



Welcome F.R.I.E.N.D.S.

Hope everyone has been enjoying the start of summer. Be sure to stay cool, well hydrated, and properly protected from the sun.

We are excited to bring you our official "first" newsletter- issue No 2. We have some new articles to share, as well as a new organization that some of

you may already be familiar with, Reece's Rainbow.

Please be sure to share this newsletter with friends, families, and co-workers, so that we can reach as many people as possible and advocate for our kids with compassion and social awareness.

HAPPY 4th OF JULY!!!!

Health & Wellness

"Celiac disease is a condition that damages the lining of the small intestine and prevents it from absorbing parts of food that are important for staying healthy. The damage is due to a reaction to eating gluten, which is found in wheat, barley, rye, and possibly oats", (ncbi.nlm.nih.gov, 2011).

"Studies in the 1990s indicated that children with DS are at a higher risk to develop CD than the general population. The reasons for that aren't entirely clear, but since children with DS are at a greater risk from auto-immune diseases, that CD represents another one of these types of diseases. Studies from Europe looking at the percentage of children with DS that have CD have ranged from 7% to 16%. One American study found 4 to 5% of children with Down syndrome living on the East Coast had positive CD, but almost all the subjects were Caucasian, so this group was mostly of European heritage to begin with. Another American study done in the southeastern US found 7% of the children with DS studied had CD," (ds-health.com, 2011).

1% of the US population is reported to have Celiac disease (and a lot of times the disease will go years without a diagnosis because it will mask itself as other auto-immune disorders such as Crohn's disease or IBS). Of the 1% reported to have the disease, 5-10% are people with Down syndrome.

Celiac disease (or gluten allergy) can be treated fairly easily with a diet free of gluten. Gluten products are becoming more and more readily available- and even some restaurant chains are offering gluten free products.

Some symptoms to watch for are: persistent abdominal pain, constipation, diarrhea, vomiting, malaise, fatigue, unexplained weight loss or foul smelling stools or breath. The only way the disease can be properly diagnosed is with a blood test or biopsy of the small intestine.

Social & Political Awareness

Reece's Rainbow is a non-profit organization that is an International Down Syndrome Orphan Ministry, based out of Gaithersburg, MD. They help to find "forever families" for the thousands of children that are orphaned by their parent's because of their disability or due to financial circumstances, world-wide.

Some statistics that are just truly mind-boggling: "In Central and Eastern European countries alone (this would include Ukraine, Kazakhstan, Romania, etc., but NOT Russia), there are more than 1.5 MILLION CHILDREN who have been abandoned by their families for one reason or another and are living in "public care" (that's the nice way to put it). If statistically, 1 out of every 733 live births results in a child with Down syndrome, that means at any given time there are 2,046 children with Down syndrome who need families. THAT'S JUST IN EUROPE!! Some do not survive because of serious medical complications...some do not survive because of lack of medical attention, lack of food, lack of LOVE.

In Russia, there are over 700,000 children waiting for families, meaning at least 955 children with Down syndrome wait, languishing. In ASIA (China, Hong Kong, Korea, India), there are 3,572,000 orphans, with nearly 5000 children with Down syndrome who are unwanted. Many of those children are killed at birth. The "lucky" ones end up in orphanages and foster care situations.

In the United States alone, 137 million people claim to be Christians of some denomination. If only 1% of the Christians in this country adopted just ONE CHILD, 1.37 MILLION CHILDREN from abroad would have loving, Christian families to grow up in. Of those 1.37 million, 1,869 of those children [would] have DOWN SYNDROME ("Staggering Statistics," 2000). One of the many reasons American's don't consider adoption is due to the HUGE financial costs that come from domestic and especially with international adoptions. Reese's Rainbow has designed their organization around these children to provide the most money and resources to adopting families to minimize the financial burden on making such a courageous decision.

One way that F.R.I.E.N.D.S. can help, even if adoption is not a possible option for your family for what-ever the reason(s), we can individually and collectively help sponsor these children so that their "forever families" can rescue them sooner than later.

