

Resource Directory



Resources listed are not endorsed by DSAWM, but are a list of options that are available. If you know of additional West Michigan resources, please let us know at 616-956-3488 or director@dsawm.org. For more information, visit dsawm.org/resources.



Diversity Resources

Down syndrome affects individuals of all backgrounds. As a result, our community is vastly diverse and a collective of many unique histories, cultures, identities, and lived experiences. DSAWM is committed to improving our focus on diversity, inclusion, and equity here in the West Michigan Down syndrome community. The directory below is intended to inform families about local resources available to the many diverse communities that make up West Michigan.

DSAWM Programs and Services for Diverse & Multicultural Families

Learn more about each program by visiting dsawm.org/programs. Para información en español, vaya a, dsawm.org/espanol.

	<p>21 Shades Support Group 21 Shades is a support group for families of color and multicultural families who are part of the Down syndrome community. Gatherings and opportunities to connect are offered frequently for families to share their experiences and discuss topics relevant to the intersection of Down syndrome and race. To learn more and get connected, visit dsawm.org/21shades, join the DSAWM 21 Shades Facebook group at facebook.com/groups/dsawm21shades, or contact us at director@dsawm.org or 616-956-3488.</p>
	<p>La Posada La Posada is an annual Christmastime festival hosted by DSAWM's Spanish-speaking families. The event invites families to bring a traditional passing dish and come together to celebrate the season of giving with delicious food, fun activities, and good company. Visit our calendar at dsawm.org/calendar for upcoming dates.</p>
	<p>Facebook Support Groups DSAWM hosts two Facebook groups that are open to diverse West Michigan families. DSAWM 21 Shades (facebook.com/groups/dsawm21shades) is open to all families of color and multicultural families who are raising or love a person with Down syndrome in West Michigan. DSAWM Familias Hispanas y Latinas (facebook.com/groups/dsawmespanol) is open to all Hispanic and Latino families raising or loving a person with Down syndrome in West Michigan.</p>

Community Supports

Families of Color

- **Resources Specific to Down Syndrome**
 - **A Friend Like Anian** is a children's book by author and mother Meeka Caldwell who, after noticing she couldn't find any children's books representing African Americans with Down Syndrome, wrote this book—the first in a series—based on her son. Learn more about the book at gigisplayhouse.org.
 - **African American/Black People Who Have Children with Down Syndrome Facebook Group** (facebook.com/groups/parentsofafricanamwithds) is for African American/Black people who have children with Down syndrome and parents/legal guardians of African American/Black children with Down syndrome.
 - **African American Conference on Disabilities** (azdisabilitylaw.org/african-american-conference-on-disabilities) is an annual conference that addresses the intersection between race and disabilities and examines avenues for self-advocacy to ensure the effective provision of services, resources, and enforcement of civil rights in the African American and disability communities. The conference is held every February.
 - **Black Families Down Syndrome Network** (facebook.com/groups/bfdsn.dsdn) is a subgroup of the Down Syndrome Diagnosis Network for black/mixed families expecting or raising a black/mixed child with Down syndrome to connect with other families.
 - **The Colors of Down Syndrome Facebook Group** (facebook.com/groups/thecolorsofdownsyndrome) is for parents and caregivers of racially/ethnically diverse individuals with Down syndrome.
 - **DSDN Asian Families Facebook Group** (facebook.com/groups/dsdnasianfamilies) is for Asian/mixed families expecting or raising an Asian/mixed child with Down syndrome to connect to other families.
 - **Rockin' Moms en Español – DSDN Facebook Group** (facebook.com/groups/dsdnenespanol) is for Spanish-speaking moms of children with Down syndrome.
 - **Sankofa** is a UC Davis support group to meet the unique needs of parents of Black children with autism and other developmental disabilities. Learn more at health.ucdavis.edu/mindinstitute/resources/family_resource_centers.html.
 - **Yo Soy Yo** is a children's book by author and DSAWM mom Katelyn Herrygers about embracing who you are, translated into Spanish with the support of DSAWM's Spanish-speaking community. Learn more at katelynshae.net.
- **Local Resources Specific to Families of Color**
 - **BL²END Business Leaders Linked to Encourage New Directions** (grblend.org) provides the means to empower African Americans and other minorities to achieve economic self-reliance, parity and civil rights.

