

## October 2011 Newsletter

Issue No 5

### WELCOME F.R.I.E.N.D.S.

#### 10<sup>TH</sup> ANNUAL BUDDY WALK- A HUGE SUCCESS!!!!

**F.R.I.E.N.D.S.** hosted our 10<sup>th</sup> annual Buddy Walk in Baker Park on September 17<sup>th</sup>. We have a full 2 pages devoted to covering this event in this month's newsletter including some great photos. Thanks to everyone that came out in support of the event, and all who donated their time, talents and treasures. Each year, we are able to do more and more for Down syndrome awareness in our community due to wonderful programs such as the Buddy Walk that help raise much needed funds for our organization and out-reach programs.

**KIDS CORNER:** In the November newsletter, we would love to feature some photos of our kids in their Halloween (or Harvest/Light the Night) costumes. Even if your child has been featured in a previous month, please send your costume photos to [holly.mohler@yahoo.com](mailto:holly.mohler@yahoo.com), to have them featured in next month's edition- we will have a special section devoted to costume pictures (deadline for pictures to be sent would be Nov 1). Our newsletter is **STILL** in desperate need of photos and bios for our regular Kids Corner. If your child has not yet been featured, please make sure you send your child's information and picture to [holly.mohler@yahoo.com](mailto:holly.mohler@yahoo.com). Please be sure to also send any Down syndrome related topics of interest that you would like to see featured in our social/political awareness or health/wellness sections.

**OCTOBER** is National Down Syndrome Awareness month. Here are some suggestions that each one of us can participate in to widen the awareness of this special month: Share your story of how Down syndrome has impacted and changed your life; wear your Buddy Walk t-shirt while you are out and about on the town; donate books about Down syndrome to local libraries and schools; or come out to the F.R.I.E.N.D.S. Family Day at Gaver Farm.

**BE SAFE!!!** As our kids head out for trick-or-treat night or similar holiday celebrations, please be sure to discuss stranger safety with them, as well as pedestrian safety, before they leave the house, even if you are accompanying them. Children with Down syndrome are naturally very trusting of strangers. They can also be easily distracted while crossing intersections. Extra precaution is needed during these exciting holiday times to keep our children safe.



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### HEALTH AND WELLNESS

#### BEHAVIORAL PROBLEMS

“At increasing rates, children with Down syndrome are being provided with the same life experiences as their non-disabled peers. More children with Down syndrome are fully integrated into the activities of their family and, in many communities it is commonplace for children with Down syndrome to be integral members of their schools, neighborhoods, and workplaces. However, for many children with Down syndrome (as is the case with other disabilities as well), success in these environments is hindered by challenging behavior. For many parents, researchers, and practitioners familiar with children with Down syndrome, challenging behavior is a common occurrence. Children with Down syndrome are often described as "stubborn" and "obstinate." For example, children with Down syndrome show higher rates (than typically developing children) of attention problems, social withdrawal, noncompliance, and compulsions (such as arranging objects and repeating certain actions), as well as high rates of self-talk. With increasing age, behaviors associated with anxiety, depression, and withdrawal also increase. Finally, recent research has indicated a pervasive pattern in children with Down syndrome, present from infancy, of escape and attention motivated challenging behaviors involving noncompliance and misuse of social behaviors. Fortunately, substantial empirical research demonstrates the effective use of behaviorally based procedures to assess and intervene on challenging behavior in individuals with developmental disabilities,” (<http://www.down-syndrome.org/case-studies/2008/>, retrieved 2011).

#### MODIFICATION TECHNIQUES

Early intervention by parents and educators is essential to effective modification techniques. In some instances, just pin-pointing the cause of the behavior can have a radical effect on how the behavior is managed. For example, if a child is defiant and stubborn in the classroom setting towards the end of the day, but is compliant and pleasant towards the beginning of the day, it is possible that lack of sleep could be contributing to their behavior. If the parents of the child can alert the school/staff to the child's lack of (or decrease in) sleep that particular day, educators can adjust the child's schedule at the end of the day to accommodate this change. Communication between parents and teachers is imperative for proper discipline and behavior modification to be effective.

