



2014 Annual Report

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PART ONE:

WHO WE ARE





In 1985, six local families raising children with Down syndrome had a need for support and information. Together, they formed the Down Syndrome Association of West Michigan.

Today, the goals of the Association have grown to encompass advocacy; education among individuals with Down syndrome, their families, and area educational and medical professionals; and public awareness in the West Michigan community-at-large.

Over nearly three decades, the DSAWM has grown from six to more than 300 families. Today, nearly 1,000 professionals, educators, community members, family members, and people who have Down syndrome benefit from our services as we strive to empower people with Down syndrome throughout all stages of life, and support the communities in which they live, work, and play.

In this mission, we are guided by the following values:

Empowerment

We provide resources, opportunities and knowledge in order to empower people with Down syndrome to realize their full potential in life and as a part of the community-at-large.

Service

We communicate with, and on behalf of, people who have Down syndrome to provide resources and information based on individual needs.

Healthy Lifestyle

We promote healthy life choices and lifelong learning.

Equality

We strive to treat all people fairly and look for ways to connect people with Down syndrome with the community-at-large.

Continuous Improvement

We recognize that as times change, so do the needs of people with Down syndrome. We never stop asking, "How can we be better?"

Leadership

2014 BOARD OF DIRECTORS

President Nancy Spanski	Vice President Maggie McPhee
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Secretary Joe Gavin	Treasurer Steve Huisjen
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Board Members

Chris Barbee	Heather Jangraw
Chad Bice	Holly Kroeze
Bob Boylen	Margaret LaHuis
Cameron Dolbow	Maggie McPhee
Diane Estrella	Bobbie Rohen
Sean Igoe	James Reinhardt

ENGAGE YOUNG PROFESSIONALS ADVISORY BOARD

Chairperson
Holly Kroeze

Board Members

Molly Bingham	Nate Kroeze
Cameron Dolbow	Victor Sultana
Skyelar Hoort	

Staff

Melissa Werkman, *Executive Director*
Lacey Charboneau, *Program Coordinator*
Meredith Lange, *Development Manager*
Alethea Mshar, *Development Assistant / Volunteer Coordinator*
Audrey Day, *Administrative Assistant*
Allie Cowden, *Intern*

Staff Additions

In 2014, the DSAWM established a formal Development Department to develop and nurture relationships with our donors and volunteers.

Meredith Lange
Development Manager



Meredith is a DSAWM member and mother of three children (one with Down syndrome). She worked with the DSAWM as a volunteer and fundraiser. She joined the staff at DSAWM in February as Development Assistant and became Development Manager in September. Meredith is responsible for writing and implementing a formal Development Plan, grant writing, event planning, donor acquisition and relationship management. Meredith also serves on the Marketing Committee.

As a parent, Meredith has benefited from many of the programs offered by the DSAWM and is passionate about sharing our mission and securing support for our work.

In her free time, Meredith enjoys running, reading, and spending time with family and friends.

Alethea Mshar
*Development Assistant
Volunteer Coordinator*



Alethea “Lee” Mshar is a DSAWM member and mother of three children. Alethea joined the staff at the DSAWM in September. As Development Assistant, she assists Meredith in donor relations and event planning. As Volunteer Coordinator, Lee recruits and trains DSAWM volunteers. Prior to joining the DSAWM, Lee worked as a paramedic and for Bethany Christian Services as an advocate for children in foster care.

As a parent of two very different boys with Ds, Lee is familiar with the many different needs of families and is dedicated to making sure that the Association is poised to meet those needs. She devoted much of her time to advocating for her children both in the medical and educational arenas.

When not at work, Lee enjoys spending time with her family, running, biking and reading.

Membership Statistics

The DSAWM serves 12 west Michigan counties. Individuals with Down syndrome and their immediate families who live within this service area are eligible for Voting Memberships, meaning they elect Directors to the Board and vote on changes to Association bylaws.

Anyone who is interested in supporting the DSAWM and keeping informed of association business and events is eligible for Non-voting Membership.