- **CAIR-MI (Council on American-Islamic Relations)** (cairmichigan.org) advocates for a better understanding of Islam in Michigan by building bridges of understanding and respect.
- **Grand Rapids African American Health Institute** (graahi.com or 616-331-5831) seeks to ensure that all people have optimal health care and benefit from health systems without race being an impediment.
- **Hispanic Center of West Michigan** (hispanic-center.org or 616-742-0200) provides unmet social services to the Hispanic Community in Greater West Michigan.
- **Latin Americans United for Progress** (laup.org) empowers Latinos to participate in creating a better community for all.
- **Urban Core Collective** (urbancorecollective.org) uplifts historically marginalized communities to a place of greater self sufficiency by unifying communities of color in order to reduce the effects of systemic racism.
- **Urban League of West Michigan** (grurbanleague.org or 616-245-2207) provides the means to empower African Americans and other minorities to achieve economic self-reliance, parity and civil rights.
- **West Michigan Asian American Association** (wm-aaa.org or 616-481-6194) seeks to build a collaborative, active, and committed Asian American community in West Michigan with a focus on healthcare, education, and civic engagement.

Hello West Michigan maintains a directory of local multicultural organizations, listed by city/county at hellowestmichigan.com. West Michigan residents are also encouraged to visit the **ExperienceGR** website to learn more about the history of diversity in Grand Rapids at experiencegr.com.

LGBTQIA+ Families

- **Resources Specific to Down Syndrome**
 - **Parenting as an LGBTQIA Parent** is an online support group for LGBTQIA parents raising children with Down syndrome. To join, email support@dsdiagnosisnetwork.org and include the subject line "I would like to be added to the LGBTQIA parenting group."
- **Local Resources Specific to LGBTQIA+ Families**
 - **Grand Rapids Pride Center** (grpride.org or 616-458-3511) empowers our LGBTQ community through supportive services and awareness.
 - **OutFront Kalamazoo** (outfrontkzoo.org or 269-349-7490) creates a just, inclusive, equitable, and supportive environment in Southwest Michigan for people of all sexual orientations and gender identities and expressions.
 - **Out On The Lakeshore** (outonthelakeshore.org or 616-994-8090) provides a constant source of support and understanding to the LGBTQ community of the greater Holland area.

- **OutPro** (grandrapids.org/talent-development/outpro) is an LGBTQ+ professionals group that can serve as both a resource to employers and employees, as well as an affinity group for the LGBTQ+ community.

Adoptive Families

- **Resources Specific to Down Syndrome**
 - **National Down Syndrome Adoption Network** (ndsan.org or 513-709-1751) works to ensure that every child born with Down syndrome has the opportunity to grow up in a loving family.
 - **DSDN Adoption & Ds Facebook Group** (facebook.com/groups/DSDNadoption) is for adoptive families looking to find support in others who have adopted children with Down syndrome.
- **Local Resources Specific to Adoptive Families**
 - **Adoptive Family Support Network** (dabsj.org/what-we-do/adoption/post-adoption-support) is a service of D.A. Blodgett – St. John’s that gives adoptive parents access to a community of people who can provide answers and share experiences.
 - **Bethany Christian Services** (bethany.org or 800-238-4269) is one of the leading West Michigan organizations that supports families along their adoption journey.
 - **Michigan Adoption Resource Exchange** (<https://www.mare.org> or 800-589-6273) is a statewide information and referral service for families interested in adopting children from foster care, and for adoption workers looking for homes for these children.

D.A. Blodgett also maintains a directory of local support groups for adoptive families across the state organized by county on their website at dabsj.org.

The Down Syndrome Diagnosis Network maintains a directory of online support groups for families in a variety of topic areas at dsdiagnosisnetwork.org/subgroups.

For more information about Diversity Resources, visit our website at dsawm.org/diversity-resources.

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