

Mile High Down Syndrome Association DOWN'S UPDATE

Serving Colorado and the Front Range Since 1981

THOUSANDS STEP UP AT ANNUAL WALK



PJ Bernardis and Jake Schroeder sing the national anthem.

By Tara Buddington

More than 3,500 people turned out for the Step Up for Down Syndrome Walk at City Park on September 26. The event raised more than \$240,000 to support the Mile High Down Syndrome Association which provides education, resources and support to people with Down syndrome and their families in partnership with individuals, families, professionals and the community.

"This is our largest fundraising and community awareness event, as well as a celebration of life," said Melissa Davis, Volunteer

and Event Coordinator for MHDSA.

On hand to help with that celebration were Congresswoman Diana DeGette, Miss Colorado Melaina Shipwash, Lisa Belkov-Snyder of Mile High Sports Radio and musical guest Opie Gone Bad.

Self-advocate PJ Bernardis and Jake Schroeder, lead singer for Opie Gone Bad, performed the national anthem.



Beautiful weather helped make the walk a huge success.

Radio Disney spun tunes to which participants danced, and former Denver Broncos were on hand signing autographs.

Team Tash was the top fundraiser, with \$11,771 raised. Other top fundraisers were: Alexander's X-Men, Kenleigh's Kause, Walking with Will, Team CAMA, Team Nick, Team Zoe, Drake's All Stars, Staci's Stinkers, Claire's Bears and Cracker Jack Team and the Rise School. Cromosoma del Amor, meantime, was the largest team, with 176 walkers.

Walkers were also able to visit with and gather information on a number of organizations and support groups, including the Rise School of Denver, which offers programs focused on the needs of toddlers and preschoolers with developmental disabilities. With the motto: "Where Special Kids Shine," the first Rise School was opened in Dallas in 1995 by a family whose son was born with Down syndrome. The same circumstance for a Denver family in 2000 was the catalyst for the opening of a school here in April 2003.

Other organizations participating in the associated resource fair were the Denver Adult Down Syndrome Clinic, The HILLS Inc., Adam's Camp, ARC of Jefferson County and the Anna and John J. Sie Center for Down Syndrome at The Children's Hospital, to name a few.



Children had fun with games and face painting.



Cheerleaders from Evergreen High School cheered on participants.



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The editor reserves the right to make corrections as appropriate and in accord with established editorial practice in material submitted for publication. Original items may be used if properly credited. Copyrighted items must have the permission of the originating author.

Down's Update is published six times per year by the Mile High Down Syndrome Association.

Community Groups

MHDSA Community Groups provide families with the opportunity to connect with other families in their area, form strong and encouraging friendships, plan outings and share information and resources. Call (303) 797-1699 to get information and locate a group in your community.

- Castle Rock Area** – 2nd Friday of each month from 6-8 p.m. (Birth-7)
Denver Area – Español – “Grupo el Cromosoma del Amor” – 4th Saturday of each month from 1-3 p.m. – in collaboration with El Grupo VIDA and PASCO (All ages)
Denver Area Grandparents/Extended Family – “Kinship Circle of Love” – 3rd Saturday of each month from 10 a.m.-noon
Ft. Collins Area – 3rd Friday of each month from 6:30-8:30 p.m. (Birth-8)
Greeley Area – BILINGUAL – 1st Friday of each month (Birth-5)
Littleton Area – 1st Friday of each month from 6-8 p.m. (Birth-5)
Longmont/Boulder Area – 3rd Friday of each month from 6:30-8:30 p.m. (Birth-18)
Longmont Area Grandparents/Extended Family – Meets quarterly (Grandparents, aunts, uncles and family friends)
Loveland/Ft. Collins Area – “Northern Colorado Circle of Friends” – 2nd Saturday of each month from 11 a.m.-1 p.m. (School age, 5-12)
Montrose Area/Western Slope – 2nd Saturday of each month at 7:00 p.m. (Birth-18)
**** NEW GROUP** North Metro Area/Broomfield/Thornton/Northglenn/Commerce City/Henderson/Brighton** – 1st Saturday of each month from 1-3 p.m. (Birth-12)
**** NEW GROUP** Northwest Colorado Chapter** – Serving Routt, Moffat, Grand and Jackson counties – Meets quarterly (Birth-18).
**** NEW GROUP** Northeast Colorado Chapter** – Serving Sterling, Twin Buttes, Wray, Brush, Crook, Atwood, Akron, Otis, Ovid, Sedgwick, Julesburg, Merino – Meets on the second Saturday of each month from September-May (except December) from 9:30 - 11:30 a.m. in Sterling (Birth - 18)
South Metro Area/Littleton – 4th Saturday of each month, time varies (School age, 5-12)
West Metro Area/Arvada/Westminster/Wheat Ridge/Lakewood Area – 3rd Saturday of each month from 2-4 p.m. (Birth-18)
DS-Autism Connection – Please email familyprograms@mhdsa.org to be invited to join our new listserv for families and providers (All ages)
Aging Issues Action group – Upcoming meeting is on 11/22. Contact director@denverdsclinic.org for more information.

