

# GREATER CLEAR LAKE Families Exploring Down Syndrome

## Calendar of Events

### Monthly Meetings:

6:30 pm Pizza & talk  
7:00 pm Speaker  
United Way-Bay Area  
1300 Bay Area Blvd.  
Conf. Room A.  
Child care provided.

August

**20 Getting Ready for School: Tips from Parents & Teachers**

September

**17 Nutrition for a Long Life** Dr. Carroll Lassiter, UHCL Nutrition

### Events:

August

**6 Dad's Night Out**  
7:00 pm  
Main Event  
1125 Magnolia,  
Webster

**21 Family Sign Language Workshop**  
Katie Tryon Rauh  
10 to 11 am  
Location TBD –  
check website

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## From the Bottom of my Bad Heart By Courtni Kopietz

I could barely stumble up the crumbling concrete steps into my grandmother's house and push open the creaking wooden door, that one door who vindictively planted splinters in my hand on a continual basis, before being enveloped in the customary suffocating hug that initiated every visit. It was a gesture full of compassion, and one that was never brief. I could feel his callused hands on my back, testing my emotional as well as physical strength, with pure joy flowing from every part of his being. As we stepped apart, he would pause, holding both of my hands in his and look me full-on in the face with his upward slanting eyes. I never knew what he was searching for, each time he did this. But after a few moments, his face would light up in a grin stretching from ear to ear, enhancing the rounded cheeks that dominated his face.

Next came the questions, which I had to answer before I left the entryway. They were the same questions I was asked since I turned 10 years old; the double digit ages were important to a man who wasn't supposed to live to them himself.

"You drivin' yet?" he'd ask with genuine curiosity. I'd always answer in the negative; once I was old enough to start driving, he had moved on to a new interrogation.

"Got a boyfriend?" He would cock his head to the side and his grin would widen as he broached this subject. "Because,



Far left back: Courtni Kopietz (Joey's niece)  
Joey's sisters Teresa Kopietz & Mary Zeleny, Joey Garro, Joanie Garro (Joey's sister)  
Front kids: Lucas Kopietz & Benjamin Drzaic (Joey's nephews)

you know, I have girlfriends."

And he did have lots of friends. He met every one the same way, and no one was immune to his obvious friendliness. "Hello, my name is Joey, and I have Down Syndrome. I have a hole in my heart, but it doesn't stop me from loving you."

He lived with my grandmother, the youngest of her eight children, but the most spirited at 36 years old. Joey was determined to be independent, and started by moving into his own place. He had an apartment; it was composed of the two back rooms in my grandmother's house and became his sanctuary. As I entered his rooms, invitation required, my eyes would jump immediately to the wall on the right side of the room. It was covered entirely with pictures of Joey's celebrity friends—some were celebrities that would be recognized by many, such as

Continue on page 3



The Reat Family

## A Word from the Board

### Community Outreach

The Community Outreach Committee has been busy in the month of July, preparing letters and packets to send to area obstetricians. The purpose of the letters is to introduce our organization to local doctors and let them know how important it is to present a positive outlook for families receiving a diagnosis of Down syndrome. The packets include information from the National Down Syndrome Association, the DVD *Living with Down Syndrome: Turning Fear Into Hope*, and our GCLFEDS brochure. We hope to raise awareness about Down syndrome among area professionals in the medical community and let them know that our organization can provide information and support to new parents. We also plan to make presentations to local hospitals, churches and ECI groups in the fall to increase community awareness about GCLFEDS and our special children.

### New Parent Chair Cristen Reat

I am grateful for the opportunity to serve as GCLFEDS's New Parent chair! For 11 years I have been married to a wonderful man, Daniel, who is an attorney at the UT Health Science Center. I have two loving and unique sons—Martin who is nine years old and Vincent, who is nearly six. We live near the medical center in Houston, and I work part-time for a non-profit organization. When I was pregnant with Vincent, I was given the news that he had Down syndrome (DS). Although it was unexpected and difficult news to bear, my doctor was extremely supportive, positive and loving. Over the years I have met many families whose experience of being given news that their child had DS was nothing short of awful, and so I feel compelled to try to help new parents as they struggle to come to terms with the baby they did not expect. It is my goal to share information, offer support, and simply listen to moms and dads who need to express emotions that only another parent can understand. I look forward to getting to know all of you in the coming year.

