

down syndrome

community connections

February 2022

STEP UP FOR
Down Syndrome
Celebration WALK



reflecting back & looking ahead!

a message from the executive director

Friends of the Down syndrome Community,

As we step out of 2021 & into 2022, we reflect on how far we have come. As a community, as a nation, as a world, we have evolved into believers, doers, fulfillers, & seekers of betterment of life for all mankind. Our pursuit of improved lives for people with Down syndrome begins again each day & our hope, our work, & the core of who we are & what we do lies in the belief that each day brings new opportunities. These opportunities unfold & manifest through perseverance, dedication, determination, & collaboration of individuals & entities who refuse who give up. Every donation breathes hope into the continuation of what we have started & what we intend to see through. We will meet every family where they are. We will be there for support, information, education, & celebration. Our desire to make lasting change for individuals with Down syndrome & their families begins with those who believe in & support our mission. The future of people with Down syndrome rests in the generosity of those who believe with us.

We dream of days without the concern over COVID, but until then, we will continue to provide socially distanced & virtual events so that we can serve families where they are. Our unwavering goal of standing with & for the most vulnerable individuals in our community hasn't changed. In-person events offered will provide space for

adequate and safe distancing. Virtual events are being offered and will continue to be in the coming months. The thought of coming together again in the future in health is thrilling! Until that time, count on DSAF to continue to accommodate members by providing masked, distanced, and virtual programming.

As more individuals and families reenter the community vaccinated, we will support and encourage participation and healthy lifestyles by increasing our offerings. Please visit our website, www.dsafnebraska.org, and register for events! We have increased strength training classes and added more age groups to encourage engagement. Our fundraising efforts will also increase and we will continue to advertise these online. Follow us on social media, register, donate, and stay connected!

I look forward to seeing more of you in person in 2022!

With Warm Regards,

Jamie Rejda
Executive Director

our mission

THE MISSION OF THE DOWN SYNDROME ASSOCIATION FOR FAMILIES OF NEBRASKA IS TO IMPROVE THE LIVES OF INDIVIDUALS WITH DOWN SYNDROME, BY EMPOWERING THEM AS WELL AS EDUCATING AND SUPPORTING THEIR FAMILIES AND THE LARGER COMMUNITY.



Help Make a Difference. *Give Today.*



The Choice Is Yours.

Founded by Nebraska nonprofits for Nebraska nonprofits, Give Nebraska makes it easy to donate to the local causes you care most about. Through our convenient payroll deduction system, your donations will be automatically withdrawn from your paycheck — so you'll never have to worry about making or scheduling payments yourself.

Every Donation Makes a Difference

With the Give Nebraska giving model, no gift is too small. Whether giving \$1 or \$5, your dollars, combined with contributions from workers across the state, are critical in supporting the communities our organizations serve.

How It Works

- 1 Choose your cause(s).
- 2 Decide on the amount you want automatically deducted from your paycheck.
- 3 Multiply that number by the number of pay periods in a year for your total gift amount.
- 4 Pat yourself on the back for being one incredibly generous individual.

Payroll Deduction Amount	Total Yearly Gift if Paid Monthly (12)	Total Yearly Gift if Paid Semimonthly (24)	Total Yearly Gift if Paid Every Other Week (26)
\$1	\$12	\$24	\$26
\$2	\$24	\$48	\$52
\$3	\$36	\$72	\$78
\$4	\$48	\$96	\$104
\$5	\$60	\$120	\$130
\$10	\$120	\$240	\$260
\$15	\$180	\$360	\$390
\$20	\$240	\$480	\$520



"I knew when my son, Ethan, was in the NICU 13 years ago that a lot of the information that I researched and received about Down syndrome was not the most current or up to date. The information limited what the expectations of our kids with Down syndrome should be, and my husband and I wanted more for him.

I'm proud to say that the Down Syndrome Association for Families of Nebraska (DSAF) has been a driving force in Nebraska over the past decade for providing positive, current, and accurate resources for individuals and families. DSAF helps improve the lives of people with Down syndrome and builds support and relationships throughout our community. Every person with Down syndrome deserves to feel like a star. When they are involved in DSAF, everything from our logo to our programming reflects the star inside each of us.