COMMUNITY CALENDAR

<p>DS-Autism Connection Tuesday, Nov. 9 6-7:30 p.m. Beau Jo's Pizza, Arvada</p>	<p>Down Syndrome Educational Fund Seminar Saturday, Nov. 13 Check-in: 8 a.m. Denver Marriott-Tech Center</p>	<p>Aging Issues Action Group Monday, Nov. 22 9:30-11:30 a.m. Alzheimer's Association Office Denver</p>
<p>Buddy Walk on Washington Feb. 7-8, 2011 Washington, DC</p>	<p>DS-Autism Connection Coffee Friday, Dec. 3 10-11:30 a.m. Autism Society of Colorado Denver</p>	<p>MHDSA Holiday Party Saturday, Dec. 4 Downtown Aquarium Denver</p>
<p>International Mosaic Down Syndrome Conference July 8-10 Walt Disney World, FL</p>	<p>National Down Syndrome Congress Annual Convention August 5-7, 2011 San Antonio, TX</p>	

FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

A Time to Celebrate



Mac and his son Guion meet Miss Colorado.

What a great time to be involved in the Down syndrome community. There has been so much positive traction here in Denver and nationally that I am not sure where to begin, to be honest.

To blow our own horn here at home it is worth noting some of the success stories that we have experienced in Denver. As you will notice,

this entire newsletter is dedicated to our 14th annual Step Up for Down Syndrome walk. The feedback from the walk has been overwhelmingly positive. We raised over \$240,000 and once again had about 3,500 people participate in the day's activities. Local band Opie Gone Bad was a crowd favorite as was Radio Disney. We were also pleased to have Congresswoman Diana DeGette join us in the morning and help kick off the walk. DeGette was instrumental in the creation of the Congressional Down Syndrome Caucus in Washington, DC.

We are also pleased to see our long time community partner and MHDSA funder, the Anna and John J. Sie Foundation, announcing so many promising events in the last few months. From the appointment of Dr. Edwin McAbe as the Executive Director at the Linda Crnic Institute and the hiring of Dr. Francis Hickey as the Medical Director at the Sie Center for Down Syndrome, Denver is once again in the global spotlight. The Global Down Syndrome Foundation hosted another great evening with the "Be Beautiful, Be Yourself" Jet Set Fashion Show. Jamie Foxx attended the event to honor his sister DeOndra Dixon, who happens to have Down syndrome.

We haven't just seen great things happening here in Denver. Congressman Patrick Kennedy and Congresswoman Kathy McMorris Rodgers were recently honored for their work in the Down syndrome community. President Obama signed Rosa's Law, which will change the terminology used in health, education, and labor laws from "mental retardation" to "intellectual disability." And finally, a new website sponsored by Down Syndrome Pregnancy, downsyndromepregnancy.org, will help expectant parents learn more about Down syndrome and gain much needed support.

