

Down in the Southland

Friends Don't Count Chromosomes!

Volume 1, Issue 3

June 2011

Ink on the Inc.

Information on the latest organizational happenings

Ok, maybe you can tell, I am trying out new titles for this regular little blurb in our newsletter. I didn't like the 'Chair' title, (which I borrowed from another newsletter)...it just didn't seem right for me. Anyhow, let me know what you think of the new title line, or if you have another good title in mind!

The past few weeks have been very busy behind the scenes of our group. Our Articles of Incorporation have been filed, our bylaws are being finalized and next, we apply for our 501c3 status! Our "Board" had it's first non-official, official meeting...and all went well!

We are getting ready to go into full swing for our walk in September. If you have expressed an interest in helping plan the Walk, you will be hearing from us soon! If we haven't heard from you...and you are willing to help, please let us know!

Do you have a great product that you have used with your child and think would help others? If so, please email as much information as possible to downinthesouthland-owner@yahoo.com so we can share in an future newsletter!

Spring and Summer Calendar!

We have added even MORE fun and exciting activities to our usual fun summer events! If you see an event on the calendar, and you don't receive an Evite at least one week prior to the event, please contact one of the board members to make sure your information is correct in the Evite system.

Check our [website](#) for our Spring/Summer Calendar of events!

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Bowling Sessions a First!

Join 'Kids Bowl Free' for free bowling

Down in the Southland will be having our first ever 'series' event! We will be bowling every Thursday from 6/16-8/18, starting promptly at 1:30pm, at [Oak Forest Bowl](#). The best price we could find is for each family to join the "[Kids Bowl Free](#)" program. This program gives each child a coupon for two free games for EVERY DAY of the week, for the whole summer, at the bowling alley of your choice! You may use any or all of the coupons and only need to pay for shoes (\$3.75 at [OF Bowl](#)) whenever you bowl! (See the [Kids Bowl Free](#) website for all of the details.) Each family is required to print and bring their coupons in order to receive free games. Give the coupons to Juliette, NOT the attendant behind the desk.



If you plan on bowling with us at [Oak Forest Bowl](#), be sure to register with Kids Bowl Free BEFORE you come to the bowling alley, so that you will have access to your coupons and can print AND CLIP (if possible) ;>) the coupons before you head to the bowling alley! Evites will be sent so we can set up the correct number of lanes and program the bowlers on each lane. We love to include family, so please let us know if you are bringing additional people, so that we can set up the lanes accordingly.

Thanks in advance for your cooperation!

Looking Back...



May Bowling Event a Huge Success!



Our first bowling outing was a great success! We had a great turnout and the kids enjoyed the bowling and the camaraderie...not to mention all of the dancing and high fives over all of those good throws! We even had a few strikes and a number of spares! Won't it be wonderful to see how much better they are by the end of summer? Sure hope you can join us for some fun, and a great opportunity for life long social skills and turn taking...not to mention a little PT! Sneaky moms, aren't we?!?! :>D

Parents, please go over the following 'bowling etiquette and safety' with your children before coming to our weekly bowling outing:

- When you are waiting to bowl, stay on the tile/down the step/near the chairs.
- When you are done bowling, go back down the step to the tile and wait for your turn.

Arriving 10 minutes before our start time allows each child to say hi to their friends, get their bowling shoes on and get ready to bowl. This also ensures that the other children are not waiting for long periods of time, which we all know can be difficult for children...and mom!

Please try to arrive with enough time to be ready to start bowling at 1:30.

If you have a child who is shy, or hesitant to 'get involved', arriving 15 minutes early can help! We can put him/her to work getting balls for everyone and help him/her warm up to the environment when there is no social pressure!

Lastly, if there are any moms who have signed up for the Parent bowling portion of 'KidsBowlFree.com' some of us will be staying to bowl after the kids are pooped out and get our bowling workout in! So we sure hope you can join us on Thursday afternoons!!

It's IEP Season!

Ways to add a personal touch to your IEP

Sometimes it's a good idea to break the ice at an IEP meeting and start with something fun or personal that sets the tone of the meeting. It helps create a sense of teamwork, celebrates your child's accomplishments and helps the people on your IEP team see a different side of your child than what they see at school. Something to help BLOW that stereotype of 'Ds' right out of their minds and help them realize that your child **is** a person who is capable! YOUR child is a complete person and not just a "Ds" that is on their list of students for next year. By adding that personal touch, it helps them know what your child can do and that they are MORE than their extra chromosome. Just a first step on the road to success for your child!

