

DSPTC News

Affiliate, National Down Syndrome Congress & National Down Syndrome Society

August 2007

Developing an Introduction Portfolio

Seminar/Working Session Sat., August 11, 10-12

Have you ever wished the people at school saw your child like you do? That they already knew your child's best motivators, your child's likes and dislikes, and their favorite games and toys? Developing an Introduction Portfolio for your child is a terrific way to tell it all in a few pages and it doesn't take that long to make. Please bring your ideas, your pictures, your current IEP, and any previous introduction materials you've used in the past. Green Oaks School (5508 Chaperito Trail in Arlington) is allowing us to use their facility so we have access to a copier and basic supplies. Robyn Hardison and Theresa Moffitt will briefly share what they have learned about creating Introduction Portfolios and will have several portfolios available for review. The majority of the time will be a working session for sharing ideas and developing or updating the portfolio for YOUR CHILD for the upcoming school year.

Save the Dates!

Saturday, September 29

Co-Sponsored by the DSPTC and Green Oaks School

Fall Conference: Social Skills for Teens, Young Adults & Adults with Down Syndrome and Similar Developmental Delays.

Sessions will be available for parents and educators. There will be a separate session for individuals with Down syndrome and similar developmental delays, followed by dinner and a social event at which they can practice what they have learned. Watch for more details to come!

Monday, October 15th

Our Special Heroes Golf Classic benefiting the DSPTC at the Texas Star Golf Course

Saturday, October 27, 2007

Tarrant County Buddy Walk

This year's walk will be held at S.J. Stovall Park in Arlington, with a portion of the proceeds being donated to the Partnership. Watch for more details!

DSPTC Board Openings

We currently have three open positions on the Board of Directors for the Partnership. The Board sets policy for the Partnership, establishes the annual budget, and oversees activities of the Partnership. Think of the ways the Partnership has helped you and your family, and how it will be there for you in the future. Here is your chance to give back, help others, and broaden your own knowledge of Down syndrome.

Requirements to be a Director are:

- 1) Be the relative of a person with Down syndrome.
- 2) Not miss more than one meeting per year (currently there are four quarterly Board meetings).
- 3) Support the annual Our Special Heroes Golf Classic by bringing in a major sponsor and/or taking an active role in the golf committee before and/or during tournament day.

If you are interested in filling one of the open positions, please contact Theresa Moffitt at 817-987-4501, Kim Marshall at 817-496-5100, or Marla Westbrook at 817-295-5346.

Upcoming Conference

(This is not a DSPTC sponsored event)

When: Saturday August 11th at 8:30am-3:30pm

Where: FEAT-NT Community Resource Center and Library 4239 Road to the Mall, North Richland Hills 76180 (directly behind Rooms to Go outlet shopping strip)

Cost: There is a charge of \$15.00 (pay at the door)

Presenters: Barbie Blizzard, M.Ed., & RDI Program certified consultant - "Shadowing"

Rebecca Sawyer, BCBA - "How to Win Friends in Education"

Carla Edwards, BCBA - "Understanding the ARD Process"

Registration: Please e-mail laurie@featnt.org to confirm your attendance so they can make sure everyone has enough handouts. If you are unable to e-mail call 817-919-2228. Childcare is not provided.

Reflections on the DSPTC

—by Jean Jewell

It's hard to believe that my daughter with DS, Kristin, turned 18 in April. It seems so cliché to say that it feels like yesterday Bill and I were attending our first DSPTC meeting . . . but it's true! Back in 1989 when Kristin was born, the Partnership held monthly meetings at the Child Study Center, with a speaker at each meeting. The group had been in existence for some years and had just recently changed its name from MODs – “Mothers of Down Syndrome”. That, right there, speaks volumes about the changes that this group has undergone over the years! We attended our first meeting when Kristin was just six days old. It was not at all what I had expected. Being in that initial stage of shock, I was thinking we were going to sit around with other parents and cry about our unfortunate lot in life. I was so surprised, and I must admit a bit disappointed, that the attendees were a group of “normal” people and their happy kids. What I didn't realize was that that night marked the beginning of what would be one of the best things that ever happened to me and to our family.

