



WVDSA Monthly

Willamette Valley Down Syndrome Association

2007 Buddy Walk—O'Fest Style!

Okay, so the Buddy Walk isn't exactly in October, but **September 29** is only two days shy, so why quibble? This year's Buddy Walk has an Octoberfest theme—shortened to "O'Fest" for the fun of it—

which is why the Albany German Band has a place of honor on the front page of this newsletter!

For the first time in several years, we're not meeting at the Carousel in Salem's Riverfront Park, but are going to make use of the nearby Amphitheater. Not only will this give us a place to sit down before and after the Buddy Walk, it will be a wonderful place to listen to the German Band music, let the kids dance at the front of the stage area, and eat our lunch!

There will be a "bounce house" for the kids this



Becca Loves the German Band

year, as well as a craft project, games and other activities for them. An Octoberfest-type lunch will be available for everyone (brats and hot dogs, beverages, etc. Sorry, no beer!).

Also for the first time, you can pre-register on our website! Donations can also be made on the website for friends and family who want to support the Willamette Valley Down Syndrome Association's Buddy Walk, but can't attend (or just don't want to hassle with it the day of the Buddy

Walk)!

The schedule for this year's Buddy Walk on **Saturday, September 29** is:

10:30 Registration
(Meet at the Amphitheater)
11:00 Walk

(Riverfront Park Pathways)

11:30 Speakers

(Author—Joan Medlen, R.D., L.D., Project Director: Creating Solutions; Senior Editor: "Disability Solutions")

12:00 German Band

(Music, Fun* & O-Fest Food)

Before you do anything else, though, you need to register, so go to our website—www.wvdsa.org—and get your family signed up!

*The Rotary Club provides 5-ride passes on the carousel for all children with Down syndrome. Free tickets will be available for any other children, compliments of the W.V.D.S.A.!

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Special Editorial Feature:

Some time ago, my father, Lewis Hatfield, wrote an article for the newsletter, giving his side of being the grandparent of a child with Ds. Enjoy it on Page 4! **Gretchen Davey**

Featured BuddyWalk Speaker: Joan Medlen, R.D., L.D.

Joan Guthrie Medlen, is a registered, licensed dietitian and holds an Advanced Certificate in Adult Weight Management from the American Dietetic Association. Joan focuses her wide array of activities on nutrition and wellness coaching



Syndrome Nutrition Handbook: A Guide to Promoting Healthy Lifestyles (2002, 2006), the first, and only, text dedicated to promoting healthy living for people with Down syndrome at any age. She is the Clinical Advisor for Health Literacy and Communications for Special

for people of all ages and stages. Her experiences span a variety of people's needs and settings:

- ◆ nutrition coaching for people with and without developmental disabilities
- ◆ nutrition counseling
- ◆ education programs in community hospitals
- ◆ writing, editing, and publishing materials for both the general public and professionals
- ◆ designing educational materials, and conducting research
- ◆ menu and recipe analysis and modifications to fit lifestyle and medical needs providing inpatient services.

Joan is the author of *The Down*

Olympics Inc. Healthy Athletes Health Promotion Program. She writes for a variety of publications, including *Disability Solutions*, book chapters about healthy living for people with Down syndrome, and presents workshops for parents, professionals, and people with Down syndrome and developmental and intellectual disabilities around the world.

What Joan enjoys most in her work is supporting people in their decision to choose a healthier lifestyle. She works with individuals, families, staff, and consultants to make conscious choices for tangible changes. She guides clients to see that they **can** make changes that are in balance with all areas of their lives. She be-

lieves improving health is *not* supposed to increase stress. Her innovative, often playful activities are designed to be fun, informative and a positive experience.

Joan understands that knowing what choices are available and having easy-to-use tools to act on those choices are key links that are missing in daily life to help people choose to improve their health.

Joan is the mother of two young men, one of whom has autism, Down syndrome and celiac disease. In her free time she enjoys experimenting in the kitchen, doing calligraphy, attempting Pilates, and going on long bike rides along the Columbia River-- even when it's raining (but not necessarily in the winds!).

At the 2007 Buddy Walk, Joan will be speaking as the mother of a son with Down syndrome, rather than as a nutritional professional, but always seems glad to answer questions you may have about the nutritional needs of your child.

September
Meeting:
Buddy Walk
Saturday
Sept. 29
Riverfront Park
Amphitheater
Salem, Oregon

Directions to the 2007 Buddy Walk

From Interstate 5, take exit 253 (Stayton/Highway 22) and follow Mission Street west towards downtown Salem. Go 2.16 miles and take the "City Center" exit at the top of the overpass. Stay to the left side at the bottom of the ramp and turn left onto Bellevue Street SE. This becomes Pringle Parkway. Follow the signs to Front Street/OR 22. As you go around a turn to the right (onto Front Street), Riverfront Park will be on your left. The Amphitheater

is just beyond the playground at the south end of the park area. Look for signs and/or balloons! There is some parking on the east side of the park. You may need to park in the Salem Center Parkade at Commercial and Cheme-keta, however, and walk over, if you can't find space in the limited parking near Riverfront Park.

If you don't pre-register, the Buddy Walk registration will be set up near the Amphitheater. Look for the balloon

arch and come prepared to have a great time! You won't be disappointed!



