

# *Connections*

*The Down Syndrome Association of Hamilton Quarterly Newsletter*

*Spring 2014*



**DOWN  
SYNDROME  
ASSOCIATION  
OF  
HAMILTON**

*It takes a village to raise a child*



Welcome to our first newsletter of the year; we plan to make its distribution a quarterly event. We hope you find it insightful, informative, refreshing and most of all, we hope this provides you with an immediate connection to the wonderful work that the Down Syndrome Association of Hamilton is conducting for all its members and friends. The newsletter is also your communication channel. Please help us populate it by sending us your information, stories, photos, anything you would like to share with all members. We hope you will be part of this communication journey!

*The Down Syndrome Association of Hamilton Communications Team*





## 21 Quotes

Inspired by member Adelle Purdham's beautiful article, '*21 reasons why I love my baby with Down syndrome*', <http://www.thespec.com/opinion-story/4367548-21-reasons-why-i-love-my-baby-with-down-syndrome/> and to celebrate World Down Syndrome Day, we are looking for 21 quotes to feature in the blog section of our new website – send your short quote to [contactus@dsah.ca](mailto:contactus@dsah.ca) and tell us what Down syndrome means to you and your family. Please forward these to us by **Wednesday March 19, 2014.**

## World Down Syndrome Day

DSAH will be on the news – watch **Morning Live** on CHCH TV on Friday March 21 at 7:50 am when Jennifer Crowson, her son Owen, and Alana Wade will be speaking about World Down Syndrome Day and why it is important to all of us.

## Visit to Christina's Tortinas Shop

We are doing a ROAD TRIP!!! Come and join us to visit a truly unique and special cupcake store in Brampton on World Down Syndrome Day (see flyer page 4)





# JOIN US & CELEBRATE!

## March 21, 2014

To commemorate and celebrate World Down Syndrome Day, the Down Syndrome Association of Hamilton (DSAHA) is organizing a road trip!! We are excited to visit a cupcake store like no other; a shop that has become an international sensation: We are visiting **Cristina's Tortina Shop** in Brampton. If you are not familiar with the story, please read on:

Mary Iusso is President and Proud mom to Cristina, the little girl born with Down syndrome who is the inspiration behind Cristina's Tortina Shop Inc (CTS). The shop was created for her daughter Cristina and other individuals with Down syndrome. CTS showcases the employee's capabilities to customers who visit the shop. As Mary notes in the several interviews she has received, CTS employees develop a sense of **accomplishment** and **confidence** in their own learned abilities and develop a sense of **leadership** and **camaraderie** as a member of the cupcake team and society. DSAHA wants to support the work that Mary and her team at Cristina's Tortina have embarked on! Let's celebrate Cristina and our loved ones born with Down syndrome on this World Down Syndrome Day!

### Details:

**Date:** March 21, 2014

**Time:** We plan to arrive at the shop for **10am** sharp stay until 12 noon

**Address:** 17 Ray Lawson Blvd, Unit 9 Brampton, ON L6Y 3L4

RSVP by March 19<sup>th</sup> to [contactus@dsah.ca](mailto:contactus@dsah.ca) telling us how many people in your party are coming –we want to give the team an idea of how many cupcakes to make!

**NOTE:** Let's STAND OUT from the crowd! Wear your Buddy Walk T-shirt and celebrate ALL ABILITIES!

**Mother opens cupcake shop where all the employees have Down Syndrome because of her daughter: "I promise to change the world for you, one cupcake at a time."**



**Cristina's Tortina Shop**  
— SHOWCASING CAPABILITIES —





We have developed a few pieces of marketing & promotional material to help us showcase our Association, our members and Down syndrome in general. Enclosed you have copies of such said pieces to bring to your attention. We will have prints of all of these and can be made available to you or if you wish to have us mail a piece to a professional, please let us know. You can also download them in PDF format from our website.

### **DSAH Information Brochure**

Intended to be distributed to doctors offices, schools, recreational centres and any other location where our message can reach parents and young children. Provides an overview of DSAH's organization and programs as well as general information on Down syndrome.

Print copies will be available on March 21<sup>st</sup>. See pages 6 and 7 for an example of this tri-fold brochure.

### **DSAH WDSO Poster**

We are taking our message of awareness, acceptance & inclusion to as many elementary schools in Hamilton. See our newly developed poster (page 8)

Like the message? Download a copy of the poster from **our website** and post it at your place of work, church, recreation centre! Spread the message and create awareness this **World Down Syndrome Day**.

