



Shining Bright! Experience the Magic of the DSACO Dancing with Our Stars Gala!

DSACO invites you to our renowned Dancing with Our Stars Gala—an enchanting evening filled with dancing, celebration, and lasting memories! This unique event highlights the heart of our mission.

Experience professionally choreographed ballroom dances showcasing the incredible talents of over 50 adults with Down syndrome who have eagerly mastered their routines and are excited to share their skills with you.

During the gala, we will proudly honor Robert J. Woodward Jr., the Founder of the GLOW Foundation. His dedication to developmental disability commu-

nity has made a profound impact, and we are thrilled to recognize his contributions.

As you enjoy the festivities, take the opportunity to learn more about DSACO's programs and initiatives that empower people with Down syndrome to shine. Get your dancing shoes ready and join us for an unforgettable night surrounded by stars—helping to make their dreams come true!

Purchase tickets at: dsaco.net/gala

Sponsorship opportunities are still available, please contact Evanthia Brillhart at ebrillhart@dsaco.net to learn more.

Dancing with our STARS Gala

Down Syndrome Association of Central Ohio

Saturday, February 1

6 PM | Cocktail Reception

7 PM | Dinner & Program

Hilton Columbus at Easton

3900 Chagrin Dr., Columbus, OH 43219

Ticket Pricing:

- Individual Ticket | **\$150**
includes dinner and valet parking
- Table of Ten | **\$1500**
includes dinner and valet parking for ten guests

Complimentary valet parking available for all guests, courtesy of Creative Options.

Details and registration at: dsaco.net/gala

Questions? Contact Mari Cox at mcox@dsaco.net

Can't attend? Please consider making a 100% tax deductible donation at: dsaco.net/donate

Register here! →



3

POST-SECONDARY
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4

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& EVENTS

12

MEDICALLY SPEAKING
with Dr. Michael Neiger

Winter 2025



3/21

In this season of gratitude and renewal, I want to take a moment to shine a light on YOU—our dedicated caregivers. At DSACO, we recognize the incredible love, strength, and commitment you bring to our community, and we are here to walk alongside you every step of the way. Here are just a few ways we're working to elevate and empower you:

3 Providing a Sense of Belonging: We are thrilled to share the results of our most recent annual family survey! Overwhelmingly, families told us that the number one value DSACO brings to their lives is a sense of belonging. This deeply resonates with our goals to foster a strong, inclusive community where every person feels valued and connected.

2 Caregiver Resources: Your feedback is invaluable! In response to your input, we've enhanced our caregiver-focused resources to keep giving you MORE. Be sure to check out programs like Somali MOMS night, Connecting Parents of Adults (pg 7) and the Aging and Down Syndrome Caregiver Support Group (pg 7), which

offer welcoming spaces to share experiences, gain insights, and foster lasting connections.

1 Renew & Recharge Kits: Caring for others often means putting yourself last—but we're here to remind you that your well-being matters, too. This year, we're introducing the Renew & Recharge Kit for Caregivers. Designed to bring small, accessible moments of peace and refreshment into your day, this kit honors the essential role you play, recognizing that your well-being is just as important. Interested? Learn more about how to get your kit on page 5.

You are enough, just as you are. Your dedication, love, and the countless sacrifices you make every day do not go unnoticed. You are invaluable to your families and to our community. Please remember, even on the hardest days, that what you do matters deeply—and so do you.



DSACO
President and CEO



DSACO Welcomes Lucy Maddrill, our New Volunteer Coordinator!

We are excited to announce the addition of Lucy to the DSACO team! Lucy rejoined the DSACO team in October, bringing her passion for community engagement and support for our amazing volunteers who help make our events and programs a success.

Lucy first became part of the DSACO family in 2023 as our Event and Marketing Intern, where she helped to plan and coordinate our major fundraising and social events. After a brief break over the summer, she was eager to return and embrace the Volunteer Coordinator role. Prior to working at DSACO, she served as the head coach for the Down Syndrome Association of Greater Cincinnati's cheer team in 2018. She is so grateful to have been a part of both communities and to return to DSACO.

Currently a senior at The Ohio State University, Lucy is pursuing a bachelor's degree in marketing at The Fisher School of Business. She is excited about the opportunities that lie ahead after her graduation in May. Outside of work and studies, Lucy loves traveling, spending time with family and friends, and exploring new restaurants in the Columbus area.

