



NEWSLETTER

Rio Grande Valley Down Syndrome Association, 2124 Katherine Avenue, Edinburg TX 78539
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A Note From the Board

By Deborah Tomai

What an amazing journey! In the past year, the RGVDSA has met over 100 individuals with Down syndrome and their families across the Rio Grande Valley. Many attended our first annual Step UP for Down Syndrome Awareness Walk, and others have connected via regular group meetings and family activities. Highlights included our Christmas Party and a wonderful celebration for World Down Syndrome Day in March.

But we are not just about events! Our mission is to build relationships, advocacy and support for individuals with Down syndrome and their families in the Rio Grande Valley.

This summer we will have activities organized by age groups. We're planning a playdate for our 0-3 year olds, a field day for 3-12 year olds, a swimming party for teens, and a bowling outing for adults. We held a Moms Night Out in June and are hoping to have an event for Dads later this summer.

I Saw God Today: Reflections On Step UP 2013

By Erika Maciel

Today I was emotionally overwhelmed with happiness. It was so amazingly awesome to see so many families supporting their child, brother, sister, cousin, uncle, aunt, neighbor that was born with that special extra chromosome that gives them light- Down Syndrome. Today my brother was treated as the perfect individual that he is. There were no "disabilities", no weird looks, no doubts, no fear, no "R" word, just SO MUCH LOVE! We were all one family of 1000+. Kin was treated with respect, as a friend, as a cool guy BY

Board Officers

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New parents will find additional support as we grow a welcome program for parents of newborns. Our Medical Outreach team is providing correct and current info about Down syndrome to local hospitals and physicians.

As members of the Board, it is vitally important to us that people with Down syndrome are *included* and *valued*. Families and friends of the RGVDSA can share resources and work together to improve the lives of individuals with Down syndrome throughout the Rio Grande Valley.



EVERYONE. People hugged each other even though we didn't know each other. I hugged, kissed, danced and carried so many angels today. Today was not only a Down Syndrome Awareness Walk.... It was a celebration to thank God for giving up his best angels to live a life with us on this planet. It is truly a gift, an honor to have been chosen to share my life with Kin. Today was full of smiles, laughs, hugs and even tears. I was amazed and grateful for our community, the media, our law enforcement and firemen. I SAW GOD TODAY!

Step UP for Down Syndrome!

Save the Date for Our 2nd Annual Awareness Walk:
 Saturday, October 11, 2014
 9:00 – 1:00
 Edinburg Municipal Park

Invite your family and friends to Step UP! This year, we will have music, food, bounce houses, cheerleaders, dancers, and activities for children and adults. Together, we will walk 1.5 miles in support of everyone with Down syndrome in the Rio Grande Valley. All funds raised will go toward maintaining and growing our local programs.

Families, schools and companies are encouraged to make teams – we will present awards for the most spirited team, the biggest team, and the top fundraising team at the Walk. Every team with over 15 members will receive a poster to be placed along the walking trail.

The RGVDSA will also recognize educators, therapists and community members who have



showed extraordinary support for individuals with Down syndrome. If you know of someone who has helped your family or another individual with Down syndrome in a notable way, please nominate them!

Online registration opens on Friday, July 11. Costs are \$15/adult, \$7/children (3–12), and free for individuals with Down syndrome. There is a \$5 discount for early adult registration, so sign up soon! The registration website is www.rgvdsa.org.

Summer Schedule

Playgroup (Newborn to 3) – Saturday, July 19
 Rosemary Orozco, rgvdsa_rosemary@yahoo.com

Preschool Pool Party (ages 3–6) – Thursday, July 31
 6:30–8:30 p.m., BT McAllen
 Nellie Salazar *, 956–827–6646

Elementary Pool Party (7–12) – Thursday, August 7
 6:30–8:30 p.m., BT McAllen
 Nellie Salazar *, rgvdsparents@yahoo.com

Teen Pool Party (13–19) – Friday, August 1
 7:00–9:00 p.m., BT McAllen
 Cindy LiVigni, c.livigni@yahoo.com

Adult Bowling Party – Friday, July 18
 Erika Maciel, info@rgvdsa.org, macielerika@aol.com

For info in English, call or text 956/314–0821. For info in Spanish, contact Violeta Yost at 956/207–9388.

