



WVDSA Monthly

Willamette Valley Down Syndrome Association

George Estreich: Encore Presentation!

All I can say is "Wow!" Those of you who missed the presentation by WVDSA member, George Estreich, really missed an amazing meeting!

George has done a great deal of research on the subject of the history of Down syndrome and how it affects us today. I think most of us at the meeting would say we learned a lot from what he had to say!

For example, I'd never thought of the fact that, back in the 1800s when Dr. John Downs first "discovered" Down syndrome (which he called "Mongolian Idiocy"), you never saw groups of people with Down syndrome together at one place, at one



time. There was no TV to broadcast such a phenomenon, either. It's not a surprise that each person who had a child with Down syndrome, assumed their child was unique—one-of-a-kind. A lack of knowledge also kept these children hidden in back rooms or placed in

asylums of some sort.

Children with Ds didn't live that long back then, either. All the health issues that endanger our children's lives today were present back then, but without all the modern medical miracles that have given today's child with Down syndrome a much longer life expectancy.

George really had us hanging on every word, because so much was of interest to us. Even more exciting is the fact that he's writing a book about his experiences as the father of a child with Down syndrome (his daughter, Laura), to be titled "The

(Continued on page 2)

WVDSA
4272 NW Pintail Ct
Corvallis, OR 97330

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In this issue:

George Estreich: Encore Presentation!	1-2
March: Disability Awareness Month	1
Oregon Advocacy Days 2005	2
Information About George Estreich	3
Future Child of the Month Candidates	3
Directions to the March meeting	3
Comin' Around the Corner	4

March: Disability Awareness Month

Developmental Disabilities Awareness Month

You are invited to the Capitol on March 17th to help Oregon celebrate "Developmental Disabilities Awareness Month." This event, sponsored by the Ore-

gon Council on Developmental Disabilities, will be held in Hearing Room C at the Capitol on March 17th promptly at 11:30 am. A reception will follow.

Secretary of State Bill Bradbury will host the event again this year. The Secre-

tary will read a proclamation from Governor Kulongoski, declaring March

"Developmental Disabilities Awareness Month." He will also assist in presenting our Community Partnerships awards and officially unveil our new awareness poster.

Information about George Estreich & His Presentation

My presentation will be called **"The figure in hiding: How we talk about Down syndrome."**

When we found out that Laura had Down syndrome, I read in a pamphlet somewhere that she was "a child first." But since Down syndrome was first described--in 1866, by John Langdon Down--those with the condition have not been "children first." They have been something else first. I want to talk about this history a little bit, focusing on metaphor.

A metaphor compares one thing to another thing. We use metaphors to cope with something new, strange, or different: we compare the new thing to a familiar thing. ("My love is like a red, red rose," for example.) Children with Down syndrome have been com-



pared to other things too; the first name for Down syndrome, "mongolian idiocy," is itself a metaphor. I will talk about this metaphor, as well as more recent ones, and their implications.

I will also talk about the metaphors that parents use. We tend to think about our children differently than scientists do, and so our language reflects that fact.

In a time when our understanding of genetics gives us increasing power, the way we talk about Down syndrome matters. If it is a "disease," like polio, then it can be "cured." Whether, when, or how this is desirable, are interesting questions. I would like to hear what everyone has to say, and hope to spark discussion with my presentation.

*A biographical note:

George was born in New York City, and grew up in its suburbs. He is a writer and at-home dad, and has



one book of poems to his name (*Textbook Illustrations of the Human Body*, published earlier this year.) He's married to Theresa Filtz, who teaches in the College of Pharmacy at Oregon State University; they have two children, Ellie (9) and Laura (4).

He is currently at work on a book of nonfiction prose called *The Shape of the Eye*, from which his presentation will be drawn. Its surface topic is Down syndrome, but it is really about raising a family in the light of science. Everybody, especially his family, hopes he will be finished soon.