## Board of Directors & Committees

If you are interested in helping on the Board or a committee, please contact us at [gclfed@clearlaked.org](mailto:gclfed@clearlaked.org)

**Please contact any of us with suggestions, questions or offers to help!**

### Board of Directors

President	Anne Bernay	<a href="mailto:pres@clearlaked.org">pres@clearlaked.org</a>	832-457-2775
Vice President	Open		
Secretary	Alicia Dague	<a href="mailto:sec@clearlaked.org">sec@clearlaked.org</a>	832-275-9365
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Director	Denise Chapman	<a href="mailto:director@clearlaked.org">director@clearlaked.org</a>	281-283-3561
Director	Joanie Garro	<a href="mailto:education@clearlaked.org">education@clearlaked.org</a>	832-483-1869

### Committees

Outreach	Beth Haas	<a href="mailto:outreach@clearlaked.org">outreach@clearlaked.org</a>	832-689-5961
Outreach	Elizabeth Stevens	<a href="mailto:outreach@clearlaked.org">outreach@clearlaked.org</a>	
New Parent	Cristen Reat	<a href="mailto:newparent@clearlaked.org">newparent@clearlaked.org</a>	713-417-9398
Public Relations	Lilliana Monita	<a href="mailto:pr@clearlaked.org">pr@clearlaked.org</a>	
Newsletter	Neesha Hosein	<a href="mailto:newsletter@clearlaked.org">newsletter@clearlaked.org</a>	
Fundraising	Open		
Social	Open		
Librarian	María Castillo	<a href="mailto:library@clearlaked.org">library@clearlaked.org</a>	
Webmaster	Joel Burdeaux	<a href="mailto:joelburdeaux@gmail.com">joelburdeaux@gmail.com</a>	

## From the Bottom of My Bad Heart, cont. by Courtni Kopietz

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his favorite actress, Suzanne Somers.

Others were people that he found extraordinary, like the former quarterback of his high school football team or his favorite rosary leader from the local church.

He never forgot to look on the bright side of things, and especially the bright side of people. He helped others to see the good they had in themselves; that's why they were so drawn to him. Joey wouldn't let you forget it either, that you had something to offer the world.

Against the left wall of his room was his desk, with a shabby nature and peeling paint. Its single drawer was crooked and didn't fit properly closed; but it worked well for Joey. He didn't mind little things like that, and rather appreciated his desk as the foundation of all his creations. It was a

place for work, and the place that gave him the most joy in life. Piled high with loose papers, prayer cards and an astonishing collection of pencils, this sacred spot was where everything began. It was where his writing began. When he had to leave it, he still didn't go anywhere without a notebook, a handful of freshly sharpened pencils and a book full of addresses. Writing constantly, he never wearied in his work producing prayers, short stories and personal letters that had the tendency to find themselves in mailboxes when a friend was most needed.

He felt it was his purpose in life to help others appreciate what they had—in many cases, they just admired the qualities that Joey possessed. He was a happy person with simple joys, who wanted to share his lighthearted pleasure with everyone he came in contact with.

While he did possess his "girlfriends," he

called Tracy his true girlfriend, to differentiate from his celebrity pen pals. She had Down Syndrome as well, just one of many things they had in common. She carefully smoothed her dark brown hair, until it hung straight against her shoulders. Her strong prescription glasses set against her rosy cheeks, dominated her face. She was his equal, his other half. While they were both considered different from the rest of society, it was their indifference of other's opinions, their rejection of sadness without cause, and their lack of unfulfilled desires that helped them to be strong individuals.

I once discovered Joey and Tracy cheerfully dancing together in my living room, their eyes closed tight and broad smiles stretched across their faces. Their bare feet moved together on the coarse green carpet,

dancing to music no one else could hear. Headphones trailed out of their ears, plugged into two separate portable CD players; two different musical genres, dancing together in perfect harmony. They were blissfully happy, living in their own world without the heavy cares that seem to accompany the integration into general society.

And though my Joey, my uncle and best friend, has been dead for a couple years, I still feel his warm hug when I need it most. His hugs could heal all hurts, and he gave them freely to any who was in need. When I remember him, I hear his favorite sentiment whispering in my ear. "I love you from the bottom of my bad heart."



