

All Ages Events

Access! GR

Through a partnership with Access! GR, DSAWM connects members with the rich arts & cultural scene in West Michigan. Free tickets are available in a limited supply for both ongoing venues and special event venues.

Friends Just Like Me

Each spring, families experiencing Down syndrome are invited to the Grand Rapids Children's Museum for a private event to meet other families on the same journey. Friends Just Like Me is held annually in May.

Holiday Parties

Every December, DSAWM families gather in Grand Rapids and Kalamazoo to visit with Santa and reconnect with friends.

Member Picnic

Each summer, DSAWM families gather at Tunnel Park in Holland for a day of friends, food, and fun in the sun. The Member Picnic is held annually in July.

Rock Your Socks Dance

Rock your socks off at our annual World Down Syndrome Day Dance on 3/21. The event is open to anyone interested in celebrating Down syndrome.

Step Up for Down Syndrome

Step Up For Down Syndrome is the largest Down syndrome awareness event in Michigan and DSAWM's annual fundraiser. Families, friends, and the public are invited to this annual celebration and walk where we come together to support our loved ones with Down syndrome.



Community Support

Educator Support

The Teacher Information Packet assists K-5 educators teacher in getting to know his or her student with Down syndrome and building a comfortable and effective learning environment for every student.

Medical Provider Support

The DSAWM Medical Outreach Committee is committed to providing resources and support to medical professionals who are involved in delivering a diagnosis of Down syndrome to new and expectant parents, as well as advocating for patients with Down syndrome.

Weekly Update and DSA Press Newsletter

The Weekly Update is emailed every Thursday and shares information about our programming schedule as well as upcoming community events and opportunities. The DSA Press is our tri-annual newsletter featuring personal stories, informational articles, and news relevant to the West Michigan Down syndrome community.

Workshops & Conferences

Informational workshops and conferences are periodically offered to address topics relevant to parents/caregivers of, and professionals who work with, individuals with Down syndrome. Topics previously presented on have included behavior, adaptive and therapeutic devices, and potty training.

DSAWM introduces new programs and services every year. For the most up-to-date listing, visit dsawm.org or contact Program Director Nate Clark at nate@dsawm.org.



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Our Programs and Services

Serving Individuals with Down Syndrome & Their Families from Diagnosis to Adulthood



DSAWM programs and services are designed to address barriers and support opportunities for people with Down syndrome and their families. All programs and services are provided free of charge to DSAWM members.



Early Stages (Ages 0-5)

Baby Sign Language

With just a few simple signs from American Sign Language, you can start communicating with your child – even before they start to talk!

Oh, Baby!

This baby shower for families who have a young child with Down syndrome is a celebration and opportunity for parents and siblings to connect with other families experiencing Down syndrome. Oh, Baby is held annually in August at the Grand Rapids Children's Museum.

Play Groups

Playgroups are a fun, social option for promoting development. Playgroup focus varies and includes speech, fine motor, gross motor, communication, and more to meet the various needs of our children.

School-Age (Ages 6-13)

Buddy Up Tennis

Buddy Up Tennis teaches children and teens with Down syndrome the game of tennis while supporting healthy activity and motor function.

iCan Bike Camp

Every other summer, DSAWM hosts a week-long iCan Bike Camp where children with disabilities learn to ride a two-wheeled bicycle using proven, research-based methods.

Music Therapy

Music Therapy classes use song and instrumentation in a therapeutic capacity to develop physical, emotional, cognitive, and social skills.

Water Ski Clinic

The Adaptive Water Ski Clinic, in partnership with Kentwood Parks and Recreation, invites members to Reeds Lake every July to participate in sitting and standing skiing.

Teens & Adults (Ages 14+)

Book Club

Book Club participants meet to read and discuss books selected by Next Chapter Book Club. The program is open to all reading levels, including non-readers.

Cooking Capers

Teens and adults gather in the kitchen to learn culinary terminology, cooking methods, measurement, and kitchen safety while crafting a delicious, healthy, gluten-free meal.

Skill Building Series

The Skill Building Series teaches life skills such as grocery shopping, resume preparation, public speaking, and navigating the city to foster independence for young adults.

Rapid Runners

In this summer running program, participants train for a 5K race by following individualized training plans based on the Couch to 5K program.

Shape Up

Shape Up is a health and fitness program that promotes healthy lifestyle choices through 45 minutes of nutrition instruction and 45 minutes of aerobic exercise.



Parent Support

Aging With Down Syndrome

Caregivers of individuals with Down syndrome aged 30+ are invited to this support group sponsored by DSAWM and the Alzheimer's Association. Participants share experiences and discuss the process of caring for loved ones growing older with Down syndrome.

Dads Group

DSAWM dads work to create positive change in our community by volunteering and hosting DNO (Dads' Night Out). DNO invites fathers raising children with Down syndrome to meet at local restaurants and share experiences and support.

Member Financial Assistance

DSAWM's Member Financial Assistance Fund is designed to provide financial support to families raising individuals with Down syndrome who need help with certain Down syndrome-related expenses, as well as adoption and respite.

MNO (Moms' Night Out)

DSAWM hosts monthly MNO gatherings in three locations: Lakeshore, Grand Rapids, and Kalamazoo. Mothers raising children with Down syndrome meet at local restaurants to share experiences and support.

New Parent Packet

DSAWM provides our New Parent Packet to parents who are welcoming a new child with Down syndrome. The packet is full of helpful information about what to expect during the first few years of your child's life, the joys and challenges associated with a Down syndrome diagnosis, and the services and support that DSAWM and other area organizations offer.

Parents For Parents Mentoring

Parents for Parents mentors are a group of "veteran" moms and dads who provide support for expectant and new parents.