

G R E A T E R C L E A R L A K E Families Exploring Down Syndrome

Calendar of Events

May

9 Golf Tournament
8 am Tee Time
Timber Creek Golf Club, Friendswood
Register Online!

17 May Social
3 - 6 pm
Challenger Park Pavilion #3
Bring a dish to share

June

17 Monthly Meeting
Potty Training
Tracie Frederick, Rise School teacher
6:30 pm Pizza & talk
7:00 pm Speaker
United Way-Bay Area Bldg.
1300 Bay Area Blvd. Conf. Room A. Child care provided.

Contents

A Word from the VP	2
Board Meeting Minutes	2
Board & Committees	2
Tee Up for FEDS	3
GCLFEDS Reaches Out to the Community	3
New Members	4
Meet Our Member	4
Book Review	6
Community Info	6
May Social	9
Volunteers Needed	9
Inspiration & Thanks	10



Building the Bridge Between Silence and Communication: Parent Experiences using Sign Language with Children with Down Syndrome

By Clacie Gonzales-Ciaccio

Clacie Gonzales-Ciaccio is a special education teacher at Heights Elementary School in Texas City I.S.D., specifically providing early intervention services to children in their preschool program for children with disabilities (PPCD). Clacie is currently completing a Master's degree in Early Childhood Education with a specialization in young children with special needs at the University of Houston Clear Lake.

Effective communication is the foundation for expressive language. This means that in order to progress and grow in their development young children need to learn to interpret and comprehend messages through interaction, touching, crying, gestures, and facial expressions (National Technical Assistance Center [NTAC], 2002). To facilitate this process parents, families, educators, and related professionals can engage children in give and take games or activities, daily routines, and interactive play.

When there are delays in this process due to a disability a child may experience a lack of appropriate and effective communication. When this occurs children need more intense and repetitive learning opportunities allowing communication and language to be learned in a multimodal approach. This approach is called total communication and can include many forms of spoken language, pictures, gestures, and sign language. Total communication "refers to the philosophy that individuals are encouraged to use oral language and other means to communicate as fully as possible what is on their minds and understand what others are communicating" (Hopmann, 1993, p. 22). Sign language is one component of total communication that has been researched and shown to be a beneficial means of facilitating expressive

language in children with Down syndrome. Each year in the United States 1 in 800 children are born with Down syndrome with the incidence being higher in women over 35 (National Information Center for Children and Youth with Disabilities [NICHCY], 2004). Individuals with Down syndrome experience delays in their cognitive functioning, gross motor, fine motor, oral motor, and communication skills. Research has shown that children with Down syndrome experience greater difficulty with language development, syntax, and oral motor control. While children with Down syndrome exhibit deficits they also demonstrate strengths in visual memory and receptive communication. With this information one can conclude that sign language can provide children with Down syndrome an effective means of

Continued on page 5



Shelby, age 5, and her mom, Ellen (GCLFEDS VP)

A Word from the VP by Ellen Lachney

I would like to introduce myself to those members that may not know me. My name is Ellen Lachney and my husband's name is Eric. We are the proud parents of Tyler (7), Jacqueline (6), and Shelby (5). Aside from being a busy mom, I also teach math part-time at Mt. Carmel High School in Houston. I am so glad I have the privilege to work with all of the amazing members and volunteers of GCLFEDS.

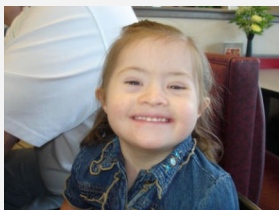
When Shelby was born I remember searching fervently for as much information as I could find. I read different

articles and books to figure out what I needed to do to raise a child with Down syndrome. After arranging her therapies with ECI and scheduling appointments with different medical specialists I still wanted to know what I could do as a mom to ensure that my daughter would have the best life possible. Then it hit me: I needed to do all of the same things I was already doing for my other two children. I needed to love and nurture her, play with her, read to her, sing to her, keep her on a schedule, have play dates with other

children. The list could just keep going on, but most of all I needed to enjoy being her mommy. Cherish each day because even though her development might be delayed, she was not going to be a baby forever.

