

write it down

Friendship Club

Young Adults from 12 -21 yrs.
May 18th - (7:00 - 9:00 p.m.) at Wayne-
dale Baptist Church

June 25-29

Camp Red Cedar

DSANI is once again co-sponsoring with
AWS a week of day camp activities for
individuals with Down syndrome ages 6+
at Camp Red Cedar. Contact Red Cedar
at 637-3608 for more information.

July 16 - 20, 2007

Lose the Training Wheels Bike

Camp will be held here in Fort Wayne
at Turnstone's gymnasium. For more
information, you may visit the web site at
<http://www.losethetrainingwheels.org> or
contact Jenny Bockerstette at JBPhoenix@aol.com.

July 16-20, 2007

Science Central Camp Contact Sci-
ence Central (260)424-2400 x451

October 7, 2007

BUDDY WALK

Self-Advocate Bowling: Crazy Pinz
on Tuesdays from 6:30-7:30 or 8. Two
games, shoes included for \$6.00. Call
Gerry Sternal for more information at
(260) 489-7444.

Playgroups: Infant to Toddler – May 26
at 2:00 p.m. Hosted by Jerry and Stacey
Foust. Infant to Toddler – June 30 at 4:00
p.m. Hosted by Steve and Sue Ehinger.
For more information regarding play-
groups or to RSVP your attendance at a
playgroup, please contact Stacey Foust
at staceyfoust@fwcs.k12.in.us or (260)
485-1673

FREE SWIM!!!!

Every Monday from 5:15 p.m. to 6:15
p.m. beginning **June 11, 2007** Northside
Swimming Pool will offer free swimming
for families of special needs children.
Children must be accompanied by a par-
ent and you need to check in at the office
when you arrive at the pool.

DSANI Website: New DSANI Board
Member Brian Hedrick says "I have re-
cently accepted the responsibility of the
site, and am committed to creating a web
site that everyone will enjoy! If you have
any comments or ideas please send
them to DSANIwebmaster@comcast.net,
they would be greatly appreciated. You
can make a difference!" Check out the
DSANI website at WWW.DSANI.ORG.

lose the training wheels

An exciting opportunity is coming
to northeast Indiana! DSANI and
Turnstone Center for Disabled
Children and Adults are co-hosting
Lose the Training Wheels Bike Camp,
which will be held at Turnstone the
week of July 16-20, 2007.

Benjamin Sutton, a DSANI member
who was 13 at the time, participated
in a Lose the Training Wheels camp
held in Napoleon, OH, last summer.
Benjamin's mom, Amy, shared these
thoughts about the program,

"For both of us, it was a fun
and awesome experience.
It was so motivating for
Benjamin to be successful in
a recreational activity he had
seen the rest of our family
enjoy. It is great that he now
has the opportunity to be a
part of that with us. I will
never forget that moment
when Benjamin first took
off on his own. It was like
watching a bird that was
taking flight for the first time.
I continue to feel moved by
that experience. And it was so
wonderful to be able to share
that week with other families
like our own, sharing that
feeling and encouraging each
other."

This camp offers a rare opportunity
that will benefit not only children
with Down syndrome, but also the
entire disability community. Some of
the disabilities that Lose the Training
Wheels therapists and volunteers
have worked with include Down
syndrome, autism, developmental
delays, mild cerebral palsy, ADHD,
ADD, spina bifida, brain injuries and
others.

Lose the Training Wheels uses
patented technology in specially

adapted bikes to teach children
how to ride conventional two-wheel
bicycles independently. The one-
week program was developed by Dr.
Richard Klein, a retired mechanical
engineering professor from the
University of Illinois and a prominent
researcher in the field of bicycle
physics. It's been featured in a
number of national publications,
including *Bicycling*, *Midwest Living*,
and *People* magazine (August 29,
2005).

The program uses a series of trainer
bikes, which mimic the motion
and balance of conventional bikes,
thereby encouraging a child to
progress in difficulty to a regular
two-wheeler. It is specifically
designed to help children overcome
the fear of riding without training
wheels. The program focuses on the
age group 8 through 18, but there
have been successful exceptions to
this age range. Typically, 70-90% of
the participants master riding a two-
wheeler by the end of this program.

