



2017 F.R.I.E.N.D.S. DOWN SYNDROME WEST FLORIDA ANNUAL REPORT

F.R.I.E.N.D.S. DOWN SYNDROME WEST FLORIDA

Families **R**aising, **I**nspiring, **E**ducating, **N**etworking for **D**own **S**yndrome

FDSWF is Non-profit 501c3, private operating foundation that was founded in 2007 by parents of children with Down Syndrome. FDSWF has grown from a membership of 35 families to 1,405 families, friends, and professionals in West Florida. FDSWF is the leading voice for Down Syndrome in the West Florida area and proudly serves Hillsborough, Pinellas, and Pasco counties. We have 2146 “Likes” on Facebook and have 30 followers on Twitter.

FDSWF MOTTO "I Can and I Will".

FDSWF MISSION

The Mission of F.R.I.E.N.D.S. DOWN SYNDROME WEST FLORIDA is to provide all encompassing educational and support services to families who have been impacted by Down Syndrome.

FDSWF GOALS

To provide financial and social service support, to advocate for our members rights, to provide educational outreach, and promote community integration for families impacted by Down Syndrome.

ANNUAL FOCUS

Our work for the 2017 year focused on:

1. Distribute our FDSWF Parent Packets to New & Expectant Parents.
 - a. FDSWF donated over 200 FDSWF Parent Packets, delivering them to twelve West Florida Hospitals in 2017.
 - b. We receive requests from BayCare and USF Genetics Department on a regular basis.
 - c. FDSWF mailed out 47 packets to new families.
 - d. The packets cost \$37 each.
2. Offer Scholarship funds to members to off set the costs of medical, educational, recreational, programs. Offset the costs of workshops and special needs conferences.
 - a. \$3,505.00 was paid out in scholarship funds to members.
 - b. Seventeen families attended the DS Conference in Orlando.
 - c. FDSWF paid for voice/singing lessons,
 - d. Two families attended the Hope Haven evaluation in Jacksonville.
 - e. FDSWF paid for Speech Therapy, IEP Consultations, swimming lessons, and tennis lessons.
3. Offer additional and consistent programing to our members, giving families the opportunity to explore new activities and meet other families.
 - a. Baby Friends Brandon – the playgroup is offered at We Rock the Spectrum and LoLo’s Playplace in Brandon each month.
 - b. Baby Friends Pinellas – the playgroup is offered at We Rock the Spectrum in Pinellas each month.
 - c. The Dads group met at the Aquarium.
 - d. Dream Tweens and FSC meet quarterly and events were held at SkyZone and Laser Tag.

4. We continue our partnerships with USF Early Steps, BayCare, The Arc, Bright Feats, and NDSS. We developed new partnerships with:
 - a. Cheryl Moscal - who offers IEP Consultations
 - b. Laurie Ohall, PA - who offers Guardian Advocate Workshops
 - c. Claudia Mitchell – who offers financial planning.
 - d. Special Olympics Healthy Florida – who offered a dental screening.
 - e. Able United – Able Accounts for our members.
 - f. DSAIA – Offers leadership, training, and support for FDSWF.
 - g. Global Down Syndrome Foundation – DS info and grant opportunities.
 - h. Buddy Cruise – Cruises for special needs.
 - i. Buddy Up Tennis – Tennis for DS
 - j. Dancing with Donations – Special needs dance classes
 - k. Positive Parenting- Parenting advice and workshops
 - l. Family Network on Disabilities – All special needs information.
 - m. Traditional Taekwondo – Taekwondo classes in Tampa.

5. FDSWF will provide more community gatherings for members, family, friends and professionals. FDSWF hosted community events with our:
 - a. March World Down Syndrome Day Picnic – To celebrate WDSM with our families.
 - b. FDSWF advocated in Tampa for Down Syndrome Awareness during the July 4th Parade.
 - c. We celebrated Down Syndrome Awareness at the July Down Syndrome Awareness Picnic.
 - d. Our first community event in Pinellas, the FDSWF Halloween Dance, was a success.
 - e. We advocated for Down Syndrome in the Pinellas Christmas Parade.
 - f. At our annual Holiday Party, over 250 families, came together for a catered dinner to celebrate the holiday season; FDSWF gave 117 children a holiday gift.

6. Increase Down Syndrome awareness/advocacy in the community by attending different fairs, expos, and workshops.
 - a. USF Baby Bulls in the Park Resource Fair.
 - b. USF Student Services Volunteer Fair.
 - c. USF Day of Service.
 - d. Community Roundtable at Brandon, Bloomingdale, and Riverview HS.
 - e. Temple Terrace Business Expo
 - f. FDLRS Resource Fair
 - g. We joined the Brandon and Temple Terrace Chamber of Commerce.

7. FDSWF held its 2nd Buddy Walk. Our Down Syndrome community, along with family, friends, and professionals, came together to advocate for Down Syndrome and to honor those we love who have Down Syndrome. Together we raised funds so that FDSWF can continue its programming and services.
 - a. We contracted DS Connex – a social media support expert; it was noted on its final media report that FDSWF reach over 4,000 people.
 - b. We contracted Cheryl Moscal for marketing and to find vendors for the duration of the Buddy Walk.
 - c. 2017 Buddy Walk raised more than \$62,000.

Thank you for participating in the FDSWF Buddy Walk. The walk around Raymond James stadium was inspirational, we are so grateful for your dedication and help raising Down Syndrome awareness. Know that you are making a positive difference in the lives of people with Down Syndrome and their families.

8. Update our website.
 - a. FDSWF hired Dyer Media to build FDSWF a professional website.
 - b. Content added:
 - i. About – FRIENDS, Mission & Goals, BOD, Parent Packets, Spanish information and Photo Gallery.
 - ii. Families – Calendar, Physicians Information and Video, Health Needs, Guardianships, Scholarships, Parent Packets, and Welcome to Holland.
 - iii. Programs – Baby Friends, Dream Tweens, Tampa Bay Teens, F.S.C., DS Adults, DS Awareness, Dancing for Donations and Traditional Taekwondo.
 - iv. Resources – Education, The Able Act, Community Partners Hospitals, Guardianship, Parent Packets, Transportation, and Videos.
 - v. Donate – How to donate to FDSWF, Buddy Walk, and What your donations are used for.
 - vi. FDSWF Store – Shop and buy your FDSWF t-shirts, bracelets, calendars.
9. Increase our Volunteers database.
 - a. FDSWF increased its Volunteer Database by joining Volunteer.com
 - b. Partnered with USF Student Services to match our families and young people with their non-disabled peers.