These are all examples of what is possible when we put our collective minds together and work hard for those living with Down syndrome.

So let's celebrate our success, look to the future, start making more changes where appropriate, inspire those who do not know our story, and work together to have the greatest impact possible.

Sincerely,

Mac Macsovit

A MESSAGE FROM MARIAN E. MASON *President of the Board of Directors*

Warmest Greetings MHDSA Community!

We sincerely appreciate all who participated in the 14th Annual Mile High Down Syndrome Association Step Up for Down Syndrome Walk in City Park. Celebrating Down syndrome awareness with over 3,500 other individuals was truly amazing and sends a clear message that this community is determined to build a better quality of life and create improved opportunities for individuals with Down syndrome.

Special thanks go to our generous sponsors, special guests, community resource organizations, vendors and volunteers. We are also so very proud of the dedication and hard work demonstrated by Mac Macsovit, MHDSA Executive Director, MHDSA's staff - Melissa Davis, Patrycia Hatten, Laurie Herrera, the Step Up Walk Committee, Team Captains and our Board of Directors.

It was a delight for my husband Paul and our daughter, Natassia, to walk through the finish line with our son, Oliver, who first brought us to MHDSA almost 7 years ago! Seeing the members of our community reuniting for such an important cause warmed my heart and, I am sure, the hearts of everyone who attended!

Over the last 30 years, MHDSA has tirelessly supported individuals with Down syndrome, their families and care providers. This organization will continue to provide valuable services and support to infants and toddlers, school-age children and adults. We are determined to develop additional programs, based on the needs of the Down syndrome community. We embrace individuals of all ages, ethnic and cultural backgrounds and economic levels. We wish to make a greater difference and encourage you to share your ideas and needs with us.

While we have made great strides, let us not forget to consider the life expectancy and challenges of many individuals with Down syndrome just a short thirty years ago. There is still much work to do! Ongoing advocacy and heightened awareness of Down syndrome are critical and true to MHDSA's mission.

Our mission is to assure inclusion and enhance independence of people with Down syndrome. We achieve this by providing education, resources and support in partnership with individuals, families, professionals, and the community.

MHDSA strives to reach every individual with Down syndrome in Colorado and beyond. While we will continue to focus on new families entering the Down syndrome community, we are planning to deliver additional programs and services for children of all ages and adults.

Your contributions make a difference and there are volunteer opportunities available to enhance the impact. Please contact our office to learn more.

Thanks again for your support of the Step Up for Down Syndrome Walk!

Let's continue to make a difference together!

Cromosoma del Amor Rallies the Most Supporters

Cromosoma del Amor, a support group for Spanish-speaking families with a child with Down syndrome, fielded the largest team at the Step Up for Down Syndrome walk with an amazing 176 members. This is only the team's second year participating in the walk so its achievements are particularly impressive.

Luisa Diaz, the team's captain, noticed a few years ago that there were very few Spanish-speaking families participating in MHDSA's annual fundraising walk. She attributed the low numbers to several factors, including language, isolation, registration process, time, and money.

Luisa knew she could make a difference so she started talking to families at their monthly meetings about participating in the walk. This year, twenty families and friends heeded her call and participated.

Luisa and friend Maria Chacon start planning for the walk in June. They organize fundraisers as well as drum up enthusiasm in the Spanish-speaking community. On the day of the walk, besides having a great time, Luisa is busy helping



With 176 participants, Cromosoma del Amor is largest team.

team members get their t-shirts and wristbands and get organized to walk together.

For Luisa, seeing the sense of community and joy in the face of her fellow team members makes it all worthwhile. The resource fair was also very useful in making connections with the community and allowed Luisa to reach out to new people as well.

Cromosoma del Amor's success in motivating its members to walk for a good cause is an inspiration to the rest of us.