Now Shelby is five and I wonder where the time has gone. I still have to constantly remind myself not to get caught up in making our fun times together an extension of therapy. She is going to naturally learn from me in our daily interactions. Although I make time to practice things she does

Continued on page 3



Anna, age 4

Board Meeting Minutes by Alicia Dague

The GCLFEDS board last met on April 3, 2008. Discussions continued with Dr. Denise Chapman and Joanie Garro concerning educational services that we might provide to our membership and educators. Joanie Garro is

working on GCLFEDS awards that will be given during October, Down Syndrome Awareness Month, to deserving individuals around our community. Members have provided us with contacts at area hospitals who are interested in

receiving information and helping us arrange presentations. Anne Bernay and Ellen Lachney are working on a GCLFEDS scholarship which we hope to award this July! As you can see....The GCLFEDS are MOVING FORWARD!

Board of Directors & Committees

President	Anne Bernay	pres@clearlakeds.org	832-457-2775
Vice President	Ellen Lachney	vp@clearlakeds.org	281-935-7327
Secretary	Alicia Dague	sec@clearlakeds.org	832-275-9365
Treasurer	Patty Cortez	treas@clearlakeds.org	
Director	Denise Chapman	director@clearlakeds.org	281-283-3561
Director	Joanie Garro	education@clearlakeds.org	832-483-1869
Committees			
Outreach	Beth Haas	outreach@clearlakeds.org	832-689-5961
Fundraising	Erica Henicke	fundraise@clearlakeds.org	281-974-6627
New Parent	Tiffany Perez	newparent@clearlakeds.org	
Webmaster	Joel Burdeaux	joelburdeaux@gmail.com	

Tee Up for the FEDS!



The 1st Annual FEDS Charity Golf Classic is around the corner on May 9. It's the last week to sign up to support this important fundraising event. All proceeds will be used for GCLFEDS programs: family support and resources, community outreach, educational programs and more!

So if you can help us in any of the following ways, time is running out! Please contact us at gclfeds@clearlakeds.org

or 832-457-2775 to help.

- Play golf – register online at www.clearlakeds.org
- Recruit golfers
- Purchase a hole sign to honor your child or talk your relatives or company into purchasing one
- Volunteer to help at the event
- Donate door prizes

Thank you!!

A Word from the VP, cont.

continued from page 2
in therapy and at school, I make sure that those times do not get in the way of playtime with mommy. She has two of the best therapists living under the same roof with her: her brother and sister. She is constantly imitating everything they do, and learning language and behaviors from them. They do not even realize the impact they have on

Shelby's development, they are just enjoying their sister. Often times I envy them, because they can teach and model for Shelby so naturally just by being kids. They do not get caught up in the worry over whether they are doing it correctly or often enough the way I do. I think we "grown-ups" have a lot to learn from the children in our lives. If we just do what comes naturally, there is so much enjoyment that we can gain from being moms and dads!

GCLFEDS Reaches Out to the Community by Beth Haas, Outreach Chair

As a new organization, GCLFEDS strives to get the word out to groups and individuals within our community about the services that we can provide for them. That is one of the goals of our Community Outreach committee. However, we don't want to stop there. We have big plans for getting information out into the medical community about our group and Down syndrome (DS) issues.

Our first course of action was to develop a folder that could be handed out to doctors and medical professionals. The folders contain the following items: a letter to the doctor explaining the packet, a copy of our DVD Living with Down Syndrome: Turning Fear Into Hope, a brochure about GCLFEDS, a phone number for parents to call for support when they receive a diagnosis of Down syndrome, and a

pamphlet for doctors with tips on delivering a diagnosis of DS combined with a medical checklist for pediatricians. The folders are ready for distribution in early May. We are looking forward to getting them out to our members who will in turn deliver them personally to their doctors.