Post-Secondary Scholarship Applications Now Open!

DSACO is excited to announce that applications for its 2025 Post-Secondary Scholarship are now being accepted! Since 2004, more than \$200,000 have been awarded through this impactful program.

Thanks to the generosity of the GLOW Foundation, DSACO is offering five \$5,000 scholarships to help support students whose careers will positively impact the lives of people with Down syndrome. This scholarship is available to siblings, parents, cousins, and relatives of people with Down syndrome. Additionally, post-secondary students with Down syndrome are strongly encouraged to apply!

Application Requirements:

- Completed DSACO Application Form
- Most recent academic transcripts
- Two letters of reference (professional or character)
- Completed essay on the provided prompt

Deadline:

All applications must be submitted by **January 31, 2025**. Electronically submitted applications are due by 5 PM on January 31, and mailed applications must be postmarked by the same date. Incomplete applications will not be considered, so please ensure all materials are submitted. Once applications have been received by DSACO, they are made anonymous and sent to the Post-Secondary Scholarship committee for scoring.

Applications are made anonymous so that any room for bias is eliminated.

Post-Secondary Scholarship Committee members are comprised of college professors, leaders in the disability community and supporters from the GLOW Foundation.

Notification & Award Details:

Scholarship recipients will be notified during the week of **March 1**. The awarded funds may be used to cover education expenses such as tuition, coursework, or materials approved by the university.

Don't miss out on this incredible opportunity! Apply now to help support your educational journey and make a difference in the Down syndrome community.

To learn more or apply: dsaco.net/postsecondaryscholarship

Scholarship support is generously sponsored by:



World Down Syndrome Day Book Bundles

Help Your School Celebrate World Down Syndrome Day on March 21!

DSACO's Book Bundles are making a return! Celebrate your student with Down syndrome on World Down Syndrome Day (3/21) by gifting a Book Bundle to their school!! These bundles are designed to promote inclusion and awareness in the classroom, featuring items like bookmarks, posters, and stickers that celebrate students with Down syndrome. Each bundle also includes two books and interactive resources to encourage a more inclusive learning environment.

Book Bundles aren't just for students with Down syndrome—siblings can share the mission of inclusion with their classmates, too, by sending a bundle to their classroom!

Registration opens **Thursday, January 30, 2025**, and closes **Thursday, February 20**.

Register here: dsaco.net/bookbundles

Questions? Please contact Carey Eash at ceash@dsaco.net.

COMMUNITY



County Connection Event Family Fun in Athens County!

Sunday, January 19, 2025 | 12 – 3 PM

Movies 10 & Fun Barn

14333 US-33, Nelsonville, OH 45764

DSACO families in and around Athens County are invited to join us for a fun afternoon at the Movies 10 and Fun Barn on US-33 between Nelsonville and Athens. Movies 10 arcade offers over 100 arcade games and ten-screen theater.

DSACO is thrilled to treat you to a fun-filled event, including a movie, popcorn, soda, and arcade time. Additional food or arcade credits will be available for purchase if you'd like to extend the fun.

This event is a wonderful opportunity to connect with other DSACO families and create cherished memories together.

This event is free for DSACO families but registration is required by January 8, 2025. Register here: dsaco.net/events/countyconnection

Questions? Please contact Mari Cox at mcox@dsaco.net.



ADULTHOOD

Adult Virtual Cooking Classes: Cooking with You and... Who?

January 8 & 22, February 12 & 26, March 12 & 26

5:30 – 6:30 PM

Virtual on Zoom

Age Group: Adults, 18+

Join us for an engaging virtual cooking experience tailored specifically for adults with Down syndrome. Each class DSACO or a guest chef will include step-by-step instructions to guide you through the cooking process. We will also take the time to discuss cooking terms, offer how-to ideas, explore useful kitchen gadgets, and provide valuable information about food and kitchen safety. Rest assured, the recipes we share will be simple and will not require the use of complex tools. They will consist of basic ingredients that are commonly found in most kitchens. Additionally, we will include gluten-free recipes or provide gluten-free options to cater to different dietary preferences.

To ensure you have all the necessary ingredients, we will send the recipes to all participants in advance. Simply purchase the required ingredients and join us over Zoom from the comfort of your own kitchen to cook along with the group. To participate in the virtual cooking classes, you will need access to a computer, laptop, or a screen with a camera in your kitchen. We strongly recommend having a support person available to assist you.