Submit your
Child of the
Month
information to:
Gretchen Davey

370 Center St
Lebanon, OR
97355

wvdsa@ookla.com

Directions to WVDSA Meeting

WVDSA Meetings at the Corvallis site can be reached by following these directions:

Coming from I-5: follow Highway 34 (Exit 228) into Corvallis, coming over the bridge just east of town. You will be on Harrison Street, a one-way street heading west. *Follow this until you get to the intersection with Kings Blvd. At this



point, you will want to be in the right hand lane, because just as you go through the intersection, a sign will say "Right Lane Ends". You will remain in the right hand lane, however, because you will turn into the parking lot of Grace Lutheran Church before the lane ends. We are meeting in the Fellowship Hall at the north end of the build-

ing. You'll see other cars parked near the entrance.

If you're coming in on 99W from the north or south, turn right (from the north) or left (from the south) at Harrison and follow the directions from I-5 from *.

If you have any questions, call Debbie Lisle at (503) 371-3046 or Gretchen Davey at (541) 451-5215. We hope to see you at the meeting!

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4272 NW Pintail Ct
Corvallis, OR 97330

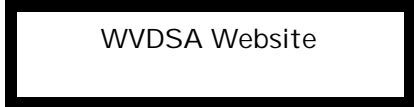
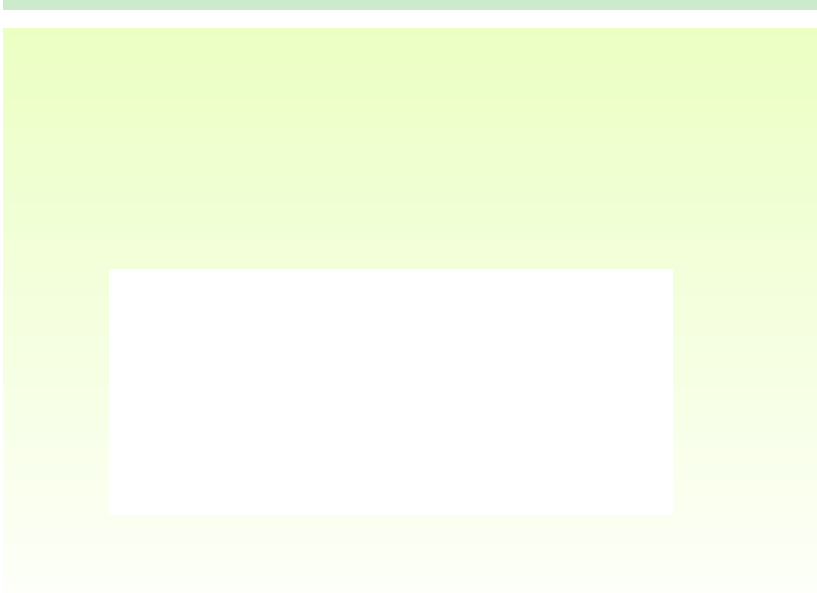
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Comin' Around the Corner

Upcoming Events, FYI:

March 8, 2005 - IDEA/Section 504 in **Albany** at the Fairmont Building from 6:30 - 8:30 PM. Registration is required, please contact Shelley Joyce, 503-581-0018, or email sjoyce@orpti.org.

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March 30, 2005: Transition: Postsecondary Options for Education and Employment, 6 PM to 9 PM, Newberg School District Offices, 714 East 6th St., **Newberg**. Sponsored by the Office of Student Learning and Partnerships, hosted by Newberg SD. Registration is required, please contact Shelley Joyce at 503-581-0018 or email sjoyce@orpti.org.

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April 12, 2005 - Statewide Assessment in **Albany** at the Fairmont Building from 6:30 - 8:30 PM. Registration is required, please contact Shelley Joyce, 503-581-0018, or email sjoyce@orpti.org.

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April 25, 2005 - Behavior in the IEP - in **Klamath Falls** at the Lucille O'Niell Education Center from 1:00 - 3:30 PM. Hosted by Klamath City Schools. Reservations are required. Please call Kirsten Thompson at (541) 608-8586 kthompson@orpti.org to register or for more information.

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April 26, 2005: ESCE Transition to Kindergarten, 6 PM to 9 PM, Newberg School District Offices,

714 East 6th St., **Newberg**. Sponsored by the Newberg SD. Registration is required, please contact Shelley Joyce at 503-581-0018 or email sjoyce@orpti.org.

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May 10, 2005 - Assistive Technology in **Albany** at the Fairmont Building from 6:30 - 8:30 PM. Registration is required, please contact Shelley Joyce, 503-581-0018, or email sjoyce@orpti.org.

