

FEBRUARY ■ 2011



Down Syndrome Digest

SNOW FLAKES & DIAMONDS GALA IS A HUGE SUCCESS

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GALA WAS AN EVENING TO PROMOTE AWARENESS AND RECOGNIZE VOLUNTEERS

RRVDSS's 5th Annual Snowflakes and Diamonds Gala was held on Saturday night, January 29th, 2011. The Gala, which raises money for the organization and promotes awareness, was a huge success enabling the organization to continue its work with individuals in the area.

The festivities included a silent auction, that consisted of 20 different themed baskets and a live auction of 8 items. Money raised from the event will continue to fund programs, such as Buddy Baseball and free tutoring at the REACH center for individuals with intellectual disabilities.

When asked how she felt the Gala turned out this year, gala committee member Sabra Vaughan responded, "The 2011 Snowflakes and Diamonds Gala was once again a great success! Everyone who attended the practically sold-out event seemed to have had a really good time. The annual event is not only an opportunity for members to have fun, but an opportunity for members of the community to learn more about our organization, programs and services. It is also our opportunity to recognize our volunteers who make our events so successful and the educators who are doing an outstanding job educating our students who have intellectual disabilities in the general education setting."



RRVDSS member, Susie Stewart (individual with Down syndrome) enjoys a dance with speaker, Tray Turner at the RRVDSS's 5th Annual Snowflakes and Diamonds Gala on Saturday night, January 29th, 2011.

The following awards were given to those individuals that make our organization a success. Volunteer Group of the Year (College Church of Christ Youth Group), Volunteer of the Year (Crystie Dawson), Educators of the Year (Prairiland ISD and Blossom Elementary- Superintendent Jeff Ballard, Principal Brad Bassano, and Teachers Dana Nutt, Melanie Padilla and Paige Clark). This year a special award was given. The Shining Star award was presented to Marth Vincent for her outstanding service and dedication in supporting the mission and goals of the Red River Valley Down Syndrome Society.



SAVE THE DATE:

BUDDY BASEBALL REGISTRATION ENDS FEBRUARY 28TH
SEASON BEGINS MARCH 26, 2011

2011 BUDDY BASEBALL SEASON

The Red River Valley Down syndrome society is happy to announce it has begun plans for its 6th Season of Buddy Baseball. Buddy Baseball is a program for children with intellectual and physical disabilities to be able to enjoy the benefits of participating in the game of baseball. Any child aged 5-17, with intellectual disabilities, physical disabilities, is encouraged to play. The child will be given a "buddy" to remain with them on the field and assist them in playing the game.

Register online or in person on February 12th or 19th from 10am-2pm at the Lamar Avenue Church of Christ.

We are also looking for "Buddies" for our buddy baseball players. Buddies assist the players on the field and in the dug outs. Buddies must be 12 yrs. of age or older by March 26th, 2011. They must also have a release form signed. To register to be a buddy and to download release forms, go to www.rrvdss.org/buddybaseball

Supporter available are available for purchase. You can purchase these online at the Buddy Baseball website, by emailing info@rrvdss.org or by calling the REACH Center at 903-783-1922.

For more information about Buddy Baseball, contact Sabra Vaughan at sabra1963@sbcglobal.net.



'85 Buddy
Baseball

Registration: February 12th and 19th
Lamar Avenue Church of Christ
10am-2pm

ONLINE REGISTRATION FOR BUDDY BASEBALL IS
AVAILABLE AT WWW.RRVDDS.ORG/BUDDYBASEBALL

TEXAS LEGISLATIVE SESSION OFFERS ADVOCACY OPPORTUNITIES

The 82nd Texas Legislature convened on Tuesday, Jan. 11, 2011, with adjournment set for Monday, May 30.

The disability community is calling for everyone to become involved in advocacy efforts during the session to minimize cuts to services and supports because of the looming budget shortfall. There are numerous ways individuals can impact the legislative process, from contacting your representatives to attending legislative hearings and rallies.