GCLFEDS would also like to take on the challenge of becoming an enlightening force within the medical community. Often doctors present outdated and inaccurate information to parents while delivering a diagnosis of DS. In addition, some health professionals fail to recognize the true potential for our children. GCLFEDS along with Father's Joy

(a Christian ministry for families of children with special needs) is developing a program that can be presented to doctors, nurses, hospitals, and genetic counselors. The collaboration produced the Living With Down Syndrome DVD and is now working on a presentation for medical professionals and hospitals focused on helping doctors give a more compassionate diagnosis of DS with more accurate and positive information for parents. Other activities include increasing positive media coverage of DS and providing parent support through the First Call phone line.

To increase GCLFEDS' services for teens and adults, we have taken part in activities including a

transition resource fair at LaPorte High School. We also met with the Gulf Coast Transition Task Force, a group of vocation coordinators and transition counselors for school districts including Galveston, Texas City, Pearland, Dickinson, Pasadena, Clear Creek and others. Our brochures and DVD were distributed at a Galveston ISD meeting for parents of kids in the transition program.

We are always looking for people to help with our community outreach program. We need volunteers to deliver information to doctors, hospitals, schools, and churches. Also, if you are interested in becoming a representative for our group at information fairs or taking part in the medical field presentations please let us know.



Evan, age 5



Owen, age 2



Ches, age 3 months



Crystal, age 3

Welcome New Members!

Thank you for supporting GCLFEDS.

Richard & MaryAnn Walton

The Rise School of Houston

Teresa & Jeffrey Kopietz – aunt and uncle of Joey Garro

Kileen McDonald, Pam Colwell and Ches, age 3 months

Become a member today!

Register online at www.clearlakeds.org or mail the form available on the website.

Congratulations to the Haas Family on the arrival of third daughter Ella Jane last weekend!

Meet Our Member: Kali Starr

For those of you who haven't had the chance to meet her, Kali is my daughter. She is the oldest of three (her brothers are almost 18 and 13). At the meetings she is the older girl that stays in the meeting and acts like she knows all that is going on. She will be 19 on May 9th of this year. She was born here in Pasadena and has from the beginning shown her "stubborn" streak. Doctors told us she wouldn't make it through the first night; they were so sure that they wouldn't even let me see her because they didn't want us to start to bond.

Kali was born with an Atrial-Ventricular Septal Defect. She was in congestive heart failure even in the womb. At 3 1/2 months she had Failure to Thrive and again wasn't supposed to survive. At 5 1/2 months, on Halloween of all days, she had open heart surgery at Arkansas Children's Hospital in Little Rock. She went home on November 10th. The day

after surgery, they had to double her Morphine dose, as she was awake and trying to take off all of the tubes and wires. Doctors said it was too much activity too soon (there was that stubborn streak again). They let her off the ventilator on Wednesday, two days after surgery. I could go through many more times of hospitalizations all during the first three years. As she got older her health improved and her stubbornness grew.

She is extremely outgoing, and doesn't give people a chance to decide if they want to meet her. If she catches you looking at her it's all over: you will meet her - like it or not. She has a rather large Play-Doh collection (130ish at last count), and will tell you her goal is to get on a show Disney channel has about kids who have unusual collections. She also loves her color books, and doll heads (she has 6 of them that she does the



hair on). She also loves movies and can tell you who the characters are and what the movie is about for just about any Disney movie including the old ones I grew up on.

Kali is very devout in her faith and loves Christian music. She keeps us on our toes and doesn't let us forget a prayer at dinner. She loves just about any kind of food although her very favorite is spaghetti and she will always pick it if given a choice. She has been to summer camp two years in a row for a week at a time and loved it. One thing I think is very

important is that we have never told her she can't do something because she has Down syndrome. There is so much more to her than Down syndrome. Sometimes I think we went to the other extreme and pushed her too hard but she is also very independent because of that. I'm supposed to keep this short and it's hard because there is so much to Kali that makes her an inspiration. She loves her family and has her dad wrapped around her finger. She is our "princess" and reminds us of that when she wants something.