Some great ideas that have been used in the past:

- Make a montage of your child's abilities (reading, swimming, potty, making friends, playing with the dog, etc.) to an inspirational song like Natalie Merchant's *Wonder* or Martina McBride's *Anyway*. (Add a little bowl of popcorn and a bottle of water for each team member, and you are sure to start the meeting off on the right foot!)
- A picture of your child, cut into puzzle pieces and each person in the meeting gets an envelope with 'their piece of the puzzle' in it. They have to put it together...a way of realizing the importance of teamwork!
- A tie dyed "Friends Don't Count Chromosomes t-shirt for all team members, or make bookmarks with our "logo".
- Write a poem to all of the team members and, if possible, have your child read it to them.
- Read a letter, written to the team, thanking them for everything they give to all kids and for the years of expertise that they bring to THIS team for _____(insert your child's name here.) Then outline what your child's 'unique needs' are and how you want your child to succeed in school and life!



Choo Choo Johnnie's Is Always Fun!

We always have fun when we go to Choo Choo Johnnie's, and this year's outing in May was no different! The kids loved the train and the games! The highlight is, of course, having their dinner delivered on a train!

Happy Birthday!!!!

June Birthdays

Kaitlyn Blount 6/7

Brittany Gass 6/27

Aaron Gowaski 6/1

Caleb Harmon 6/17

Molly Marchionda 6/23

Josh Ratliff 6/26

The email address for Down in the Southland was incorrect in the last newsletter. The email address is correct throughout this newsletter.



Thunderbolts Game Info

Payment for the 6:05 pm [Windy City Thunderbolts](#) vs. Lake Erie Crushers on Sunday June 26th, 2011 is due to Juliette no later than Friday June 10th. Our group will be providing a subsidy for each ticket, so the final price is \$3 each. Parking is an additional \$2 per car, payable to the park on the day of the game. No refunds can be issued after Friday June 10th, according to Thunderbolt rules.

Please arrive at [the park](#) NO LATER THAN 5:40 so that you may get your tickets. The group will be entering the park at 5:45pm. If you arrive after that time, you may have to purchase your own additional ticket at the regular box office prices, as the group will already be seated and ready to enjoy the Star Spangled Banner with their families!

Thanks for your understanding and cooperation!

Sunday June 27th – Windy City Thunderbolts



LITERACY/TUTORING PROGRAM

OUR MONTHLY UPDATE ON THE TUTORING PROGRAM

The literacy/tutoring program is getting started. We are in the process of drafting volunteers to tutor and have a few students to get our pilot program underway! If you are interested in having your child participate in the tutoring program, please email Lisa @ downinthesouthland-owner@yahogroups.com Please put "Literacy Program" in the subject field.



ANNUAL PICNIC/WALK/FUNDRAISER

SAVE THE DATE!

Our annual picnic/walk/fundraiser is scheduled for Sunday, **September 18th**, 2011 at Jaycee Grove (aka McCarthy Park) which is located at 168th and 80th Ave in Tinley Park. Mark your calendars!!

MANY HANDS MAKE LIGHT WORK!

Our picnic/walk will only be as good as those who volunteer to help! We are looking for people to serve on the planning committee, as well as people to serve on subcommittees. Some of these jobs won't take a lot of your time, and WON'T necessarily take you away from your families on the day of the picnic either. That's our goal! If you can help, email the Walk Committee at downinthesouthland-owner@yahoogroups.com and put "Walk" in the subject field.

ON LINE FUNDRAISING

We will be using the same company that the Chicagoland Buddy Walk uses to create our on-line fundraiser. Hopefully this will provide us with a seamless transition from the Buddy Walk to our own walk.

What's in a Name?

PLENTY! We need a catchy 'name' for our walk, so if you have a good idea, please let one of the board members know!

Gym and Swim in Crestwood

You will note tentative dates on the calendar for regular gym & swim on Wednesdays throughout the summer! These tentative dates are based on the success of our first date, June 15th, so come on out and let's get the kids moving!! Siblings are also welcome and the fee is \$5 per child.