Joey Garro writing letters

## Welcome Members!

### Welcome New Members

Sarah Wells  
Elizabeth Kohlschmidt  
M.G. & Nancy Spanial –  
Marty & Beverly (16 & 14)

Swapna Antony –  
Jesey

### Become a member today!

Register online at <http://clearlakeds.org/membership-application/> or mail the form available on the website. Membership has its privileges! Our "Members Only" area has videos of past meetings, a photo gallery and a bulletin board. Members also pay a reduced registration fee for the annual conference.

### Thank You Renewing Members

Jay & Jan Stailey

Ryan & Jennifer Anderson – Macie (2)

Robert & Maria Castillo – Evan (6)

Marc & Ileana Fellows – Christina (3)

John & Beth Haas – Annalee (4)

Richard & Sylvia Bostelmann – Joshua (4)

## Meet Our Members: Marty & Beverly Spanial by Nancy Spanial

Our family, the Spanials, spelled "ial" not "iel," and not to be confused with the dogs with fluffy ears, consists of mom, dad and six children, but it is still pronounced like the dog. We have two children with Down Syndrome (DS).

Marty is 16 and was our first to be born with DS. He was diagnosed with Translocational DS, but is healthy in every other regard. Just on a side note, Mom and Dad were tested to see who might be the carrier of the gene and tests showed that neither parent was the carrier of the gene. At the time, the geneticists advised us there was a 100 percent chance that all our children would have DS. My husband's favorite saying is "there is a reason why they call them practicing physicians because they are still practicing to get it correct." Esther, 15, our next child, was born without DS. So much for medical science.

Marty is like any other teenager when it comes to likes and dislikes. He loves to listen to music, very loud I might add, even though his hearing is normal. He has an appreciation for "High School Musical 1, 2 and 3". Repetition is key to learning for DS children, and now the whole family knows the words by heart. But in a large family such as ours, we make concessions and sing along. He contributes regularly to the family with chores, such as taking out the trash each morning and helping with the yard work — his favorite being the leaf blower. He is very strong, so mom always appreciates an extra pair of



The Spanial family in Israel, 2007

hands for heavy lifting.

With a little extra patience we know that Marty can accomplish much. So far he is becoming fluent in American Sign Language. The rest of the family is trying to catch up. Beverly is 13 and our next child with DS (4<sup>th</sup> of 6<sup>th</sup> chronologically). She was born with Trisomy 21. Having two different DS diagnosis in one family is extremely rare. Then again we always thought of ourselves as being special. She also was diagnosed with Atrial septic defect (ASD) of 10 mm – one of the common defects of the heart. It was advised by her cardiologist that it should

*Continued on page 5*

## Meet Our Member, cont.

*Continued from page 4*

be corrected by the age of ten. After an annual checkup, her test showed that the opening in her heart had closed up by itself, so no surgery was required. Living proof that specific prayer requests are answered.

Beverly, like other teens, is a Hanna Montana fan. She loves to sing and dance and is not shy. She is the first to extend her hand and welcome you. Her natural ability to accept others without question always astounds me. She also has her chores that consist of setting table for eight, which is a feat in itself, and taking care of our cat Monty. She is mom's big helper. I have become aware that some families are taken aback when

found that they have a child with special needs. I would like to remind them that in God's word it says "children are a blessing from God" with the emphasis on "all" not just the children whom are considered normal. I always believed that if God is blessing me with this child he will give me the grace to take care of this special one. And he has. He has remained faithful.

Marty and Beverly, along with our other children, have been such a blessing. To see the children come together and take the time to ensure that their brother and sister are loved and accepted in every circumstance they should find themselves in always humbling. We have been enriched!



*The Spanish kids enjoy a day at the beach.*

## GCLFEDS Accepting Nominations for 2009 Explorer Awards

Help **Greater Clear Lake Families Exploring Down Syndrome** recognize members in our community who go out of their way for our children and adults with disabilities. These individuals or organizations **explore** the needs of our special friends and neighbors and find ways to integrate their capabilities into our everyday lives for the betterment of our community overall.

The Explorer Awards recognize those who help make a difference in the community by enhancing the way people with disabilities can develop, celebrate their abilities, and be included in everyday events. We invite you to nominate a community member or organization who you feel is a great example of an **Explorer Award**. Recipients of the **Explorer Award** will be honored at the **October 15th, 2009** GCLFEDS member meeting at the United Way Bldg. on Bay Area Blvd. at 7pm.

