



WVDSA Monthly

Willamette Valley Down Syndrome Association

Special Olympics of Oregon: Summer Games!

It seems like "Special Olympics" have been in our vocabulary forever, but they've actually only been around for 36 years. Started in 1968, they were designed to give disabled people, age 8 and up, an opportunity to stay fit and have fun competing in events in which they have a chance to win an actual medal!

The Oregon Special Olympics program is run by the individual counties in the state or, as in the case of Eugene/Springfield, by a city or municipal area. Each year, the different regions compete in various athletic events and then the winners go on to compete in the state's summer or winter games. This year, the state games are being held in Cor-



Special Olympics County Coordinators, Sue Hill & Kanani Bowden.

vallis (see article on page 2 for times and locations).

Sue Hill is the coordinator of the Special Olympics in Marion County and Kanani Bowden for Benton County. It's not hard to tell that the Special Olympics are "near and dear" to the hearts of both of these women!

Sue's 18-year-old daughter, Jenny, spoke to the group about her 2003 trip to the International Special Olympics Summer Games, held in Dublin, Ireland. She received three medals (two bronze and one gold), as well as two 4th place ribbons, in gymnastics. Back in the states, during an exhibition performance, Jenny was "spotted" in her routine

by none other than Olympic gymnast, Carly Patterson! It was an event that she'll never forget! Nor will her mom!

Jenny told us that her participation in Special Olympics started when she was 9 and gave her a way to be active and fit. She lost 40

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WVDSA
4272 NW Pintail Place
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Looking Ahead: WVDSA Activities

July 12 : We will be meeting at the Enchanted Forest south of Salem at 10:00 AM. We hope all of you can make it. Call Cory Harrington—503-463-9788 for details.

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July 23: Beach Barbecue at Gleneden Beach 6 miles south

of Lincoln City (15 miles north of Newport). 1:00 PM; bring side dish (salad, chips, veggies, dessert, etc.) and yourselves. Hot dogs/hamburgers and beverages will be provided.

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August 16: Family Picnic at

Avery Park in Corvallis. 6 -9 PM at the Lions Shelter. Details next month.

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September 17: 2005 Buddy Walk in Salem!! See article on page 3. We need your help so check out what's happening with this year's Walk!



WVDSA Family Picnic: Tuesday, August 16

For several years now, we've been meeting at a park in Corvallis and enjoying a family picnic with other members of the Willamette Valley Down Syndrome Association. All but one of the last few years have been at Avery Park—a fun park for family picnics.

We generally reserve the **Lion's Shelter at Avery Park**, just south of Corvallis, which provides a cooking area, covered dining area, playground equipment, and fun stuff like "dinosaur bones" and a genuine steam locomotive for the kids to climb all over. Plan to come at **6:00 and stay until 9:00!**

We ask that each family bring what they want to barbecue—whether it's hotdogs, hamburgers, chicken, or steak—and then bring a salad or dessert to share with everyone. The WVDSA will provide beverages, paper



2004 Family Picnic at Avery Park

plates, napkins, and plastic "silverware." If you have a large picnic tablecloth, bring that, too. The tables aren't horrible, but they're well-used picnic tables. A tablecloth makes the surface much nicer for eating!

If you have any lawn games—such as croquet, lawn darts, or other things—bring those, too. It's kind of fun for the

adults to be able to "play" while the kids have fun. Anything else you think would be entertaining—bubbles, Frisbees, or anything at all—bring them along. We've never had a lack of things to do and talk about, but it's always better to be prepared than not! Lawn chairs are also nice to have.

Our weather has usually been really warm, even as evening sets in, but it won't hurt to bring along some warm clothes in case you or your kids get chilly as the sun sets.

The nice thing about the Lion's Shelter is that even if we get rain, we still have a covered area under which to eat and visit. It's a little harder on the kids, but if the weather looks like it will be nasty, toss in some "indoor games" for them to use. The important thing is to come and get to know each other!

Some Fun Family Activities, Etc.!