At that very first meeting, I met Karen Buie (mom of Scotty, now 20) and Kim Marshall, (mom of Lindsey, now 20) mothers who would become two of my dearest friends. As the months and years went by, of course, that list grew. Bill and I went to every meeting that first year. We had to force ourselves to go to the first few – it took us awhile to overcome our grief and sense of loss over the child we thought we were having. Surrounding ourselves with other families who had been where we were was a true lifeline. It took only a few months for that fog to lift. I began to look forward to the meetings and the social events. It didn't take long for Kim Marshall and I to see that we were kindred “Type A” personalities. The Partnership had meant so much to both of our families but we wondered why more people weren't being reached. Kim was on the board of The Arc (then called the Association for Retarded Citizens) and I soon became Vice President of the DSPTC (Kristin was 9 months old). At that time, the DSPTC did not have its own mailing list and the newsletter was produced by a staff member of The Arc. The group didn't have much money. We wanted to do more. We got together with our husbands and another friend, and conceived the Heat Rash Dash. This was a four mile running race that started in 1990 and was held annually in August for eight years. It was the beginning of a “business” partnership between Kim and I that still exists!

After being VP of the group for a year, I was President for three years. Our little group of “leaders” grew. We began doing the newsletter ourselves. We started a mailing list (that first one had 25 names and eventually grew to over 600). We contacted the maternity departments at area hospitals and added them to our list. Thanks to Rhonda Bannister, we began taking our babies and toddlers to local high schools and speaking to their Child Development classes about Down syndrome. We put on conferences. We went en masse to the National Down Syndrome Congress Convention and soaked up everything we could. We were especially excited about Inclusion – the latest buzzword in the Down syndrome community. All of us were absolutely adamant that our children would be fully included – there was no reason they couldn't or shouldn't be!

Back in the late 1980's and early 1990's, there were few options for our kids. They all received services from the state through ECI until they were three years old. At three, they went to an Early Childhood class at their public elementary school. There were few private preschools that would take our kids, or had even been approached about doing so. Many of us were the first ones to get our children with DS into area programs. Sometimes it went really well. Sometimes it didn't. That has always been a great thing about the Partnership. We were all in it together and had so much support for what we were trying to do.

Kristin started public school when she was almost four as she had been undergoing chemotherapy for leukemia since she was 16 months old and couldn't go until she was off treatment. I was VERY wary of putting her in the segregated class at her elementary school so I also kept her in a private preschool for two days a week. She went on to Kindergarten at six with the support of her wonderful ECI teacher, then to first grade. She did not have an aide in the classroom. She had friends. She was invited to birthday parties, and had “typical” kids over to play. All along, we were very involved with the DSPTC. Not only did we participate in the group functions but Kristin and I got together with other moms and their kids on a regular basis. I can't express to you how valuable those times were. Sometimes you just need someone who REALLY understands when your kid does something weird!!

As our kids got older and continued through the public school system, we began to feel that maybe inclusion wasn't working out the way we thought it

Please Note: The content of this newsletter is provided for informational purposes only and is not a substitute for medical or other professional advice. The opinions, beliefs and viewpoints expressed herein are those of the individual authors and do not necessarily represent those of the DSPTC directors, members or editors.

**DOWN SYNDROME PARTNERSHIP
OF TARRANT COUNTY**

5508 Chaperito Trail
Arlington, Texas 76016

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CHANGE SERVICE REQUESTED

Things to Remember

Mom's Night Out

August 17

Cheddar's
Little Rd. in Arlington

RSVP to Cyndi Anderson at
cyndi0633@yahoo.com or call her
cell phone, 817-501-2358. Hope to
see you there!

Bienvenidos!

La Asociacion Syndrome de Down
de Tarrant County prove recursos y
apoyo para gente con syndrome de
down y sus familias. Mas
informacion: Favor de llama a la
Sra. Julia Barbosa, (817) 923-3628.

Down Syndrome Clinic

Upcoming Clinic Dates:

August 17 October 19
September 21 November 16

For more information or an appointment, call
Sarah Stringer at 682-885-2181.

Arlington Play Group

Saturday, Aug. 18

Come play! 0-5+ play group—siblings are
welcome! We will be at Green Oaks School from
10:00 a.m. to 12:00 p.m. Indoor play for our little
ones—outdoor playground is weather permitting.
5508 Chaperito Trail, Arlington, 76016
Wendy Behnke 817-829-7812 (cell) or
behnkesw@yahoo.com

Northeast Play Group

Contact Sessalie
Shapley
at (817) 358-1879

Dads

Contact Mike Nelson
at 817-723-9051 or
Fnelson@bbar.com
for more info.
Thanks!

DSPTC Voice Mail

817-421-1812

The DSPTC qualifies as a 501c(3) non-profit charitable organization and contributions are tax deductible to the extent the law allows.