Membership By County

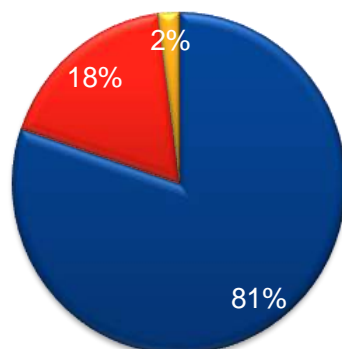
Allegan	11
Barry	4
Cass	2
Clinton	1
Gratiot.....	1
Ionia	5
Kalamazoo	14
Kent.....	165
Leelanau.....	1
Manistee.....	1
Mecosta.....	3
Montcalm	6
Muskegon	19
Newaygo.....	3
Osceola	1
Otsego	1
Ottawa.....	54
Presque Isle.....	1
Roscommon.....	1
Saginaw.....	1
Out-of-Area	9



Total Voting and Non-Voting Members: 304

Membership Statistics

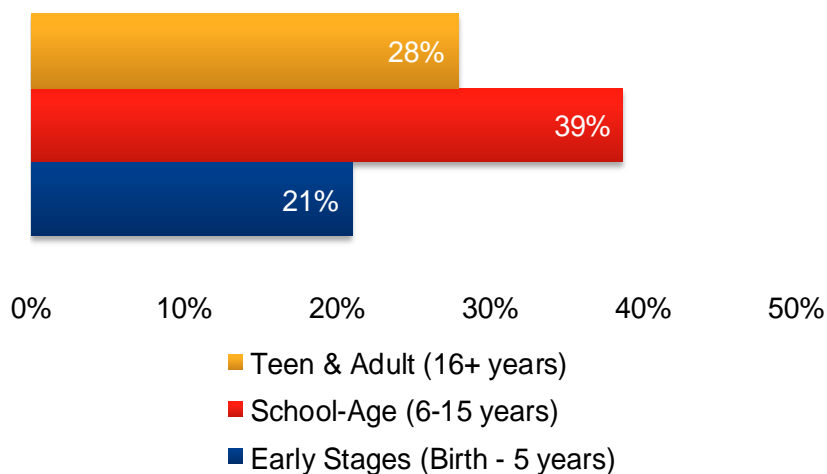
Membership Types



- Children with Ds (under 21) and their family members
- Adults with Ds (21 and older) and their family members
- Professionals

The DSAWM services nearly 1,000 individual members. Our membership includes individuals who have Down syndrome, their relatives, and the professionals and community members who support them.

Members with Ds by Age Group



As people with Down syndrome age, their needs evolve. The DSAWM provides services to empower individuals with Down syndrome across all stages of life.

PART TWO:
**WHAT
WE DO**





The DSAWM is committed to empowering individuals who have Down syndrome and supporting the communities in which they live, work and play.

We do so by providing programs for individuals with Down syndrome and their families through all stages of life.

EARLY STAGES (Birth to 5 years)

From first diagnosis through the first years of life, parents of children with special needs often require additional support, answers, and resources. The DSAWM serves as a clearinghouse for parents, connecting them to accurate, up-to-date information and resources so they are better informed throughout their child's first year of life. The Association provides a one-year complimentary membership for all new and expectant parents.

SCHOOL AGE CHILDREN (6-15 years)

During a child's school years, friendships are formed, character is defined, and new experiences and perspectives are introduced. Children are learning about themselves and the world around them. The same is true for a child with Down syndrome. Children with Down syndrome share similar interests, hopes, and desires as their classmates. The DSAWM provides resources and support for school aged children and their parents/caregivers and educators.

TEEN AND ADULT (16 and older)

As our members with Down syndrome grow up, the focus shifts to acquiring the skills that foster independence. The DSAWM strives to fill the gaps in services to assure a smooth transition into adulthood and support a healthy, active lifestyle.

ADDITIONAL FAMILY RESOURCES

Resources available to all of our member families provide fellowship opportunities and financial supports that remove barriers to services.

Member Services

Access GR: Through a partnership with non-profit Access GR, DSAWM members gain access to local art, entertainment and culture through complimentary tickets to local museums, events and exhibits.

Adapted Water Ski Clinic: Made possible through a partnership with Kentwood Parks & Recreation, this one-day clinic on Reeds Lake is for people with Down syndrome, ages 5 and older. Participants learn to water ski in a safe, supported environment, encouraging healthy physical activity while gaining confidence and learning a skill that will provide recreational opportunities with their typically developing peers. In 2014, the Water Ski clinic was at full capacity with 16 participants.



Breakfast Buddies: Feeding issues are a common hurdle for infants with Down syndrome. This monthly educational series brings the expertise of Mary DeWys, RN (Infant Developmental Specialist and Infant Feeding Specialist) and a registered dietitian in a small group format. Topics include hands-on practical learning applications for children age zero to thirty months with a group feeding session.