**Explorer Awards** will be given for the following five categories, with one recipient selected from each category:

1. **Teacher/Paraprofessional** – for **advocating** for their students and/or classroom
2. **Therapist** – for **empowering** individuals with disabilities to reach new goals
3. **Employer** – for **hiring** individuals with disabilities and/or **training** staff on disability awareness
4. **School** – for **including** children with disabilities in all aspects of the school
5. **Community at large** – for **exploring and creating** an inclusive community (this category includes all other applicants, such as community groups)

The following selection criteria will be used in evaluating applications:

- 1) Alignment with the Greater Clear Lake FEDS core mission and value: *To celebrate the abilities of individuals in our community, regardless of any apparent disability. To promote awareness, understanding, and inclusion in our communities.*
- 2) How the person, business, or organization has impacted the lives of people with disabilities

### DEADLINE

Applications and nomination forms must be submitted by 4:00 p.m. on Monday, September 21, 2009. Please mail applications to the address on the form or e-mail to Joanie Garro at: [education@clearlakeds.org](mailto:education@clearlakeds.org). The form is on our website:

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

## Upcoming GCLFEDS Events



### GCLFEDS DAD'S NIGHT OUT

August 6, 2009 at 7:00 p.m.

For billiards, food, drink and conversation at

Main Event

1125 Magnolia, Webster, TX 77598

Call (281) 333-1604 for information

### Sign Language Workshop *sponsored by GCLFEDS*

Katie Tryon Rough will teach families how to use sign language to enhance communications for all ages. This free workshop will engage children, teens and adults with stories, crafts and songs to teach frequently used signs.

**Saturday, August 22 from 10-11 a.m.** Location TBD – check website in mid-August for location. Refreshments provided.

### Monthly Meetings

**United Way  
Service Center-  
Bay Area  
1300 Bay Area  
Blvd.  
Room A**

6:30 pm

Pizza and informal  
parent discussion

7:00 pm

Speakers

Child care  
provided.

## Upcoming GCLFEDS Meetings

Thursday, August 20

### Getting Ready for School: Tips from Parents and Teachers

Wondering what you can do to ease the transition to "big" school from preschool? Looking for ideas on how to better work with your child's teachers to help start the school year off right? Parents and teachers share what has worked for them. Kindergarten teacher Amy Phillips, Rise School teacher Beverly Taube, and parents Anne Bernay and

Heather Burdeaux answer your questions.

Thursday, September 17

### Nutrition for a Long Life

Dr. Carroll Lassiter of UHCL speaks on how nutrition can defer aging and what parents can do to help their children, with and without Down syndrome, and themselves eat healthier.

For more information call (281) 736-8008 or email [gclfeds@clearlakeds.org](mailto:gclfeds@clearlakeds.org).

# Golfers Support GCLFEDS in 2<sup>nd</sup> Annual Tournament

By Anne Bernay

The 2nd Annual FEDS Charity Golf Classic on May 8 at Magnolia Creek Golf Club in League City provided a wonderful day of golf while raising funds to support GCLFEDS programs. It was a sunny and windy day; workers and golfers alike enjoyed the morning. Ten teams teed off at 8:30 a.m. and competed in a scramble format on the England and Scotland courses. Play was followed with a BBQ lunch. Chris Dague, father of Anna Dague, shared with the golfers his appreciation for their support of GCLFEDS and how GCLFEDS helps families in our area. Door prizes included clubmaking sessions courtesy of Golfsmith; gift cards from restaurants including Gringo's, Boudreaux's, and Chili's; golf at Magnolia Creek and more. Annalee Haas, age 4, presented the door prizes to the golfers with a big smile.

The team of **Castillo, Castillo, Anderson and Romeo** took top honors for the second year in a row with the best gross team score of 59. **Stevens, Roper, Pool and Ruth** posted a 37 to win the best team net prize. Both teams earned new Ben Hogan CFT TI Hybrid clubs.

Individual honors went to **Jack Vernon** for closest-to-the-pin and **Rob Priddy** for the longest drive. Both were awarded certificates for two rounds of golf courtesy of Magnolia Creek.

Tournament Co-Chairs Anne Bernay and Alicia Dague want to thank the wonderful volunteers who made the tournament possible. Thank you to Blanka Brhlik, Melissa Collins, Chris Dague, Beth Haas, John Haas, Lisa Hartman, Mark Hernandez, Melissa Moore, Tiffany Novick, Elizabeth Stevens, and Steve Bernay. And special thanks to all of the FEDS members who solicited sponsors!



Members of the Atkins, Inc. team.

