



Down Syndrome Association of Northeast Indiana
1413 West Coliseum Blvd.
Fort Wayne, IN 46808

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September 2006

"Afraid to Look Down" Coming to Fort Wayne

The Down Syndrome Association of Northeast Indiana is pleased to announce that the acclaimed one-man play "Afraid to Look Down" will be performed at IPFW on Saturday October 28, 2006. Told with unflinching honesty and humor, Afraid to Look Down is a play that explores the journey actor/playwright Cullen Douglas took in becoming a first-time father to his oldest son Gabriel – born with Down syndrome.

Except for a single chair the stage is bare, as Cullen takes the audience on the roller coaster that was to be the first year of life with Gabriel. Personal moments from that year are revealed sometimes full of intense laughter and at other times, quiet sadness.

"Everything was going along exactly as we had planned. It was a typical pregnancy. Despite the fact that I was bursting with fears and anxieties about becoming a father, I felt prepared. I had read all the books, didn't miss a single Lamaze class, I was even practicing my Kegals Exercises. I was ready or so I thought.

The bottom dropped out the day Gabriel was born. What were we supposed to do? I didn't know how to be a father to a child with a disability. Slowly however, through some pretty extraordinary - as well as life's everyday mundane events, we began to move forward. I fell in love with my son.

I began writing what would become Afraid to Look Down back in 1997.

Gabriel had just turned a year old - yet it felt like we had lived a lifetime in that year. I was searching for a way to channel all of the emotions and feelings I experienced on a daily basis. The play that began to emerge however was just awful, a lot of - "woe is me, I hate my life, your life is so much easier than mine" Thankfully I came to my senses and realized that no one would sit through such drivel. So I walked away from the piece. When I returned I was resolved to write only the truth, to expose myself warts and all, and most importantly to keep my sense of humor.



I tried to be very careful about tone as the play began to take shape through its various workshops and staged readings under the direction of Patricia Crotty. I didn't want the play to become a sugary triumph of the human spirit narrative - it's simply the story of how I learned to get out of my own way to let Gabriel teach me how to be his father."

Please plan to attend what no doubt will be an extraordinary experience. Admission is FREE but seating is limited to just 150 people – reserve your space today by emailing dsani4u@aol.com or by calling the DSANI office at 260-471-9964. Curtain is at 8 PM and the production will be held in the IPFW, Studio Theatre.

mark your calendar

Play Groups

Play Groups get together for fun and friendship! Join us for the following (contact Stacey for dates and directions): **September** at Jason and Jennifer Greenman's house in New Haven for infants only. RSVP to: Stacey Foust by calling 485-1673. **November** playgroup is at Jennifer Mihuc's house in Fort Wayne for infant-6 year olds. In 2007, we have the following planned: **January** will be a baby playgroup. **February** we are meeting at "It's Playtime" off of Coldwater Road in Fort Wayne for infant-10 year olds. Anyone interested in joining our playgroup can call or email Stacey Foust at (260) 485-1673 or stacey.foust@fwcs.k12.in.us. Any other ideas feel free to share. Anyone interested in joining our playgroup can call or email Stacey Foust at (260) 485-1673 or stacey.foust@fwcs.k12.in.us. Any other ideas feel free to share.

**Tuesday, September 19, 2006
Tom van Meter, parent/advocate of "Forte"**

Tom is a parent who decided to effect the life his son and their family wanted for him by incorporating into a company that drives his son's support decisions and housing. He will share with us about this path his family took and how his son now lives in his own house with support people he has chosen, funded through the government support system. Come meet Tom, hear his story and learn more about options for our kids' adult lives. We will also have a brief lesson in how to read ISP's and PCP's. Don't miss this informative meeting. At 7pm at the Nuffer's home- 8304 Riveroak Dr. (Northpointe Woods addition), Ft. Wayne. Call Pat (483-1241) or Barb (749-5867) or email pnuffer@comcast.net.

**October 7, 2006
DSANI Buddy Walk**

10am at Foster Park, Old Mill Road. Registration at 9:30 am, walk begins at 10 am. Call DSANI at 471-9964

**October 22, 2006 (date change)
Halloween Bowling Party**

Watch for more details soon on this annual fun event

**Saturday, October 28, 2006
"Afraid to Look Down" IPFW**

Told with unflinching honesty and humor, "Afraid to Look Down" is a play that explores the journey actor/playwright Cullen Douglas took in becoming a first-time father to his oldest son Gabriel- born with Down syndrome. www.afraidtolookdown.com.

**Wednesday, November 22, 2006
Auburn Moose Lodge Fundraiser**

3rd annual event to benefit DSANI. Contact DSANI at 471-9964.

**December 3, 2006 (date change)
DSANI Holiday Party**

Join us for the annual DSANI Holiday Party complete with a visit from Santa.