Cooking Capers: This monthly cooking class provides valuable life skills to members age 14 and older. Students prepare and eat a healthy meal while learning about safety in the kitchen and good food handling practices. In 2014, Cooking Capers ran 3 sessions, each at a capacity of ten students.

D.A.D.S. (Dads Appreciating Down Syndrome): Dads meet monthly for dinner and fellowship. Meetings may feature a guest speaker or simply allow dads a chance to connect with each other.

Drama Class: Inclusive instruction in the dramatic arts is the focus of this course. Children with Down syndrome learn alongside typically developing siblings in 8 weekly sessions. An all-ages cast of 15 performed in the 2014 production of "Kenny and the Quest for the Purple Pen."

Financial Assistance: In 2014, the DSAWM provided \$7599.43 to offset costs associated with educational, recreational, medical, therapeutic and trust planning services. Additionally, \$760 was granted for respite care and \$1500 was provided to assist with adoption related expenses families with the costs related to adopting a child with Down syndrome.

Fit With Friends: An extension of our Shape Up! program, teens and adults with disabilities meet weekly in Norton Shores for 90 minutes of nutrition instruction - such as healthy recipes and methods for food preparation, the food pyramid and proper portion sizes - followed by 90 minutes of fun, aerobic exercise. The exercise portion utilizes circuit training, strength training, Zumba and Yoga. Participants are required to weigh in every class and receive incentive prizes for reaching weight and fitness goals and for working hard. Through a partnership with No More Sidelines, Fit With Friends welcomes anyone with a disability and is open to all ages. Fit With Friends started in September 2014 with 6 participants and continues to grow.

Grand Haven Parent Coffee: Lakeshore parents of children who have Down syndrome meet monthly for coffee and conversation.

GRCM Night at the Museum: 40 families attended a private event at the Grand Rapids Children's Museum that included full access to the museum and fun activities.

Continued...

Member Services

Guide for New & Expectant Parents (In English & Spanish): The DSAWM has formed partnerships with West Michigan hospitals, Michigan Early On offices, genetic counselors and health department nursing staff to facilitate the distribution of the Guide for New & Expectant Parents to parents of infants recently born or prenatally diagnosed with Down syndrome. This Guide introduces caregivers to the unique experience of raising a child with Down syndrome. The Guide provides: 1) relevant information on what Down syndrome is and is not, 2) proven teaching methods for healthy infant development, 3) an overview of medical concerns often exhibited in persons with Down syndrome, 4) sibling and family support resources and 5) a comprehensive resource guide. While historically the majority of these packets were given to parents receiving a postnatal diagnosis of Down syndrome, in 2014 we provided an increased number to families receiving a prenatal diagnosis due to increased accuracy, availability and safety of prenatal screening methods.

Gymco Playgroup: DSAWM members are provided access to open gym Monday-Saturday from noon to 1pm in Grand Rapids, allowing them to meet with other families at a time that best fits their schedule. Gymco staff support parents in activities that promote motor development.

Holiday Party: In December, more than 400 members celebrated the winter holidays with the DSAWM at the Frederik Meijer Gardens & Sculpture Park. Refreshments, crafts, and access to the gardens and exhibits were part of the festivities.

Home Visit Program: In 2014, 6 families of infants with Down syndrome received a no-cost, 90 minute in-home visit with our specialist--Mary DeWys RN, BS, CIMI, Infant Development Specialist and Infant Feeding Specialist.

iCan Bike Camp: This week-long intensive camp for children with disabilities ages 8 and older teaches the skills necessary to ride a typical, two-wheeled bicycle. In 2014, forty children from across West Michigan participated in our inaugural iCan Bike Camp, learning this important skill that translates to a more active lifestyle, more social opportunities, and more independence.

Kalamazoo Outdoor Playgroup: Families meet every other Friday throughout the summer at various playgrounds in the greater Kalamazoo area. In 2014, they also met for a Family Night picnic and a Beach Day.

Meal Vouchers: Families with a hospitalized child receive gift cards to help with the expense of purchasing meals at the hospital. The DSAWM spent \$1,180 on meal vouchers in 2014.

MNO (Moms' Night Out): Moms meet monthly to share a meal, experiences and support in three locations: Grand Rapids, Kalamazoo, and on the Lakeshore.

