September 2019 Newsletter

DSAHV is Actively Seeking Volunteers:

If you are interested in joining our team and learning more about the responsibilities of our Board please contact 845-226-1630 or email info@dsahv.org. Meetings occur monthly and are held on weeknights from 6:30-8:30pm. Locations currently vary between Dutchess and Orange Counties

Meet our Board Members:

Michael Suarez - President
Tammy Winchheim - Secretary
Maha Golden
Amy Jett
Bonnie Ann Dombroski
Christa Wicklund – Self Advocate
Jessica Doering – Self Advocate
Jason Gehlert – Program Coordinator
Ashley Quitoni – Membership Coordinator
Tammy Gehlert- Educational Coach

This Newsletter is funded in part by a NYS Family Services Support (FSS) grant from OPWDD
Letter from a New Parent

Hmmm, what can I say. There were so many thoughts running through my head once I found out that my baby has Down syndrome. Eleven months passed with no real answers. Each week and month we went to see so many Specialist, who told us that he may have this or that. We have to do testing for this and that. Despite the test, my son passed all of them.

There were many times when I thought the diagnosis was wrong. How could he have this, he's doing so well. The opportunity came when he was born to test him. I was excited and nervous at the same time. Finally I would get some real answers. Does he or does he not have Down syndrome?

8 medical staff were in the delivery room. 10:20 am came and he was born. The nurse from NICU said he has characteristics but didn't confirm that he has Down syndrome. Then the heartache and pain came again. Not knowing where to begin or start.

Forty-eight hours past and we went to see his pediatrician. The doctor did some tests to see whether he had traits and could not confirm his diagnosis. Surprisingly on Valentine's Day, we had an appointment at Boston's Children's Physicians group in Westchester to start the process.

I was happy and excited that we could finally get some answers on his pending results. The nurse practitioner came in and did her exam. My son put on his best behavior only 4 weeks old. Smiling and holding her real tight. It's is almost like he wanted her to feel his heart. To let her know it was okay and that he didn't need an exam. He made his stance as everything will be alright.

It was beautiful to watch him smile. I had to hold back the tears so my husband couldn't see me crying. Then we went out for lunch and I couldn't control myself. Something in me said he has it. And the thoughts and fears that I had came to reality.

I started to daydream and think about what Nicole told me. An ultrasound technician from Dr. Heller's office. "She said you can be depressed all you want but when the reality hits you, being depressed isn't going to help your son?" Pick yourself up! Do research and educate yourself" and that is what I did.

I went on the internet and found the Down Syndrome Association of the Hudson Valley and completed a registration form. I was hesitant to put my name as a member because it was something that I experienced at work. Meaning I process claims for families who have Down syndrome children in their home. This was someone else's reality not mine.
Then I heard Nicole’s voice, press submit and I did. Few moments later, I got an email from Jason saying hi, and offering some assistance. At first I said to myself is this a joke? Who is this person emailing me? Do I tell him everything, will he judge me? Then an calmness came over me. We text the next day and I met his wife Tammy. An educator, she told me about her daughter Cara. Who also has Down syndrome. In my heart I felt it was right. Both Tammy and Jason made me feel human again. Gave me a sense of relief, someone who I could cry to. Someone to give me inspiration again. I had this beautiful son and I needed someone to validate how I was feeling.

Hands down I recommend DSAHV for their tireless work and efforts to assist families in the Hudson Valley to help with questions and support of families who have children who vary from infants to adults with Down Syndrome.

My life has changed, I asked God to give me something special from my 40th birthday. I got a special, wonderful son who makes my life complete. His challenge of Down syndrome is secondary. Just waking up to him. Holding him and seeing his smile is all that I need. He is my superman, my hero. And so is my family and support system. I could not have done it without the support of Jason and his wife. And Down Syndrome Association of the Hudson Valley. They are a god send and I am honored and grateful for their support.

Thank you, Fishkill resident.
NDSS Upcoming Events

2019 New York City Buddy Walk® at The Great Hill Central Park, NY
September 14th, 2019

The Buddy Walk® brings together people with Down syndrome and everyone from friends and family to teachers, politicians and co-workers — to promote acceptance and inclusion for people with Down syndrome and to raise funds for education, research and advocacy programs. All NYC BW funds raised go towards NDSS’ four core areas of programming:
1. National Advocacy & Public Policy Center
2. #DSWORKS® Employment Program
3. National Inclusive Heath & Sports Program
4. Community Outreach & Support

3rd Annual D.C. Golf Outing at Bell Haven Country Club Alexandria, VA
September 16th, 2019

Join the National Down Syndrome Society and a group of remarkable golfers on Monday, September 16 2019, at Belle Haven Country Club in Alexandria, VA to help raise awareness about the importance of inclusion and the value of individuals with Down syndrome in our community.

The mission of the National Down Syndrome Society is to be the leading human rights organization for all people with Down syndrome. The National Down Syndrome Society envisions a world in which all people with Down syndrome have the opportunity to enhance their quality of life, realize their life aspirations and become valued members of welcoming communities.
The Education Coaches Committee is comprised of a small group of mothers and advocates for children with Down syndrome. Together they combine information and resources for families to enable both parents and children to make informed educational and work-related decisions. They meet monthly to collaborate ideas in order to provide accurate and current information to families. Their goal is to help individuals with Down syndrome obtain the resources they need to lead productive and independent lives.

DSAHV members are always welcome to come participate in the meetings. Please RSVP to Tammy at gehlert@dsahv.org

**2019 Meeting Schedule**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Location</th>
<th>Time</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>September 24, 2019</td>
<td>Panera Bread – Fishkill NY</td>
<td>4:30pm-6pm</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>October 29, 2019</td>
<td>Panera Bread – Fishkill, NY</td>
<td>4:30pm-6pm</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>November 26, 2019</td>
<td>Panera Bread – Fishkill, NY</td>
<td>4:30pm-6pm</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Why I Like the "Think Ahead Program," at Dutchess Community College  
By: Christa Wicklund

My first reason is the campus is SO BEAUTIFUL! There are many trees and places to sit and study. The view outside our classroom window is great, especially in the fall, when the leaves change colors!

I also enjoy making new friends on campus, especially, Caitlin, James, and Gian-Carlo. I like to have lunch with them, and some of our staff members. We also went
on a field trip to the FDR Museum last semester. I learned about Eleanor Roosevelt, the famous First Lady.

I joined the Christian Fellowship Club and the Theatre Club at DCC. I like the people because they are very kind and nice to me. In the CFC, we share our thoughts, our faith, and sing worship music. The Theatre Club is fun when we do improv acting. It makes me laugh!

I like the "Think Ahead Program" because I like to participate in group work and projects. I like helping my classmates in Team Challenges. I'm looking forward to the fall semester because I am going to be a Senior, and graduate in May 2020. My new goals for next year are to improve my math skills, my time-management skills, and my communication skills with peers. I think this year will be great!

Pictures from Past Events
Yoga with Liz
Classes start September 14th
36 Raymond Ave, Poughkeepsie NY
Email Tammy at gehlert@dsahv.org for more information.

2019 Buddy Walk
Sunday, October 6th
11am – 3pm
Renegades Stadium

Donor Drive Link:
https://dsahv.donordrive.com/index.cfm?fuseaction=donorDrive.event&eventID=508

PO Box 161
Hopewell Junction, NY 12533
Like us on Facebook:
“Down Syndrome Association Hudson Valley”

Follow us on Twitter:
“DSAHV321”