

DSAM highlights

2008
annual report

Who we are and what we do:

The mission of the Down Syndrome Association of Memphis & the Mid-South is to support and empower people with Down syndrome and their families. We seek to promote inclusion of all individuals with Down syndrome by providing families and our communities with up-to-date information and education, enhancing public awareness of the inherent worth, value, and contribution of these individuals to society and fostering positive attitudes regarding people with Down syndrome.



What a year for DSAM! In 2008, we implemented new programming focused on helping our children and self advocates to succeed in the public school systems, we expanded our staff to support the new programs, we hosted another record breaking Buddy Walk, we bid a fond farewell to our first Executive Director, Jawanda Mast and we hired Alyson Edwards as our new Executive Director.

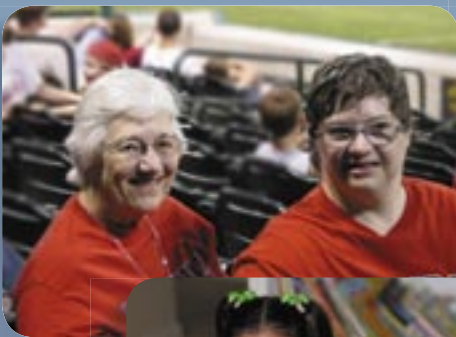
The strategic planning work that we completed in 2007 clearly indicated that our community needs programming in education, employment and independent living skills. Knowing that we cannot do all of these at once, we made 2008 the year of education. With the cooperation of our board members, staff and volunteers, our pilot group of Down Syndrome Education Specialists from Memphis City, Desoto County and Shelby County have completed a few education training sessions and started the process of sharing their knowledge with other teachers in their districts.

With the addition of our new staff members, DSAM has greatly increased and improved our ability to communicate with you. The weekly email update, DSAM Happenings, is reaching a mailing list of thousands to provide a constant stream of program announcements to help our families get the help that they need. The implementation of our family database has helped to ensure we reach all families without sending duplicate mailings to the same homes.

What can you expect from DSAM in 2009? First is our inaugural annual conference, Focus, Aim, Achieve, to help educate and train self advocates, families, educators and other service providers. Second is an expansion of the education programming to include more education specialists from the public school systems. Finally, an employment committee made up of board members and business leaders will begin the process of building employment programming that provides meaningful employment opportunities for our self advocates.

We have the planning and momentum to make 2009 a great year for our community. However, we still need your help. Even with the hard work of our small paid staff, we need volunteers to make the programming for our families and self advocates a success. Volunteers with varying skill sets are needed in all aspects of our organization. If you have the time and desire to help us create a vibrant and supportive community for our families and self advocates, please contact us.

*Sincerely,
Alyson Edwards, Executive Director
Mike Karst, Board President*



Our 2008 Highlights



Community Outreach & Awareness

- Parents & Schools in Partnership - The Down Syndrome Association of Memphis & the Mid-South has developed partnerships with the Memphis City Schools, Shelby County Schools and DeSoto County Schools, the key areas served by DSAM. The project trains educators and parents on best practices in working with individuals with Down syndrome in the educational arena. Additionally, volunteer educators receive specialized training to serve as Down Syndrome Specialists for individual schools or geographic areas. These specialists serve as a resource to teachers who have students with Down syndrome in their classroom.
- Host the web site www.dsamemphis.org – Provides current information, resources, community events and other helpful sites and links.
- Produced and distributed four quarterly newsletters and two Buddy Walk newsletters with an average mailing of 1000 families per newsletter.
- Produced and distributed two editions of Inclusion Solutions newsletters to 12 Down Syndrome Specialists and additional educators throughout the Mid-South.
- Co-sponsored the 2008 RISE (Restructuring for an Inclusive School Environment) Beyond Access conference for teachers and parents.
- Sponsored Company d, a performing arts troupe of 15 teenagers and young adults with Down syndrome and other disabilities, and provided funds so Company d could attend and perform at the National Buddy Walk in New York City.
- Partnered with Les Passes to support Kids on the Block. This Puppeteering program reaches 25,000 students in public and private schools throughout the Mid-South. KOTB shares a message of building self-esteem and acceptance of those who are different.
- Planned, organized and hosted the 11th Annual Buddy Walk, the largest disability awareness event in the Mid-South, which counted more than 4,200 participants.
- Partnered with Special Kids and Families through sponsorship of the Bunny Run.