Luisa's advice to new families? "The walk is fun. Register your team, talk to friends and relatives and you will see people around you willing to participate and support you and a good cause: MHDSA."



The Kennedy family enjoys their first walk.

Finn's First Walk

The Step Up for Down Syndrome walk is a great introduction to the local Down syndrome community for many families with a baby with Down syndrome.

This year, Finn Kennedy, all of six months of age, made his first appearance at the walk, but it won't be his last!

Finn's mom, Kayleen, is enthusiastic about the family's experience and says it will definitely become a yearly event for the family. "The walk was wonderful. I didn't know what to expect because it was our first one, so I didn't go into it expecting anything but maybe a place to make some connections with other families. I also wanted to see if I could get more information from other service organizations on how to help my son Finn in the future as he grows. I think my daughter Rowan had the most fun though. She loved the games and all the cool things there that kids could do, especially the face painting!"

Many families with a baby with Down syndrome go through an adjustment phase after their baby is born. The walk helped the Kennedy family connect with organizations that provide support and assistance to new families. Kayleen says, "After the walk, I felt very optimistic. The support that is available for people with Down syndrome is incredible, almost overwhelming, and I know my husband and I are

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Tash's smile inspires many to donate!

Team Tash Top Fundraiser

Perhaps the team to travel the farthest to the walk, Team Tash, managed nonetheless to raise the most money for the Step Up for Down Syndrome walk: a whopping \$11,771.

Team Tash first formed in 2007 after Tashtyn RayAnn Mendoza-Werner—"Tash" for friends—was born with Down syndrome in Rocky Ford, Colorado—165 miles from Denver. That first year, her parents Kali Mae and Todd sent letters to their closest friends and family and were amazed at the support they received. Over one hundred people came to walk and Team Tash raised \$10,000.

Since then, Team Tash has been on a roll. This year, Todd organized a "fundraiser for the fundraiser"—the 1st Annual Tee Up For Down Syndrome Team Tash Golf Classic in La Junta. Local radio station KBLJ covered the event live and a silent auction of items solicited from local businesses and friends helped raise more than \$7,000, which went towards Team Tash's contribution to the Step Up for Down Syndrome walk.

The Mendoza-Werner family looks forward to the walk all year. Tash's siblings Triston, Teagan, and Torrin, often talk about the walk. Friends and family ask when the next Team Tash fundraiser will be.

Part of the excitement is because the walk has become a major event for Team Tash. The more than one hundred team members travel from Denver, Greeley, Colorado Springs,

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Volunteer Corner



VOLUNTEER SPOTLIGHT

In every group of people, there is always one who goes the extra mile. While there are many volunteers who were outstanding and contributed a lot of time and energy, there is one who really sticks out. I'd like to introduce to you Hans Konstabel of the Step Up for Down Syndrome Walk Planning Committee. Hans has been a part of the committee for two years and is not afraid to get his hands dirty. When there is work to be done, he gladly pitches in.

I found myself short staffed during the week leading up to the walk and despite his busy work schedule, Hans pitched in and helped get the job done. In

addition to working full time, he provided more than 27 hours of volunteer time in one week! He generously sacrificed much of his personal time (and sleeping hours) that week to help us accomplish all of the necessary tasks in preparation for the walk.

You may not have seen Hans at the walk. He was not assigned to the most glamorous position. He made certain the trash containers were monitored and the liners were changed. In addition, he set up the water stations, placed signage on the walk route and executed many other tasks behind the scenes.

There is no job too small for Hans Konstabel. Thank you for "Stepping Up" with your warm smile and can-do attitude!

With Gratitude,
Melissa Davis

Step Up Walk Volunteers

Two hundred and seventeen volunteers helped make the 2010 Step Up for Down Syndrome a huge success. That's a lot of people! Volunteers worked in a variety of positions: food preparation, trash clean up, unloading trucks, parking, tent set up, volunteer check-in, games and activities, information, and much, much more. As Volunteer and Event Coordinator, I am deeply grateful for the way the community came together and lent a helping hand. Hosting an event for 3,500+ people takes a lot of planning and manual labor and would not be possible without an army of volunteers.

