



Fiscal 2003 Annual Report

DSANI's Mission

"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."

The Down Syndrome Association of Northeast Indiana (DSANI) was formed in March of 2000

Programs

DSANI sponsored several family events in 2003. As always, the annual holiday party, full of fun, games, and clowns, was the most attended program of the year. Over 100 DSANI member families enjoyed the trip to see Santa Claus, and each of their children received a gift. Well over 400 people attended the programs offered in 2003. Several new programs were introduced in the past year, including the Down Syndrome Awareness Reception, Dad's Night Out, and the IEP Parent Conference. This conference was the first of its kind in the Fort Wayne area, where parents of special needs children could meet to discuss and share information about their experiences with the IEP process in their school systems. Keynote speakers for the conference included Jackie Gruesbeck, Special Education Director, Smith-Green West Allen Special Education Co-op and Connie DeLong, Special Education Director, East Allen County Schools. About 50 parents attended the conference.

Buddy Walk

Although there was talk of rain for September 27, 2003, we had another spectacular, sunny fall day to enjoy the Buddy Walk. It has been great to see the Buddy Walk grow from the first walk in 1999, which brought together about 100 people on a cold, rainy day to the record attendance of approximately 575 walkers this year. We also have had amazing growth in the amount raised since the beginning. The first walk had contributions of around \$6,000. This year an astounding \$57,000 was raised, well over our goal of \$40,000. The Buddy Walk provides the large majority of the income DSANI receives. We contribute 30% of the money raised at the Buddy Walk to the National Down Syndrome Society (NDSS). The remainder funds our operating budget for the programs and services that we provide. The City of Fort Wayne Mayor Graham Richard once again led as Grand Marshall. Mayor Richard has attended every Buddy Walk since its inception.

Mark your calendar now for the 6th Annual Buddy Walk
Saturday, September 25th 2004



Library

The DSANI library continues to grow, with well over 100 books and tapes available to our members. The past year, DSANI acquired several new resources, which are available to parents and for use with local school systems. They include Down Syndrome: Issues and Information, which is a comprehensive guide for children with Down syndrome 0-16 years, and An Introduction to Numicon, which provides a promising new approach to teaching math concepts to children with Down syndrome. As always, we will strive to keep abreast of the most current information available concerning Down syndrome. The library catalog is available online at www.dsani.org under the library link.

The Books-to-Schools program is an outgrowth of DSANI's mission to support our member's children in the public school systems, by providing better information on learning. At the DSANI sponsored 2004 IEP Parent Conference, DSANI donated seven books on educating children with Down syndrome to all elementary schools within East Allen Community Schools and the Smith-Green West Allen Special Education Co-op.

Outreach

We continue to support the 18 hospitals in Allen and surrounding counties. We provided 28 New Parent Packets and 2 gift bags. Several families contacted us to either join DSANI or to obtain information relating to their newborn and available services. We were also able to provide New Parent Packets to a nurse who is in charge of a respite ministry at her church. She trains volunteers and other nurses in caring for children with special needs. Outreach continues to be our most successful method of reaching parents of newborns with Down syndrome.



Office Administration

The Office Administration Team was created following the Board's Strategic Planning Meetings last year and incorporates the responsibilities of what was originally called the Member Services Team and also adds maintenance of the DSANI office. The DSANI Office Administration Team oversees quarterly newsletters, membership development, the Membership Directory, maintaining the mailing list, event mailings, coordinating volunteers and completing tasks in the DSANI office.

In 2003, the Office Administrative Team:

Produced four quarterly newsletters. Jen and Randy Pickard, with Jen serving as chief writer/editor/organizer and Randy as graphic layout artist, publish the DSANI Star. The DSANI Star is an excellent newsletter, highlighting group events, and providing informational and educational articles to our members and interested service providers. The DSANI STAR is mailed quarterly to about 500 members and non-members.

Delivered 6 Sunshine Baskets. When an individual with Down syndrome is admitted to the hospital for illness, injury or surgery, Ken and Sharon Burkholder (doting Grandparents to Griffin Tutwiler) deliver a basket of goodies (lotion, note cards, stationary/stamps, magazines, phonecards, toys, snacks) to help with the extended stay.

Updated and distributed the Annual Membership Directory, highlighting our members with Down syndrome and their ages. Maintained office hours and volunteer staff at the DSANI office at 1530 Progress Road, Fort Wayne, IN 46808.