Thank you for helping people with Down syndrome succeed. Thank you for helping them shoot for the stars.

We're Stepping Up for Down Syndrome 15 Years and Counting

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I always get a sense of pride every year seeing Nelnet listed as a sponsor on our walk t-shirts! Working for a company that cares for you professionally and personally is a blessing.

Thank you, Nelnet.

- Eldren Echternkamp



Echternkamp Family

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Thank you, DSAF, for your support of our community's families.
We're with you, every step of the way.



NelnetInc.com/nelnet-serves/

#NelnetServes



member spotlight:

marti jacobsen

story by mary sweeney

Marti Jacobsen is a bubbly 23-year-old from Kearney who will steal your heart the moment you meet her with her charming personality, spunky pink hair, and outgoing nature. You'd never know she had to survive three heart surgeries as an infant, has been hospitalized many times for pneumonia and RSV, struggled to speak until the second grade, and had alopecia areata which caused her to be bald for nearly 10 years.

With a smile on her face, she shares that she has two sisters and one brother and is the proud aunt to six nieces and nephews. If you ask her what she likes, she gushes about her love for her two kitties, Oreo and Snickers, and her passion for art.

Some parents might worry about their child with Down syndrome as they get older, wondering if they will have things to do. Well, this girl will prove to you there is nothing to worry about! Marti goes fishing with her friends on Tuesdays (and this year she caught a REALLY big fish!), horseback riding on Wednesdays for therapy, and on Thursdays, she gets to drive to Omaha to the Munroe Meyer Institute for a camp they host for adults with special needs. Oh...and in between all that she works out with her personal trainer, helps deliver Meals on Wheels, and volunteers at the library. So yeah...she's a busy gal!

What I loved about the conversation with her was her honesty. COVID was rough on her. Yes, it was rough on us all, but for people with Down syndrome, especially adults who rely on state and community services to provide opportunities for interaction, it was an extremely difficult and isolating time. All those activities listed above – they shut down. She battled loneliness and depression. But thankfully, her mother sought help for her and connected her with a trained therapist. Marti is now learning the tools to help her express herself and her emotional needs to become her best self-advocate. For example, if someone isn't being kind or getting too close and making her feel uncomfortable, Marti said, "I tell them to stop and then I walk away." It's stories like that which show you just how intuitive and strong of a person she is.

Marti has dreams. But how could the former Nebraska Special Olympics Athlete of the Year and Miss Amazing Princess not have dreams?! Marti's dream is to find a job someday where she could do art and read books every day.

Until that day comes – and when she's not busy with her daily activities, of course – Marti simply likes to spend time with her family, ride her bike, or enjoy her favorite shows, Scooby Doo and Full House, on her iPad.

We wish for you the world, Miss Marti! Thanks for showing us your strength and making each day just a bit brighter for us all.



Support from the Step Up for Down Syndrome Walk helps create programs and events that Marti, and people like her all throughout the state, can enjoy with their families and friends. Register to walk or make a donation at ds-stride.org/dsafstepup.

mission partner opportunities

You are important to us. Therefore, we have expanded the number of opportunities and ways you can help advance the mission to better reflect the year-round nature of our work. Because DSAF is more than just a Walk.

We invite YOU to be a **star**. Will you consider supporting DSAF?



Presenting Sponsor: \$10,000

Shooting Star: \$5,000

Rising Star: \$2,500

Gold Star: \$1,000

Red Star: \$500

Blue Star: \$250



Your support will create a positive vision of the future for people with Down syndrome **all year long.**

expanding the impact

It takes a lot of teamwork and resources to create stars. DSAF depends on donations and fundraisers to provide programs and services and meet operational costs. It is only through the generosity of many individuals, corporations, and grants that DSAF is able to provide quality programs and services for individuals with Down syndrome and their families in Nebraska.

Nearly 85% of all funding goes directly to support the mission of DSAF serving the needs of Nebraska families. Join DSAF and help create a positive vision of the future for people with Down syndrome. Your dollars allow Nebraska families to gain essential resources as they support their loved one with Down syndrome from birth through adulthood.

mission partner benefits

How will YOU be a star?

where you will be seen...