2005 Oregon Summer Special Olympics: July 9 & 10 (Saturday & Sunday) - Corvallis, Oregon. Track & Field, Gymnastics, and Bocce events will be held at Crescent Valley High School (4444 NW Highland, north of Corvallis), beginning at 9:00 AM. Softball will be at Williams Field across from Cheldelin Middle School (937 Conifer Blvd). The games will also begin at 9:00 AM. If you're interested in attending any of these events, you can e-mail **Kanani Bowden** at rkbowden@comcast.net or call her at **541-754-0388**.

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Enchanted Forest - On Tuesday, **July 12, 2005**, We will meet in the parking lot at 10:00 AM, then head in by 10:15. If you have them, wear your Buddy Walk t-shirts. The cost of admission is \$7.95 for adults, \$7.45 for Seniors, \$6.95 for children ages 3-12. Tickets for rides cost \$0.75 each. There are many free activities, but some rides cost from 1 - 4 tickets each. Enchanted Forest is located just

south of Salem. From I-5 you'll take the Sunnyside - Turner Exit # 248, then head east, you'll turn right onto Enchanted Way (which is the first road). Enchanted Forest will be on your left. If you have any questions, give **Cory** a call at **503-463-9788**. If you would like to visit the Enchanted Forest Website: www.enchantedforest.com.

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Saturday, July 23—Picnic/Barbecue at Gleneden Beach 6 miles south of Lincoln City (15 miles south of Newport). We'll meet at 1:00 at one of the picnic shelters (look for signs). Hamburgers, hotdogs, and beverages will be provided. Bring a side dish (chips, salad, veggies, hot dish, dessert, whatever you want) to share. Tablecloths might help, but utensils and plates will be provided, too. Entertainment will be provided by the Pacific Ocean and Gleneden Beach! For more information, call **Rachel Sargent: 541-265-4780**.

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As has been the pattern in the past two months, if anything important comes up, we'll be calling you or sending out postcards to the local families.

Stay involved!
The group needs you!

- July Activities:
- Oregon Summer Special Olympics
- Enchanted Forest
- Barbecue at Gleneden Beach
- ~*~*~*~*~*~
- Family Picnic in August!
- August 16th
- 6:00 PM
- Avery Park
- Corvallis, OR

Fun in the Sun at Riverfront Park!

Don't forget that these dates are available to get together with other parents and children. The kids can play in the awesome playground while the adults enjoy chatting with each other. Bring blankets, snacks/lunches, games, strollers, etc. Call Cory at 503-463-9788 with questions. Date will be cancelled if it rains.

Thursdays at 3:00 PM:

July 21 & August 18, 2005

Saturdays at 10:00 AM:

July 9 & August 13, 2005

September 17, 2005: The Buddy Walk Needs Your Help!

The 2005 Buddy Walk is fast approaching. There will be a few changes this year, some big and some small. You will notice our date is a month earlier, September 17, 2005. We are hoping this will give us better chances of good weather. Our tradition will continue to hold our event at Riverfront Park in Salem at the carousel. This year we will have an inflatable obstacle course in the park for added fun. Donna' Dragons and Castles will be bringing their huge "Adrenaline Rush" for all to enjoy. The Shriner's group of Kader Klowns has also agreed to join us and add to the festivities. We also plan to serve lunch to everyone after the walk.

This is our biggest event of the year, and as always lots of additional volunteer help is welcome. We will be having committee meetings once a month in June, July, and August to wrap all the details up. If you are willing to help in any way, big or small, please let me know. Some specific needs are:

Advertising and Media Coverage Securing media coverage is not an easy task, and it is definitely more of an "art" than a "science". I am not skilled in this art, and welcome anyone



who would be willing to help out. I have ordered new radio and television public service announcements with custom tags for our group from the NDSS which can make the job much easier.

Also, with this type of event, the most effective type of marketing involves grassroots and direct marketing. Our posters will soon arrive, as well as flyers. If you can help with this level of publicity it would also be appreciated. If you have e-mail distribution lists in our area (e.g. schools, local service agencies, etc.) we would like to have the Buddy Walk information included.