Building the Bridge, cont.

Continued from page 1

communicating a message. Many children with Down syndrome are “ready to use a language system many months or even several years before they are able to use speech effectively to communicate” (Kumin, 2002). Without knowledge of recent research on sign language and children with Down syndrome families and professionals are widening the gap between working ability and actual potential.

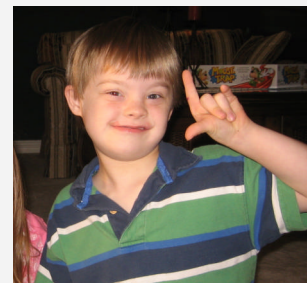
Sign language is widely used and can be seen on many children’s television programs as well as in books. Families and professionals are beginning to see the benefits of using this type of communication as a transitional tool to assist children in moving to the use of spoken language (Hopman, 1993). Research indicates the positive implications of using sign language with children with Down syndrome like increase in active learning, decrease in distress, and increase in communicating attempts (Acredolo & Goodwyn, 2000). However, current research lacks information on parent experiences using sign language with their child with Down syndrome due to a

primary focus on outcomes. In order to provide more opportunities for early intervention, determine further effectiveness, address challenging behavior, and minimize negative beliefs and misconceptions research must be conducted in this area. As an educator of young children with Down syndrome, I have experienced an increase in the knowledge and use of sign language by their parents and families. Parents are using sign language to provide their children with an added means of communication hoping to decrease tantrums and confusion in wants and needs. They are also using sign language for the social aspect of conversation, play, and interaction.

While most research on sign language and Down syndrome provides positive outcomes and implications for families and professionals there is some research that disagrees with the popular belief in this form of intervention. Many parents express initial concern with sign language due to misconceptions and a lack of experience. Doman (1999) discussed a need for families and professionals to focus on auditory functioning and hearing in order for

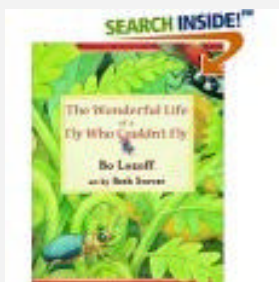
children with Down syndrome to acquire language. He notes that the primary focus of intervention should be a neurodevelopment approach looking at factors that effect function and impact development (Doman, 1999). This view implies that by teaching sign language as an alternative means of communication families and professionals are focusing on the symptoms instead of the problem. Doman (1999) also discusses that when sign language is used children no longer see a need to speak. Many parents report that they began teaching sign language because of their child’s frustration with being misunderstood and strongly disagree with research that implies that sign language is harmful to the development of spoken language. Parents often report that the words their children do say are the ones they used to sign. Woodard (2002) discusses her experience with using sign language with her son with Down syndrome and states “my son is now at the point that he will try to speak a word and if I

Continued on page 7



Many children with Down syndrome are “ready to use a language system many months or even several years before they are able to use speech effectively to communicate” (Kumin, 2002).

Book Reviews by Cristen Reat & Anne Bernay



The Wonderful Life of a Fly Who Couldn't Fly
By Bo Lozoff & Beth Stover
(2002, \$13.49 on Amazon.com)

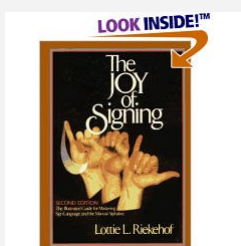
I came across this book in a doctor's office, and I was so moved by the story and the illustrations, it has become one of our family's favorite books. It is written for pre-school to Grade 2 level, but I suggest it as a book to read together as a family. It tells the story of a fly who cannot fly, and the positive message that emerges serves as a great way to open a conversation about diverse abilities. A child with disabilities may be

able to identify with the character of the fly, whereas a child without a disability (especially siblings) can talk about the value and contributions of those who are different. The rhyming narrative is fun and gets kids excited about trying to guess which words come next. Generally speaking, a winner for all ages!
- Cristen Reat