For more information about Reese's Rainbow, and their fight to bring every Down syndrome orphan to a "forever family", please visit: <http://reecesrainbow.org/>

Reference: Staggering Statistics. (2000). Retrieved June 23, 2011, from <http://reecesrainbow.org/background/staggering-statistics>

Upcoming Activities and Information

July Upcoming Events

Family Social- Sunday, July 10th at 1pm- Kemptown Park Pavilion #1

Over the past year we have welcomed so many wonderful new families. It has been great meeting and getting to know the parents and their special angels. We would like to host a picnic to welcome our newer families and we ask that the older members bring a dish to share. The new families, who have become a part of the group in the last year, just bring yourself and your family. You get to be spoiled today.

So come out and enjoy a fun afternoon with friends and family. This park is well shaded with a creek and playground nearby. Vonda has offered to bring water balloons to help ward off the heat. Please bring fun outdoor activities for the kids such as bean bag tosses, scooters, ride on toys, bubbles, etc.

Address: 3456-B Kemptown Church Road, Monrovia, MD 21770

Be on the lookout for a reminder email in early July. Please email Tracy at tracybarnard@live.com if you have any questions.

Can't wait to see everyone!

Buddy Walk Planning Meeting- July 13th and July 27th at 6:30pm- MUMC

Board Meeting- July 18th at 6:30pm- MUMC

SET UP YOUR FIRST GIVING ACCOUNT NOW FOR UPCOMING BUDDY WALK

Below is our link for all online registrations and fundraising for this year's Buddy Walk. This is our 10th walk and with that we are aiming big and high! We are bringing in more entertainment, more vendors and exhibitors, artists, the petting zoo and more variety in food.

We are aiming for 1000 walkers this year and a fundraising goal of \$75,000.00!

We are also trying out the "Team" approach this year as well. The idea is to form a team, get family and friends to join you in raising funds on your team page and encourage everyone on your team to come the day of the walk and show their support for Down syndrome awareness. Everyone is welcome to create a team... families, businesses, schools...all are possible.

We are looking for as many corporate sponsors as possible, so if you can help us, please contact Denny Weikert.

Remember, 100% of the funds received are invested into our awareness campaigns; F.R.I.E.N.D.S. has no overhead, like some other non-profits. So why wait, use the web address below and select the **"JOIN NOW"** button and get you and your team registered today.

<http://www.firstgiving.com/frederickfriends/friends-10th-annual-buddy-walk>

Board of Directors Update- June 20th Meeting Recap

- Our treasurer has decided to step down as the Treasurer due to personal reasons and the Board discussed options for their replacement. It was decided that Dean Coccia will be the Board Treasurer and we would seek outside resources for our bookkeeper.
- MDAC, our lobbying group for the state legislature, requested additional funds to hold a “brain storming” meeting with all members of the group. This group is a collective body consisting of members from Frederick, Montgomery, Prince Georges, Anne Arundel, and Baltimore counties. This group was the one that spearheaded the UDL effort here in the state and Maryland became the first state in the country to adopt UDL.
- A lot of conversation surrounded the status of the Buddy Walk planning. It was decided to have three moon bounces, popcorn and cotton candy machine this year. Also well have the entire multi-purpose field along with the band shell and gazebo area for our activities. We will have the activities centralized to the field instead of the band shell and use the band shell for a karaoke.
- Brad Hennefer will be our self-advocate this year and we will set up a golf driving range for everyone to enjoy with him.
- It was decided that we will be selling Mums this year at our Buddy Walk and we will use Chloe’s Cause to manage this aspect of the activities.
- The Board has decided to move forward in creating a fund called ipad4rKids to supply i-pads for children in the classrooms...more details to come on this new program
- And finally, F.R.I.E.N.D.S. will be hosting the next techniques for Success Teachers conference with a target date of Nov 5th or 12th here in Frederick County.
- Next Board Meeting will be July 18th @ 6:30pm held at MUMC

Our Kids Corner- Noah Seth Weikert

Noah was born on May 16, 1999 and was a BIG surprise. He is such a blessing to our family. He has 5 sisters who absolutely adore him, and too many friends to mention. He is on the Challenger Baseball team and is known as the "big hitter". He also loves to swim and has been in Special Olympics swimming for the past 2 years and has received 3 gold medals for his hard work! He has the best sense of humor ever and loves playing pranks on his sisters AND his mom and dad! He also loves scary movies and no one can beat him at Play Station! We are so lucky to have Noah in our lives and don't know what we'd do without him!!!



Affiliated Organizations



<http://friendsoffredco.org/>

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