DSANI
DOWN SYNDROME ASSOCIATION OF NORTHEAST INDIANA
1413 Coliseum Blvd Fort Wayne, IN 46806
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"The Down Syndrome Association of Northeast Indiana exists as an advocacy organization to enhance the lives of individuals with Down syndrome, provide information and support to families and professionals, and promote awareness and acceptance of individuals with Down syndrome within our community."

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DSANI is an affiliate organization of the National Down Syndrome Society (NDSS) and the National Down Syndrome Congress (NDSC).

national down syndrome
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Buddy Walk

Hope to see all of you on Saturday, October 7 at Foster Park for the Buddy Walk. We have LOTS of exciting things in store this year! Registration starts at 9:30 AM and the walk will step-off at 10:30 AM. If you have not registered yet, you can register in advance at:

<http://join.buddywalk.org/dsani>. By now you have received your Buddy Walk registration brochure, if you need more let us know by calling 260-471-9964 or emailing dsani4u@aol.com. Remember, Buddy Walk is our only major fundraiser each year but it is so much more than a fundraiser – it is a fun time with family and friends! See you there!!



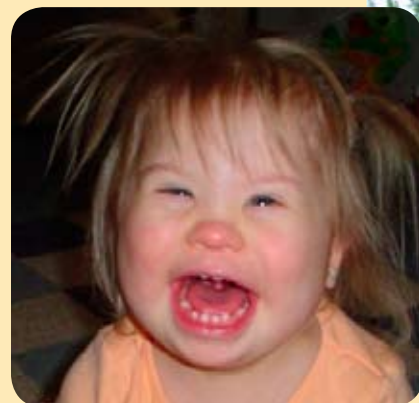
"Celebrities" in our midst!

DSANI is proud to announce that four members had their photo selected to be a part of the 2006 NDSS Times Square video. This photo montage will be played in Times Square prior to the New York City Buddy Walk on Sunday, September 17. Congratulations to DSANI members – Josh O'Neill, Sydney Pequignot, Reid Pickard and Griffin Tutwiler. Join us on Saturday, October 7 for the DSANI Buddy Walk to see these smiling faces along with all the other great members of DSANI.

Griffin Tutwiler



Josh O'Neill



Sydney Pequignot



Reid Pickard

National Council on Disability Youth Advisory Committee Seeks Four Members

The following announcement was received from the National Council on Disability. Self-advocates should consider applying for this wonderful opportunity.

The Youth Advisory Committee (YAC) for the National Council on Disability (NCD) announces the opening of a nationwide search for four new members. One of the positions is reserved specifically for high school students. NCD is an independent federal agency, headed by 15 Council Members appointed by the President and confirmed by the Senate. The collective responsibility of NCD is to make recommendations to the President and Congress on issues affecting all Americans with disabilities. NCD's overall purpose is to promote policies, programs, practices, and procedures that guarantee equal opportunity for all individuals with disabilities, regardless of the nature or severity of the disability; and to support the empowerment of individuals with disabilities to achieve economic self-sufficiency, independent living, and inclusion and integration into all aspects of society.

The YAC, a 12 member advisory committee with applicant ages from 16-25 encourages youth across disability sectors, diverse racial and ethnic groups, and under-represented areas of the country to apply. Application documents must be received through E-mail by September 14, 2006 at 5:00 PM Eastern Daylight Time.

The application consists of

- your resume,
- your cover letter pointing out what makes you the best candidate for a position of national level leadership as a representative of youth with disabilities, and
- one letter of recommendation from an adult who is familiar with your leadership and disability experiences and potential. A recommendation by someone who is not your parent/guardian is requested.

A brief daytime telephone interview with you may also be needed for a selected list of finalists among the top applicants.

Please send only electronic documents (use e-mail only) to be considered as a YAC applicant during this recruitment period. E-mail your resume, your cover letter, and one letter of recommendation to: YOUTH@ncd.gov

Attn: Dr. Gerrie Hawkins
Designated Federal Official
Youth Advisory Committee
National Council on Disability
Youth@ncd.gov

Please do not send your application to any other address, if you wish it reviewed for this recruitment period.

The YAC ensures that NCD's policy recommendations and activities give consideration to the perspectives of young people with disabilities. Meetings are planned and conducted through teleconference arrangements under NCD's budget. If a face-

to-face meeting occurs travel and lodging are assumed by the agency for active members of the committee, in accordance with federal guidelines.

To read more about the YAC, feel free to check out the NCD website at: <http://www.ncd.gov>.

If you have questions, please contact youth leaders Gina Semenza (YAC Chair outgoing) or Stephanie Orlando (YAC incoming Chair) at YOUTH@ncd.gov

We look forward to receiving your application documents at: YOUTH@ncd.gov . . . by September 14, 2006 at 5:00 PM Eastern Daylight Time.

Moms of Older Kids Network

We have planned another informative meeting for parents of older kids with disabilities. Note: this meeting is open to DADS too!

Come join other parents to learn more about navigating this world of adult services and options for creating the life you child and you want.

Memorials

Jerome Henry, Jr
in memory of
Janice Welch