New Baby Gifts: By partnering with local hospitals, the DSAWM works to ensure that each family welcoming a baby with Down syndrome is provided a gift celebrating the birth of their child. The gift includes a handmade baby blanket and the book *Gifts* - a collection of personal essays highlighting the unexpected gifts of raising a child with Down syndrome.

Parent/Teacher Packets: This comprehensive workbook is designed to help introduce a child with Down syndrome to his/her teachers and classmates. Each packet contains a "Getting to



Continued...

Member Services

"Know Me" booklet to help the teacher understand the interests, skills, and strengths of their student with Down syndrome. Classmates receive a child-friendly introduction letter to introduce them to their peer with Down syndrome. Packet materials also include suggested learning strategies, practices, adaptations, modifications, and techniques for teaching a child with Down syndrome.

Parents for Parents (P4P) Mentoring: Experienced parents receive special training to support new member families through various aspects of raising a child with Down syndrome. Mentors are assigned based on a number of factors including primary language, family dynamics, medical history, and location. Often, these mentorships are formed at diagnosis but parents can be connected at any life stage. Twelve parents completed training to become mentors in 2014.

Rapid Runners/Regatta Runners: The Rapid Runners program, taught by a certified personal trainer, helps people with Down syndrome ages 12 and older train for the 3-21 Harvest Run. Volunteers partner with the runners to support them through the three month training program consisting of individual and group training runs, and a focus on healthy eating. Regatta Runners is a similar program for Lakeshore residents and is open to people with all disabilities. In 2014, 23 people with Down syndrome and other disabilities participated in our running programs. They were supported through their training by 22 volunteer Running Buddies.

Shape Up!: In 2014, twenty teens and adults with Down syndrome participated in our nationally-recognized health and fitness program. Shape Up! consists of 90

Continued...

Spotlight on Adult Programming

By Allie Cowden



Allie Cowden interns at the DSAWM. She writes for the DSA Press, and volunteers at DSAWM events. Allie participates in many DSAWM programs.

Here, she shares her experience with two of her favorite programs: Shape Up! and Cooking Capers.

Shape Up!

What do you do in Shape Up?

We do exercising - like dancing. After we exercise, we learn about nutrition, nutrition labels, and serving sizes. We get weighed in before we start exercising.

What have you learned from Shape Up?

I learned about getting in shape. And I also learned about the serving sizes and taking quizzes and we also learned about being fit. How much we are eating and losing weight.

What do you like about Shape Up?

I like learning about being fit and exercise and eating right. I like doing strength training and we do some yoga at the end of class.

Cooking Capers

What do you do in Cooking Capers?

We put on our aprons and pick which team we are on. We also get the ingredients out to make a recipe. We wash our hands before we get started.

What have you learned in Cooking Capers?

We learned how to cook and we learned about cutting things up like bananas and strawberries. I learned to turn the stove on and off. We cook things on the hot stove and in the oven.

What do you like about Cooking Capers?

I love to cook! I cook at home. I can chop up and cut fruits and vegetables. We cook them on the stove, and we turn off the stove. We put the fruits and vegetables on the plate and eat them. Yum, steamed vegetables!

Member Services

minutes of nutrition instruction such as: nutritious recipes, healthy methods for food preparation, the food pyramid, and proper portion sizes. This nutrition class is followed by 90 minutes of aerobic exercise. Participants are required to weigh in every class and receive incentive prizes for reaching weight and fitness goals and for working hard. Shape Up! meets weekly in Grand Rapids.

Signing Time Sing 'N Sign: Children ages birth to 5 years and their caregivers attended four sessions of this introductory sign language class in the summer of 2014. Sign language has been proven an effective form of communication for children with speech delays.

Spanish Support Services: The DSAWM provides support materials in Spanish as well as translation services for conferences, workshops and programs.

Special Olympics Young Athletes Camp: Through a partnership with Special Olympics of Michigan, DSAWM members ages 8 and younger honed their gross and fine motor skills while practicing sports related skills and completing crafts during this three day long day camp.

Step Up for Down Syndrome (SUDS) Walk: Millennium Park was the setting for our largest member and community event of 2014. More than 1,000 people joined us for the 1 mile walk and superhero themed celebration.

Summer Member Outing: Nearly 150 members joined the DSAWM at Boulder Ridge Wild Animal Park for a day of fun interaction with exotic animals.

Summer Picnic: In July, two hundred members assembled at Tunnel Park in Holland for food, fun and friendly conversation.