Hallowe'en Fun in a Harvest Setting

Although we don't necessarily promote Hallowe'en, we appreciate the unique fun of this time of year. Cory Harrington has been wanting to have some sort of costume party that would appeal to all age levels of people with Down syndrome and this time of year seemed to provide the perfect opportunity.

An observation from having attended the International Down Syndrome Conference in Vancouver, British Columbia last August: Most people with Down syndrome seem to love to dance! From the youngest (mainly Lora Harrington, who was 4, and Becca Davey, age 9 at the time) to the oldest—a host of teenagers and young adults, dressed to the nines and ready to party—once the music started, they were out on the floor "jiving" to the beat!

Most kids also like to dress up in costumes, too. We're going to combine these two great things and have a costume party/dance **October 27** at the **Sacchi Farm** on **River Road**, north of the Brooks/Gervais exit on I-5.

The Sacchi's have graciously offered us the use of their barn as the location of our party, which is going to make this one of the best events of the year!

More details, including directions on how to get to the Sacchi's and instructions of what to bring, will be included in the October issue of the newsletter. In the meantime,



mark your calendars for **Saturday, October 27** and start planning your costumes (Yes, even the adults can dress up if they want to!).

We encourage everyone to plan to attend—even those members of the WVDSA who are older! It would be a great opportunity for some of our young adults (and older adults) with Down syndrome to meet each other.

At the Conference in Vancouver, it was obvious that many of the young people we saw knew each other from past conferences and were anticipating seeing each other.

Why not start our own group of friends with Down syndrome?

WVDSA News—Coming Soon...

Saturday, October 27: Hallowe'en Costume Party! Sacchi Farm, 9995 NE River Rd, Salem (north of Keizer). More details will be coming up!



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Saturday, November 10: Speech and Language Mini-Conference; Mighty Oak Children's Therapy Center; Albany, OR. Featured speaker: Heather Mackey, speech therapist at



center. Watch for more details on this important topic!

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Saturday, December 1: Family Christmas Party. Keizer Fire Station's Community Room. These parties are always a lot of fun and a great chance for the parents to meet and get to know each other better. More details will be coming soon.



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Other Events: As we head into the 2008 year, we will have other activities planned and will keep you posted. March is usually the month of our Spring Social, which is always

a great time to get together. We encourage people to take advantage of the Adair Easter Egg Hunt, usually the week before Easter, which has special help for our special kids. Keep watching for event details!!

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(Continued from page 4)

to read a section of the 1950's reading primer, *Dick and Jane*. We felt a surge of pride in our granddaughter.

Since having Becca in the family we no longer look the other way or avoid contact with people who obviously have Down syndrome. Instead, we seek them out and talk directly with them and usually to their parents.

See, Becca—you have educated us!

Love, Grandpa Lew



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**New WVDSA Website:
(Check it out!!)
<http://www.wvdsa.org>**

Special Contribution: Editor's Dad, Lew Hatfield, Gives His Views

When Gretchen, our oldest daughter, had coffee with us one summer afternoon in 1996, she had a surprise for us. She pulled out a picture from a manila envelope. It wasn't the kind of picture we were expecting, but an ultrasound of a baby in the womb.

Our 48-year-old daughter had done quite well, in our estimation, by producing a grandson, then 22 years old and a granddaughter, 21. What we didn't know at that time was that our new granddaughter had Down syndrome; that fact was revealed the following February when Rebecca Sterling Davey made her appearance on the world scene.

We met Becca in person for the first time at her sister's wedding, two months later, as a sweet, tiny infant. The most noticeable thing at that time was that she seldom cried or emitted a lot of noise. When held, she was content to lie quietly in our arms. Her parents had been told she would need open heart surgery.

The very next month we came down to Doernbecher's from our home in Auburn, Washington, to be with her parents in Portland. We got to meet the doctor who had performed the operation. He is an amazingly skilled surgeon, adept enough to repair the defects in Becca's walnut-sized heart.

Becca will have eleven candles on her birthday cake in February of 2008. By reading our daughter's Internet blog, "Gretchen's Ramblings," during the years since Becca's operation, we have followed her development, step by step. I have cut-and-pasted many happenings into the daily journal I have kept for the past 30 years. There are a long series of incidents, mishaps, and successes that mark her young life.

Bringing up a daughter with Ds hasn't been easy for either Gretchen or Mark, but the most amazing thing to us is that many people who have come into contact with Becca have grown to love and admire her. She can be a frustrating

enigma at times; but she is her own person, capable of astounding things. If there is enough room in this newsletter to mention a couple of these episodes, I will insert them here:

Several years ago, Becca was moved from her class to one made up of her age peers. One of the little boys in the class she left behind was being rewarded for some success by being allowed to choose his own prize. He asked that Becca be allowed to return to read a story to the little boy's class—*Green Eggs and Ham*.

Last October my wife and I were invited to see our granddaughter in a new setting—as a student in the classroom of a wonderful special education teacher, whom we know only by her first name, "Melea." Becca was working hard on the exercises she had been assigned. We had no idea that she was developing reading skills, until we read in Gretchen's blog that Becca was able

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