The Joy of Signing: The Illustrated Guide for Mastering Sign Language and the Manual Alphabet
By Lottie L. Riekehof (1987, \$16.31 from Amazon.com)

The 1978 edition of this book was recently loaned

to me and I have already ordered a copy of the newer 1987 version. I have several American Sign Language books already that we use frequently to help teach Peter new signs. While the ones we use are arranged alphabetically, this book groups the signs by category and explains the origin of each sign. For example, the sign for summer originates from "wiping the perspiration from the forehead." It also has a comprehensive section of religious signs - great for helping with prayers and church. -Anne Bernay



Community Info

Research Study

The Down Syndrome Clinic of Houston is conducting a new research study examining the effects of an FDA-approved medication on improving language and independent living skills. We are seeking children with Down syndrome between the ages of 10-17 years who are in good health to participate. All of the laboratory tests, medical evaluations, developmental tests, and study medication will be provided at no cost to the child's family. The medicine being tested is Donezepil hydrochloride, a

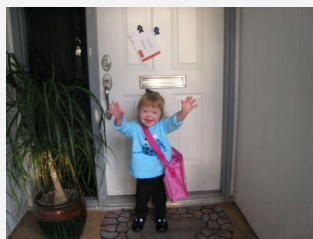
medicine that is used in adults with Alzheimer's disease. If you are interested in enrolling your child, please contact Christine Lee at 832-822-3419 or 832-822-3478; or email downsyndrome@texaschildrenshospital.org.

Second Chance to Hear Joanie Garro's ARD 101!

Side by Side
Tuesday May 20
7:00 p.m.
Tad Akers Facility
218 Clear Creek Ave.
League City
SPEAKER: Joanie Garro
ARD 101 & FILM CLUB

If you missed the GCLFEDS February

meeting, here's your chance to hear GCLFEDS Director Joanie Garro provide advice on preparing for your child's ARD meeting. A Board Certified Behavior Analyst and certified Special Education teacher, Joanie has over 20 years experience working with individuals with special needs and their families as a special education teacher, private therapist and family coach. She has attended between 200 and 300 ARDs. She currently is in private practice working with families, schools and corporations.



Annalee's first day of school (PPCD) - she's ready!

Building the Bridge, cont.

Continued from page 5

do not understand him, he will then use his sign as backup" (p. 46). Doman (1999) disagrees with the efforts of families and professionals and believes they are taking short cuts in development that will meet short term goals but destroy long term ones. Hopmann (1993) counters this point of view and discusses the need to deviate from the normal patterns of development in order to better serve children with Down syndrome.

Current research on sign language and Down syndrome focuses on benefits and outcomes. Research also indicates initial experiences of parents with the discovery and implementation of sign language. Donovan (1998) states that by introducing sign language at birth to babies with Down syndrome a bond can be formed between family members and the baby as well as providing opportunities for eye contact and attention to movements. Initially sign language should build upon natural everyday gestures allowing for messages to be relayed in a visual manner. Parents often lack exposure to research on positive outcomes of sign language and

fellow parent experiences. Many parents are referred to sign language by speech pathologists, occupational therapists, physical therapists, early interventionists, or educators. Woodard (2002) states that her son's speech pathologist suggested the use of sign language to augment communication. She was frustrated because her son could not make his wishes known and was open to teaching sign language because she had experience with it (Woodard, 2002).

Some parents are open and willing to try new forms of communication while others are not. Derr (1983) was strongly opposed to the idea of teaching her son sign language. She believed its use would further highlight his disability and differences. After months without progress in language development Derr (1983) taught her 2 ½ year old son his first sign and overtime noticed an increase in his motivation to use oral speech. Sign language also provided him access to communication and conversation along with easing frustration and tantrums. Donovan (1998) discusses that tantrums, frustration, and

misbehavior are means of communication. In order to extinguish this response, children must be taught appropriate means to communicate their message. Donovan (1998) also notes that by avoiding these situations children are further motivated in their efforts to initiate conversation and take part in expressive communication.