## Thank You to Our Hole Sign Sponsors

Maternal Fetal Medicine  
 Stemark Associates / Steve Rhatigan  
 Dr. Thompson Bogert, D.D.S.  
 Remax/Faron Daigle  
 Dentistry 4 Children  
 Tubular Resources  
 House and Lawn.com  
 Collins Family  
 Paul Herrmann  
 Lynn's Landscaping  
 Garner Vision  
 Hegwood & Associates, P.C.  
 Dry & Tassin, PLLC  
 Father's Joy  
 Atkins, Inc.



Annalee Haas thanks a golfer.

## Thank You to Our Generous Tournament Sponsors

### Hole In One

Maternal Fetal Medicine Associates of South Texas, LLP

### Birdie

Tubular Resource, Inc.  
 Amegy Bank, N.A.  
 Atkins, Inc.  
 Kim & Mark Roffman  
 Southern Property Options, LLC

### Gallery

The Hartford  
 Robert McAfoos  
 Norine Jaloway

### Team & Individual Prizes

Magnolia Creek Golf Club  
 Golfsmith

### Door Prizes

Magnolia Creek Golf Club  
 Golfsmith  
 Gringo's  
 Barnes & Noble  
 Chili's  
 Boudreaux's  
 Golf Etc. Pearland  
 Bernay Family

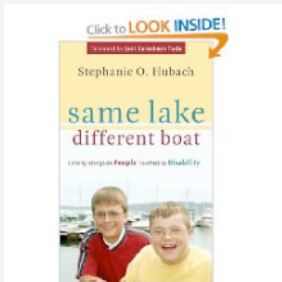
### Printing & Food

Airview Graphics & Printing  
 Kroger  
 HEB



Edward Jaloway & Trudy Holland

...She encourages all of us—those with disabilities and those who seek to extend a welcoming hand to those touched by disability—to build community based on respect and understanding.



## Book Review by Cristen Reat

### Same Lake, Different Boat: Coming Alongside People Touched by Disability By Stephanie O. Hubach

I was intrigued by the title of this book, as it seems to summarize feelings I sometimes have when I consider the added challenges of raising a child with a disability.

This feeling appears in flashes at places like the playground when I have to make sure that my 5-year-old son doesn't eat small stones, while other mothers lounge around talking or reading a book. It is no question that sometimes I feel like an outsider, as if I am in a different "boat."

Stephanie Hubach is the mother of two children, one of whom is a teenager with Down Syndrome. Sharing her personal experiences, humorous anecdotes and a Christian perspective, Hubach offers keen insight about how human beings are essentially the same, but *experientially* different—especially when it comes to

those touched by disability. The book is not intended as a "how to" book on how to create a disability ministry in a church, nor is it intended to be an inspirational literature. Hubach instead offers a vision of how to understand disability biblically, how to understand the challenges that face individuals and families touched by disability and how to understand the church's role in the lives of those with differing abilities. Each chapter ends with several thought-provoking questions to work through as a reflective exercise.

She encourages all of us—those with disabilities and those who seek to extend a welcoming hand to those touched by disability—to build community based on respect and understanding.

I thoroughly enjoyed reading "Same Lake, Different Boat," and I came away with a deeper knowledge of how to understand and accept disability as a normal part of life in an abnormal world.

Summer 2009 Film Club participants celebrate the premier of their movie on July 20. Director Joanie Garro instructed the children in social skills while they directed, wrote, and starred in their own movie. Front left to right: Peter, Katie, Zack and Shelby. Back left to right: Ms Garro, Jenna, Matt and Ashley.



## Community Events & Resources

### Hope Village Night at the Ballpark

Help support Hope Village, enjoy some great food, and cheer on the Astros. Hope Village is partnering with the Houston Astros for "Hope Village Night at the Ballpark" on August 22, 2009 at 6:05 p.m. For every Astros ticket purchased through our special web link, Hope Village receives a donation of \$4 or \$5. Take your family, friends, colleagues, etc. to an exciting Astros game and help support Hope Village residents and programs. What could be better: enjoying the great American pastime and supporting a favorite local charity?

Before the game, join the BBQ Tailgate Party at Hope Village from 3:00 to 5:00 p.m. Enjoy a BBQ Beef Sandwich smoked and hand-crafted by our BBQ expert, potato salad, beans, dessert, and beverages all for only \$10.