Most public schools can have a behavior modification plan on file for children with disabilities. These plans usually have been drafted by input from both the educators and parents so that a collaborative effort has been implemented to avoid melt downs and to deter undesired behavior from even ever starting.

(<http://www.down-syndrome.org/case-studies/2008/>, retrieved 2011).

The Developmental Disabilities Administration (DDA), provides service coordinators that can be very helpful in working with the schools to develop a behavior modification plan. They can attend IEP meetings, and can be a point of contact for your child when they age out of the school system and begin to require additional government assistance. Please visit their website: <http://www.ddamaryland.org/>

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### **SOCIAL AND POLITICAL AWARENESS**

#### **KIDS UNLIMITED YMCA PROGRAM**

The Kids Unlimited program through the Frederick YMCA is a special needs summer camp that offers a variety of activities for children with special needs. The staff ratio ranges from 1 adult to 2 children up to 1 adult to 5 children. They also offer camp services throughout the school year for before and after school care; and also on some scheduled days off from school.

Children are able to participate in arts, crafts, sports, all geared around a unique theme each week, and modified for each individual's special needs. There are also opportunities for the campers to get involved in other YMCA summer camp activities with the other general camp programs.

Camper ages are from 5-21, and the campers are divided into age appropriate activities. Usually each Friday, a "field trip" of some kind is scheduled, which the campers really look forward to and is probably their favorite activity (second only to the swimming days scheduled throughout the week and frequent visits from the ice-cream truck).

Special funding is available for such programs to help families with special needs pay for the camp (see last page of newsletter for links). Non-member rates for 2011 were \$375/week for full time, and member rates were \$300/week (with family membership). Half day rates were \$40/day for non-members and \$35/day for Y members.

Kelly Presnell is the director of the kid's Unlimited program, and is a phenomenal blessing to these kids. She works diligently to make sure the kids have a great summer experience, while also working closely with the parents to make sure they feel comfortable leaving their child with special needs in the care of her staff.

For more information on the kid's Unlimited program- please contact Kelly Presnell at [kpresnell@frederickymca.org](mailto:kpresnell@frederickymca.org)

#### **LITTLE SOLS SOL YOGA- YOGA FOR SPECIAL NEEDS**

The Sol Yoga had a booth at our Buddy Walk; their company is offering an Intro to Yoga for Kids with Special Needs. This semi private session is designed for your child if he/she has special challenges such as: Attention Deficit Disorder (ADD) of Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD), Autism, Cerebral Palsy, Down syndrome, Learning disabilities, Sensory Processing Disorder.

Space is limited to six students, so please make reservations early.

Session will be developed based on the needs of the students enrolled.

Benefits of the program include: Improvement in ability to focus & concentrate, develops mental, physical strength flexibility, improve balance, loosens tight limbs, and promotes language and communication skills. The program can also help build self-esteem and self-acceptance. The program is open to ages 2-18. Current dates for the program are Saturday October 1<sup>st</sup> and Saturday October 8<sup>th</sup>. Sessions start at 10:45 and run till 11:30. Cost is \$25 per session. Private lessons are available upon request. For more information, please contact [marge@solyoga.org](mailto:marge@solyoga.org).



Family Resource, Information & Education Network  
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### UPCOMING EVENTS AND ACTIVITIES

#### MONTHLY GROUP MEETING FOR OCTOBER- CANCELLED

Please join us at Gaver Farm in lieu of monthly meeting

#### **FAMILY DAY AT GAVER FARM - October 15th from 1- 3 pm 5501 Detrick Road, Mt. Airy, MD 21771**

Gaver's Farm is a pumpkin patch in Mt. Airy. They have hay-rides, corn mazes, huge slides, fun jumping pillow, tricycle & tractor lot, sand pit, tire playground, tunnels, pick your own pumpkin and a Farmers market to browse. Admission is \$7- under age 2 is free. Also, this would be a great opportunity to wear your Buddy Walk t-shirt to promote Down syndrome awareness month!!!

