Dear DSACT Members and Supporters,

2017 was a year of new things! After celebrating our 25th anniversary in 2016 and reflecting on how far DSACT and our members have come, 2017 was the year to charge forward and look ahead with renewed energy and passion.

We kicked off the year with new staff. Longtime staff member Rachel Walker left DSACT at the beginning of the year and Ashley Whitt took over Programs and Events. Laura Whitekettle joined the team in early April as Operations Coordinator.

Our biggest new adventure was hosting an iCanShine Bike Camp in August. Staff and our wonderful intern, Shelby Vigil, spent many hours planning and preparing for this week-long camp. Bike camp proved to be more than we could have imagined - in a good way! Our 27 participants started camp full of nerves, but ready to learn. Nearly every camper was riding independently by the end of bike camp. The week was physically and emotionally demanding, yet every day brought major triumphs and so much pride, not only from the riders, but their families and the 43 volunteers who made this camp a success.

The DSACT Board of Directors and staff committed to focus on Social Groups in 2017. Our age-specific social groups have been an essential part of DSACT since the early years. We know how important these groups are for development and for connecting members in the community, so we took a long look at what we could do to improve. The Adult Group began meeting monthly with a recreation therapist who brings fun social and physical activities, much like the very successful Teen Group. Then, we looked at the other end of the age spectrum, our BabyTalk group. Native Austinite and DSACT member Sara Dodd began leading our New Parent Outreach Program and Baby Talk group and has been a warm and welcoming voice for DSACT’s newest members.

As we look forward to 2018, we see big opportunities for our members to continue learning how to best support their loved ones with Down syndrome. Many of our members will be looking forward to the National Down Syndrome Congress Convention coming to Dallas, Texas, in July 2018! DSACT will award 10 stipends to our member families and we are a proud sponsor of the event. Throughout 2018, we will be bringing in world renowned speakers and local experts that will cover everything from mental health to special education legal rights.

We look forward to seeing you at our annual celebrations, like the Cocktail Bash in April and the Buddy Walk in October, but also at our new events and programs. Thank you for engaging with this incredible community.

Sincerely,

Cameron LaHaise
DSACT Executive Director
**Mission:**

Our mission is to provide education, support, and resources to individuals with Down syndrome, their families, and professionals and the community while building public awareness and acceptance of the abilities of individuals with Down syndrome.

**Vision:**

Our vision is a world in which all members, including those with Down syndrome, are accepted, valued for their uniqueness, respected for their abilities and contributions, and assured the opportunity and choice to create their own path to fulfillment and success.

“**DSACT does a lot for the DS community.**
We’re very grateful for all the programs and choices that are made available to us.”

Rudy Matel, DSACT Parent

Below: Recreation programs
DSACT believes that the opportunity to participate in recreational programming shouldn’t be limited to people without a disability. That’s why in 2017, DSACT offered 13 different recreation programs for people with Down syndrome and their siblings!

DSACT’s goal is to provide programming for all ages and interests. Running seasonally, each session features classes such as Fitness Boot Camp, Warrior Storm Karate Classes, Kayak Camp, Performing Arts, and Book Club. As we have done in the past and will continue to do in the future, in 2017 DSACT subsidized costs for other programs, such as swim lessons at SafeSplash, classes at Gymboree, and art programs through Arc of the Arts.

“[Warrior Storm] has been amazing! The teacher and her assistant are very patient, knowledgeable and charismatic. They have great volunteers from the volunteer program at UT and also others that come and help our kids learn this wonderful skill.

Every week, Pablo and Marco (and even their parents!) learn a new self-defense strategy. They work on their gross motor skills and most importantly for us, they learn about kindness, respect, courage and leadership, among many other values in life.

Pablo and Marco say that what they enjoy the most in their class are the strikes and breaking boards. We enjoy having this opportunity for them to grow and learn with confidence and compassion.

I hope we can count on this program for many years to come!”

Catalina Carlin, DSACT Parent
“One of our main goals is to provide programming that is accessible to everyone, regardless of their learning style or perceived limitations. [...] We want to bring a focus to Adaptive Swim Instruction not only at our Anderson Mill pool, but throughout Austin and beyond. Partnering with DSACT and having the opportunity to work with your amazing members helps us practice our best skills and provide comprehensive swim instruction to our clients.”

