



*A Down Syndrome Advocacy Group
Frederick County, Maryland*

Issue No. 3

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

As summer draws to a close, please remember to set up your First Giving pages- the Buddy Walk will be here before we know it.

Check out the up-coming events page to make sure

you and your family stays connected this month with F.R.I.E.N.D.S. We are also working on getting a brochure created for the Buddy Walk to bring local awareness to our group- and would like some quotes to publish from some of our families. The quotes should reference how FRIENDS has impacted you or your family's life in a positive way. All quotes can be sent to Holly Mohler (holly.mohler@yahoo.com).

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.

Health & Wellness

Hypothyroidism is the most common thyroid issue among Down syndrome children and adults. Some children are born with this autoimmune disease; others can develop thyroid issues at any age (acquired).

"In acquired hypothyroidism, the most common reasons in toddlers and older children with DS is (1) autoimmunity (where the body makes antibodies against its own thyroid) and (2) thyroiditis, where the thyroid tissue becomes replaced with white blood cells and fibrous tissue (Hashimoto thyroiditis)", (The Thyroid and Down Syndrome, 2011).

The symptoms of Hypothyroidism are not easy for parents to pick up on in children with Down syndrome because they mask themselves as standard characteristics of the genetic disorder itself: enlarged tongue, decrease muscle tone, decrease in development or growth, dry skin, etc.

It is very important to talk with your health care professional about testing your child during the following ages: at birth, 6 months, 1 year, and every subsequent year after that.

Retrieved August 1, 2011, from <http://www.ds-health.com/thyroid.htm>

Social & Political Awareness

Many of us are familiar with the atrocities that came out of the Holocaust. Not many people are aware that prior to the Jewish holocaust, the Nazi government had long since been trying to end "life unworthy of life". They first targeted children under the age of 3 that were deemed to have a physical or mental disability- it was called the child "Euthanasia" program.

"In the spring and summer months of 1939, a number of planners--led by Philipp Bouhler, the director of Hitler's private chancellery, and Karl Brandt, Hitler's attending physician--began to organize a secret killing operation targeting disabled children. On August 18, 1939, the Reich Ministry of the Interior circulated a decree compelling all physicians, nurses, and midwives to report newborn infants and children under the age of three who showed signs of severe mental or physical disability. Beginning in October 1939, public health authorities began to encourage parents of children with disabilities to admit their young children to one of a number of specially designated pediatric clinics throughout Germany and Austria. The clinics were in reality children's killing wards where specially recruited medical staff murdered their young charges by lethal overdoses of medication or by starvation.

At first, medical professionals and clinic administrators incorporated only infants and toddlers in the operation, but as the scope of the measure widened, they included juveniles up to 17 years of age. Conservative estimates suggest that at least 5,000 physically and mentally disabled German children perished as a result of the child "euthanasia" program during the war years" (Euthanasia Program, 2011).

"The "euthanasia" program represented in many ways a rehearsal for Nazi Germany's subsequent genocidal policies. The Nazi leadership extended the ideological justification conceived by medical perpetrators for the destruction of the "unfit" to other categories of perceived biological enemies, most notably to Jews and [Roma and Sinti \(Gypsies\)](#)" (Euthanasia Program, 2011).

The killing of the disabled is not isolated to the Nazi's, but rather has been an on-going assault on the handicapped for centuries. Surprisingly, it is still a debatable issue today in the form of abortion- that has been re-ignited by early detection tests in the first trimester of pregnancy. Down syndrome is now one of the most commonly tested for chromosomal abnormalities, and has become a debatable issue of whether or not these tests are comparable program to the Nazi's attempt to persuade parents to "end life unworthy of life". Many suggest that these tests are being used to wipe out Down syndrome from our society in its entirety.

"But Gene Rudd of the Christian Medical & Dental Associations said he was concerned that women are not always fully advised about the risks of prenatal testing, and that screening could be used to try to eliminate babies with Down syndrome. 'What's the goal here? Is it to rid our

society of Down's babies? If that is the goal, I really have to question the civility of that,' Rudd said. 'The overwhelming number of people with Downs will tell you their life is good.' (Stein, 2005).

We need to remember the past, be conscious of the present, and diligent about our children's future and the future of all Down syndrome people. We can make a difference by social awareness campaigns, reaching out to the community and to expectant parents of children with Down syndrome. We need to take the stigma off of this disability, and let everyone in the public know what we already know, that Down syndrome children are not a burden, but a **TRUE** blessing.

Stein, Rob. Down Syndrome Now Detectable in 1st Trimester. Retrieved July 21, 2011, from <http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2005/11/09/AR2005110902079.html>.

