

Down Syndrome Digest

October 2008 Edition

(This newsletter version does not contain graphics contained in the original pdf version.)

Pictures are not included in this version with each article.)

RRVDSS Goes Hi-Tech!

TECHNOLOGY IS HELPING EDUCATIONAL PROFESSIONALS HELP KIDS WHO LEARN DIFFERENTLY—AND RRVDSS IS EXCITED TO BE A PART OF IT.

The Red River Valley Down Syndrome Society's program Play 2 Learn was recently the recipient of a generous gift from Denver Pyle's Children's Charities in the form of a technology grant. This gift entails the purchase of several items aimed at improving the results with children who are visual learners. It includes an interactive whiteboard, a document camera, digital projector, and new computers as well as software. The goal is to transfer the successes seen in other classrooms into the Play 2 Learn program. The equipment should be in the classrooms before the October class date.

The Play 2 Learn program is in its 2nd term (first class day was September 27th) and is now accepting children with ANY developmental delay rather than just children with Down syndrome. Classes are held one Saturday each month with the option of an additional Thursday evening class for specific emphasis on various subjects of the students. Play 2 Learn does not charge families for the classes, but ask rather that they make a commitment to follow-through with the curriculum and techniques at home during the month.

The funds for the charity are raised locally each through Uncle Jesse's Big Bass Classic. First held in 1988, the Uncle Jesse's Big Mouth Big Bass Classic, has become an annual event each spring for Paris and Lamar County. The tournament is held at Pat Mayse Lake and attracts 350-400 anglers along with hundreds of spectators. Denver "Uncle Jesse" Pyle of Dukes of Hazzard fame, had only made one request...that all net proceeds from the tournament go directly to benefit children of the county with special needs. If you meet a board member of the charity, please thank them for their gift and assure them it is much needed and appreciated.

Fall Workshop Series: Sibling Issues

Ever wonder what your other children WITHOUT Down syndrome are thinking? Being a sibling of a child with a disability is no easy task. Using the research (and personal experiences) of Harvard researcher Brian Skotko, RRVDSS member, mother of two, and educator Shana Carter will present on this very important topic. No matter what ages your children are, this workshop will cover it. Go online today or call to register for this FREE workshop sponsored by RRVDSS.

When: Saturday, October 25, 2008 10 am

Where: RRVDSO Office, 935 S. Collegiate—Village

Shopping Center, Paris, TX

Cost: FREE, but registration is requested

How do I register? Online at www.redriverdss.org/events or by phone at (903) 783-1922

Is there childcare? Yes, but you must register ONE WEEK PRIOR to workshop with children's information!

RRVDSS Member Was Bright Light in NY's Times Square

NEW YORK, NY — Joel Tharpe of Blossom, Texas, appeared in lights on Broadway on Sunday, September 28 as part of the National Down Syndrome Society's video production to demonstrate that people with Down syndrome can be successfully included in community activities, education and employment.

The photo of Joel (which is not pictured in this article) was selected from 2,500 entries in the NDSS nationwide call for photos. Approximately 200 photographs will appear in a video production to be shown on the larger-than-life plasma screen, located in the heart of Times Square.

The video production, coordinated by NDSS, illustrates children, teens and adults with Down syndrome working, playing and learning with friends and family.

The Times Square video production kicks off National Down Syndrome Awareness Month, which includes the 2008 Buddy Walk™. This year, Walks will be held in more than 275 cities across the country, as well as many international walks. John C. McGinley, who plays Dr. Perry Cox in the hit show "Scrubs," is the 2008 National Buddy Walk™ Spokesman. Mr. McGinley is both an accomplished actor and the proud father of Max, his ten-year-old son who has Down syndrome. The New York City Buddy Walk™ will be led by Mr. McGinley and NDSS Goodwill Ambassador Chris Burke, star of the long-running series, "Life Goes On." For information about National Down Syndrome Awareness Month or the NDSS Buddy Walk™, visit www.NDSS.org or call 800-221-4602.

(Joel is the 2nd RRVDSO member to appear in the video...Regan Swindle was chosen in 2006.)

EEOC Issues Guide for Hiring, Promoting Disabled Employees

By Brittany R. Ballenstedt bballenstedt@govexec.com August 27, 2008

The Equal Employment Opportunity Commission on Tuesday published a guide to help agencies identify opportunities to hire and promote individuals with disabilities.

