

Red River Valley Down Syndrome Society

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Newsletter
March 2006

The Down Syndrome Association of Los Angeles Applauds FOX's Decision on the "R" Word

March 10, 2006



Red River Valley

Down Syndrome Society

Los Angeles, CA - Peter Ligouri, President of FOX Broadcasting Network will lock out the word "retarded" from FOX Productions according to Lawrence Jacobs, General Counsel of Fox Entertainment Group and News Corp in New York in a response to the Down syndrome Association of Los Angeles (DSALA).

Public demand has brought FOX to this decision. The National Down Syndrome Society in New York Received phone calls from concerned parents about a promo airing during FOX's top grossing show "American Idol" for the upcoming comedy series "The Loop." The promo included the statement "you have a retarded squirrel look on your face." NDSS alerted Gail Williamson, Executive Director of the DSALA and long time media advocate for people with disabilities. Williamson contacted Lawrence Jacobs who had come to her aid on a previous media issue. Jacobs' concern got the studio to pull the promo, but was told it was too late to re-edit the first episode of "The Loop" due to premiere on Wednesday, March 15th following "American Idol."

The National Down Syndrome Society (NDSS), the National Down Syndrome Congress (NDSC) and the Arc of the U.S. have fought this fight before but never has a studio heard and responded to their concerns with such a definitive

response. Jacobs reported that Ligouri felt if the use of the word offended a group of people this much it should be left out of any program they produce. Williamson and the DSALA have been campaigning to keep the word "retarded" from being used in the media to slam someone or something for many years. She reports "the word exists on the medical charts of over 2 million people world wide trying to fit into their communities participating in education, employment, living, worship and recreation opportunities; it is extremely dangerous to use it as a derogatory term. This casual use of the word meant to offend can escalate to isolation, segregation and even abuse of people with intellectual disabilities."

Jon Colman, NDSS Acting Director, applauds Ligouri for this groundbreaking decision. "NDSS is pleased with Fox's response and hopes that other studios and networks will review how their Standards and Practices Departments govern the use of the word as well" said Colman.

Upcoming Events

- ◆ Mom's night out March 21, 2006.

Support Group Meeting

The support group meeting for this month has been cancelled due to spring break. We will continue our monthly meetings in April. I hope everyone has a great spring break! See you next month.

Mom's Night Out

We had a great time at our first mom's night out! If you didn't have the opportunity to come in February, Please try to make it this month. We are going to meet at Capizzi's at 6:30 on March 21, 2006. If you are going to be able to join us please call Tara Swindle at 903-785-1072. Hope to see you there!

Buddy Walk Preparations Begin

Although October seems a million miles away, time for our annual Buddy Walk will be here before we know it. If you would like to be involved in this year's Buddy Walk as a Project Chairperson, please contact Deanna Tharpe by phone (903) 517-2236 or by e-mail (dtharpe@rrvdss.org). This year, our duties will be divided even more due to the large response to last year's walk and more volunteers will be needed.

World Down Syndrome Day is March 21

Down Syndrome International has designated March 21, 2006 as the first-ever World Down Syndrome Day. The date was chosen to signify the uniqueness of Down syndrome in the triplication (trisomy) of the 21st chromosome and is use synonymously with Down syndrome. The center of the global festivities will be in Singapore, where the Down Syndrome Association of Singapore and DSI are planning a full program of activities, including a Buddy Walk. For more information, visit <http://www.worlddownsyndromeday.org/>

Happy Birthday!



A.J. Burtis
March 10, 2006
2 years old



Molly Fisher
March 22, 2006
3 years old



Joel Tharpe
March 26, 2006
5 years old



Charlie Wilkerson
March 10, 2006
6 years old

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