#### **AROUND THE WORLD OF SPECIAL EDUCATION IN ONE DAY- October 22<sup>nd</sup> 9am-3:30pm**

The 5<sup>th</sup> annual, FREE, all day conference for families whose children have disabilities and special health care needs and for the professionals that work with them will be held Saturday, October 22, 2011 from 9:00 am to 3:30 pm at Christ Lutheran Church in La Vale, MD. Breakfast and lunch is provided. For more information, contact Debbie DiPaolo at [dkmc199@comcast.net](mailto:dkmc199@comcast.net)

#### **BUDDY WALK + RAIN = LOTS OF EXTRA T-SHIRTS**

Did you miss out on this year's Buddy Walk due to the weather? Did you make it out to the walk, but your t-shirt got soaked at the walk and shrunk? YOU ARE IN LUCK- we have many shirts left over from this year's walk, and for a small \$5 donation to F.R.I.E.N.D.S., you can walk around in style in your very own Buddy Walk T-shirt. Share them with family and friends. Get a couple sizes bigger than your regular size for lounging around the house, sleepwear, and workouts. Thanks for your support of F.R.I.E.N.D.S. and Down syndrome awareness.

#### **INFANTS AND TODDLERS PROGRAM- FREDERICK COUNTY, MD**

You may have heard that the Frederick County Commissioners are discussing budget cuts to the Infants and Toddler Program in Frederick County. A BOCC meeting was held on September 27, but it is not too late for you to voice your opinion on the issue. Please share with the commissioners how this program has impacted your family, and how if it went away, or funding was decreased, how this would impact your child's daily life. Please forward all correspondences to the Board of Commissioners (their email and phone numbers can be obtained from <http://www.frederickcountymd.gov/Directory.aspx?did=21>).

#### **FUTURE AND ESTATE PLANNING FOR SPECIAL NEEDS**

You may have missed the September 27<sup>th</sup> meeting at the ARC of Frederick County, but it's not too late to get your estate planning completed or a special needs trust set up for your child. Please contact Mary Anne Williams at the ARC of Frederick County for more information.

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### OUR KIDS CORNER- SAMANTHA "SAMMIE" GIBBONS



Samantha was born April 6, 1998 to Jean Harley. Sammie is in the 8<sup>th</sup> grade at West Frederick Middle School in the Learning for Life Program. She has a sister named Andrea, and Sammie loves to accompany Andrea to her job at the Frederick Athletic Club. She loves to play with her twin 8 year old cousins, Alex and Paige, who moved in with Sammie and her family over the summer. She loves to color, work on her work books, watch movies, swim, and hang out with her many friends in the neighborhood. She loves to play basketball, and she is VERY good at it!! Sammie's mom Jean was one of the original founding members of F.R.I.E.N.D.S. when it re-formed in 1999. Sammie suffers from Hashimoto Thyroiditis and is a Type I Diabetic. Until recently, she had to endure 4 shots of insulin a day until she received her new insulin pump- now she only has to get stuck every 3 days when the site is changed. She still has to have her finger pricked up to 9 times a day to test her blood sugar (luckily she has the BEST health room staff at her school- a BIG thank you to Ms. Patty and Ms. Carol). Sammie has been SO BRAVE through all of this. To anyone that knows Sammie, knows that she is an energetic, fun-loving, social butterfly, and is one of the sweetest girls you'll ever meet. Once you are her friend, you are her friend for life!!!

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Family Resource, Information and Education Network for Down Syndrome (F.R.I.E.N.D.S.) hosted their 10<sup>th</sup> Annual Buddy Walk on September 17, at Baker Park. Many local vendors and organizations came out to show their support; including Rita's Italian Ice, Special Olympics of Maryland, Sol Yoga, Christopher Vigliotti Photography, Mystics fast pitch softball team and the Little Pottery Shop. The key note speaker was Brad Hennefer, a self-advocate and spokesperson for Golf for Life, which is a non-profit organization that helps introduce the game of golf to individuals with Down syndrome ([www.golfforlife.org](http://www.golfforlife.org)).

After the singing of our National Anthem by Kelly Savannah, the Andrew C. Eiker Scholarship in the amount of \$800 was awarded to each of the following students: Kate Adams, Katelin Cep, Jennifer Eiker, Kelly Savannah, and Caleb Zecher. The scholarship is named in memorial of Andrew C. Eiker, a local Thurmont boy with Down syndrome that passed away in 2009; he was just 12 years old.

