



# **Greater Clear Lake Families Exploring Down Syndrome**

## **2007 Annual Report**

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### We're Up and Running!

Greater Clear Lake Families Exploring Down Syndrome (GCLFEDS) was born of a desire to provide the south and east sides of Houston with more accessible resources and events. After meeting in the Clear Lake area for approximately eighteen months as a part of the Down Syndrome Association of Houston



(DSAH), we held our first meeting as GCLFEDS in August. The founding Board of Directors had already been meeting and working throughout the first half of 2007 in preparation and were excited to have fifteen adults and eight children kick off the organization at that August meeting.

Several significant milestones were met in 2007: we received our 501(c)(3) tax exemption from the IRS and held a very successful first fundraiser in September; celebrated Down syndrome with movie star, teacher and self-advocate Christopher Scott in October; hosted nationally-known speech therapist Dr. James MacDonald for a full-day conference in November; and had a visit from Santa, crafts, delicious food and enjoyable family time at our December social. Our first election of officers and directors was held at the October meeting.

### Our Mission

The mission of GCLFEDS is to provide support and resources to individuals with Down syndrome and their families and to promote awareness, understanding and inclusion in their communities. We primarily serve the south and east sides of Houston.



### Our Vision

- GCLFEDS will strive to make all members feel welcome and included, that they have input and support, and that the Board is acting in the best interests of all of its members.
- GCLFEDS will provide as many opportunities for involvement as possible, communicate decisions and plans to the members, and ask for input and feedback from members frequently.
- GCLFEDS will focus on providing family support and education, building a strong community of families with DS, and educating the



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community in hopes of providing a positive outlook for our children and adults with DS. As part of this, we will work towards supporting families of individuals from birth to old age and getting new parents the right resources early so that all babies get a good start.

- In five years, we hope that GCLFEDS is thriving and growing, financially strong, a well-known community resource and improving the lives of its members in visible ways.

### Our 2007 Board of Directors



*Left to right:*  
Alicia Dague  
Anne Bernay  
Ellen Lachney  
Beth Haas

### Our Membership

At the end of the 2007 fiscal year, GCLFEDS served approximately 35 families in Clear Lake, League City, Friendswood, Pearland, Houston, La Porte, Galveston, Humble, Baytown, Pasadena and Deer Park. Paid membership in the association totaled 10 families.



### PROGRAMS

#### *Family Support*

**Monthly meetings** provided excellent, informative speakers to help parents broaden their knowledge and get specific questions answered by experts. Topics ranged from medical issues like sleep apnea and the new Down Syndrome Clinic to OT techniques, navigating the ARD process, Medicaid waiver programs and a sibling panel. In October we were fortunate to have local movie star, teacher and self-advocate Christopher Scott and his mother, Brenda.





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**Family Events** were a great way for families to meet, socialize and learn from each other. In 2007, thirty people attended our Spring social at Stevenson Park in Friendswood, where the kids enjoyed jumping in the moonwalk and battling with water balloons along with hot dogs fresh off the grill. Over forty people attended the Christmas Party at Life Tabernacle Church, where Santa Claus



brought holiday cheer and posed for pictures with every child. The kids made picture frames for their Santa photo and decorated Christmas cookies, while their parents enjoyed visiting and the wonderful food.

**New Parent Support** was provided to approximately eight area families this year and included phone calls, visits, invitations to meetings and events and later in the year our DVD "Living with Down Syndrome: Turning Fear Into Hope."



**Our resource library** was started with donations from members and was available at monthly meetings. Families are encouraged to borrow material and donate books or other resources they no longer use.

### ***Education/Community Outreach***

**Our first conference**, Communicating Partners, on Saturday, November 10, 2007 at University Baptist Church was a resounding success. Parents, teachers and therapists learned from Dr. James MacDonald's thirty years of experience and clinical research how to help their late-talking children and students build social and communicative relationships. Nine of these families had one-on-one consultations with Dr. MacDonald the following day. The conference participants went away with much hope and many tools to help kids with Down syndrome and autism communicate. In addition, teachers received continuing education credits for attending and can now take what they learned and apply it in the classroom setting of several area school districts. DSAH collaborated with GCLFEDS on this event by providing financial support. We are also grateful for financial and in-kind support from the following donors: Oceanshipholdings, Inc.; Shuman Management Services, Inc.; Ashland Group, L.P.; Dr. Debbie Gant of Pearland Pediatrics; Mario's Flying Pizza, Seabrook; Riley's Donuts; University Baptist Church; and Kroger. A big thank you to the many individuals who provided



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childcare for parents attending the event and Dr. Denise Chapman of UH-Clear Lake for handling the continuing education credits for the professionals.

**Education for medical professionals** and support for parents receiving a prenatal or post-natal diagnosis of Down syndrome was enhanced with the premiere of a DVD produced jointly by GCLFEDS and Father's Joy. Titled "Living with Down Syndrome: Turning Fear Into Hope," the DVD profiles five families of children and adults with DS to show the positive impact these individuals have on their families and communities and how successful individuals with DS can be. The DVD was distributed to new parents and some doctors in the Clear Lake area this year and will be distributed more broadly as part of an educational program for medical professionals, educators and parents in 2008.



**The 2008 DSAH Buddy Walk** was supported by a GCLFEDS team and several teams formed by our members. GCLFEDS also manned a booth.

### Goals for 2008



- **Family Support/Membership:** Increase paid membership to at least 30 families and increase attendance at monthly meetings and socials by providing high quality events.
- **Adult Participation:** Initiate programs for teens and adults and their families in the hopes of increasing involvement of these families.

- **Outreach/Education:** Reach medical professionals, educators and the community through presentations (target 4), information packets and mailings including our DVD (target doctors and hospitals in 2008), and representation at resource fairs and community events (target 5 or more). Our message is one of hope, opportunity and what individuals with DS CAN do!



- **Public Relations:** Increase visibility of GCLFEDS through a brochure, website and electronic newsletter.
- **Fundraising:** Raise \$25,000 to fund our programs through events, dues and donations.



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### FINANCIAL STATUS

#### Fundraising

Members, family and friends gathered at D'Vine Wine ~Kemah on Thursday, September 13 to taste wine, socialize and raise funds for GCLFEDS. The sixty wine tasters were treated to tastings and wine along with h'ordeuvres and great door prizes. Our sincere appreciation to General Manager Bernie Anderson of D'Vine Wine for their donation of the tastings, their



assistance putting on the event and for soliciting the door prizes. Masseurse Angela Gunderson generously donated the proceeds from the 1-minute massages enjoyed by the attendees. Thank you also to the following Kemah businesses who donated door prizes: Kemah Boardwalk, Clipper House Inn, Terrace Café, and D'Vine Wine~Kemah.

#### Operating Analysis

Revenues and Support Received	
Fundraising Events	\$2,663
Contributions	5,120
Dues	305
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Total Revenues and Support	\$8,088
Expenses Paid	
Program	5,565
General Administrative	375
Fundraising	496
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Total Expenses Paid	\$6,436
Increase in Unrestricted Net Assets	\$1,652
Net Assets – Beginning of Year (August)	\$ 0
Net Assets – End of Year	\$1,652