

Down Syndrome Information Network of the Twin Tiers

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Special Olympics Highlights

Sunny skies, cool breezes, helpful volunteers, athletes in a rainbow of colored t-shirts, smiles, cheers, shiny medals, a blazing torch, tireless spirits.

It was an inspirational day. Many thanks to the City of Corning, the Corning School District and Corning Incorporated for their corps of well-organized volunteers. Great job athletes! You inspire us all with your willingness to try your hardest and your good will towards your fellow athletes.



**SUMMER PICNIC
JULY 17th
NOON
THORNE ST PARK
HORSEHEADS
PAVILLION #2**

**PLEASE BRING A DISH TO PASS, TABLEWARE,
SWIMSUITS, GAMES AND AS MANY FRIENDS AND
FAMILY MEMBERS AS YOU CAN ROPE INTO
COMING!**

Please e-mail Marcelle at mks@chemungarc.org or call 734-6151 to RSVP. There is a pool, restrooms, ballfield, playground and lots of room to throw a frisbee. This is a great opportunity to relax and get to know each other better. Please join us!

Buddy Walk News

We're gearing up for the big day on Saturday, September 24th. We could use volunteers to fill in information and put up posters in August, set up, man tables and clean up the day of the event. Community groups such as scouts and area youth groups are welcome to help, as well as, family and friends. If you wish to help, contact Michele Battersby at mbattersby@stny.rr.com or 607-732-0272.

Updated forms and photos from last year's walk are available on the website. There will be a free raffle for door prizes for registering to walk. If you wish to get sponsors to support your walk, that is great; but all are welcome to walk, with or without sponsors. **Awareness, acceptance and inclusion** are our primary goals and we appreciate your support of those goals in any way, shape or manner. Hope to see you there!

Sponsored by:



Next Meeting:

SCHEDULE CHANGE: NO REGULAR MEETINGS in JUNE, JULY AND AUGUST. BUDDY WALK MEETINGS will be held on JUNE 21st, JULY 27th, AUGUST 24th.



- **Kim Gilbert (who will be 18 this summer) attended the Ellsmere Program annual Prom. Dressed in a black full-length gown with a white wrap embroidered with black flowers, Kim danced the night away after a wonderful meal at Appleridge. We hope to see photos soon, Cindy**
- **CONGRATULATIONS TO LOREN HECKLE (DARYL AND CHRIS TOO) ON THE BIRTH OF HER BABY SISTER, CAROLYN! We know you'll make a terrific big sister!**

Meetings of the Down Syndrome Information Network of the Twin Tiers are held on the fourth Wednesday of every month (unless otherwise announced) at Chemung ARC, 711 Sullivan Street in Elmira.

Dates to Remember:

June 21st

Buddy Walk meeting 6pm Chemung ARC

July 16th

Picnic 12pm Thorne St Park Horseheads

July 27th

Buddy Walk meeting 6pm Chemung ARC

August 24th

Buddy Walk meeting 6pm Chemung ARC

September 24th

Buddy Walk, Wisner Park, Elmira.

REFLECTIONS

My daughter Kally will be 15 years old tomorrow. She talks about boys constantly. Everyday I get an update as to who likes who in her class. When her friends come over they close the door to the bedroom and I hear nothing but giggles every so often. On the average she tries about 3 different hairdos each morning before she settles on a style for the day and sometimes that one doesn't make it as far as the bus.

I sometimes embarrass her if I talk too much or laugh too loud in front of her friends (or mine). "American Idol" is her favorite TV show. She loves to read. She sings in the choir at church.

Tomorrow I'm taking Kally and her friend to the mall. We'll see a movie, eat pizza and do some shopping. Sounds about right, huh?

In some ways she is so typical. But she can't tie her shoes. She sleeps with Barney the dinosaur every night but she would prefer to sleep with me. She would like to eat peanut butter and applesauce sandwiches three meals a day with vanilla ice cream for dessert (even for breakfast if she could talk me into it and believe me, she tries!) Addition and subtraction are a mystery to her.

Having Down Syndrome creates this myriad of abilities and disabilities, strengths and weaknesses. To me, it's just part of who she is. I can't wish it away just as I wouldn't wish away her strawberry blonde hair.

We all want to be loved and accepted for who we are rather than judged for who we aren't and I'm so proud of who she is. Her ability to reach her goals despite the obstacles in her way, makes her triumphs that much sweeter.

Maybe having Down Syndrome really isn't a disability, just another descriptor that helps define to others who we are, like "Christian", "asthmatic", "college graduate", "athlete", "seamstress". Think of the descriptors people assign to you. Is any one of them a complete picture of who you are or just a piece of the puzzle?

My daughter has Down Syndrome but she is so much more than that. She is a singer, a good friend, a reader, a kind and loving person, an animal lover. Actually, I can't think of a single person whom I could describe with just one word or even two. I am so grateful to have Kally as my daughter and I know that I am a better person for having her in my life.

HAPPY BIRTHDAY KALLY!