DSACT had a year of explosive growth in our membership!
In 2019 we hit some big membership milestones, growing our community globally and locally.

DSACT members live across Central Texas, the state, and around the world:

In 2019, our membership grew 26% from 5800 to 7300 members!

Here at home, our community of families grew 14% from 687 to 786 families!

Major Member Events
DSACT also had terrific success with new experiences, events, & adventures for our members:

A first-ever Facebook Day experience for our teens and adults at the Facebook Austin headquarters!

A new adventure with the Austin Bold FC and our first DSACT summer soccer camp. And another great experience to conclude soccer camp: Down Syndrome Awareness Night at the Bold game.

A fun-filled, joyous 20th anniversary Buddy Walk® event with 3,000 participants and 144 teams. As our primary fundraiser and awareness-raiser, it was a solid success.

Our Educational Program offered great events for parents and professional educators, including the largest one-day education conference in our history!

Members just wanna have fun! Our oh-so-popular social events really took off this year, growing in attendance 69%, from 360 to 608.

Welcome to our new members, and let’s celebrate another great year of our growing DSACT family!
DSACT Social Groups

Free to DSACT families, social groups offer opportunities to connect and form lifelong friendships, providing support and skills development based on age and culture. DSACT has six groups: Baby Talk (0-2 years), InkDots (3-5 years), KiDSACT (6-12 years), Teen Group (13-19 years), Adult Group (20+ years), and Comité Latino (Spanish-speaking all ages). From meetups over coffee for new parents to community outings led by a recreational therapist for our teens and adults, DSACT offers dozens of opportunities for our members to connect.

**Baby Talk**

- Members: 90
- Events: 9

A fan favorite was a splash pad outing, using the fun of water to develop important motor skills and muscle development.

**InkDots**

- Members: 88
- Events: 4

“"We had so much fun with the music session! I hope we can do more sessions - everyone really enjoyed it!”

— Sara Dodd, parent of Brian, age 3

**KiDSACT**

- Members: 245
- Events: 6

Movement and curiosity are important for those in our KiDSACT group, which is why favorite social events include dance parties with the Texas Lassos and outings to local farms.
Teen

- Members: 210
- Events: 13

Teens love to socialize, which is why DSACT offers monthly, themed social events for our teen members, graciously hosted at the Townlake YMCA. A favorite activity: pumpkin decorating for Halloween!

Adult

- Members: 191
- Events: 12

Community outings led by a licensed recreational therapist allow our adult members to develop independence, confidence, and important socialization skills. Our Adult group had a great time attending the Zilker Hillside Musical.

Comité Latino

- Members: 490
- Events: 10

DSACT’s Comité Latino group embraces the Central Texas Spanish-speaking Down syndrome community, encouraging all to share cultural traditions and activities. And celebrate they do, with birthday parties throughout the year!

“Comité Latino is very important for Spanish-speaking families in DSACT. It lets us know we are not alone and that there are other people in the same situation. We have a place to support each other and communicate and share experiences in a way that helps our kids.”

“Comité Latino es muy importante para las familias hispanohablantes en DSACT. Sabemos que no estamos solos y que hay otra gente en la misma situación. Podemos apoyarnos unos a los otros, hablarnos y compartir experiencias de una manera que ayuda a nuestros hijos.”

Deborah Trejo, mother/madre
DSACT Ambassadors

DSACT was honored to work with five Ambassadors in 2019: Ronnie Brown, Sofia Jimenez, Brenna Prior, Jack Shepherd, and Noah Springfield. Ambassadors dedicated themselves to volunteering and fundraising with DSACT at the Cocktail Bash, Down Syndrome Awareness Night with the Austin Bold FC, and the DSACT Buddy Walk®. These young adults embodied the DSACT mission throughout the year by building awareness and acceptance of individuals with Down syndrome. They also had the opportunity to participate in an exclusive tour at Facebook Austin and meet the Differently Abled @ Facebook ATX team.