Formal studies have also been conducted on the early use of sign language with children with Down syndrome. Launonen (1996) describes early intervention as "systematic strategies aimed at promoting the optimal development of infants and toddlers with special needs and at enhancing the functioning of their families and caregivers" (p. 213). Research shows that the earlier individualized and uniquely designed activities and interventions are used with children with Down syndrome the more likely there will be a reduction in future problems in development. Launonen (1996) conducted a study on the use of sign language as an early intervention tool for

Continued on page 8



Emma, age 4 months

"...by introducing sign language at birth to babies with Down syndrome a bond can be formed between family members and the baby as well as providing opportunities for eye contact and attention to movements."

"...The study showed that sign language was effective in building a foundation for spoken language as well as giving children an opportunity to be an active participant in communication."



Building the Bridge, cont.

Continued from page 7

children with Down syndrome. The study showed that sign language was effective in building a foundation for spoken language as well as giving children an opportunity to be an active participant in communication.

Another formal study conducted by Acredolo and Goodwyn (2000) on the use of symbolic gestures and facilitating verbal development showed that there was a relationship between using symbolic gestures or signs and initiating responses from caregivers. This relationship eases frustration, builds trust,

and increases motivation in efforts to communicate.

In conclusion, sign language is a visual means of communicating that allows children with Down syndrome an output system when they do not have the ability to produce spoken language. Children with Down syndrome can use sign language to communicate their wants, needs, and interests. They are also given an opportunity to participate actively in give and take conversations. Children with Down syndrome experience delays in language development and need assistance communicating through a multisensory

approach. Parents and professionals need to be aware of experiences of people who use sign language with children with Down syndrome in order to close the gap in language development. Sign language has been shown to have positive and beneficial implications allowing children with Down syndrome an opportunity to communicate without using words. This eases frustration and stress and motivates future attempts for interaction. Thus, the use of sign language within a home or classroom learning environment can be instrumental in setting a child up for productive and rewarding developmental outcomes.

References

- Acredolo, L.P. & Goodwyn, S.W. (2000). Impact of symbolic gesturing on early language development. *Journal of Nonverbal Behaviors*, 24, 81-103.
- Bichelaman-Cotnoir, N. M., Dancho, K. A., McKerchar, P. M., Tate, T. L., & Thompson, R. H. (2007). Enhancing early communication through infant sign training. *Journal of Applied Behavior Analysis*, 40(1), 15-23.
- Bixler, B., Layton, K., Morgan, S., & Stremmel, K. (2002, August). National Technical Assistance Center. Community Fact Sheets for Parents. Retrieved Feb. 28, 2008, from <http://www.tr.wou.edu/ntac>
- Clibbens, J. (1993). From theory to practice in child language development. *Down Research and Practice*, 1(3), 101-106.
- Derr, J. S. (1983, December). Signing vs. silence. *The Exceptional Parent*, 13(6), 49-52.
- Doman, R. J. (1999). Language acquisition in children with Down syndrome. *Journal of the National Academy of Child Development*, 12(1). Retrieved February 28, 2008, http://www.nacd.org/more_information/journal/article13.html
- Donovan, C. (1998). Teaching sign language. *Disability Solutions*, 2(5), 1, 3-7.
- Down Syndrome Fact Sheet 4 (2004, January). Retrieved February 28, 2008 from <http://www.nichcy.org>
- Hopmann, M. R. (1993). The use of signs by children with down syndrome. *Down Syndrome Today*, 2(2), 22-23.
- Launonen, K. (1996). Enhancing communication skills of children with down syndrome: early use of manual signs. In S. von Tetzchner & Jensen, M. H. (Eds.), *Augmentative and Alternative Communication: European Perspectives* (pp. 213-231). Whurr Publications.
- Kumin, L. (2002). National Down Syndrome Society: Speech and Language in Infants, Toddlers, and Young Children with Down Syndrome. Retrieved February 28, 2008 from www.ndss.org
- Woodard, A. (2002, December). Signing for success. *The Exceptional Parent*, 32(12), 45-46.