Betsy Zielinski, Owner of SafeSplash
Bike Camp

July 31st to August 4th, 2017, 27 children and adults with special needs participated in the iCan Shine Bike Camp program. Each day, these riders spent 75 minutes with over 40 wonderful volunteers and iCan Shine staff to learn how to first ride a specialized training bike, then transition to tandem-riding with Bike Technicians, to riding solo on their own bikes with the help of trained and encouraging volunteers and staff.

- 27 riders, two of whom traveled over 200 miles for camp
- Amazing and knowledgeable iCan Shine staff
- 249 volunteer hours

Volunteers were driving hours to be at Bike Camp every day! Many had signed up for only one shift, but after the first day, asked to return to work with their rider throughout the week.

Emerson was a 2017 DSACT Bike Camp participant. Her grandma was so proud of her and said, “We couldn’t even get her on a bike, we’ve been working on it for a year.”

**Within 5 minutes she was riding.**
Speech Therapy

- **First Year**: 13 participants
- **Second Year**: 10 participants
- **Bonus Year**: 5 participants
- **Total 2017 Participants**: 28

**Highlights:**

- 75% of new participants and 88% of returning participants made progress, per parent report.
- Of the new participants, most indicated an interest to continue in the program and will be doing so in 2018.

“We feel very fortunate to participate and Emelia doesn’t let a day go by without doing speech homework. *She has more confidence and with prompts is building sentences.* I simply want to thank y’all for your commitment and effort to improving her life.”

Elisa Maldonado-Holmertz, DSACT Parent

We want to thank Speak Freely for partnering with us to create this program and the generous discount they provide to allow us to offer this program at a very low cost to our members.

Thank you to the RGK Foundation and the Kozmetsky Family Foundation for their financial support of this program.
Education

- 8 Lunch & Learn presentations, 64 attendees
- 5 Saturday Learning workshop sessions, 24 attendees
- 2 Conferences with guest speakers, Katy Davenport and Stacy Taylor
- 12 School or district trainings, 388 people

Ms. Mulgaonker said, “I am honored for being nominated as the Teacher of the Year by your organization. My passion for Special Education began in India and has been an integral part of my life ever since — from the children with intellectual disabilities who I played with in the park behind my house in India, to my American-born son, a teenager on the Autism Spectrum with mental health issues. My passion has followed me across continents and oceans and has always fostered the most unbreakable bonds.”

Catherine Mason, Pearl’s mother, stated, “I can’t say enough regarding Ms. Pooja’s efforts to facilitate peer relationships and inclusion. She ensures on a daily basis that Pearl interacts with her peers.”
18th Annual DSACT Buddy Walk
Sunday, October 22nd 2017
Reunion Ranch in Georgetown, TX

Amount Raised: $228,567.71

Number of Participants: 2,437
Number of Teams: 131
Number of Volunteers: 254

Top Corporate Fundraising Team - Breda Go Bragh, raised $11,230
Top Individual Fundraising Team - Mosey with Maris, raised $5,875
Largest Team - Super Santi’s, 104 team members
Most Spirited Team - Team Christopher

Buddy Walk Committee Members:
Grace Rogge
Jess Heck
Jordan Bresler
Kristin Cox
Lisa Rogge
Luby Wilson
Staci Patrick
Taylor Wallace

Guest Appearances and Highlights:
Moana
DJ Mel
Quita Culpepper
STAR Flight
SWAT Team
Kona Ice
HEB Buddy
Bella Peregrina Ranch horses
2017 Cocktail Bash

Wednesday, April 12, 2017
800 Congress

The Annual DSACT Cocktail Bash is a celebration as well as a major DSACT’s fundraiser. Over 175 community leaders and supporters attended this year’s event and raised over $50,000. DSACT Ambassadors welcomed attendees to the party.

Money raised at the Cocktail Bash directly supports our programs and services to over 5,000 members in Central Texas. Programs like speech therapy, swim classes and social groups are essential to our mission of helping people with Down syndrome create their own path of fulfillment and success.
**Austin Marathon**

DSACT was a proud official charity of the Austin Marathon and participated in the Austin Gives Miles Program*. With a $10,000 match from the Moody Foundation, DSACT Runners raised $21,204!

---

**Fun Run**

The Fun Run is an event hosted by the University of Texas Lassos for DSACT members, their families and friends. It’s a family friendly opportunity to enjoy the beautiful Texas spring weather and get some exercise!