The [online guide](http://www.eeoc.gov:80/federal/qanda-employment-with-disabilities.html), <http://www.eeoc.gov:80/federal/qanda-employment-with-disabilities.html>, responds to frequently asked questions about hiring flexibilities and legal requirements.

"The EEOC is doing everything it can to provide agencies with useful guidance on how to be the nation's model employer, providing equal opportunity to all Americans, including those with disabilities," said Naomi Earp, the commission's chairwoman.

The publication highlights special regulations that allow federal agencies to hire qualified individuals with severe

disabilities without going through the usual competitive process.

The guide also outlines requirements for providing disabled job applicants and employees reasonable accommodations, and discusses how to handle accommodation issues when entering into relationships with other agencies or contractors. In addition, the publication details the types of questions agencies can ask about an applicant's or employee's disability. And federal agencies can use it to determine how their obligations under the 1973 Rehabilitation Act relate to responsibilities under other federal laws.

The percentage of federal employees with targeted disabilities, which are severe physical or mental disabilities that historically have resulted in barriers to employment, has declined each year since reaching a peak of 1.24 percent in fiscal years 1993 and 1994. In fiscal 2007 it dropped to a 20-year low of 0.92 percent. EEOC Commissioner Christine Griffin is leading an initiative to raise the portion of federal employees with disabilities to 2 percent by 2010.

"Even though the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 has long required federal agencies to engage in affirmative action to hire and advance individuals with disabilities, the federal government has failed to meet this challenge," Griffin said. "This question-and-answer guide will help agencies make concrete progress."

Free Job Postings for National Disability Month

In 2007, Network IP launched JobEnable.com, an online bank that assists individuals with disabilities identify employment opportunities as a way of supporting Matt Lawrence, a Network IP employee who developed a progressive neurological disorder. While candidates with disabilities can post resumes and search the database for job openings free of charge, employers are usually charged a fee to post jobs and search the resume database for qualified job applicants that have a disability. However, in October, commemoration of National Disability Employment Awareness Month, JobEnable.com is allowing employers to post jobs for free. To take advantage of this opportunity, you can visit JobEnable.com and post a job using the promo code "HIRE" at checkout.

Full Story: PR Web, JobEnable.com Offers Free Job Postings to Commemorate National Disability Employment Month, September 11, 2008, available at <http://www.prweb.com/releases/2008/9/prweb1318644.htm>

_ The Disability Law & Policy e-Newsletter is the collaborative product of Editor-in-Chief David W. Klein, Ph.D., Executive Editor William N. Myhill, M.Ed., J.D., Managing Editor Deepti Samant, M.S. (Rehab), M.S. (ECE); and Associate Editors Lauren Chanatry, B.A.; Janelle Frias, B.A., Carly Pavlick, and Amanda Bernasconi.

DS COMMUNITY CELEBRATES AN

IMPORTANT VICTORY!!!

New York, NY (September 26, 2008). After three years of advocacy, the U.S. Senate and the U.S. House of Representatives passed S. 1810, the Prenatally and Postnatally Diagnosis Conditions Awareness Act, during this last week before Congress adjourns. The legislation has been an extremely high priority for the National Down Syndrome Society (NDSS) and the National Down Syndrome Congress (NDSC). These organizations and individuals with Down syndrome and their families across the country are convinced there is a need for physicians and other health professionals to provide parents who receive a prenatal or postnatal diagnosis with updated, evidenced-based information about Down syndrome. U.S. Senators Edward Kennedy (D-MA) and Sam Brownback (R-KS), original co-sponsors of the bill, came together to pass S. 1810. The bill passed the Senate by unanimous consent on September 23rd and passed the House by a voice vote on September 25th.

The Prenatally and Postnatally Diagnosed Conditions Awareness Act ensures that pregnant women receiving a positive prenatal test result and parents receiving a postnatal diagnosis will be more likely to receive up-to-date, scientific information about life expectancy, clinical course, intellectual and functional development, and prenatal and postnatal treatment options. It offers referrals to support services such as hotlines, Web sites, information clearinghouses, adoption registries, and parent support networks and programs specific to Down syndrome and other prenatally diagnosed conditions. The information that is all too often being provided in these situations is out-dated and inaccurate. The treatment options, functional development, opportunities and accomplishments of individuals with Down syndrome have improved dramatically over the years, yet decades old stereotypes still persist. It is critically important for healthcare professionals, families and society to update their knowledge and their perceptions about individuals with Down syndrome.