John Herron, another DSANI
member, also participated in last
year's camp in Napoleon. His
mother, Natalie, shared this about
the experience,

"I am thrilled each time I see
John ride! I'm comforted
knowing he accomplished
the skill without all the
bumps, bruises and fears
that typically go along with
learning to ride. It has
been a pleasant
and positive experience.
One that fills John with an
exuberant confidence, and
an experience to last his
lifetime."



For more information about
Lose the Training Wheels, visit
www.losethetrainingwheels.org.

For additional details about
the camp in Fort Wayne,
please visit www.dsani.org or
email Jenny Bockerstette at
jbphoenix@aol.com.

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home alone

Many of us have watched at least some of the Home Alone movies. We've laughed at the antics of McCaulay Culkin's character as he protects himself and his home from bungling burglars. But for parents of special needs children, the decision to leave a child home alone is often confusing and frightening.

The legal aspects of this decision can be confusing. When asked the question, "How old does my child have to be to be left alone in Indiana," the following reply was posted on www.wiki.answers.com.

For children with normal mental capabilities: Ages 7 and under cannot be left alone for any period of time. Children ages 8 through 9 can be left in their home alone for up to 2 hours. Children 10 through 13 can be left alone for up to 12 hours. Children 14 to 17 can be left at home up to 24 hours with adequate adult back-up supervision (an adult willing to take legal responsibility preferably within 5 miles). For children who are mentally disabled, you have to go by their maturity age and not their chronological age.

The website www.ci.madison.si.us/fire/prevention/community contains the following information from a checklist. Before leaving any child home alone, first ask the following questions.

Physical Readiness

Can your child?

1. lock and unlock the doors and windows of your home.
2. perform everyday tasks such as fixing a sandwich or using the phone.

Mental Readiness

Can your child?

1. tell time.
2. understand what stranger and emergency mean.
3. recognize danger and know how to stay safe.
4. solve small problems on his or her own but know when and how to get help.
5. consider how his or her actions affect others.

Social Readiness

Does your child?

1. talk easily to you about what happens at home or school and about his or her feelings.

2. feel confident enough to contact another adult if a problem arises.

Emotional Readiness

Does your child?

1. feel confident and secure when alone
2. seem willing to stay alone
3. know how to handle fear, loneliness and boredom.

Several experienced parents offered these words of wisdom. Boredom can become an issue if a child is left alone for too long. Two shared instances where teenagers who had never shown any interest in driving suddenly decided to move the car out of the driveway when their parents weren't home. They recommend never leaving keys lying around to offer a temptation.

Several parents described a process of first leaving their child alone inside while they would do outside activities such as gardening or yard work. Following success at this level, a parent might run a short errand, gradually building up the time that they were left alone. Having trustworthy neighbors often helps give parents a secure feeling. One mother said she always checks to make sure a neighbor is available during specific times that her child stays home alone.

Most parents agree that cell phones make it much easier to communicate with their children. Some popular models allow pre-programming important telephone numbers in speed dial, requiring the touch of just one button. It's also possible to limit phone calls from a cell phone, avoiding nasty surprises when the cell phone bill arrives.

Leaving any child home alone is something everything parent needs to evaluate on an individual basis. Hopefully, these guidelines may help with this important decision.

~Kathy Meeks

league for the blind and disabled – youth services

Summer camp season is quickly approaching and one resource for families planning a summer camp for their children with special needs is the League for the Blind and Disabled. The mission of "the League" is to provide and promote opportunities that empower people with disabilities to achieve their potential. The League's vision is the full inclusion of people with disabilities in all aspects of community life.

Kevin Hughes serves as the Youth Services Coordinator. According to Kevin, this year-round service to children, youth and their family members was established in 1995 as an expansion of the League's Summer Youth Program. It emphasizes integrating children and youth with severe disabilities into existing age appropriate, community based summer programs with individualized support from League staff members. Camps that children with special needs can attend with the League's assistance are Franke Park Day Camp, Camp Potawotami (YMCA Day Camp), Camp Crosley, FAME Arts, Farmin Fun Day Camp, MASTER Camp, McCracken Basketball Camp, Science Central, Girl Scouts, Southwest YMCA & IPFW Community Arts Academy. The Youth Services program also includes advocacy training and assistance, parent support services, youth peer support opportunities, and adult/youth mentoring services

If you would like more information about the Youth Services Program,

contact Kevin Hughes at kevinhughesyouth@yahoo.com or Carmen Terrell, a part-time Youth Services Coordinator

(hours: Monday-Thursday 8 a.m.-3 p.m.).