2019 was an amazing year in the personal lives of DSACT Ambassadors! Ronnie Brown was crowned high school homecoming king, earned a silver medal and state competition invite in bowling with Unified Champions with Special Olympics, and had his first successful event with his business, The Fry Guy. Brenna Prior was awarded DSACT’s Achieve Your Dream scholarship and attended UT informal classes. Jack Shepherd continued with post-secondary studies in a college program in Virginia. All Ambassadors have demonstrated their commitment to DSACT’s mission throughout the year and we thank them for their year of service!

Community Partnerships

As a member of a very generous Central Texas community, DSACT is delighted to offer tickets to a wide variety of community events throughout the year, including shows at The Paramount Theatre, One World Theatre, Ballet Austin, and the Trail of Lights. In 2019, DSACT awarded 474 tickets to a total of 14 events, a value of almost $12,000.
Facebook Day

In July 2019, eight DSACT teen and adult members and their families, along with DSACT staff and board members, joined the Differently Abled @ Facebook ATX team for a full day at the Facebook Austin headquarters. We got a tour of the downtown office, got a Q&A session with Conference Room Ambassador employees, learned about online safety during a friendly but competitive game, and had lunch with the Differently Abled crew. So much fun - we can’t wait for our next event!

Holiday Party

A DSACT favorite, our holiday party brought together members of all ages to celebrate and give thanks for another year with DSACT friends and family. It was a day full of festive fun, including a great meal, cake, cookie decorating, outdoor games, a bounce house, and for the brave - karaoke!
Medical Outreach

DSACT presents to local hospitals and clinics, providing guidance on the latest Down syndrome research and best practices in giving a Down syndrome diagnosis. In 2019, DSACT had 16 medical outreach visits with 89 healthcare professionals.

Speech Therapy

DSACT recognizes the importance of communication in everyone’s life, as it opens up opportunities for social, educational, and vocational pursuits. Our newly designed Parents Empowering Articulation in Kids Speech Therapy program debuted in 2019! This one-of-a-kind program was designed by our licensed speech therapists at Speak Freely and addresses the unique communication and speech patterns of individuals with Down syndrome. Eighteen participants were accepted to the program in 2019. This program is valued at over $3,000 per participant and offers intense services that emphasized parent involvement. DSACT covered about 90% of the cost for each participant.

Investments

Investments in Down syndrome research are important to DSACT. In 2019, DSACT invested a portion of its budget to LuMind IDSC Foundation, a leader in international Down syndrome research in areas targeting crucial developmental life stages, including Alzheimer’s disease, independence, gene therapy, and access to treatment. With our 2019 and 2020 commitments to this research, we look forward to hosting LuMind IDSC executive director Hampus Hillerstrom in 2020 for a medical seminar on sleep apnea and Alzheimer’s disease, two focus areas of LuMind’s vast expertise.

Community Partnerships

DSACT partners with other Central Texas organizations dedicated to the special needs community. In addition to working with our fellow Texas Down syndrome associations, we work closely with and are members of Austininclusive, Family Liaison Action Group (FLAG), Disability Policy Consortium, and Texas Parent to Parent.

“Thank you for the support offered to these families! We appreciate you and your team so much!”

— Beth Bishop, Ascension Seton NICU Social Worker

“I am so happy we are able to provide this support to our families!”

— Theresa Rose, St. David’s South Austin Neonatal Services Educator
Through individual consultations, workshops, and an annual full-day conference, we provide training and support to equip strong research-based expertise to parents, educators, and community groups. In 2019, DSACT offered expertise to 242 parents and teachers.

**DSACT Annual Education Conference - our largest ever!**

“Inclusion is More Than Just Being “In”: Strategies and Tools That Promote Full Participation and Learning of Students with Down Syndrome” presented by Dr. Cheryl Jorgensen was a huge success with 132 participants including school administrators, teachers from 12 districts, and parents. The opportunity to share visions and strategize how to make those visions a reality through tools and resources was the focus of the day. We focused on teamwork between general education, special education, and parents to explore how to improve inclusive education for all students.

