



# WVDSA Monthly

Willamette Valley Down Syndrome Association

## Christmas Social-Kristmas Karaoke!

I don't know about you, but this year's Christmas Party sounds like it's going to be a blast! Katie Ross, with the help of Tami Ruter, has some fun things on the schedule—one of which is a Karaoke Christmas Carol sing. I've been to all of the



WVDSA Christmas parties so far, and one thing I've noticed is that many of our kids are real "hambones" when it comes to getting up on stage and performing. I can't wait to see what they do with a chance to sing with a microphone! We'll all want to bring our video cameras for this special event!

We'll also have a sandwich

bar with all the fixings to make your favorite sandwich—along with beverages. Plan to have dinner at the party! We'd like each of you to bring a pie to share—you choose your favorite flavor!

Along with the Karaoke Carol Sing-Along, Katie is planning some crafts for the kids to do. In addition, Santa and Mrs. Claus will be making

an appearance! This is going to be the "Claus Couple" we had scheduled for last year's Christmas Party, but who were unable to make it due to a last-minute emergency. We think you'll be surprised and delighted to see who is playing the part this year!

For directions and additional information, see the flyer enclosed with your newsletter or call Katie Ross (541-929-2884) or Tami Ruter (541-928-3594).

We hope to see each and every one of you at our 2003 WVDSA Christmas Party! We're sure you'll be very glad you came!

WVDSA  
4272 NW Pintail Court  
Corvallis, OR 97330

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## WVDSA News & Upcoming Events:

Our total intake from the Buddy Walk has exceeded the \$6000 mark! Thanks to all of you who got donations from your friends and family and to all of those who donated to our group! This puts us in a good position as we begin to plan next year's Buddy Walk (and it's going to be a

super one)! Make sure you mark October 9, 2004 on your calendar!

~\*~\*~\*~\*~

**December 13:** Annual Christmas Family Social at the Linn County Fairgrounds. Time: 5:00—7:00.

**January 20:** The topic for this meeting hasn't been revealed yet, but I'm sure

it will be something special. We'll have more information in the January newsletter.

### Mark your calendars!



## November's Meeting: Rosemary Ayres

Speech problems with our kids is one of the top items on our agendas. As long as they are hard to understand, they risk being evaluated at a lower level than they may deserve—sometimes completely missing skills they have, but can't communicate. Rosemary Ayres has made it her life's work to help "kids" (her oldest client is 44) find ways to overcome the communication barriers they may be facing.

Rosemary talked about many of the services available for people with Down syndrome, as she has seen them. She also went through a list of typical characteristics that may affect Oral Motor Development



in our kids and the effects they may produce. For example, many children with Down syndrome have low muscular tone, muscular coordination difficulties, and oral sensitivity defensiveness or low sensitivity. These conditions can lead to things like tongue thrusting, speech intelligibility problems, and oral re-

sistance to different foods, tastes, temperatures, dental exams, etc.

Rosemary had some interesting things to point out to us. For example, we know that most kids with Down syndrome tend to let their tongues hang out, but did you know that part of the reason it gets harder as they get older is that the roof of the mouth can't form correctly, because the tongue isn't in there to provide the resistance needed to broaden the palate. The growing child's palate remains narrow, which makes it even harder for the tongue to stay in the mouth! This also has an

## More 2003 Buddy Walk Pictures



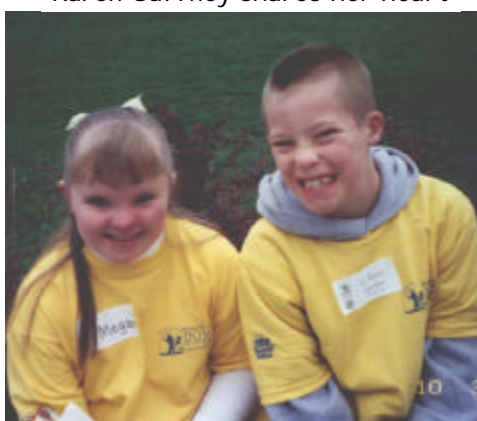
Jordan Sargent leads the walk



Karen Gaffney shares her heart



Frank & Joy Morse



Megan Moore & Ian Ruter

**WVDSA  
Christmas Party**

**Saturday,  
December 13th  
5:00—7:00 PM**

**Linn County  
Fairgrounds  
Albany, OR**

These pictures were shared from the ones taken by our 2003 Buddy Walk Chairman, Rachel Sargent of Lincoln City.