Euthanasia Program, Retrieved July 21, 2011, from <http://www.ushmm.org/wlc/en/article.php?ModuleId=10005200>.

Upcoming Activities and Information

August Upcoming Events

❖ **Monthly Group Meeting- Tuesday, August 2nd at MUMC, 6:30pm**

This is a pizza and game fun night for families, please be sure to contact Tracy Barnard if you plan to attend. Buddy Walk posters will also be available for pick up at Tuesday's meeting. We need these distributed in our local stores and public places of business.

❖ **Buddy Walk Planning Meetings: every Wednesday in August, at MUMC, 6:30pm**

❖ **Karaoke Night- Friday, August 12th at Sports Center at the International Community Church of God, 6:30pm**

Karaoke night is just around the bend. This event is put together for Individuals with Disabilities, their family, friends and supporters of all ages by The Frederick Challenger Civitan Club. If you have not been out to the new location, please join in a fun filled night of delicious food, singing, dancing and a good old fashioned good time with really wonderful people. Buffet dinner starts at 6:30pm, 7-11pm Karaoke. Everyone is welcome to bring a dessert.

❖ **DSNMC survey**

This is a survey created by the DSNMC.org; they are requesting our groups help in filling out this adult employment survey. This is required to advocate for funds, training programs, etc. Survey is attached.

❖ **F.R.I.E.N.D.S. 10th Annual Buddy Walk – Saturday, Sept. 17th at Baker Park, 11-4pm**

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.

www.firstgiving.com/frederickfriends/friends-10th-annual-buddy-walk

The Best of Best!

We would like to thank you for advocating for the FRIENDS group and for children and adults with Down syndrome. The F.R.I.E.N.D.S. group is lucky to have you as an advocate! Special recognition and prizes will be given to the following:

The most creative team tent - Your team has worked really hard up to this point at fundraising, recruiting and walking. But the fun isn't over yet! We know that your team is overflowing with spirit and fun, so show it! This is your chance to get creative by coming up with your tent theme and going all out to make your tent a true party. Make your tent stand out above the rest! **A random panel of judges will be visiting each tent the day of the Buddy Walk and will be awarding a large ribbon that afternoon recognizing the Best Team Tent!** Please email Dean at dcoccia12@yahoo.com prior to the walk if you plan on bringing and setting up a team tent.



The most creative team – Show your team spirit and make your team stand out. Be creative, be silly, and just have fun! Let's see who has the most creative team!
Winner receives a \$100 VISA Gift Card

The largest school team – The top school team will lead the 2011 Buddy Walk. What are you waiting for kids.... get out there and spread the word to all your school friends and get your teams formed! Ask Mom & Dad to help.
Winner receives a \$100 VISA Gift Card

The largest team – Get as many family, friends, co-workers, etc. to join your team. The goal is to raise awareness and support inclusion in our community.
Winner receives a \$100 VISA Gift Card

The team with the most money raised – Send an email to all your friends, family, co-workers, and school friends and see how many people are willing to sponsor your winning team.
Winner receives a \$100 VISA Gift Card

The “Top Dog(s)” – The top three fundraisers will receive special recognition and prizes.

1st Place will receive a \$500 Best Buy Gift Card
2nd Place will receive a \$250 Wegman's Gift Card
3rd Place will receive a \$100 VISA Gift Card

All winners will be featured in the 2012 Buddy Walk Brochure and recognized in our October newsletter.

So what are you waiting for? Go ahead and register and get your team formed online at...

www.firstgiving.com/frederickfriends

New Families to F.R.I.E.N.D.S

We have some new families to welcome to the group:

- The Hartman's
- Enrique and Adriana Toro-Torres
- Frances and Rebecca Morgan

Our Kids Corner- Rebecca Taylor Hessami Morgan

Rebecca was born July 26, 1997. Her parents are Frances B. Morgan and Aram Hessami. She has one sister, Sarah, age 24, and one brother Cyrus, age 22. She has a close cousin "sister", Jasmine, age 16. Her grand-mom is Linda R. Morgan (maternal) and her Grand-dad is Irai Hessami (paternal). She attends Charles Town Middle School, and is in the 8th grade. She is involved with the Special Olympics, Allegro School of Dance (ballet, jazz, hip-hop), AYSO soccer, and tennis. She likes meeting new people, traveling, museums, music, trains and airplanes, ice cream, cake, chicken, pizza, French fries, cell phones and swimming. She dislikes loud or sharp noises, bugs and being in extreme heat.

Affiliated Organizations



www.friendsoffredco.org

Newsletter Committee:

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