Civic groups came from all over the Denver metropolitan

area to show their support. In no particular order, I'd like to extend a special thanks to the following organizations for providing groups of volunteers to assist with the walk: Civitans of Aurora, Mile High Civitans, Civitans of Castle Rock, Regis Men's Soccer Team, Magis at Regis, Regis Psychology Department, CU- AMC students, Financial Alignment Partners, Girl Scouts Troop #2771, Boy Scouts Troop #12, CAMA, Rite of Passage, Grandview High School Poms, Evergreen High School Poms, Unique Litho, Macy's, Kohl's, Grant Ranch School NJHS, Jan Blankennagel of JTB Events, and friends and family of Mary Ann Barwick. Thank you all for the impact you made and for making the day possible!

MHDSA Aided by Dedicated Helpers

As you all know, MHDSA is run by a very small, dedicated, and professional team. We accomplish much with our little team, but we could not meet with the



success that we do if it were not for those dedicated individuals who volunteer, serve on our Board, or work for us as contract laborers for greatly reduced rates. We are very fortunate to have one such person who works closely with Executive Director Mac Macsovits and Board Treasurer Beth Leon.

Mary Ann Barwick has been working with MHDSA as our bookkeeper for over a year now and her help and leadership in this area have proven invaluable. Mary Ann comes to the MHDSA office at least once a week to help organize and reconcile our various bank accounts. She pays bills and aids in the creation of the various reports that we use to track our financial standing as an organization. But her professional skills are not the only things that make Mary Ann a standout part of the MHDSA family.

This past September Mary Ann also agreed to be one of the lead members of the Registration Team for the Step Up Walk, which involved attending off hour meetings and dedicating her time and energy above and beyond what she had been doing as our bookkeeper. If that wasn't enough, Mary Ann solicited and received the help of her husband, sons, sister, cousins, friends, and neighbors to come out to the walk and volunteer. Mary Ann also introduced MHDSA to Jan Blankennagel (founder of JTB Events) who helped us organize a successful inaugural golf tournament and the most successful walk in our long history. Without Mary Ann, we never would have met Jan!

To see this little "army" of volunteers that Mary Ann had assembled reminds us why what we do is so important: it matters to the community and makes Colorado a better place for everyone to enjoy.

So, a simple thank you to just one of the very special people that help make our work possible. Without people like Mary Ann, Kerrie, Lisa, Hans, etc. who give so much of themselves selflessly we would not be the organization that we are.

Free Identification Cards

Some individuals with Down syndrome have a tendency to wander off. If this is the case for your loved one with Down syndrome, you won't want to miss the opportunity to get a free identification card at the Holiday Party.

Seth Huber, a Boy Scout with Troop 365, will be setting up a booth at the party that will provide a free identification card to all interested individuals as part of his Boy Scout Eagle project. The card will include fingerprints, a detailed description, and a photograph. This information will be compiled and laminated and then given to the caregiver. Seth will be assisted by the Denver Police Department. The booth will be open throughout the event.

Identification cards are important to have on hand. If someone gets lost, their caregiver can give this identification card to the local police department. This will aid with the search efforts. Please come and get your identification cards at the holiday party!

Seminar on Health Issues for Individuals Ages 12 & Up

We are fortunate here in Colorado that the Down Syndrome Educational Fund organizes seminars on a regular basis on a variety of Down syndrome-related topics from the top professionals in the field.

This fall's seminar addresses the health issues facing adolescents and adults with Down syndrome. World-renowned experts Dr. Brian Chicoine, M.D. and Dennis McGuire, Ph.D. will be the speakers.

Date: Saturday, November 13

Check-in time: 8 a.m.