Continued...

Spotlight on Superheroes

On Saturday, October 11th, as the sun burned away the frost of a brisk fall morning, more than 1,000 people took advantage of the sunny weather to celebrate at the Step Up for Down Syndrome Walk.

Held at Millennium Park, this year marked the 16th anniversary of West Michiganders coming together to support their family, friends and co-workers with Down syndrome thriving in our community.



This year's event was all about Superheroes – a fitting theme since people with Down syndrome conquer numerous foes on a daily basis. Our heroes conquered “enemies” such as *Heart Defects, Respiratory Problems, Low Muscle Tone, Leukemia, Low Expectations*, and arch-nemesis *Untrue Stereotypes*.

2014 Step Up for Down Syndrome raised more than \$75,000 for the DSAWM. This money will be used to continue providing the essential supports and services that allow superheroes with Down syndrome to reach their full potential and lead happy, healthy, fulfilling lives.

Member Services

Transportation Assistance: Lack of access to transportation can be prohibitive to some of our members. In 2014, the DSAWM provided it's members \$1,876.72 for transportation to DSAWM events and programs.

Tween Scene: A dozen children with Down syndrome ages 8-15 participated in fun, monthly outings that help them practice social skills.

THREADS: Quarterly dances are held for teens (16 and older) and adults with Down syndrome. This provides an opportunity to share experiences and support with other self-advocates in a fun, social setting. Parents and caregivers meet to discuss information pertinent to supporting their teen/adult with Down syndrome. In 2014, THREADS served 20 families.

Conferences & Workshops

The DSAWM offers educational opportunities on a wide variety of topics relevant to individuals with Down syndrome and their educators, medical teams, families, caregivers and support professionals.

Lakeshore Conference: Positive Discipline

After the success of the Positive Discipline series in Grand Rapids, in 2014 we brought the conference to Grand Haven. Forty-three educators, caregivers and parents learned methods for implementing Positive Discipline in both home and classroom environments to influence behavior.

DSAWM Member Conference & 21 Club

The one-day annual member conference offered sessions led by advocates, educators, therapists, and experts in areas relevant to people with Down syndrome. In 2014, two concurrent tracks were offered: School Age Issues and Adolescent and Adult Issues. Members with Down syndrome ages 8 and older were invited to participate in fun and interesting activities through 21 Club.

National Down Syndrome Congress (NDSC) National Convention

The DSAWM offered financial scholarships to 5 member families, totaling \$1,250, to assist with the cost of attending the 2014 NDSC convention in Indianapolis, Indiana.

Wrightslaw Conference: Special Education Law & Advocacy Training

Eighty parents, caregivers, advocates, and educators received a detailed overview of special education law and processes including section 504, IDEA, LRE, IEPs, and legal advocacy. A partnership with Kent ISD allowed attending educators to receive continuing education credits.

Legal Planning for People With Disabilities

This workshop held in Grand Rapids and on the Lakeshore, provided the opportunity to learn about maximizing public resources such as public benefits, special needs trusts and estate planning for the special needs family.

PART THREE:

HOW WE DO IT



Volunteer Support

The important work of the DSAWM requires a lot of helping hands, and in 2014, over 100 volunteers donated their special talents and more than 3,200 hours of their valuable time to further our mission.

They spent their time serving on the Board of Directors, supervisory committees and event committees. They devoted their talents to advocacy, fundraising, graphic design, marketing, programming, event planning, office work, and outreach into the medical, educational and employment sectors.

According to the Independent Sector, the estimated value of volunteer hours in Michigan is \$22.96 per hour.* We did the math:

$$3,241 \text{ hours} \times \$22.96 = \$74,413.36$$

That is the equivalent of an additional full-time staff member *and* an additional part-time staff member! While the DSAWM could certainly use those additional employees, it simply isn't in the budget.

We are humbled and inspired by the efforts of the many self-advocates, family members, professionals, and community members who make room in their busy schedules to empower individuals with Down syndrome and support the communities in which they live, work and play.



*"Value of Volunteer Time." Independent Sector. Independent Sector, n.d. Web. 5 May 2015. <http://independentsector.org/volunteer_time>.