We would love to put other pictures in the newsletter, if you have some to share! Send them to Gretchen Davey.

### Child of the Month

We would still like to include our WVDSA "Child of the Month" Feature in future issues! All we need is some volunteers! Please see page 3 for information on where to send either a short story about **your** child or the information so we can write it up. Also include 1-3 pictures we can put in the newsletter. We need **YOU!**

## Rosemary Ayres, cont.

effect on their adult speech!

The best part of Rosemary's presentation was her list of ways we can help our child develop oral skills that can help the speech therapist. For example, oral hygiene needs to be stressed, because our children are more resistant to dental decay, but more prone to periodontal disease. It's important to get them used to the feel of a toothbrush—using aids such as a safety brush or infi-dent brushes that you can put on your finger and massage their gums. As far as toothbrushes are concerned, an electric one is a good choice, since they brush the teeth and gums more quickly. Rosemary says the Sonic Care brushes are the ones she'd recommend, but the loud noise may be a little too intense for some people.

To stimulate the muscles in the face, mouth, and tongue, she recommends things like chewy toys—an obvious thing for infants and small children, but something that benefits even older children. For example, a pen-holder on a neck cord (minus the pen) works for an older



person with Down syndrome, rather than an infant teething toy.

Whistles are a good therapy tool (she let some of us try a "lip whistle" - a pair of lips that has a whistle built in), as are chewy candy or gum. Try to get your child to chew the gum for a certain number of chews and then encourage them to spit it out (rather than swallow it).

Straws of various sizes require different levels of sucking intensity, developing muscles in increasing ways. A solution of water and bleach (4%) will sterilize straws before re-using.

Other suggestions included blowing bubbles (using a variety of

wands that require a more focused stream of air), slurping liquids (bad table manners, but good therapy), using mirrors to see how their mouths are being used, and "lip barbells" - a tongue depres-

sor held between the lips and "lifted" by pursing the lips. To add resistance, balance pennies on each side (a load of 8 pennies on each side would be what a person with normal muscle strength in their mouth should be able to "lift").

Rosemary conducts a Speech Camp each summer at her clinic in Philomath for ages 3 to adult. She occasionally works in 2-year-olds, but only about one per group, letting the older participants help out with the little ones.

For more information about Rosemary and her clinic, call her at 541-929-4565 or e-mail her at [SpeechCamp@alyrica.net](mailto:SpeechCamp@alyrica.net).

## New Parent Packet Request

### Request from Cory Harrington:

I want to put together a page that goes with the new parent pack that has some names and details of different families that wouldn't mind talking with new parents. So I thought maybe the newsletter could put this idea out and we could get some people to volunteer their information. I also want to encourage people around the valley even rural

areas. They can contact me for the details either by phone at 503-792-4714 or email me at this address: [cjharrington@juno.com](mailto:cjharrington@juno.com).

*(Editor's Note: This would be helpful in that those of us who have been through different experiences with our children may be able to help new parents facing similar situations.)*

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The "New Parent Packet" is still an important goal of our group. The foundations are there, but we need "manpower" to get things rolling again. Interested? Contact someone on the WVDSA board and volunteer!

Child of the Month:

Submit your child's information to Gretchen Davey at 370 Center Street, Lebanon, OR 97355

[wvdsa@ookla.com](mailto:wvdsa@ookla.com)

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## President's Corner



**A Very  
Merry Christmas  
and a  
Happy New Year  
to all of you!**

### 2004 Calendars

Don't forget to order your 2004 WVDSA Calendars—for yourself or as gifts for friends and family. We will have some at the Christmas Party so you can save yourself the shipping and handling charge, but if you live outside the area and would like to order one, send \$6.75 (\$5 for the calendar; \$1.75 for s/h) to Gretchen Davey, 370 Center Street, Lebanon, OR 97355. If this is a gift, I'll mail it to the specific person, along with a gift card with your name on it, if you'll provide me with their address. If you send a check, make it out to "WVDSA".