**Where: Denver Marriott-Tech Center,
4900 S. Syracuse St.,
Denver, CO 80237**

**Cost: \$15 per person
\$25 per couple**

**RSVP by calling (303) 636-4700 or
go to www.denveroptions.org**

New Resource for Expectant Parents

By Sarah Hartway

A new nonprofit, Down Syndrome Pregnancy, Inc., launched the website www.downsyndromepregnancy.org on October 1. By the fourth day of existence the website already had attracted almost 3,000 visits from all over the United States and 49 countries.

The website, featuring a free downloadable pregnancy book, *Diagnosis to Delivery: A Pregnant Mother's Guide to Down Syndrome* by Nancy McCrea Iannone and Stephanie Hall Meredith, will provide a new resource to expectant parents to help them as they await the birth of a baby with Down syndrome. Other publications are in progress and a blog is now active as well.

In recent years, the area of prenatal testing has become more sophisticated, and more accurate blood tests are on

the horizon for next year. Expectant parents learning about a Down syndrome diagnosis spend four to six months waiting for the birth of their baby and wondering about the future. This book is a practical resource for women who are moving forward with a Down syndrome pregnancy.

Iannone and Meredith, both parents of children with Down syndrome, recognized that expectant mothers with a prenatal diagnosis face some unique challenges that were not being specifically addressed in current literature. The authors understand the sense of isolation and grief after receiving a diagnosis and the sense of empowerment and validation that comes from understanding the condition and connecting with others.

Finn's First Walk

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looking forward into the future with great hope."

Highlights of the walk for the Kennedys were the face painting, the games for the kids, and the great spirit of love and acceptance they witnessed as other members of their team cheered people with Down syndrome on. Kayleen compared the entire event to a big tailgate party, with parties, music and events for all.

This year, Finn's contingent was composed of his parents, his sister, and his grandmother. Next year, however,

Kayleen has big plans. A school teacher in Douglas County, she will be tapping into her large network of colleagues and friends: "This year I wanted to "feel" the walk out, but I know that next year I will definitely organize a team with all my friends and people that I work with at school. Many people asked me about the walk since they knew I was going and told me that I'd better ask them to join Finn next year. I don't know if we will be a top team, but I am sure we will have many people supporting us next year."

Watch out, Team Tash and Cromosoma del Amor! Next year you might have some competition from Finn and friends!

Team Tash

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Holyoke, Eagle, La Junta, Rocky Ford and Nebraska to participate in the fun. They usually come the night before and stay at a hotel.

Kali Mae says, "It has almost become like one big family/class reunion. The day of the walk we just show up and walk. We catch up with old friends and family, enjoy the entertainment, and in the end our hearts are rejuvenated to see and know we are not alone in our journey."

For Kali Mae and Todd their greatest joy, however, is watching Tash at the walk. "Our absolute favorite thing is to watch our

daughter cross the finish line each year. The first two years it was in a walker or in someone's arms, the third year she walked across the finish line, a little unsteady, but she did it—hand in hand with her sister. This year she ran across with a smile. It lit up so many other faces with smiles...and filled our hearts with joy and our eyes with tears!"

The Mendoza-Werner family values the sense of solidarity they experience at the walk and encourages new parents to join in the walk: "You will be amazed by the jolt to the soul that you are not alone, inspired beyond words by the other families and even more so by the beautiful individuals with Down syndrome."



DENVER ADULT DOWN SYNDROME CLINIC

What a great year it has been for the Denver Adult Down Syndrome Clinic! We recently participated in the Step Up for Down Syndrome walk Resource Fair and had the opportunity to meet and talk with many families. Our ALIVE class also put together a team of nearly 30 walkers who raised over \$2,600! Thank you very much to Scott Quicke and all the volunteers who came out to City Park for the walk.

The Clinic is heading into an exciting time of growth and change as we begin a search for a new full-time Executive Director. If you or someone you know is interested, please visit our website at www.denverdsclinic.org and download the job description. Our board is also embarking on a strategic and organizational plan and we look forward to our future growth and continued service to adults and adolescents with Down syndrome.