To express interest in attending, simply email downinthesouthland-owner@yahoogroups.com with "Gym & Swim" in the subject field.

Polished Girlz is Coming to Chicagoland!

On Saturday, June 18th, at 1:00pm 15 of our lucky 'girlz' (ages 5+) will be learning about hand washing and hygiene followed by the Polished Girlz signature "Polish" nail treatments! We still have a few spots left, so if you are interested in attending please email your name to downinthesouthland-owner@yahoogroups.com and indicate "Polished Girlz" in the subject. Evites will be sent, so watch your email and RSVP as soon as possible!

Down in the Southland

Board of Directors:

President: Juliette De Nova

Vice President: Lisa Pringle

Secretary: Rita Barnes

Treasurer: Peggy Marchionda

Member-at-Large: Rachel Thornberry

For more information about Down in the Southland email downinthesouthland-owner@yahoogroups.com

Or Call

Juliette 708-614-6118 OR Lisa 708-535-1438

QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS

Q: WHY DO WE NEED A LITERACY PROGRAM, WON'T MY CHILD JUST LEARN TO READ WITH THE REST OF THE CLASS?

A: CHILDREN WITH Ds ARE USUALLY VISUAL LEARNERS, WHICH MEANS THEY LEARN BEST WHEN THEY CAN ASSOCIATE A PICTURE WITH WHATEVER THEY ARE LEARNING. MOST SCHOOL PROGRAMS ARE GEARED TOWARD PHONICS AND AUDITORY (HEARING) LEARNING WAY TO READ...OUR KIDS VISUAL STRENGTHS ARE READY TO HELP THEM LEARN TO READ USING VISUAL TECHNIQUES BEFORE THEY ARE DEVELOPMENTALLY READY FOR PHONICS.

Q: MY CHILD ISN'T REALLY ALL THAT VERBAL YET (EVEN AT AGE 3 OR 4) SO SHOULD I WAIT TO PUT THEM IN THE READING PROGRAM?

A: NO! CHILDREN WITH Ds WHO ARE NOT YET VERBAL FLOURISH WHEN THEY CAN LEARN TO READ! STUDIES HAVE SHOWN THAT LEARNING TO READ USING THE STRATEGIES IN THE BOOK "TEACHING READING TO CHILDREN WITH Ds" ACTUALLY INCREASES THEIR VOCABULARY AND THEREFORE THEIR SPEECH! THE ONLY REQUIREMENT TO TEACHING YOUR CHILD SIGHT WORDS IS THEY LEARN 'SAME' AND 'DIFFERENT' FIRST. MOST OF OUR KIDS CAN LEARN THAT AROUND AGE 2.5 OR SO.

THIS SECTION OF OUR MONTHLY NEWSLETTER WILL PROVIDE ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS ABOUT OUR GROUP, OUR DIRECTION, OR ANYTHING ELSE THAT ANYONE WANTS TO ASK (RELATING TO DOWN SYNDROME OF COURSE!). PLEASE EMAIL QUESTIONS TO DOWNINTHESOUTHLAND-OWNER@YAHOOGROUPS.COM.

LOOK WHAT I DID!!

Each month, this space will be a place to share our children's recent accomplishments. Send your child's recent successes to downinthesouthland-owner@yahoogroups.com



On May 6, 2011, Molly Marchionda made her First Holy Communion! How beautiful!!

CONGRATULATIONS MOLLY!!!

Down Syndrome Awareness Bracelet

Down syndrome is the most commonly occurring chromosomal condition with more than 400,000 people living with Down syndrome in the United States. This bracelet has been created to show support for individuals living with Down syndrome.

This handmade bracelet consists of 21 freshwater pearls representing the extra 21st chromosome, and 3 Swarovski crystals to represent the extra, or 3rd chromosome in Down syndrome awareness colors, blue and yellow. Lastly, the sterling silver heart charm represents the love of each individual living with, or touched by Down syndrome and the many hearts they will touch.

If you would like to purchase this bracelet for someone living with Down syndrome, or just to show your support, please visit, www.jacqueline-diana-jewelry.com, under the Philanthropy link to view bracelets, prices and additional color options or contact Jackie at jackiedwargel@gmail.com.

A portion of the proceeds from each bracelet benefits Down in the Southland Non-Profit. Please show your support of the inspiring individuals living with Down syndrome and those who have been touched by an angel!