Family Education, Training and Support

- Introduced Dads Appreciating Down Syndrome (D.A.D.S.). D.A.D.S. see themselves as an action group rather than a support group. These are not the type of people who gather to whine about having children with Down syndrome. Instead, D.A.D.S. are in the community coaching their kids' sports teams, participating in IEP meetings, volunteering at local Down syndrome fundraising events and even sponsoring fundraising events of their own.
- Distributed approximately 45 new parent packages and books to parents of newborn babies with Down syndrome in the Mid-South.
- Provided stipends for families to attend the National Down Syndrome Congress Convention in Boston. Twenty family members were able to attend.
- Hosted the North Mississippi Down Syndrome Awareness Picnic with more than 200 in attendance.
- Hosted several community education workshops about topics such as STEP training, Medicaid Waiver, Transition 101, Financial Planning and How to Choose a Preschool.
- Partnered with several Mid-South organizations in offering the FIRM (Family Information and Resource Meetings) held quarterly to provide support to parents/ caregivers of individuals with disabilities.
- Hosted social events for networking opportunities for families including Zoo Day, RiverKing's Night, Grizzlies Night, Red birds Outing, Memphis Tigers Tailgate party and Game, New Mom's Brunch and New Parents Cook-out, Holiday Party and Mom's Night Out.



Strategic Plan Review

DSAM's view of success involves:

- a fully inclusive community
- inclusive public school programs
- available community workplace opportunities
- individuals leading productive lives (meaningful jobs & independent housing)
- every parent and the medical community is educated about Down syndrome

Programming Priorities

- 2008 - the year of education with strong programs aimed at serving individuals with Down syndrome that attend public schools
- 2009 - the year of employment to provide significant employment opportunities for DSAM clients
- Future programs will improve independent living options and address aging issues



Strategic Plan Goals

- Goal 1 - Programming: Based on needs assessment, we will deliver priority programs that enhance the lives of individuals with Down syndrome and their families across the life span.
- Goal 2 - Awareness: Increase awareness and acceptance of people with Down syndrome by educating the public about what people with Down syndrome have to offer.
- Goal 3 - Resources: Provide the resources to support organizational programming and awareness including funding, staff, volunteers and collaborations.
- Goal 4 - Board Governance: Develop governance processes that strengthen the board.
- Goal 5 - Financial Planning: Ensure that the financial processes are in place to support the organization's growth.
- Goal 6 - Collaborations: Continue to strengthen collaborations with other organizations with missions that align with the DSAM mission.



What is on the horizon for DSAM?

- Tweeners workshops including art classes and manners & social skills classes
- Self-Advocate Scene with trips for dinner & theater and cooking classes



2008 Financial Review

Fundraiser events

- Christmas in July Shopping Extravaganza, \$1,200 raised
- 1st Annual Buffalo Wild Wings Golf Tournament, \$4,500 raised
- 11th Annual Buddy Walk of the Mid-South, Over 4,000 attended, \$150,000 raised
- 4th Annual First Citizens Silent Auction, \$3,600 raised

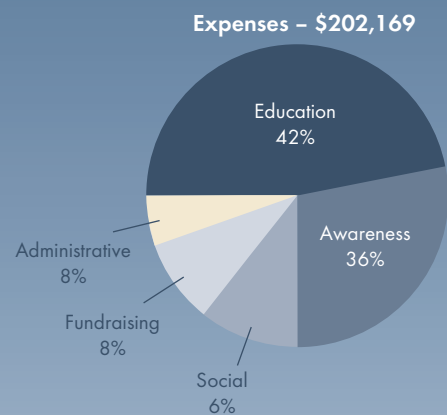
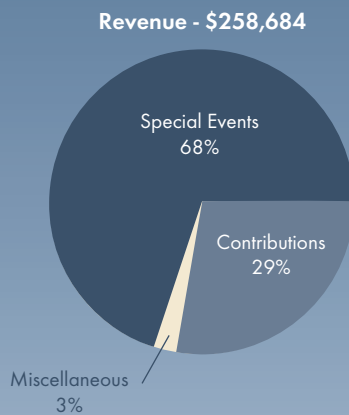
Financial Statement

Revenue - \$258,684

- Special Events - \$175,131 (68%)
- Contributions - \$75,327 (29%)
- Miscellaneous - \$8,226 (3%)

Expenses - \$202,169

- Education - \$84,911 (42%)
- Awareness - \$72,781 (36%)
- Social - \$12,130 (6%)
- Fundraising - \$16,174 (8%)
- Administrative - \$16,174 (8%)



2009 DSAM Board of Directors

President, Mike Karst
Vice President, Mark Price
Treasurer, Mark Olivito
Secretary, Chandra Evans
Amanda Cash, Self-Advocate
Aggie Coughlin-Fratta
Manuel DeTuya
Marie Dodson

Carolyn Graff
Joel Halvorson
Martine Hobson
Lauren Powers
Jessica Smart, Self-Advocate
Nina Staples
Brandon Wann

Staff

Executive Director, Alyson Edwards
Communications Manager, Kelli Polatty
Administrative Assistant, Sonya Oliver