**Lori Tullos Barta Educator of the Year Award** was created in honor of DSACT member Lori Tullos Barta who worked to ensure that every child with Down syndrome would reach their full potential. The award is presented to a deserving educator/team who has made an undeniable impact on a student and provided support to parents.

**Educator of the Year:** Ms. Lindsay Davis of Eanes ISD. Ms. Davis was honored for her unwavering support, high expectations and positive communication with William Suter and his parents.

**Education Team of the Year:** Dana Barton (special education), Randi Reyes (general education), Krissy Anderson (instructional aide), and Janet Mormon (principal) of Frost Elementary School in Georgetown ISD. DSACT recognizes the difference that a whole team working together made in the lives of Olivia Peschel and her parents.

**Achieve Your Dream Scholarship**

DSACT’s Achieve Your Dream Fund supports pursuits related to education, employment, independent living, life skills, and vocational interests for DSACT members with Down syndrome ages 18+ years. The DSACT Achieve Your Dream fund granted a scholarship in 2019 to DSACT member Brenna Prior to attend UT informal classes.

“Thank you again for the funding so Brenna could attend the UT Informal Class on Renaissance Art. She loved it!”

— Susan Prior, mother of Brenna
Recreation Programs

DSACT’s therapeutic recreational programs provide opportunities for individuals with Down syndrome of all ages to sing, dance, move, and shake! We provide specially designed recreational programs that address the health, wellbeing, and development of individuals with Down syndrome. These programs help our members build lifelong healthy habits, confidence, and strong friendships.

In 2019, we held over 160 recreational classes with 300+ total attendees.

DSACT offered seven weekly recreational programs for individuals with Down syndrome, providing 10 hours of recreational activity most weeks of the year.

• Book Club Austin
• Book Club Round Rock
• Fitness Bootcamp
• Performing Arts in partnership with Variety Arts
• Social Dance
• Warrior Storm Self Defense Austin
• Warrior Storm Self Defense Round Rock

“Brandon has participated in DSACT programs since he was a baby. He wasn’t very social before and he couldn’t tolerate many sounds around him. Having programs with modifications and accommodations specially for individuals with Down syndrome helped him be more included in the community.”

— Adriana Prado, parent of Brandon and Dylan
DSACT is proud to partner with Variety Arts, a program that empowers individuals of all abilities through the performing arts. DSACT has partnered with Variety Arts (formerly the KidsActing Foundation) for six years, staging, practicing and performing multiple plays and musicals each year. A testament to the impact of the program, some of our members have been part of the Performing Arts program since its inception in 2014.

“We love seeing students grow from year to year and develop their skills as actors, singers, and dancers. The confidence they gain brightens our hearts and solidifies why our programs with DSACT are necessary.”

— Nina Robbins, Director of Variety Arts Programs
Recreational Camps

Texas summers may be hot, but that doesn't stop DSACT Summer Camps! DSACT offered six specialized summer camps. These camps are structured specifically for individuals with disabilities, tailored to the unique physical and developmental needs of our members.

Through the power of collaborating with other local nonprofits and civic-minded businesses, DSACT is able to increase the impact of programming for the disability community in the Austin area.

2019 Summer Camps

- **Bike Camp**, in partnership with Variety Texas and the Autism Society of Texas
- **Kayak Camp** in partnership with Texas Rowing for All
- **Performing Arts Summer Camp** in partnership with Variety Arts
- **Soccer Camp** in partnership with Austin Bold FC and Sunshine Soccer of Central Texas
- **Warrior Storm Self Defense Summer Camp** - Austin
- **Warrior Storm Self Defense Summer Camp** - Round Rock

“**My son enjoyed people letting him learn and play in his own way.**”

— Beth Shurtz, parent of DSACT member, Jack

**Save the Date for 2020 Camps**

- Bike Camp: June 8-12
- Kayak Camp: August
- Performing Arts: July
- Soccer Camp: June 15-17
- Warrior Storm: July
Soccer Camp & Down Syndrome Awareness Night

In 2019, DSACT hosted our most popular camp to date - an inaugural Soccer Camp and Down Syndrome Awareness Night in partnership with the Austin Bold FC. In the 3-day camp, individuals with Down syndrome and their siblings learned how to kick, dribble, and shoot - coached by Austin Bold FC player Sonny Guadarrama. Members even got a chance to play in Bold Stadium alongside Bold FC players!