Presenting Sponsor: \$10,000
 Shooting Star: \$5,000
 Rising Star: \$2,500
 Gold Star: \$1,000
 Red Star: \$500 (NEW! Dual Event Sponsorship Level)
 Blue Star: \$250

NAMING RIGHTS to Step Up Walk, example: Step Up for Down Syndrome Walk Presented by "Your Company"	X					
Recognition by logo as Presenting Sponsor on all print and electronic marketing materials, promotions with media partnerships, event day signage, social media, etc. for Step Up Walk AND large-group events or program of choice	X					
Recognition by logo at large-group events OR program of choice	X	X				
Opportunity for short sponsor remarks from the stage at Step Up Walk AND World Down Syndrome Day	X	X				
Recognition with branded professional video in Monthly e-newsletters to 1,500+ people	X	X	X			
Recognition in quarterly DS Community Connections newsletter to 1,000+ homes	X	X	X	X		
DUAL EVENT SPONSORSHIP for Step Up Walk AND World Down Syndrome Day	X	X	X	X	X	
Recognition on Step Up Walk T-shirt worn by 500+ people	X	X	X	X	X	
Recognition on event signage, website, and social media for Step Up Walk	X	X	X	X	X	X

how you can engage...

Custom engagement opportunity for company employees	X					
Engagement opportunity with DSAF members at 1 event/program of choice (i.e. Large Group Community event or the DSAF Educational Series)	X	X				
Short article in 1 DS Community Connections Newsletter to 1,000+ families	X	X	X			
First pick of booth space at Step Up Walk to host an engagement activity for attendees and pass out information to audience of 1,200+ people	X	X	X	X		
Complimentary T-shirt(s) and registration(s) to Step Up Walk	6	5	4	3	2	1

how you will see your impact...

In-Person Mission Partner Presentation by DSAF Staff	X					
Branded quarterly Mission Partner Update	X	X	X			
Quarterly Mission Partner Update	X	X	X	X		
Recognition in Annual Report	X	X	X	X	X	X

Please Note: As COVID-19 makes each day a little uncertain, be sure to visit dsafnebraska.org/events or the **DSAF Facebook Page** for the latest event information.

upcoming events

february

- 15: DSAF Ed Series: Lisa Hobza - PTI Nebraska**
Lisa will be discussing state waivers, SSI, navigating health care options, and assisting with health care costs.
- 19: Young Adult Cooking Class @ HyVee**
Hosted by Jennifer Dunavan at HyVee in the Club Room, the class will make and enjoy guacamole and pico de gallo!
- 25: Lil' Stars Polar Bear Handpring Craft Event @ 7:00 p.m.**
- 26: HIFT Training (High Intensity Functional Training)**
HIFT is a program offered to our young adults and adult members with Down syndrome who want to branch out and enjoy a safe, adaptable, & effective program that incorporates equipment used by athletes who practice CrossFit. For ages 13 years of age and older Those under the age of 18 will need a parent/guardian to sign waiver to participate*

march

- 10: New Family Zoom Meet Up**
Join DSAF for a zoom meet up to connect with other families with a child under 3 with Down Syndrome. Kristen Pfeil, OTD, will be present to answer questions and share about Occupational Therapy for the young child.
- 15: DSAF Ed Series: Topic TBD**
- 21: World Down Syndrome Day!**

april

- 10: Husker Heroes**
A time for individual with disabilities and their families to hang out with Husker athletes from all sports. All ages and abilities welcome! General registration will open on March 14th and will remain open until April 1st or when the event reaches capacity.
- 19: DSAF Ed Series: TBD**

Quick & Easy Registration!



Want to Sign Up?

Try scanning the QR code with your phone camera for a direct link to the DSAF event page to register for upcoming events!



Scan me



thank you mission partners!

Please consider supporting the companies working with DSAF to provide a positive vision of the future for all people with Down syndrome in Nebraska.

LINCOLN COMMUNITY FOUNDATION

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FROGGY 98

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