To secure your spot, please register at least one week in advance of the class you wish to join. Register here: dsaco.net/events/virtualcookingclass

Questions? Please contact Boo Krucky at ekrucky@dsaco.net



COMMUNITY

Renew and Recharge Kit for Caregivers

Wednesday, February 5, 2025 | 2-6 PM

DSACO Office | 510 E. North Broadway, Suite 401

Fee for Pickup: \$10

Fee for Shipped: \$20

The Renew & Recharge Kit for Caregivers is thoughtfully designed to support those who care for loved ones with Down syndrome. Including self-care items, practical tools, and resources for mental health and mindfulness, this kit helps caregivers prioritize self-care and regain balance. Designed to bring small, accessible moments of peace and refreshment into the day, this kit honors the essential role caregivers play, recognizing that their well-being is just as important.

To register, you must have a child with Down syndrome and live within our 23-county service area. Each household is eligible to receive one kit, allowing families with parents or guardians in separate homes to prioritize self-care and restore balance.

**Shipping is available only for those who select that option at the time of registration.*

To register: dsaco.net/events/kits

Questions? Please contact Kirsti Osborne at kosborne@dsaco.net

DSACO is committed to ensuring all families can access this kit without barriers. To waive the program fee due to financial hardship, please reach out to **Kirsti Osborne** at kosborne@dsaco.net.



Guardianship and Estate Planning Seminar: Planning for the Future

Saturday, March 1, 2025 | 9:30 - 11:30 AM

Columbus Main Library

96 S. Grant Ave., Columbus, OH 43215

Attorney and DSACO parent, Derek Graham, Esq., will provide an overview of guardianship and estate planning, with a focus on information important to people with disabilities and their families. Childcare will be available to ensure that families are able to attend the seminar!

Derek will cover the following topics:

- Special Needs Estate Planning (why it is so important and when you should do it)
- Medicaid and Social Security (what benefits are available and why they are so important)
- When guardianship of an adult is necessary
- The various types of guardianship and alternatives to guardianship
- Supported Decision Making

This class is free to DSACO families, but registration is required by Friday, February 21. To register: dsaco.net/guardianship

Questions? Contact Kirsti Osborne at kosborne@dsaco.net



COMMUNITY



Save the Date! DSACO's World Down Syndrome Day Celebration!

Saturday, March 22, 2025 | 10 AM - 1 PM

Columbus Funny Bone at Easton
145 Easton Town Ctr., Columbus, OH 43219

Join us for a joyful celebration of World Down Syndrome Day (WDS) on Saturday, March 22, at the Funny Bone at Easton! This Global Day of Awareness, observed by the United Nations since 2012, brings together communities worldwide to advocate for the rights, inclusion, and well-being of people with Down syndrome.

Event Highlights:

- **Proud to Be Me Fashion Show:** A chance to shine and showcase your style!
- **Improv Performance by DSACO's Improv Group:** Get ready for a fun and engaging show!

Registration opens in February at dsaco.net/wdsd

Questions? Contact Mari Cox at mcox@dsaco.net

MODELS NEEDED! ★★

If your child or adult with Down syndrome is interested in participating in the Proud to Be Me Fashion Show, hosted by The Ohio State University's Students Supporting People with Down Syndrome (SSPDS), be sure to visit dsaco.net/wdsd for details.

SCHOOL AGE

Mark your calendars! DSACO's Summer Learning Academy is Back!

Monday June 9 - Thursday July 10 | 9 AM - 12 PM

Locations TBD

Fee: \$200/student

Looking to help your child make progress in math, literacy, and social skills over the summer? DSACO's Summer Learning Academy is designed for students on an IEP, offering one-on-one and small group instruction by certified teachers to work on their academic goals and prevent summer learning loss.

Applications for DSACO's Summer Learning Academy will open on **Friday, March 28th at 5 PM**, and enrollment confirmations will be sent out by Friday, April 25th. The program will run from Monday, June 9th to Thursday, July 10th, operating Monday through Thursday from 9 AM to 12 PM each day.

Stay tuned for more information on classroom locations coming soon!