Event Insurance Each year we spend approximately \$500.00 for an event insurance policy for the day of the walk. Some groups across the country have been able to come under the umbrella of another larger service organization and not required this additional expense. I would welcome any suggestions or connections members may have to save us this expense.



Speakers If you have suggestions for speakers for the day of the walk please let us know. We always love to hear from some of our group members with Down syndrome.

Sponsors We have several local businesses that have been great

sponsors in the past walks. If you, your business or employer would consider being a sponsor of the event on any level I would be glad to share the information with you.

I can be reached by email at: ark-princ@msn.com or phone 503.434.8618. Please call or email me if you can help out in any way.

Looking forward to another great day celebrating together our friends and family members with Down syndrome!

Keri Prince
Buddy Walk
Chairman

Submit "Child of the Month" information to:
Gretchen Davey
370 Center St
Lebanon, OR
97355
wvdsa@ookla.com

Buddy Walk Teams

This year we would like to encourage families and businesses to participate in our walk by forming a team. A Buddy Walk team can consist of a family, friends, co-workers, students and colleagues. Usually Buddy Walk teams are five or more individuals walking on behalf of one buddy. You can have a "Team Captain", or however you would like your team to be set up.

We will have a team option on the registration forms. This may help simplify the registration process. The team captain or one member of the team can turn

in the registrations for all the team members. I hope to create "Team Packets" to give out to people who are interested in being part of a team. They would include sample letters and other tools to raise interest in team participation. I am also working on having a photographer there to take team pictures.

The help promote the Buddy Walk Team concept, your team could wear special shirts, buttons, stickers or carry signs that promote their team. If requested early enough you can have the yellow or white Buddy Walk t-shirts imprinted on the back with the name of your team.

Last year there were a couple teams.

Lora Harrington's friends and family had a great team, they had the Buddy Walk t-shirts imprinted with their team name on the back. Becca Davey had another fun team with t-shirts as well. Weyerhaeuser had the largest team, with their W.A.V.E.S. t-shirts and bright blue presence. They actually had five teams that day! Building on last year, we would like to encourage members to be thinking about a name for your team. Next months newsletter should have more information. In the mean time if you have questions or would like to get started don't hesitate to give me a call! (Teams will not be required...as always, everyone will be welcome to participate!)

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Comin' Around the Corner

I can't imagine anything more wonderful than to have my daughter, Becca, end up as confident and fit as sparkly Jenny Hill! It's obvious that she feels good about herself and is proud of her accomplishments.

Although Jenny doesn't have Down syndrome, she's 4'10" tall and has weight issues on both sides of her family. As happens to most people with Down syndrome, weight would tend to creep up on her if she didn't stay active and have a plan to keep herself fit.

By getting involved with Special Olympics as a child (age 9), Jenny went from a sedentary child (according to her mother) to an ac-



tive one. She lost 40 pounds in the process (which would be a lot of excess weight on a 4'10" frame!) and has kept her weight at a reasonable level as a result of her active lifestyle!

The main thing to remember is that Special Olympics focuses on *abilities*, not *disabilities*! They will work with your child and find out what things they can successfully do to compete. If you've ever considered this, I'd encourage you to contact your area coordinator and get involved!

Sincerely,
Gretchen Davey, Editor

(Continued from page 1)

pounds as a result and said that her classmates at school became more accepting of her—mainly due to the respect she got from her participation in the games.

Jenny started working towards her current status by taking part in the OSU Motor Fitness Clinic (now called IMPACT) and then moving on to Special Olympics training in track & field, gymnastics, and power lifting! The main thing is to get started!

Both Sue and Kanani urge parents of special needs children to look into the Special Olympics for them. Sue can be reached at 503-362-8408 (Marion County) and Kanani at 541-754-0388 (Benton County). If you live in a different county, go to the Special Olympics website (www.soor.org) to find out who to contact. In most cases, you need to work with your own county coordinator, but if they don't have the sport you are considering, you can contact another county coordinator to see if you can participate in their program.
