com

THE ENTIRE MONTH OF APRIL IS DINE OUT FOR DOLLARS AT GLORY DAYS



APRIL 3RD - EASTER

Come a few minutes early if your kids would like to decorate bags and attach handles to make Easter baskets for the Easter egg hunt. Easter Egg Hunt begins at 6:30 outside. Dinner will be provided but feel free to bring desserts.

Where: Middletown UMC
7108 Fern Circle, Middletown, MD 21769

RSVP: Tracy Barnard, 301-606-4644 or tbarnard02@gmail.com



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UPCOMING EVENTS AND ACTIVITIES

APRIL 14th - ADHD: PERSPECTIVES ON BEHAVIOR AND PARENTING WORKSHOP

A Conference for Parents, Family Members, Caregivers and Professionals Interested in Helping a Child with ADHD. Jason Barth, LCPC, a previous presenter that really connects with parents, will look into the various perspectives of childhood behavior, including clinical diagnostics for mental and behavioral disorders of childhood and behavior-specific interventions. These will be practical ways parents, teachers, and caregivers can provide an optimal environment for children with ADHD to learn and to live. Mr. Barth holds a Master of Arts degree in Mental Health Counseling from Gallaudet University in Washington, D.C., and is a National Certified Counselor and a Licensed Clinical Professional Counselor.

Where: Washington County Technical High School in Hagerstown (near the outlets)

Conference Cost: \$15 per person which includes: Workshop Materials and Door Prizes, morning refreshments and lunch, gift bags and free books, and vendors.

APRIL 21ST - MARYLAND MISS AMAZING PAGEANT- AT 5PM- SEE ATTACHED FLYER

MAY- ALL DETAILS TO FOLLOW

MAY 1ST - MOTHER'S DAY DINNER & F.R.I.E.N.D.S. MEETING- 6pm

SPECIAL SPEAKER- DR. CAPONE- 7pm

JUNE

JUNE 5TH- MONTHLY MEETING & SPECIAL GUEST SPEAKER

KELLY PRESNELL

FROM THE YMCA KIDS UNLIMITED PROGRAM

(We will also be voting on the movie to be seen in July*)

FATHER'S DAY CELEBRATION- KEYS GAME NIGHT

WELCOME PICNIC FOR NEW FAMILIES- location/time to follow

END OF SCHOOL YEAR DANCE- details to followpending a location to hold the dance**

****DOES ANYONE HAVE A SOUND SYSTEM OR KNOW OF A DJ THAT COULD WORK OUR DANCE PARTY FOR A FEW HOURS? PLEASE CONTACT TRACY AT tbarnard02@gmail.com**



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UPCOMING EVENTS AND ACTIVITIES

JULY

JULY 3RD- MONTHLY MEETING- BUDDY WALK BRAINSTORMING/PLANNING

JULY 20TH- MOVIE NIGHT at MUMC- 7pm

JULY 19TH- 22ND- NDSC CONVENTION- F.R.I.E.N.D.S is offering the first 20 families to sign up a \$75 reimbursement check for the conference- sign up TODAY!

AUGUST

AUGUST 7TH- MONTHLY MEETING

FAMILY NIGHT OUT- BOWLING- Saturday in August

SEPTEMBER

WEEK PRIOR TO SEPTEMBER 22ND- STUFF THE BAG NIGHT- VOLUNTEERS NEEDED

SEPTEMBER 22ND- BUDDY WALK

OCTOBER

OCTOBER 2ND- MONTHLY MEETING- DRESS UP FOR HALLOWEEN PARTY

FAMILY DAY- HARVEST FARM- Saturday in October

NOVEMBER

NOVEMBER 6TH- THANKSGIVING DINNER

TECHNIQUES FOR SUCCESS CONFERENCE- details to follow

DECEMBER

DECEMBER 4TH- CHRISTMAS PARTY

MISC:

F.R.I.E.N.D.S PHOTO SHARING- [HTTP://DOWNBUTUP.SHUTTERFLY.COM/](http://downbutup.shutterfly.com/)

SHARE PHOTOS OF THE GROUP AND INDIVIDUALS WITH DOWN SYNDROME THROUGHOUT THE YEAR

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OUR KIDS CORNER- MADILYN (MADI) GRACE GARCIA



Our beautiful angel was born on April 29, 2006. Madi is the younger sister to Ryan and Dylan. She attends kindergarten at Rockland Woods Elementary in Hagerstown, where she is thriving and making so many friends. She can't wait to go to school each morning where everyone welcomes her with a smile. She loves dancing, playing dress up and swimming. She is quite enthusiastic when it comes to the outdoors -- nothing is off limits. She takes dance lessons and loves spending time with her Grandparents. Madi has a few daily chores around the house but her labor of love would have to be taking care of her dog, Daisy. Madi had the sweetest disposition and loves being with other kids. She has truly captivated everyone who meets her and continues to surprise us each day with all she does.

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MISCELANEOUS

BALTIMORE -- A Baltimore-based daily deal website is expanding nationwide, providing discounts on family activities and new programs that help families with children who have special needs.

The [Urban Pirates of Fells Point](#) casts off on voyages beginning in April through October, and this spring, they're setting sail with a group of special passengers: families with children who have special needs.

"Once you get on the Urban Pirate ship fearless, you're going to get dressed up like a pirate, get a tattoo and facial hair -- that's very important," said Adam Sahhar, Peppercorn the Pirate. "Then, once we're out on the water, everyone's going to learn how to walk, sing and dance like a pirate and shoot the water cannons, of course."

Urban Pirates is offering the deal through the website [certifikid.com](#), which started two years ago. The site offers daily discounts on products and programs geared toward children and families. Last week, the site added the new "special deals for special needs" program.

"This is for kids with all kinds of special needs -- from behavioral, mental, accessibility, special dietary needs; we'll have gluten-free type of deals -- you name it, we'll have something for it," said Jamie Ratner, CEO of Certifikid.

Ratner said many of the families have asked about the deals, and Certifikid is the first in the country to offer deals specifically for special needs families.

Urban Pirates is just one of the vendors in Baltimore offering discounts and deals.

"Downtown Sailing has a camp for kids with special needs. We have this organically grown gym one as well, that's a gym that's specifically for kids with special needs, and it will also be things that we've previously worked with in the past such as Urban Pirates," Ratner said.

Ratner said the idea is to give the families an outlet to experience the best of Baltimore and enrich the children's lives.

"These families are looking for other families to connect with who have children who are going through the same things as them," Ratner said. "So, this is giving the opportunity to socialize and feel comfortable in certain settings."

Read more: <http://www.wbaltv.com/family/30662183/detail.html#ixzz1p5eXXVhF>





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AFFILIATED ORGANIZATIONS



Newsletter Committee:

Holly Mohler (holly.mohler@yahoo.com)