For information about all our programs and upcoming events, please visit us online at www.denverdsclinic.org.

Team Photos

Team photos were offered by professional photographer, Barry Mariash of Photo Colorado. They are available for viewing and purchase by visiting www.wix.com/photocolorado/pc. You will find a link beneath the words "to view photos." Click on the link and select "Step Up for Down Syndrome walk" in the drop down menu. You will need to provide an email address to enter the site. 10% of your photo order will be donated back to MHDSA.

Memantine Trial Needs 4 More Participants!

Dr. Alberto Costa, MD, PhD, an associate professor of medicine and neuroscience at the University of Colorado Denver's School of Medicine, is conducting a groundbreaking study on the effects of memantine, an FDA-approved drug for Alzheimer's Disease, on young adults with Down syndrome. He needs just four more participants in this rigorous study to see if memantine works to improve cognition and memory. So far, 36 young people have participated in the study.

Dr. Costa needs four individuals who match the following criteria: a young woman age 18-21, a young man age 22-28, a young woman age 26-32, and a young man age 26-32. If your son or daughter fits these criteria, please contact Dr. Costa at (303) 724-6007 or Alberto.Costa@ucdenver.edu.

Rosa's Law Eliminates Terms "Mentally Retarded" and "Mental Retardation" from Federal Law

On October 8, President Obama signed into law legislation that eliminates the terms "mentally retarded" and "mental retardation" from federal health, education, and labor laws.

Named "Rosa's Law" after the little girl whose case inspired the legislation, the new law will replace the previous terms, deemed offensive and hurtful by many in the disability community, with the terms "intellectual disability" or "individual with an intellectual disability."

Nina Marcellino, whose nine-year-old daughter Rosa has Down syndrome, was upset to see that her daughter had been labeled "retarded" at school in Anne Arundel County, Md. After successfully changing the legislation in Maryland, Marcellino, assisted by Senator Barbara Mikulski, fought for changes in terminology at the federal level.

"Just like Rosa's Law hit a chord in Maryland, it hit a chord in the U.S. Senate," Senator Mikulski said. "This law is about families fighting for the respect and dignity of their loved ones. It was driven by a passion for social justice and compassion for the human condition. And it's a perfect example of citizen advocacy."

Why is "the R-word" so offensive to many? According to Soeren Palumbo, co-founder of the Special Olympics' Spread the Word to End the Word campaign, "Although originally clinical terms introduced with good intentions, 'mental retardation' and 'retard' are used in everyday speech to degrade people with intellectual disabilities in movies, on TV, online, in the classroom and beyond. The R-word is an outdated reference that must be recognized for its hurtful impact on this population and universally changed to positive language echoing inclusion and acceptance."

MHDSA Is Looking For Leaders

One of the programs MHDSA offers to families is our community groups. These community groups offer families with Down syndrome an opportunity to meet other families, offer support, share information and have fun! Currently MHDSA is looking for a facilitator for the North Metro Community Group, which serves the Broomfield, Brighton, Thornton, Northglenn, and Henderson communities. We are also in need of a facilitator for the East Metro Area Community Group, which serves Aurora and Commerce City. Each of these groups has several families who are anxiously waiting for the group to begin. Groups meet anywhere from once a month to once every three months depending on the facilitators' and groups wishes. MHDSA offers group facilitation training for the leaders and on-going support. Please contact Patrycia at patrycia@mhdsa.org or call (303) 756-9979 for more information.



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Please join us
for the
MHDSA Holiday Party
at the

**DOWNTOWN
AQUARIUM**
AN UNDERWATER ADVENTURE

DENVER, COLORADO

**Saturday, December 4
9:00-11:30 a.m.**

The party will include a buffet breakfast, photos with Santa, entertainment, and free ID cards. The cost is \$5 per person and RSVPs must be received by **Wednesday, Nov. 24** at **(303) 797-1699**.