How to Get Involved

Step 1: Educate Yourself

*Visit the **Texas Legislature Online** website (www.capitol.state.tx.us) to follow the action and create a list of bills to track.

*If you don't already know, find out **who represents you** in the Texas Legislature at www.fyi.legis.state.tx.us and contact them through a phone call, email or letter. You can also schedule an appointment to meet with your legislators and tell them how their decisions on the

state budget and lawmaking affect you and your family.

Step 2: Stay in the Loop

*The **Disability Policy Consortium** (www.dpctexas.org) has a **Texas Action Center**, where individuals can register to receive announcements on disability issues.
*The **Texas Council for Developmental Disabilities** (www.txddc.state.tx.us) has a wealth of information.

*The Texas **Governor's Committee on People with Disabilities**

(www.governor.state.tx.us/disabilities) invites Texas citizens and disability organizations to sign up to receive Legislative Issue Reports which are sent each Friday during the session. To receive reports, send an email to Angela English.

And of course RRVDS will pass along important Federal and State legislative information in the newsletter. Be sure to watch your email in-box for time-critical advocacy alerts.

NEWSLETTER CHANGES AND NEW WEEKLY UPDATES

Due to the ever increasing and changing technology that our society has to offer, Red River Valley Down Syndrome Society recognizes the need for up to date and current information getting into the hands of our members in the fastest and most efficient means available.

We have found that email communication with our members is the quickest and most efficient way to get current and need to know information to everyone.

Therefore, in 2011 we will shift our newsletter to a quarterly format instead of the monthly format we have used in the past.

In addition to our quarterly newsletters, our members can look forward to receiving weekly updates in their inboxes.

These weekly updates will have upcoming meeting information, important legislative and advocacy information, upcoming events and other things that we believe our members will want to know about.

Also, please remember that if you would like to have the quarterly newsletter emailed to you so that you receive it as soon as it is published, we can set that up for you as well.

“GROW WITH ME” PROGRAM

Red River Valley Down Syndrome Society is looking for any interested participants to become involved in a new group in the Paris area called "Grow With Me".

This group would meet at the REACH center one Saturday morning every other month for 90 minutes.

The group would be for children ages 0-4 years and their parents. Children and parents would be involved in activities

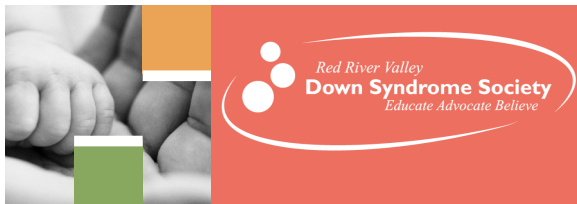
that focus on age appropriate needs.

The 90 minutes will also involve a time for a question and answer session as well as an opportunity for parent support.



The meeting will be facilitated by a certified **Special Education Teacher** and parent of a child with **Down Syndrome**.

If you are interested in participating or for more information please contact Tiffany Phillips at tphillips@rrvdss.org or call 903-982-7547.



**Non-profit
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Paris, TX**

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URGENT-UPDATED CONTACT INFORMATION NEEDED

If you are missing some of the weekly updates or know a member who isn't receiving them or other information; we may need to update your contact information. It is very important for RRVDSS to keep its contact information on its members current. Please email any contact changes to info@rrvdss.org.

**PLEASE CONTACT
RRVDSS AT 903.783.1922
OR VISIT WWW.REDRIVERDSS.ORG
FOR MORE INFORMATION.**

Board Members:

The RRVDSS is taking applications for Board members. All members of the RRVDSS are encouraged to join the board. Your input is important to us and important to make this organization a success.

To join, please go online at www.rrvdss.org to print our an application or call the REACH Center today. Return your completed application RRVDSS at PO Box 6455 Paris Texas 75461-6455 or fax it to 903-783-1922.