RunLab led our opening stretches before the one mile race. Post race, The Texas Lassos offered face painting, a sponge race, photo booth and lots of fun!

---

*Austin Gives Miles was selected as a grant recipient from the Moody Foundation. The grant matched all donations raised by 29 official charities through the Austin Gives Miles program, up to $10,000 per charity.*
52 people attended Trail of Lights, thanks to STARS at the Trail.

“Our family had such a wonderful time and we thank you and Stars at the Trail for having our family be a part this year. It is such a magical time of year and Liam was so excited to see the lights, dance and see Santa and Mrs. Clause! Our entire family enjoyed the experience! And wow, to see the trail when it’s closed to the public was such a treat and definitely helped Liam feel comfortable as long lines, walking long distances and crowds can make his sensory aversions go into overdrive! It was an experience we don’t normally get to do so thank you!”

Regan Noveskey, mother of Liam, pictured
2017 DSACT Sponsors and Community Supporters

800 Congress
Accruent
All Points Communication
Ameriprise Financial
Ann and Nathan Boren
ATX Bikes
Austin Eastciders
Austin Family Magazine
Austin Regional Clinic
Ballet Austin
Beck Associates
Bella Peregrina Ranch
Children’s Special Needs Network
City of Dripping Springs
David Barnes
David and Allie McCann
Dell Children’s Medical Center of Central Texas
Dell Inc.
Diana Khan
Dripping Springs Vodka
Entrepreneurs Foundation of Central Texas
Esquivel Events
Falcon Structures
For Kids From Kids
Frank Bradley
Henna Chevrolet
Homeaway
Hope Orthotics and Prosthetics
Insperity
Jack Shepherd’s Family
Jacqueline and Jason Putnam
Jones-Dilworth Inc.
Justin Blumoff
Kari and David Hernandez
Kendra Scott
Keystone Concrete
Kona Ice
Kozmetsky Family Foundation
La Patisserie Macaron and Pastry Boutique
Latin Bakery Austin
Macaroni Kid
Marathon Real Estate
Marshall Eudy
Matt and Samantha Conkey
Mirna and Guillermo Carrillo
Moody Foundation
One World
Paramount Theatre Access to the Arts
Parrish & Co. Inc.
Pedal Hard
PSW Real Estate
Qatalyst Partners
RetailMeNot
Reunion Ranch
RGK Foundation
Sailpoint
Smokey Mo's BBQ
Southwest Strategies Group
Summit Midstream
Sushi Zushi
Sutliff & Stout Injury and Accident Law Firm
Texana Brands
Texas Lassos
Texas Music Water
Townlake YMCA
Trail of Lights - STARS at the Trail
Tritium Partners
TruWest Credit Union
Turnkey Vacation Rentals
Waterloo Printing
Whataburger
The Wine Group
Wish Upon a Star
Young Men’s Service League
Total Income: $430,357.67
Total Expenses: $395,300.05

Breakdown:

- **Programs***: $232,236.78
- **Fundraising**: $87,468.97
- **Admin**: $75,594.30

* $15,000 donated to LuMind Research Down Syndrome Foundation to support cognition research.

* $6,000 donated to Pierce Lab at the University of Texas at Austin to support the employment of Cory Gentry, a fantastic worker with Down syndrome, and to assist their research in Down syndrome and Alzheimer's disease.

New Members

- 78 new families with a child with DS
- 6 new education members
- 13 new non-parent family members
- 7 new general members
- 3 new health professional members

Community Partnership Benefits

- **Ballet Austin Night of Community** - 380 tickets awarded to four 2017 shows
- **One World** - 55 tickets awarded to two 2017 shows
- **Paramount Theatre Access to the Arts** - 486 tickets awarded to twelve 2017 shows
### Development Board

The DSACT Development Board was created to enhance fundraising efforts and is comprised of community leaders who support the mission of DSACT.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Name</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Allie McCann</td>
<td>Germaine Henry</td>
<td>Matt Swinney</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ann Morris</td>
<td>Jessica Nicole Heck</td>
<td>Michael Bradley</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bethany Douthit</td>
<td>Jordan Bresler</td>
<td>Rebecca McCormick</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Corrie Henderson</td>
<td>Kim Kozmetsky</td>
<td>Travis Wilson</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Volunteers

**Total Number of Volunteers:** 322

Total number of volunteer hours contributed in 2017: 1750+