Walkers donned their golden t-shirts to show their unity for the cause as they embarked on the one mile walk around Baker Park. They were serenaded by the Main Line Gravy Slopers and Mark McKay which helped liven up the walk. Over 600 walkers braved the rainy day and helped to raise over \$36,000. The money will be used for furthering Down syndrome awareness in the local Frederick community through F.R.I.E.N.D.S. out-reach programs. One program is the Techniques for Success, scheduled for November 5 at the Frederick Fairgrounds, which is a free conference for educators, school administrators and counselors that will cover practical strategies for educating local students with Down syndrome.

Top three individual fundraisers were Edge Bio, Michelle Chisholm and Ginger Buckland with a combined fundraising amount of \$7,164. The top team fundraiser was Team Routzahn with \$3633. Awarded most creative team was Aidan's Animals, and most creative tent went to Team Cupcake with notable mentions to Silly Lily's Bubble Guppies and Noah's Posse. The creative tents and teams added to the colorful, fun success of the walk.

After the one mile walk concluded, families were able to enjoy many festivities including a petting zoo, Paul Merklein's caricatures, moon bounces, door prizes and lots of delicious, free food. Artist and self-advocate, Margie Smeller, debuted her art exhibit at this year's walk. She works from home at Art Enables in the District of Columbia and at Scott Key Center in Frederick, MD. ([www.margiesmellerart.com](http://www.margiesmellerart.com)).

"The walk was a great success, even with the rain!" stated Denny Weikert, F.R.I.E.N.D.S. president and a father of a child with Down syndrome. F.R.I.E.N.D.S. would like to thank all who came out to show support for Down syndrome awareness, especially to those that donated their time and resources, including fund-raisers and walk participants. F.R.I.E.N.D.S. is a non-profit organization and all donations are tax deductible. To make a contribution to F.R.I.E.N.D.S. please visit <http://friendsoffredco.org/>

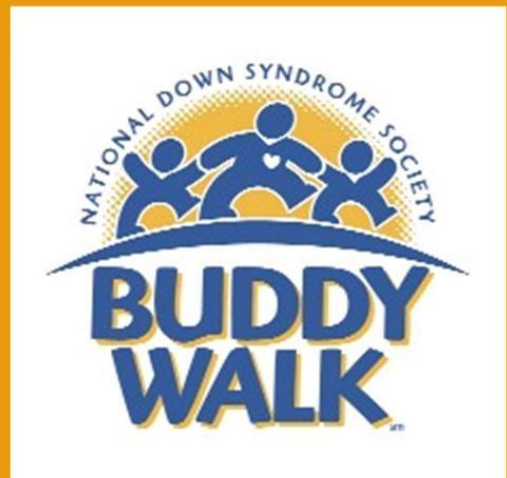
SAVE THE DATE: Next year's Buddy Walk, scheduled for September 15, 2012, Baker Park, Frederick, MD.

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### PHOTOS FROM THE WALK

10<sup>th</sup> ANNUAL



SEPTEMBER 17, 2011



To view more pictures from the walk- visit our website at

<http://friendsoffredco.org/our-kids/9th-buddy-walk-2010/>

or

<https://picasaweb.google.com/FrederickFRIENDS/10thAnnualBuddyWalk#>

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### GRANT OPPORTUNITIES FOR SPECIAL NEEDS (RESPITE) FUNDING

F.R.I.E.N.D.S. grant [www.friendsoffredco.org/](http://www.friendsoffredco.org/)

Maggie's Light [www.maggieslight.org/](http://www.maggieslight.org/)

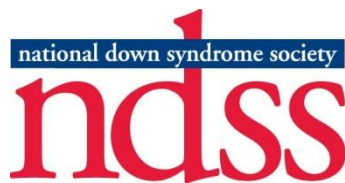
LISS Pen Mar [www.penn-mar.org/liss/providers.htm](http://www.penn-mar.org/liss/providers.htm)

Service Coordination Impact Fund

[www.servicecoordinationinc.org/pdf/SC Fund Grant Application.pdf](http://www.servicecoordinationinc.org/pdf/SC_Fund_Grant_Application.pdf)

YMCA of Frederick County [www.frederickymca.org/](http://www.frederickymca.org/)

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