Down Syndrome Association of West Michigan Foundation



BOARD OF DIRECTORS

President

Bob Boylen

Secretary

Melissa Werkman

Treasurer

Steve Huisjen

Board Members

Tom Hanley

Brenda Heacock

Brad Hecksel

Michael Lomonaco

In 2013, the Down Syndrome Association of West Michigan Foundation (DSAWMF) was established to provide a permanent source of principal, so that funds would be available for future needs of individuals with Down syndrome and their families, regardless of economic climate. The DSAWMF is funded by cash, securities and other assets.

The DSAWMF is a separate, not-for-profit organization that is independent of the Down Syndrome Association of West Michigan. The Foundation supports the Association's mission of empowering individuals with Down syndrome and supporting their communities. In 2014, the Foundation funded a portion of the vital programs, supports and services provided by the Association as well as funding programs through Special Olympics, Arts In Motion, and the University of Kentucky.

Winners Cup

The primary fundraiser for the DSAWMF is the Winners Cup, a Kentucky Derby party and auction held each May. Since its inception in 2004, the Winners Cup has raised more than \$1,000,000 for the Down Syndrome Association of West Michigan Foundation. In 2014, a portion of the money raised was designated to fund Shape Up!



Statement of Activities

Year Ended December 31, 2014 and 2013

	2014 (Reviewed)	2013 (Reviewed)
Support and Revenue		
Public Support	110,479	40,788
Fundraising Events	170,482	140,186
Program Revenue	11,411	5,034
Grant Revenue	23,388	10,000
Member Dues	6,086	6,155
Merchandise Sales	140	1,600
Total Support and Revenue	321,986	203,763
Expenses		
Program Services	198,000	108,562
Management and General	99,461	76,514
Fundraising Costs	40,330	32,384
Total Expenses	337,791	217,460
Endowment Fund		
Endowment Fund Investment Income	28,790	30,008
Unrealized Gain/Loss on Endowment Fund	(386)	74,295
Change in Net Assets	12,599	90,606
Net Assets, January 1st	1,041,614	951,008
Net Assets, December 31st	1,054,213	1,041,614

Statement of Financial Position

Assets and Liabilities 2014 and 2013

ASSETS	2014 (Reviewed)	2013 (Reviewed)
Current Assets		
Cash and Cash Equivalents	94,016	224,448
Prepaid Expenses	1,181	507
Pledges Receivable	0	5,000
Total Current Assets	95,197	229,955
Property and Equipment		
Furniture and Equipment	8,207	8,207
Accumulated Depreciation	(4,490)	(3,130)
Net Property and Equipment	3,717	5,077
Endowment Fund Investments	1,024,766	941,124
Total Assets	1,123,680	1,176,156

LIABILITIES AND NET ASSETS	2014 (Reviewed)	2013 (Reviewed)
Current Liabilities		
Accounts Payable	1,920	2,187
Accrued Payroll Expenses	7,535	7,355
Deferred Revenue	60,012	125,000
Total Current Liabilities	69,467	134,542
Net Assets		
Unrestricted Net Assets		
Operating	15,575	15,003
Board Designated	1,038,638	1,026,611
Unrestricted Net Assets	1,054,213	1,041,614
Total Liabilities and Net Assets	1,123,680	1,176,156

Major Donors



Dan Vos Construction Company DSAWM Foundation

Adtegrity.com Inc	Hobart Sales & Service
Aetna	Information Systems Intelligence
Amway Corporation	James Vandermeulen
Bob & Patty Boylen	Special Needs Trust
Colliers International	King Milling Company
Comerica Wealth & Institutional Management	Kevin Kozak
Craig & Lauren Davis	Mason Dynamics, Inc.
Die Cad Group, Inc.	Mercantile Bank
Kenneth & Marjorie Dykstra	Miller Johnson
Engineered Protection Services, Inc	Norris, Perne & French LLP
Fifth Third Bank	OtterBase
Gordon Food Service, Inc	Samuel L. Westerman Foundation
John & Amy Gordon	The MSJ Foundation
Grand Rapids Community Foundation	Tuff-Cover Inc.
Hinds-VanderPoorte, Inc.	Douglas & Tracy Warsen
	York Worldwide

Boar's Head Provisions Co.	James Kozak
D & D Building, Inc.	James & Michelle Leach
Dyer-Ives Foundation	Lona Leach
Fish Window Cleaning	Lugers Family Foundation
Grand Rapids Adventure Sports LLC	Jim & Bonnie Scarlett
Brooke Griesse	State Farm Companies Foundation
Ruth Hill	Ewa Timek
Mike & Donna Holtvluwer	Scott VanLaan
Illinois Tool Works Foundation	Peter & Doris Wagner