Camp culminated in Down Syndrome Awareness Night at an Austin Bold FC game. 500 members received complimentary tickets from DSACT, our soccer camp participants got to “walk the field” with players for the National Anthem and the Bold generously donated that night’s concession profits.

“I had a wonderful experience working with DSACT. It was a pleasure to teach the game I love to children with special needs. We had a great time and finished off the week with an amazing experience with the kids coming on the field for an official game!”

— Sonny Guadarrama, DSACT Soccer Camp Coach and Austin Bold FC Midfielder
Cocktail Bash

Date: April 3, 2019  
Location: 800 Congress

We “kicked in for rec!” at the 2019 Cocktail Bash, where over 120 individuals raised funds to support DSACT’s varied recreational programming. Delicious bites, goofy photobooth pics, an open bar, and music from DJ Mel all set the tone for a festive evening celebrating the lives of and possibilities for our Central Texas Down syndrome community.

A main feature was our inaugural soccer camp, which was the fastest selling camp in DSACT history - it sold out in less than 24 hours! Thanks to our generous Cocktail Bash supporters, all 40 participants got to attend the 3-day camp free of charge.

Join us at the Junior League of Austin’s brand new Community Impact Center for our 2020 Cocktail Bash. New location, same great mission!

Save the Date: March 26, 2020
Your Support

In 2019, general donations to DSACT more than doubled - and it's thanks to the generosity of our growing Central Texas community.

Our donors support faces like Kelsey, Ian, Avalyn, and Alaina - individuals who have diverse needs and unique interests. And the ways our donors support our members are just as diverse. From setting up birthday fundraisers on Facebook to attending one of our flagship events, our donors support the mission of DSACT and our 786 Central Texas families!

Here are some ways you can support our growing Down syndrome community in Central Texas:

- Attend one of our flagship events, the Cocktail Bash or the Buddy Walk
- Host your own fundraiser
- Become a corporate sponsor
- Donate to DSACT and know your gift will go directly towards our great services!

“I chose DSACT as a birthday fundraiser because I have seen the programs firsthand and know where my money is going. Facebook was a direct channel to all my friends who know my life with our daughter that has Down syndrome”

— Dave McCann

Pictured left: Dave and Allie McCann

“DSACT is an amazing organization that is really making a positive impact on the Central Texas community. We (Austin Bold FC) had the privilege of working with DSACT to help set up both a soccer clinic and a Down Syndrome Awareness night last season, and it could not have been more successful. Their passion, hard work, and preparation helped ensure that the participants learned about the sport of soccer and everyone involved truly enjoyed the events.”

— Anthony Rizzo, Circuit of the Americas/Austin Bold FC Vice President of Sales and Ticketing
DSACT Buddy Walk®
Date: October 20, 2019
Location: Reunion Ranch

DSACT hosted our 20th annual DSACT Buddy Walk® on October 20th. With 144 teams and 3,000 people in attendance, DSACT celebrated the Down syndrome with music, pony rides, paddleboats, a helicopter landing, and a special visit from our Star Wars enthusiasts friends at the 501st Legion.

A true testament to our growing community, members were surrounded by family and friends, new and old as we celebrated 20 years of raising funds to support our Down syndrome community in Central Texas.

Save the Date: October 4, 2020
World Down Syndrome Day: 3/21/19

In 2019, the Central Texas Down syndrome community was celebrated with a City of Austin proclamation deeming 3/21 as DSACT Day!

March 21 is World Down Syndrome Day (WDSD), a global awareness day officially observed by the United Nations since 2012. The UN acknowledges, “All people with Down syndrome must have opportunities to live fulfilling lives, included on a full and equal basis with others, in all aspects of society,” and envisions a future in which “no one will be left behind.” March 21 (3/21) signifies the triplication of the 21st chromosome that is unique to Down syndrome.

