

Who We Are

In the fall of 1999, two local parents organized the first National Down Syndrome Society affiliated Buddy Walk in northeast Indiana. In the months following the walk, a small group of parents formed the Down Syndrome Association of Northeast Indiana (DSANI) as a non-profit parent support and advocacy organization. DSANI held its inaugural meeting in March 2000 and approximately 40 families joined the organization.

Today, DSANI represents people with Down syndrome and their families in the eleven counties surrounding Fort Wayne, Indiana, provides support and resources to more than 170 member families and professionals, and maintains a database of over 600 supporters.

DSANI is proud to be affiliated with two national Down syndrome organizations. We work collaboratively with these organizations to eliminate stereotypes through education and awareness to achieve positive outcomes for individuals with Down syndrome and their families. Learn more about the national organizations by visiting the web or calling:

National Down Syndrome Society

www.ndss.org
800-221-4602

National Down Syndrome Congress

www.ndscenter.org
800-232-NDSC

Our Mission

The Down Syndrome Association of Northeast Indiana's mission is to enhance the lives of people affected by Down syndrome, advocate on their behalf, provide information and support to families and professionals, and promote acceptance and inclusion of people with Down syndrome in northeast Indiana.

Contact us:

P.O. Box 13611
Fort Wayne, IN 46865
260-471-9964
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“It's not our
disabilities
but our
abilities
that count.”

-Chris Burke



About Down Syndrome

Down syndrome is the most commonly occurring genetic condition. Individuals with Down syndrome have an extra, critical portion of the number 21 chromosome present in all or some of their cells. This additional genetic material alters the course of development and causes the characteristics associated with Down syndrome.

It is estimated that one in every 733 live births will result in a child with Down syndrome, representing approximately 5,000 births per year in the United States. There are more than 400,000 people living with Down syndrome in the United States today.

There is a wide variation in the abilities, physical development and behavior of individuals with Down syndrome. Each individual has his or her own unique personality, capabilities and talents. One should always use "people first" language when referring to someone with Down syndrome. For example, a newborn is a baby with Down syndrome, not a Down's baby.

In adulthood, many people with Down syndrome hold jobs, live independently, enjoy recreational opportunities in their communities and lead fulfilling and productive lives.



Why You Should Be Involved

- "Meeting other parents of children with Down syndrome really made a difference for my wife and me. Before we got involved we felt isolated and like we were on our own. Now we feel like we have an extended family that looks out for us."
- "I enjoy going to the activities hosted by DSANI. It's fun to see kids with Down syndrome build friendships, watch siblings interact, and parents support each other and share resources."
- "Volunteering for DSANI has been very rewarding for my family. We like meeting the kids and adults with Down syndrome and their families and helping them have a good time."
- "I always enjoy volunteering at your events and learn something new every time I am around the families in your group."
- "Participating in the Buddy Walk is an amazing experience. It's a day full of joy, awareness and smiles. Thank you for all you do to promote greater awareness of the many abilities of people with Down syndrome."



Buddy Walk

The Buddy Walk was established in 1995 by the National Down Syndrome Society to celebrate Down Syndrome Awareness Month in October and to promote the acceptance and inclusion of people with Down syndrome in society. In northeast Indiana, the Buddy Walk is usually held the first Saturday in October at Foster Park in Fort Wayne. It is one of more than 275 Buddy Walks held across the United States.



How We Help

- Comprehensive Website – www.dsani.org
- 24-Hour Phone Information Line
- Expectant Parent Packets
- New Parent Packets and Gift Totes
- New Parent Mentors
- New Parent Playgroups
- Seminars
- DSANI Star Newsletter
- Lending Library
- All-Ages and Age-Specific Social Activities
- D.A.D.S. and Mom's Group Activities
- DSANI Week at Camp Red Cedar
- Advocacy on Local and National Issues

resources