DSANI Star Awards

Each year DSANI honors, with a DSANI Star Award, individuals or corporations whose achievements or contributions further the mission of DSANI and its members. This year there are five DSANI Star Award honorees.

Holly Eykholt of AWS is a job coach, case manager and friend-most of all she is a tireless advocate for person centered services. Meaning she looks first to her client's needs, desires, abilities and then goes after what it takes to meet those needs. She is tireless in her optimistic outlook toward the full validity of people with disabilities to meaningfully participate in the community. And last of all, she is a friend to her clients and she regularly goes beyond the call as a job coach, trainer and case manager.

Sheryl Sternal is an outspoken young woman who clearly and often advocates for herself! She is an example of a very active young adult. Besides working, she is involved in activities in the community for people with disabilities such as Jesters, Friendship Bible Class, and the Challenger bowling. She has served on our board for the 2003 DSANI conference and the DSANI self advocates group. She takes public transportation to and from work each day. Sheryl is a model for many of our pre-teen and teenagers to stay active, join in and keep on learning after school.

George Glick and the Challenger baseball program are part of District 10 Little League, which is a division of National Little League. In 1999, George Glick and the volunteers from the Challenger baseball program brought this program to northeast Indiana. This meant that teenagers and young adults with Down syndrome and other disabilities could play on a baseball team, just as their peers were doing. George and the volunteers who give of their time provide great opportunities for young people with Down syndrome and other disabilities and contribute so much to the quality of their lives.

Steve Williams, an attorney with the local firm Shambaugh, Kast, Beck, and Williams, was instrumental in helping DSANI organize five years ago. He guided the original steering committee through the steps of incorporating, helping develop the organizational By-laws and Articles of Incorporation, and helping to file for nonprofit status. Since DSANI's incorporation, Steve and his sons Nate and Ben (also lawyers) have offered their legal expertise to DSANI members on many occasions. Their insights, especially helpful to local families in the areas of estate planning and trusts, have been given free of charge. Steve and his wife Sharon, who are Reid Pickard's grandparents, are also annual supporters of Buddy Walk and other DSANI events.

Edy's Grand Ice Cream has provided consistent constant support of DSANI through the Buddy Walk. Edy's has supplied ice cream treats for dessert at every Buddy Walk. Not only that, but Mike Stewart has taken time to bring the truck and "bunker" to our walk, sometimes on his own time. These efforts embody what support of our organization means.





Financial Statement

INCOME	Buddy Walk	\$48,111
	Regional Conference	\$20,494
	Other	\$ 4,971
TOTAL INCOME		\$73,576
Operating Expenses		\$23,980
NDSS Contribution		\$24,905
Conference Expenses		\$29,680
TOTAL EXPENSES		\$78,565
SURPLUS		(\$4,990)
12/31/03 CASH BALANCE		\$85,586

DSANI is a 501 (C) (3) non profit organization as determined by the Internal Revenue Service

DSANI 2003 Board of Directors

President	Joe Bockerstette
Past President	Deb Gavette
Vice President	Brenda Amburgey
Secretary	Marsha Scheitlin
Treasurer	Theresa Bickel
Senior Advisors	Tom/Rita O'Neill
Newsletter	Jen/Randy Pickard
Programs	Sherrie Floyd/Amy Lipnicky
Outreach	Chriss Miller
Administrative	Marilyn Miller
Buddy Walk	Deb Gavette
Public Relations	Julie Tutwiler
Self Advocate Coordinator	Pat Nuffer
School System Liaison	Dick Hamman

2003 Regional Conference on Down Syndrome

On March 15, 2003, DSANI and the National Down Syndrome Society co-sponsored the 2003 Regional Conference on Down Syndrome. Approximately 650 families, professionals, speakers, exhibitors and volunteers participated, including 31 teens and adults with Down syndrome, who were enrolled in the all-day Self-Advocate Program. An event like this could not have been possible without the support of our community. In addition to seven DSANI members on the conference steering committee, Jackie Gruesbeck, Director of Special Education for the Smith-Green West Allen Special Education Co-op, and Bill Swiss, President of AWS and Lynne Gilmore, Vice President of Marketing and Development of AWS, were valuable committee members. Our community also supported us financially with over \$29,000 in grants and donations to defray costs associated with the conference.