# Outside image of tri-fold DSAH 2014 Brochure

## Our Background

The Down Syndrome Association of Hamilton was formed in 1982 by a small group of committed parents of children with Down syndrome. These parents came together to share their experiences, feelings, hopes, and expectations for their children and their future.

These parents wanted to exchange information of medical and educational nature as it related to Down syndrome. They shared one set of common needs: to support, learn from, and rejuvenate one another.

## Our Mission

The work conducted by the Down Syndrome Association of Hamilton, as a not-for-profit charitable organization, run exclusively by volunteers, includes:

- Providing support for parents & families
- Providing information to the community & professionals
- Encourage development and support for community programs that enrich the lives of those living with Down syndrome



The Association works toward creating an inclusive society in which all people with Down syndrome are supported in reaching their full potential and are treated as equal and active citizens of our community.

## Affiliations

The Down Syndrome Association of Hamilton holds active seats on the **Special Education Advisory Committee (SEAC)** at each of the local Boards of Education

DSAH is also an affiliate member of the **Canadian Down Syndrome Society** and a member of the **Down Syndrome Association of Ontario**.



## Connecting with Us!

Visit us at [www.dsah.ca](http://www.dsah.ca) to find more information on our association, events, and links to local and national resources. Other ways of getting in touch with us include:

Email: [contactus@dsah.ca](mailto:contactus@dsah.ca)

Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/dsah.ca>

Twitter: <https://twitter.com/DSAHamilton>



POST OFFICE BOX 372  
HAMILTON, ONTARIO L8L 7W2  
CHARITY NUMBER 119230225RR0001

Down syndrome may direct our parenting journey in a *different* path but *joy and beauty* can be found in this unexpected journey.



*DSAH is a not for profit organization that serves families of children and adults with Down syndrome and interested professionals in the Hamilton and surrounding areas*



## About Down Syndrome

(with excerpts from The Canadian Down Syndrome Society)

Down syndrome, also known as Trisomy 21, is a naturally occurring chromosomal arrangement that has always been a part of the human condition. The occurrence of Down syndrome is universal across racial and gender lines, and it is present in approximately one in 800 births in Canada.

Down syndrome is **not** a disease, disorder, defect or medical condition. It is wrong to refer to people with Down syndrome as "suffering from" it. There are some medical conditions that are more commonly found in people with Down syndrome, but advances in diagnosis and treatment have greatly reduced the impact of these.

While individuals with Down syndrome do have some physical features in common, they resemble their family in appearance and temperament much more than they do each other.

As members of society, individuals with Down syndrome benefit from loving homes, education, positive public attitudes and a supportive community environment.



## We can help you & your child on this journey

We offer a diverse range of programs aimed to provide information and education, in an effective manner, to everyone involved with Down syndrome in our community.

### Meetings

These take place on a monthly basis. They can include organizational updates, guest speakers, a social time to share ideas & concerns.

### New Parent Connection Opportunities

Becoming parents to children with Down syndrome can be stressful and confusing. Experienced parents can visit new parents upon request in-hospital or in-home to provide them with up-to-date resources, information, and support.

### Parent & Child Networking Group

Held at an Ontario Early Year centre to allow small children and their parents an opportunity to connect in a fun environment. Check our website for details.

### Funding for Therapies

Involved members have the opportunity to receive a bursary that can be utilized to cover therapy expenses such as speech therapy. Other eligible activities include camps and community programs.

### Funding Supporting Education Events

The Down Syndrome Association of Hamilton provides funding support to members wishing to attend the Down Syndrome of Ontario Conference and the Canadian Down Syndrome Society's Annual Conference. There is also funding available to members for other educational events and conferences.



### Programming

The association supports its members in attending programs in the community (for example, sign language classes, swimming lessons and music programs) and it also develops its own programs for members (for example, cooking classes for teenagers and young adults and dance classes).

### Community & School Support

Upon request, members are available to speak to community groups, schools, and at special events geared to promote awareness, acceptance & inclusion of Down syndrome within our community.

### Lending Library

A portable library is available. It includes books for parents, children, siblings, and professionals. Some educational videos and newsletters from other associations are also available.

### Social Events

Spending social time and sharing experiences with other families who share a commonality can be rewarding for both you and your child. Special events include a Christmas party, Summer Picnics, Halloween Party, Moms & Dads Night-outs among others.