NDSS, NDSC and affiliate groups across the country, have worked for almost three years to bring the bill to passage. J. David Hoppe, NDSS Governmental Affairs Committee Chair, worked tirelessly with Members of Congress to ensure the bill would be considered despite competing time demands in Congress. "With one small eight-page statute we have the power to brighten the future for people with Down syndrome and their families, by breaking stereotypes and dispelling myths", states Hoppe.

NDSC and NDSS appreciate the hard work of the Members of Congress who championed the bill in the Senate and the House of Representatives-Senators Edward Kennedy and Sam Brownback, Congressmen James Sensenbrenner and Tim Ryan.

Other members of Congress who provided invaluable assistance and support- Senator Harry Reid, Speaker Nancy Pelosi, Majority Leader Steny Hoyer, Senator Mitch McConnell, Congressman James Clyburn, Minority Leader John Boehner, Congressman Roy Blunt, Congressman John Dingell, Congressman Joe Barton, Senator Jon Kyl, Congressman Pete Sessions and Congresswoman Cathy McMorris Rodgers.

NDSS and NDSC would like to thank the members of the Trisomy 18 Foundation and their leadership who were diligent and stalwart supporters in the effort to pass the bill.

NDSC and NDSS would also like to thank their affiliates and the thousands of individuals with Down syndrome, parents, families and friends who have worked tirelessly during the three-year effort to pass the legislation.

About NDSS

The National Down Syndrome Society is a nonprofit organization with more than 250 affiliates nationwide representing the more than 400,000 Americans who have this genetic condition. NDSS is committed to being the national leader in supporting and enhancing the quality of life, and realizing the potential of all people with Down syndrome. We demonstrate this commitment through our education, research and advocacy initiatives that benefit people with Down syndrome and their families. To learn more visit our new website www.ndss.org.

About NDSC

The National Down Syndrome Congress is America's oldest national organization of individuals with Down syndrome, their

families, friends and the professionals who work with them. NDSC works to promote equal rights and opportunities for individuals with Down syndrome through advocacy, information and education. The NDSC also hosts the world's largest annual gathering of teens and adults with Down syndrome, as well as parents and professionals. For more information, please visit www.ndsccenter.org.

RRVDSS's Annual Halloween Party

What: Food—Fun—Hayride—Lots of Laughs!

When: Thursday, October 30, 2008 at 6 pm

Where: The Stewart Family Home

2788 FM 906E in Powderly, Texas

Wear your costume! Bring your family! Come prepared to have a Boo-ti-ful evening!
(To RSVP & get directions, please call (903) 783-1922.

Announcements!!

In lieu of an October meeting in Sulphur Springs area, the organizers in Hopkins County would like to invite all those interested to attend the Sibling Issues workshop on Saturday, October 25th in Paris. Watch the website and your mailbox for more details on the next meeting to be held in the Hopkins County area.

Bonham Area Meeting

**There will be a Bonham Area
Support Meeting on Tuesday,
October 21, 2008 at 6 pm at the**

Burtis home located at 1305 Pine in Bonham. Everyone is welcome to come and chat for an hour or so. Children are welcome. For more information or directions, please call (903) 583-3228.

**Want to help RRVDSS?
Donate your time!**

Join a committee! We need volunteers to help with the following events....

- Snowflakes & Diamonds Gala on January 31, 2008 in Paris

- Annual Special Needs Conference on February 21, 2008 in Paris
- Play 2 Learn classes one Saturday or one Thursday evening each month

Fall Fiesta Day Camp

Saturday, November 15, 2008

Day camp for children with disabilities

Deadline for applications: Friday, November 7, 2008. These same forms can be downloaded (Go to day camp page.) off our website www.texaschild.org For those who need assistance with the \$16.00 registration fee, scholarships are available.

Capacity is limited so sign up early!

(903) 886-8365

Date: Saturday, November 15, 2008 Time: 9AM to 2 PM Place: 4494 County Road 4509 Commerce, Texas 75428

Join RRVDS On The Farm in 2009

The new 2009 RRVDS Awareness Calendar "On the Farm" is now available for purchase. These beautiful full-color calendars will make great Christmas gifts and are only \$15 apiece. There are only a limited number of calendars available, so purchase yours soon!

Calendars are available for purchase at the RRVDS office located in the Village Shopping Center in Paris or from a calendar participant. For more information, please contact RRVDS at 903-783-1922 or online at www.redriverdss.org.

Calendars can be ordered online and shipped but standard shipping rates will apply. All credit cards accepted.

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