Kevin and Carmen can be reached at (260) 441-0551 or (800) 889-3443.

red cedar day camp



For the third year, DSANI is sponsoring a one-week day camp at AWS' Camp Red Cedar. This Camp is specifically designed for individuals with Down syndrome, ages 6 and up and is scheduled for the week of June 25 – 29, 2007. Camp activities include swimming, fishing, hiking, horseback riding, boating, camp songs, arts & crafts, and much more. Most importantly, all activities are done in a safe and friendly environment since all counselors will be specially trained and low camper to staff ratios will be maintained. Cost is \$325 and DSANI will again offer scholarships of \$150 to member families. Minimum age to participate is 6 years old. Contact Camp Red Cedar today to reserve a space!

infant – kindergarten playgroups

Our first playgroup met in the Spring of 2006 with six families and now, a year later, we have over twenty families! As a result of this growth, we decided to break the playgroup into two age groups, so new families were not overwhelmed. We have an infant-toddler playgroup and an infant-kindergarten playgroup.

The infant-toddler group is for new families. It is nice to be welcomed into a group where everyone is experiencing similar issues. We help each other each step of the way and share ideas for caring for our little ones.

The infant-kindergarten group is inspiring, especially seeing the older children and all that they have accomplished. The adults and children learn from each other.

The goals for our group are to develop relationships between families and children, and for the children to establish friendships as they grow. The playgroups are for the whole family. It is wonderful having time for fathers to talk to each other. Mothers share ideas and siblings play together.

We meet each month at a different person's house for food, drink, and

fun.

We look forward to our monthly playgroups. It has been a great year watching the children and families grow together. One of the many wonderful rewards we have

found in having a child with Down syndrome includes the wonderful "family" we have found with each other.

Playgroup dates are published in each newsletter. Please contact Stacey Foust at 485-1673 or stacey.foust@fwcs.k12.in.us to join or for more information.

~Stacey Foust



buddy walk

Hopefully you have marked Saturday October 6, 2007 on your calendar for the Annual Buddy Walk.

The Buddy Walk is our only fundraiser that helps support all of the DSANI programs and activities each year. DSANI was able to present the National Down Syndrome Society a check at our annual meeting for \$15,000.

If you would like to help make this years Buddy Walk another great success, please consider joining our planning committee. There is a meeting on May 16, 2007 at 6:30 p.m. We will be meeting at Spoons Bistro, 6732 West Jefferson Boulevard (connected to Mitchells Bookstore). We will also need volunteers to work at the Buddy Walk. Anyone interested in volunteering for the 2007 Buddy Walk, please email dsani4u@aol.com or contact Jennifer Mihuc at misslydia@aol.com. Jennifer can also be reached at (260) 312-1158



sunshine baskets new-kids activity

DSANI has started a Kids Activity Group. This is for individuals with Down syndrome who are 6-11 yrs. old and their families. Marsha Scheitlin is the Coordinator of the group and they will be meeting on a quarterly basis. Their first activity is on May 12 from 1:00 – 3:00 p.m. at Kids Crossing Playground in Lawton Park, Fort Wayne, weather permitting. They will start on the playground and possibly move on to kickball or other structured play. Please call Marsha Scheitlin at (260) 627-5634 for more information. Snacks and drinks will be provided.

Is your child with Down syndrome facing surgery or other hospitalization? Please let DSANI know so we can deliver a Sunshine Basket of goods to your home or hospital room. Baskets include items to make the hospital stay and recovery easier on both parents and child.

Contact us at dsani4u@aol.com or (260) 471-9964



Summer Science Sampler – Join us this week as we explore everything from astronauts to zoologists.

You're sure to find a topic that satisfies your budding scientist during this camp. Camp this week has been designed especially for students with special needs. There is a low camper to counselor ratio with a maximum 20 campers. For more information, contact Science Central at (260) 424-2400 x451 or visit our website at www.sciencecentral.org.

Ages: 6-12

July 16-20

Time: 10 a.m. to 3 p.m.

Lunch: Bring your own lunch each day

Cost \$250/\$225 if you are a Science Central Member

science central day camp