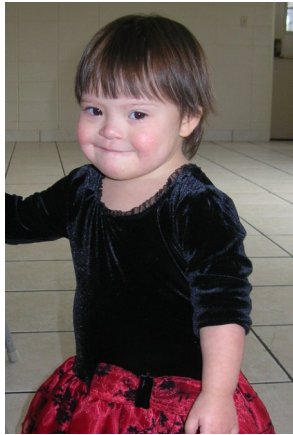


## DSSMC Board of Directors 2009:

Scott Dennis.....President  
Jason Jones.....Vice-President  
Dora Harding.....Secretary  
Kimberly Pryor.....Treasurer  
Laura Sherman.....Special Events Coordinator  
Keri Davis.....Member at Large  
Suzanne Dennis .....Member at Large  
Ashley Cassity.....Alternate Member



## Join Us

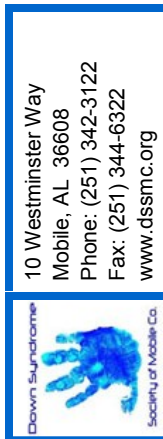
The Down Syndrome Society of Mobile County would like to keep you informed of upcoming meetings, events, family fun events, interesting web sites and other information. Just email us at [info@dssmc.org](mailto:info@dssmc.org). You can also go to our website at: [www.dssmc.org](http://www.dssmc.org) for more information and to view our calendar of events.

## Volunteers

If you would like to volunteer for our organization, please e-mail [dora@dssmc.org](mailto:dora@dssmc.org).

## En Español

Si necesita ayuda en español llame al (251) 776-6861 o envíe un mensaje electrónico a: [dora@dssmc.org](mailto:dora@dssmc.org).



## Down Syndrome Society of Mobile County DSSMC



A non-profit organization serving Mobile  
and surrounding areas

Member of:



[www.dssmc.org](http://www.dssmc.org)

## About the Down Syndrome Society of Mobile County?

DSSMC is a non-profit organization made up of parent volunteers who are committed to improving the lives of people with Down syndrome and their families in our area. Our mission is to provide enrichment through education, emotional support, advocacy and networking opportunities for individuals with Down syndrome, their families and the greater community. We are dedicated to enhancing the lives of individuals with Down syndrome by facilitating programs that can help them in achieving their highest potential.

### Our History

Our organization was officially incorporated March 31, 1981 by William Heath, Debbie Heath, Rebecca Cox, Diane Sears, and Patrick Avinger. The incorporated name was "Association for Down Syndrome Citizens." The organization has had many leaders and members over the years with times of high and low participation.

When applying for the 501(c)3 tax exempt status the membership and board wanted to change the name and reflect ties to the Mobile County, where most participating members live. The 501(c)3 tax exempt status was granted and the organization has held this status since 2007

### Ongoing Events

**Watermelon Parch Free Playtime**—Every first Sunday and Wednesday of the month. Open to all children with Down syndrome and their siblings.

**Awareness Fair** in the Spring.

**Back to School Social** in August.

**Buddy Walk**—Saturday, October 10, at Hank Aaron Stadium.

**Christmas Social** in early December.

Visit our website for more details on these and other events.

## Our Goals and Intentions

- Place valuable resources and current literature in the hands of families with young children diagnosed with Down syndrome so as to help them with questions, struggles and concerns related to Down syndrome.
- Hold events within the Mobile County regional area that will open the doors of opportunity for persons with Down syndrome, increase community awareness of the issues and challenges as well as the strengths held by persons affected by Down syndrome, and to increase favorable conditions and tolerance for persons with such disabilities in our community as well as serve to raise funds for the ongoing work of the organization.
- Educate healthcare professionals on the issues related to proper medical care for persons with Down syndrome by informing them of the clinical specifications for persons with Down syndrome.
- Help develop the medical community's sensitivity to persons with Down syndrome and their unique needs as well as the appropriate bedside manner for delivering diagnosis of Down syndrome to new parents.
- Offer opportunities for persons with Down syndrome to make friends with peers and their families to network with one another at such informal events about issues they face and ways that they have worked through them..
- Offer opportunities for parents and family members of persons with Down syndrome to learn more about issues that affect them and their loved one (s) as it relates to the consequential issues of Down syndrome in structured educational and informative meetings and seminars.
- Develop and maintain an active, up-to-date, resourceful web site for our community and our members.
- Maintain an organization that will grow and increase in its effectiveness to serve its community and it's constituents as problems and new challenges continue to arise for persons with Down syndrome and their families.

## What is Down Syndrome?

Down syndrome is a genetic condition resulting when a baby is born with three rather than the usual two copies of chromosome 21 (Trisomy 21). This condition can occur in 1 out of every 733 live births and crosses all demographics. The extra genetic material will affect a child's cognition and development but it is not a blueprint that determines his/her potential. Individuals with Down syndrome vary in their personality, intellect and physical development all of which are improved through loving homes, early intervention, quality education, sensitive medical care, and positive public awareness.

## How will having a baby with Down syndrome affect my family?

One of the best ways to find an answer to this question is by speaking to family members of individuals with Down syndrome. In addition, there are many books and articles written by family members about their personal experiences. These accounts can offer a great deal of comfort and reassurance because, as you hear or read other people's stories, you will find that there is a consistent theme throughout the various experiences. The message that you will hear time and time again is that the positive impacts of having a family member with Down syndrome far outweigh the difficulties or challenges that may come up. The majority of families share that they are stronger and closer as a result of the experience of dealing with a disability, and that they are more focused on the things that really matter in life. There have also been many research studies that explore how having a child with Down syndrome affects families. Studies show that while these families do experience additional challenges, their levels of well-being are comparable to those of families who do not have a child with Down syndrome. Researchers say that what seems to determine if families are resilient and able to thrive is their ability to access individual, family and community resources. Be sure to take advantage of all the resources available in your community, and focus on building a support network to get you and your family through any tough times.

*Adapted from NDSS*

## Resources:

The National Down Syndrome Society  
[www.ndss.org](http://www.ndss.org)

The National Down Syndrome Congress  
[www.ndscenter.org](http://www.ndscenter.org)

Alabama's Early Intervention System  
<http://www.rehab.state.al.us/Home/default.aspx?url=/Home/Services/AEIS/Main&flash=yes>

Woodbine House Publishers  
[www.woodbinehouse.com](http://www.woodbinehouse.com)