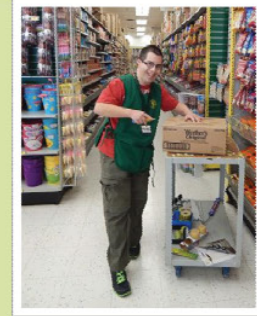
Inside image of tri-fold DSAH 2014 Brochure



**I learn, just like you**



**I play, just like you**



**I work, just like you**



**I volunteer, just like you**



**I make friends, just like you**

**Raise awareness, reach out to learn more, get involved and become a volunteer! Reach us at [contactus@dsah.ca](mailto:contactus@dsah.ca)**

### ABOUT DOWN SYNDROME

- Also known as Trisomy 21
- A naturally occurring chromosomal arrangement
- People with Down syndrome are welcome into all aspects of life in their communities. They go to schools with their peers, have jobs, and do volunteer work with others.
- They build wonderful relationships with friends

### LOOKING FOR MORE INFORMATION?

Please connect with us:

**Website:** [www.dsah.ca](http://www.dsah.ca)

**Email:** [contactus@dsah.ca](mailto:contactus@dsah.ca)

**Facebook:** [www.facebook.com/dsah.ca](http://www.facebook.com/dsah.ca)

**Twitter:** <https://twitter.com/DSAHamilton>



### ABOUT WORLD DOWN SYNDROME DAY

World Down Syndrome Day (WDSD) is a global awareness day which has been officially observed by the United Nations since 2012. Each year the voice of people with Down syndrome, and those who live and work with them, grows louder. But there is still so much more we can do.

*DSAH is a not for profit organization that serves families of children and adults with Down syndrome and interested professionals in the Hamilton and surrounding areas*



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## Social Media and DSAH

**March 21** – World Down Syndrome Day marks the launch of our new ‘look’ website! Please visit us at [www.dsah.ca](http://www.dsah.ca). Our website promises to be a wealth of information and inspiration for new and current members and other supporters in our community.

Thank you to all our members who forwarded pictures to us of your beautiful children. We welcome more photographs and will make an effort to feature all of our children.

You can also connect with us via Facebook & twitter, you will be pleased and surprise at the number of our followers!



[www.facebook.com/dsah.ca](http://www.facebook.com/dsah.ca)



<https://twitter.com/DSAHamilton>

**SOMETHING  
BIG  
IS COMING!**





## **Member recognized for his volunteer work**

John Corbett, the Board's new Fundraising Director, received **The Volunteer Award** from his employer **The Future Shop** for a sum of \$1,000, to donate to a charity of his choice. John chose DSAH. John was recognized for his contribution to the community through volunteerism and fundraising. John was an instrumental member of the Buddy Walk team last year and is chairing the Committee this year.

Thank you John for all that you do and thank you the Future Shop for this very generous donation.



## **Volunteers.**

Speaking of volunteers....we want to start the process of recruiting volunteers for different events held throughout the year, but in particular for our upcoming Fundraising walk. Do you have a teenager son/daughter who is looking to build volunteer work hours? We would love to hear from them!

Send us a note to [contactus@dsah.ca](mailto:contactus@dsah.ca) and let us know if you are interested in participating!





## **DSAHA is heading to the CDSS conference – Fredericton 2014 (May 16-18)**

Each year, the Canadian Down Syndrome conference showcases cutting-edge developments and information from specialists in their respective fields, as it relates to Down syndrome. Information from medical, health, social, educational and advocacy programs will be shared through plenary and keynote speakers, state of the art reviews, panel discussions and presentations. For more information on the conference – visit [www.downsyndromeconference.ca](http://www.downsyndromeconference.ca) or call 1-800-883-5608.

DSAHA would like to support some of our members to attend the conference. We have \$2,500 to be divided equally amongst interested members (to a maximum of \$1,000 per member).

**If you are interested in attending please email us at [contactus@dsah.ca](mailto:contactus@dsah.ca) by APRIL 1, 2014.** We will ask that members who attend with the support of DSAHA that they bring back their learning from the conference and present it to our wider membership at a future information session.