Major Donors



John Bertsch	Steve & Brenda Heacock
Jim & Chris Boylen	Michael & Susan Jandernoa
Thomas Boylen	Sidney & Sharin Jansma
James & Kim Cornetet	JCT Foundation
Die Cad Group	Lacks Enterprises, Inc.
Douglas & Maria DeVos Foundation	Joseph & Katy Levan
Ernst & Young	Mark & Elizabeth Murray
Grand Rapids Christian Schools Foundation	James & Mary Nelson
Richard Hansen	Norris, Perne & French LLP
	Peter & Joan Secchia

David Bartz	Michael & Jaimie Lomonaco
Bill Dvorak	Richard & Margaret Moritz
Todd & Melissa Hoefler	Plante Moran Financial Advisors
Jewish Community Foundation Los Angeles	Chris & Ami Rabideau
Keeler Foundation	Paul & Beth Taylor
Legacy Trust	Watkins, Ross & Co.

PART FOUR:

HOW YOU CAN HELP



Donate

The DSAWM General Fund directly supports operating costs, programs and services. Donations are accepted in the office, via mail, or online.

Matching Gifts

A great way to increase your donation to the DSAWM is through your employer. Many companies offer a matching gift program to their employees, directors, employees' spouses or retirees as an added benefit. With these programs, a company will match an employee's gift to charitable and educational organizations. If you work for one of these matching gift companies, you can take that extra step to support the DSAWM:

1. Contact your Human Resources office for eligibility requirements and to obtain a matching gift form. (Many companies match the gifts of retirees, spouses and surviving spouses.)
2. Fill out the employee portion of the matching gift form completely.
3. Mail the form to: DSAWM, 233 E Fulton, Suite 124, Grand Rapids, MI 49503

Gift-In-Kind

If you have a product, service, or other item that you would like to donate to the DSAWM, you may donate it as a gift-in-kind. Non-cash gift examples are design services, printing services, office supplies and equipment, advertising space, food, beverages, books, etc. A gift-in-kind to the DSAWM is tax-deductible under state and federal laws. We will send you a gift receipt acknowledging your contribution of goods or services. You will determine the value of your gift-in-kind donation.

Online & Monthly Giving

Online giving is the fastest and simplest way to support programs and services. Visit www.DSAWM.org and click on the 'donate' button on the bottom left of the home page. You can choose to make a one-time donation or select an amount to be automatically deducted from your credit/debit card each month.

Honor/Memorial

Gifts made in memory or in honor of a loved one are used to support the objectives and mission of the DSAWM, unless otherwise specified. These gifts can be used to recognize a birthday, graduation, or anniversary. These gifts are recognized in the DSA press.



Volunteer Opportunities

If you are interested in getting involved, we have many volunteer opportunities available - from one-time projects or events to ongoing options with programs or committees. Whether you have a special skill or just a desire to help, we appreciate your support. Contact DSAWM Volunteer Coordinator Lee Mshar at alethea@dsawm.org or (616)956-3488.

Volunteer Rewards

When I learned that the Down Syndrome Association of West Michigan was starting a running program to train adults with Down syndrome to run a race, I was pumped. I quickly signed up to be a running buddy.

I love running and, having a very young son with Down syndrome, I occasionally wondered if he would ever share my love for running or physical exercise. If he did, what would that look like? Would he be able to run races if he wanted?



I signed up to be a running buddy because I wanted to share my love of running with people who are generally believed to be non-athletic or, at the very least, non-runners. I also wanted to understand adults with Down syndrome better.

Lastly, I wanted to prove to myself and everyone else what I believed was true: that people with Down syndrome can run if they want, and, if they train, can run a race just like anyone else.

Over the months of training with the Rapid Runners, I was reminded how hard running is. Running is hard for me, and it's especially hard for new runners with physical challenges. I was amazed at the potential and ability in these adults with Down syndrome. They can run! They can do it! And, on race day, they DID.

I was delighted and honored to be involved in a program that gave a new opportunity to people with Down syndrome, and pushed them to achieve new levels in their ability.

Melissa Finkbeiner, Rapid Runners





DSAWM

Down Syndrome Association of West Michigan
Empowering individuals. Supporting communities.

233 Fulton St E, Suite 124 • Grand Rapids, MI 49503 • (616)956-3488

www.dsawm.org