Other celebratory WDSD events in Central Texas included a rally at the Capitol with our fellow Texas Down syndrome associations, and social events with our Baby Talk and Comité Latino groups.

DSACT Executive Director Jennifer Edwards wrote an op-ed essay, published in local newspapers, which concluded with the following:

DSACT envisions 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. And while we want to leave no one behind, we’re concerned that there are people in our community with Down syndrome who need help and aren’t getting it.

Surprisingly, the population of people in the U.S. with Down syndrome is currently unknown. One third of Americans know someone with Down syndrome. If you know someone with Down syndrome, please encourage them or their family to contact DSACT. We’d love to welcome them into our community and offer our support and resources.

On this World Down Syndrome Day, let us commit to welcoming people with Down syndrome into every area of our community. DSACT, in partnership with Down syndrome communities from across Texas, will gather at the State Capitol as both the House and Senate recognize the significance of WDSD. Here at home in Central Texas, help us in our DSACT mission to embrace and support every person with Down syndrome. Let us all fulfill the United Nations pledge to “leave no one behind.”
Key Thanks

Board
Allie McCann & Kyle Henry  
*Co-Presidents*
Nick Carlin  
*Treasurer*
Liz Jones-Dilworth  
*Secretary*
Marshall Eudy  
*Buddy Walk Chair*

Tracey Cantu
Sara Dodd
Corra Dunigan
Kim Kann
Suzanne Shepherd
Kristin Steen
Yulanda Young

Staff
Jennifer A. Edwards  
*Executive Director*

Asha Thomas  
*Programs and Events Manager*

Laura Whitekettle  
*Outreach and Operations Manager*

Peggy Wolf  
*Education Manager*

Donated Photography
Daisy Prieto Photography: family portraits
Beth Culpepper Edwards: family portraits
Linda Avitt: Buddy Walk & holiday party
Michael Kersten: Buddy Walk
Donovan Ruble: Buddy Walk

Graphic Design
Studio Guerassio  
www.studioguerassio.com

Special Appreciation To
800 Congress
Adele Plauche
Adriana Prado
All Points Communication
Austin Bold FC
Austin Chair and Table
Austonian Whiskey
Bash Photo Booth
Bella Peregrina
Bob Feiner
Bob McKinley
Brisa Salcido
Cami Dato
Carol Howell
Circuit of the Americas
Corrie Henderson
Deborah Trejo
DJ Mel
Dripping Springs Distilling
FUN Auctions, LLC
Game Plan Entertainment
Janet Bryce
Jessica Heck
Jim Shields, Ripple Creek Photography
Junior League of Austin
Kong Screenprinting + Design
Latin Bakery
Liberty Hill Fire Department
Liz Jones-Dilworth
Lux Event Rentals
Marne Litton
Matthew Gattozzi Photography
Michelle Layne
Mirna Ponce
My Event is the Bomb
Myia Little
Norma Urbina
Orange Cone Agency
Panda Shaved Ice
Quita Culpepper
Round Rock Police Department
Sara Dodd
Schlotzky’s Georgetown
Smokey Mo’s Bar-B-Q
Sonny Guadarrama
Speak Freely
Stage Tech
STAR Flight
Sushi Zushi
Texas Lassos
The Arc of the Capital Area
Waterloo Printing
Westward Way Photography
YMCA
Donors & Supporters

From parents to large corporations, our generous donors make DSACT programs and services possible. Without the help of these supporters, we would not be able to serve our growing membership. Thank you to everyone who contributed their time and talent and to those who joined DSACT at our events and programs this year - we couldn't do this great work without you and we look forward to seeing you again in 2020! If you'd like to join this group of supporters, please contact us at (512) 323-0808 or donate online at www.dsact.org/donate.