GCLFEDS May Social

Saturday May 17, 2008
3pm-6pm

Location: Challenger Park Pavilion # 3,
behind Acrosports on FM528
2301 W. Nasa Parkway,
Webster 77598

Link to the park for location and directions:
http://www.co.harris.tx.us/comm_Lee/PCChallenger7/

Please join us in celebrating Spring and getting to know other families. The children can enjoy crafts and play.

We will provide a main dish and drinks. Please call to RSVP and sign up to share a side dish or dessert.

Call Tiffany at 832-385-0596 or email her at perez_tiff@yahoo.com for any questions.



Volunteers Needed!

GCLFEDS needs help with the following activities:

- Public Relations: submit event announcements to local publications on a monthly basis and assist with event PR as needed
- Librarian: Maintain and add to the library and fill member requests for books at meetings or by mail
- Community Outreach Committee: assist in contacting medical professionals, hospitals, and others in the community; help distribute materials to these groups to promote inclusion and acceptance; present to groups

Contact
gclfeds@clearlaked.org
or call 8320457-2775 to volunteer.



A Little Inspiration

American Sign Language Browser (Michigan State University, 2000)

<http://commtechlab.msu.edu/sites/aslweb/browser.htm>

This online American Sign Language (ASL) browser allows you to look up video of thousands of ASL signs and learn interesting things about them. This web site

contains a sample of the material found on the award winning Personal Communicator CD-ROM, available for purchase on the website.

GCLFEDS Dancers to Perform in Recital

Several members of GCLFEDS participate in Kennedy Dance Theatre's Special Needs Dance Program

(<http://www.kennedydance.com/specialneeds.html>).

The talented young hoofers will perform in Kennedy's Annual Recital on the weekend of May 23-25 at the Grand Opera House in Galveston. Check out <http://www.kennedydance.com/recital.html> for more information. Congratulations to all of the dancers!

Thank You to Our Sponsors & Volunteers

Our gratitude and thanks to the following generous donors:

Dr. Thomas F. Rowe
Cristen & Daniel Reat

Our volunteers make all of our programs possible. Special thanks to:

- Joel and Heather Burdeaux – designing and maintaining our incredible website
- Alicia Dague – coordinating the babysitters for our monthly meetings, sending out communications to the

group, writing thank you notes and a hundred other tasks big and small!

- Denise Chapman – videotaping our monthly meetings for our website
- Elizabeth Pool – assisting with newsletter editing
- Ellen Lachney – getting pizza donated for our February meeting and working on the scholarship program design among other things
- Joanie Garro – developing our awards program
- Cristen Reat, Megan Starr & Clacie Ciaccio – writing for our newsletter this month

Greater Clear Lake
Families Exploring Down
Syndrome

Phone
(832) 457-2775

E-mail
gclfeds@clearlakeds.org

Website
www.clearlakeds.org



About Our Organization

GCLFEDS provides support and resources to individuals with Down syndrome and their families. Our family support programs educate and empower families to ensure the success of their children in the larger community. Monthly meetings, socials, new parent support, a lending library and annual conference are a few of

our activities.

GCLFEDS promotes awareness, understanding and inclusion in our communities. Through presentations and the DVD entitled "Living with Down Syndrome: Turning Fear Into Hope" we help medical professionals and hospitals provide a more positive outlook to new parents. We are working

with local school districts and colleges to ensure the best education for our children.

GCLFEDS focuses on ensuring a positive community outlook and ample opportunity for individuals with DS to succeed. We believe in our kids and know that they can do great things! Won't you join us?

The Greater Clear Lake Families Exploring Down Syndrome newsletter is published every other month and is a benefit of membership in GCLFEDS. Copyright © 2008 – All Rights Reserved.