**Canadian Down Syndrome Conference**  
Delta Fredericton Hotel — May 16 to 18, 2014

*Join us in Fredericton!*  
*Discover Hidden Potential*

[www.downsyndromeconference.ca](http://www.downsyndromeconference.ca)

Canadian Down Syndrome Society  
Société canadienne du syndrome de Down

FREDERICTON & AREA DOWN SYNDROME SOCIETY  
SOCIÉTÉ DU SYNDROME DE DOWN DE FREDERICTON ET DES ENVIRONS



## **Programming updates**

DSAH fully funded a group of families to attend a Kindermusik 8-week session this past winter. It was extremely successful and it is fair to say... we have some budding musicians on our hands!! The children, (three and under) were able to experience different musical sounds, movements, song and dance. It was fun for both the children and adults.

Thank you Jessica Zilberbrant and Blossom Yoga for offering this to DSAH at a reduced cost. There is a plan for DSAH to support a second session of this wonderful program in the Fall. Details on how to sign up will be available in the summer.

### **UPCOMING**

Swim abilities and Teen Connections – see flyer page 9 (**summer registration still possible and will be funded**)

Cooking class – back by popular demand.... Watch this space. Preliminary planning is underway to run a DSAH cooking class for our young people. If you are interested in getting involved in setting this up, please email us at [contactus@dsah.ca](mailto:contactus@dsah.ca)





# 2014 SPRING-SUMMER PROGRAMS



The Down Syndrome Association of Hamilton (DSAHA), in partnership with the City of Hamilton, Recreation Office, is proud to offer our members the opportunity to participate in one of their Adapted Programming sessions.

DSAHA will fully fund the enrolment of members with Down syndrome in ONE of the following programs:

- 1- SwimAbilities (10 spots)
- 2- Teen Connections (8 spots).

*Details of each of the programs is presented page 2 of this flyer. Brief description is found at the end of this flyer.*

**NOTE:**

The association will pay for a one-time, 9 (or 8) class session, taken in either the SPRING or SUMMER 2014.

Space is limited to a FIRST EMAIL, FIRST SERVED basis. Deadline for signing up: **MARCH 15<sup>th</sup>, 2014.**

PLEASE let us know if you would like to participate by sending a note to our Programs Coordinator Alyson Kowalchuk at [scouters\\_girl@cogeco.ca](mailto:scouters_girl@cogeco.ca) with the following details:

- a) Name of member (s) participating
- b) Age (s)
- c) Program you are choosing –and level based on description see note below .
- d) Location you prefer based on description on page 2.

**SwimAbilities:**

A Learn to Swim program for children (3-18 yrs old) with special needs.

There are 3 levels, Beginner-Parent and Tots/Splash ABC; Intermediate- Splash A+ B+C+/Swimmer 1, 2, and Advanced Swimmer 3 and higher.

Participants in this class must provide their own volunteer to be present in the water with the swimmer.

**Teen Connections:**

This recreational program is designed for teens ages 16 to 21 who have special needs and can participate semi-independently with a ratio of one staff to 5 participants. Participants can recreate and form connections with other teens and engage in activities including, cooking, active games, crafts, swimming, fitness, group team building and much more.





**Friday March 21, 2014** - World Down Syndrome Day – visit to Christina’s Tortinas (flyer in earlier section). You can visit their website for more information:

<http://www.cristinastortinashop.com/>

Again, if you are interested in joining the group, we will be meeting there at **10 am**.

**Sunday April 27, 2014 at 2 pm** - Family Bowling party – details to follow

**Thursday May 22, 2014** - DSAH Annual General Meeting –@ 7 pm at Community Living Hamilton. Join us for dinner, an informative speaker (TBA) and entertainment for the children.

We will also be reviewing the year and holding elections for the Board. Currently, there are three vacant positions on the Board – two members at large and one self-advocate. If you are interested or know of a self-advocate who is and if you wish to discuss it further please email Jennifer at [jencrowson2@gmail.com](mailto:jencrowson2@gmail.com)

**Wednesday July 2, 2014** – DSAH heads to the Blue Jays ! More details will follow on a separate email BUT save the date and keep your eyes open.





## MARK YOUR CALENDARS Sunday September 28, 2014 –

**The Hamilton Walk for Down Syndrome** (The Walk 2014) formally known as the Buddy Walk. Following on from the immense success of the Buddy Walk last year comes our very own **Hamilton branded walk**. Our goals remain the same, to raise funds to support DSAH and to raise awareness about Down syndrome in our community. It promises to be a fantastic day: watch for more details on our website and follow us on Facebook for regular updates.

Comments, questions, suggestions, email us at: [contactus@dsah.ca](mailto:contactus@dsah.ca)