$250+ Donors

*Individuals who have donated at least $1,000
**Individuals who have donated at least $2,500

3M
Melissa & Jerad Adams
Ameriprise Financial, Inc.
Anonymous Donors
Apple, Inc.
Aqushen, LLC
Susan & Paul Ardi*

Ascension Seton

Austin Regional Clinic
Michael Babcock
Skip Balch
David Barnes*
Bartlett Real Estate Group
Regenia & Michel Bertrand**

BlueCross BlueShield of Texas

Ann & Nathan Boren
Todd Bowers
Elizabeth & Mike Bradley*
Ellen Jane & Frank Bradley*

Mary K Bradley
Brazos Valley Equine Hospital
Melissa & David Bunce
Rushelle Burton
C. Haynes Construction
Dennis Cahill
Capital Chevrolet
Scott R Caplan
Catalina & Nicholas Carlin**
Guillermo Carrillo
Cink Fundraising
Robert Clem II*
Samantha & Matt Conkey
Anthony De Furio*
Alison Dehan
Nancy DeLisi

Gloria Dholakia
Gloria Dholakia & Neil Gonzalez**
ds-connex
Edward M Dunigan*
Rose Engledown & Ingrid White*

Enterprise Holdings Foundation
Jamie & Pete Eppele
Bobby Epstein**
Marshall Eudy
Rebecca Ewing
Brian Feller*
Angela Fitts
Alex Gabbi
Karen Gage*
Juan Garza
Courtney Gatton
Groovy Molar Pediatric Dental Care
Growth Acceleration Partners
Jonathan Gyory*
Pia Habersang
Christen & Tom Hadfield
Allison Hales
Elizabeth Hall
Quandra Hamilton
Kendra Hays

Amie & Kevin Henry
Germaine & Kyle Henry**
Marcos Hernandez
Jeanette Holahan
Melissa Hutsen
Antonio Iglesias
Megan & William Ilkow
Julie Jendrusch
Liz & Joshua Jones-Dilworth**
Julio’s Restaurant
John Keel
Lisa Kienlen
Anne C Klein
Kevin Koch
Joslen Koester
Kim Kozmetsky
Marisa Lacey
Jimmy Lee
Marne & Blake Litton
Estella Lucero
Bob Lum
Elisa Maldonado-Holmertz
Betty Maskey*
Diane E Maskey
Darlon May**
Daniel McCallin
Heather McCallin
Allie & Dave McCann**
McGuire Family Foundation**
Robert McIntosh
Laura Montemayor
Brian Moran
Jim Mulkey
Susanna Murray
Ukali Mwendo
Maria Nehme*

Regan & William Matthew Noveskey
Panda Ice
Parrish & Company
DonaldPercenti
Annabelle Perdido**
Susana Perez
Brenda & Brad Pollard*
Edna Price
Denise Prior
Joy & Jon Rasul
San Marcos Women’s Health II
Carol Sandusky
Cynthia Sandusky*
Chris Scherr
Eugene Sepulveda*
Frank Shattuck
Suzanne & Carl Shepherd**
Shippy Property Management LLC
Mary Sickbert
Jeffrey & Randi Simmons*
Heather & Brad Singleton*
Leslie Snell
Southwest Strategies Group
Kristin & Bill Steen*
Stella Steen*
Laura Steen-Patterson
Stewart Builders, Inc
Brian Stobaugh
Storybuilt

James Taliano
Sara Teitelman*
Texana Brands

TheZebra.com
Kelly Tjelmeland
Jasen Trautwein*

Alex Tynan
UBS Financial Services
Urban Air
Urology Austin
VMWare
Waddell & Reed Financial Advisors
Bonnie B Whiteis
Marianne & Mike Wiley
Darryl Worsham*
YMCA of Austin
Join us in our great mission!

Donations are gratefully accepted. If you are interested in discussing a gift to DSACT, including us in your workplace giving campaign, holding a fundraiser, or including DSACT in your estate plan, please contact Jennifer A. Edwards, Executive Director, at jennifer.edwards@dsact.org.

The Down Syndrome Association of Central Texas is a 501(c)3 nonprofit organization serving the Down syndrome community in Central Texas for over 28 years. Our tax ID/EIN is 74-2577312. All donations are tax deductible, as allowed by law.

Down Syndrome Association of Central Texas
(512) 323-0808
www.dsact.org
Join us on Facebook, Twitter and Instagram