1. Follow the link ([www.astros.com/hopevillage](http://www.astros.com/hopevillage)) and use the password Hope to purchase tickets for the Astros game.
2. Contact Heather (281-400-2011 or [heather@hope-village.com](mailto:heather@hope-village.com)) to purchase tickets to the Tailgate Party. You may also purchase tickets on the website at [www.hope-village.com/tailgate.asp](http://www.hope-village.com/tailgate.asp). You must purchase game tickets and tailgate tickets separately if you plan to attend both. Transportation to the game is not included.

### Texas Medicaid Waiver Workshop

United Way of Greater Houston  
9:00 a.m. to noon  
Saturday, August 15, 2009  
Continental breakfast will be provided

Texas currently has seven different Medicaid waiver programs designed to allow Medicaid funds to be available to provide individuals with disabilities the opportunity to receive services and support. Financial eligibility is based on the *child's income* rather than the family income on the majority of the waiver programs. This workshop will provide you with information concerning five of the seven waiver programs - [CLASS](#), [Community Based Alternatives](#), [Home & Community Based Services Program](#), [Medically Dependent Children's Program](#) and [Texas Home Living](#).

To be eligible for Medicaid waiver services, children and adults must get on the waiver waiting/interest lists. This workshop will answer your questions about the Medicaid waiver programs, you'll understand why it is so important that you "Get on the List," and you'll leave knowing how to get on the list. See [www.dsah.org](http://www.dsah.org) for more information.

### Volunteers Needed!

**Join our 2010 Board of Directors!**

**Elections for 2010 officers and committee chairpeople will be held at our October GCLFEDS Monthly Meeting. If you have a passion for making a difference in the lives of people with Down syndrome and have time to commit to help our organization serve the community, contact Anne Bernay at 832-457-2775 or [gclfeds@clearlaked.org](mailto:gclfeds@clearlaked.org)**

**Board members must be able to attend Board meetings every other month, support events and activities by attending when they can and be willing to commit the time and effort required to carry out their specific role. For details about roles and responsibilities, please contact us.**

**Current open positions include:**

- Fundraising Chair
- Vice President
- Social Chair
- Adult Programs Chair



## A Little Inspiration

Having just celebrated Mother's and Father's Day, it is inspiring to note that parents can make a difference in the lives of their special children. Local mom and dad, Lori and Tom Ferazzi, have started the **Horizon School** in an effort to provide a specialized learning environment for their son Eric and others. The school will open in the Fall of 2009 at Good Shepherd Episcopal Church in Friendswood for children with DS ages 11 to 15. For more information, check out the website at [www.thehorizonschooltx.com](http://www.thehorizonschooltx.com).

A dad who wanted to do more than just set up tables and cook hot dogs at local Buddy Walks, Joe Meares founded **D.A.D.S.** in 2002. An organization devoted to supporting fathers of children with Down syndrome, D.A.D.S. was started in Indianapolis, IN and has chapters around the country ( [www.dadsnational.org](http://www.dadsnational.org)).

And, for an inspiring Web site founded by Cynthia Kidder, mom of Jordan who was born in 1989, check out [www.bandofangels.com](http://www.bandofangels.com). The Inspiration photo gallery's graduation photos are definitely inspiring.

We welcome articles and contributions to the newsletter. Send them to Neesha Hosein at [newsletter@clearlakeds.org](mailto:newsletter@clearlakeds.org).

The deadline for submissions to the Oct. newsletter is Sept. 15.

**Greater Clear Lake Families Exploring Down Syndrome**

**Phone**  
(281) 736-8008

**E-mail**  
gclfeds@clearlakeds.org

**Web site**  
[www.clearlakeds.org](http://www.clearlakeds.org)



## Thank You!

Our gratitude and thanks to the following generous donors:

**Golf Tournament Sponsors, see page 7**

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

- **Courtnei Kopietz, Nancy Spanial, Cristen Reat, Elizabeth Stevens, Neesha Hosein, Beth Haas, Alicia Dague, and Anne Bernay**– writing for our newsletter this month

- **Beth Haas** - organizing our fun May Social
- **Joanie Garro** – teaching parents about setting IEP goals at our May meeting
- **Carmen Dickerson** – talking with parents at our June meeting about dealing with feelings and stress
- **Anne Bernay & Alicia Dague** - chairing our 2<sup>nd</sup> Annual Golf Tournament fundraiser on May 8
- **Joanie Garro** – directing the amazing Film Club social skills classes that benefit our kids so much

## 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.