To register: dsaco.net/sla

Questions? Contact Carey Eash at ceash@dsaco.net

Get Ready to Ride: iCan Bike Camp Returns in 2025

June 2-6, 2025

West Jefferson High School
1 Roughrider Drive, West Jefferson, OH 43162

Fee: \$150/rider

Ages: 10+

DSACO is thrilled to announce that the iCan Bike Camp will return in 2025, now at West Jefferson High School! The camp will take place from June 2-6, 2025, with a Parent Orientation and Volunteer Training on June 1, 2025. Registration opens in the spring, so keep an eye out for more details and the official announcement coming soon!

Learn more at: dsaco.net/icanbike

Questions? Contact Lucy Maddrill at lmaddrill@dsaco.net

ADULTHOOD

Aging & Down Syndrome Caregiver Support Group

January 28, February 25, March 25

6 - 7 PM

Virtual on Zoom

For parents/caregivers of adults (40+) with Down syndrome

Are you a caregiver for an adult with Down syndrome aged 40 or older? Join our monthly support group, held via Zoom, in partnership with the Alzheimer's Association Central Ohio Chapter.

This group provides a space for caregivers to share experiences, resources, and emotional support, with a focus on navigating the higher prevalence of Alzheimer's and dementia in people with Down syndrome.

Virtual meetings ensure accessibility for all caregivers in our service area. If you need assistance with virtual participation, please contact Boo Krucky at ekrucky@dsaco.net. Join us to connect, share, and support one another on this caregiving journey.

Please register at least 1 week prior to the group you'd like to join: dsaco.net/events/agingsupport

Once registered you'll receive an email confirmation of your registration, an introductory phone call from one of the co-facilitators, and then a Zoom link will be emailed to you.

Questions? Please contact Boo Krucky at ekrucky@dsaco.net

BONUS: Join us for a special extended gathering on **January 7, 6-7:30 PM**, featuring guest presenter **Kristi Davis, Program Manager at the Alzheimer's Association - Michigan Chapter**. Kristi will share her expertise in dementia and intellectual/developmental disabilities (IDD) during a 30-minute presentation followed by a 30-minute Q&A. With over 8 years in her current role and 15 years designing programs for individuals with IDD, Kristi brings valuable insights to this important discussion.

Register here!



Connecting Parents of Adults: Share Stories, Build Support, and Take a Well-Deserved Break

Thursday, February 20 | 6 PM - 8 PM

Olive Garden
7160 Sawmill Rd, Columbus, OH 43235

Parents of adults (18+) with Down syndrome

Are you a parent or caregiver of an adult with Down syndrome (age 18+)? DSACO invites you to join Connecting Parents of Adults, a supportive gathering designed just for you.

This event provides a welcoming space for DSACO dads, moms, and caregivers to:

- Exchange stories and experiences
- Discuss needs and address concerns
- Brainstorm ideas and solutions
- Share laughter and camaraderie

We know how valuable it is to take a break, connect with others who understand your journey, and feel supported. DSACO will cover the cost of appetizers and non-alcoholic beverages, making it a relaxing and enjoyable time.

*If lack of care for your loved one prevents you from attending, please contact Boo Krucky at ekrucky@dsaco.net to discuss alternatives.

To Register: Follow RSVP instructions on our event page here: dsaco.net/connectingparents

ADULTHOOD

Adult Improv Class Series: Two Locations for Twice the Fun!



Improv Southeast

Mondays | February 3, 10, 17, March 3, 10, 17, 24, 31, April 7, 14

6:30 – 8 PM

Combustion Brewery and Taproom

80 W Church St., Suite 101, Pickerington, OH 43147

Fee: \$100

Age Group: Adults, 18+

Improv Central

Tuesdays | February 4, 11, 18, March 4, 11, 18, 25, April 1, 8

6:30 – 8 PM

Ruling Our eXperiences (ROX)

1335 Dublin Rd # 18A, Columbus, OH 43215

Fee: \$100

Age Group: 18+

Due to popular demand, we're thrilled to announce the addition of a second improv class series on the southeast side of town!

Southeast Class Series: Led by returning instructor Jake Lees, classes will take place on **Mondays**.

Central Columbus Class Series: Taught by improviser Dylan Liptak, classes will be held on **Tuesdays**.

Both series feature engaging, creativity-boosting activities designed to improve skills like eye contact, listening, quick thinking, voice projection, and teamwork. Whether you're a returning participant or brand-new to improv, we'd love to see you at either location!

Registration opens on **Friday, January 10**, and class size is limited to 10 participants per location. We anticipate both locations will fill up quickly, so be sure to register early! Participants may initially register for only one location. Starting Friday, January 24, if spots remain available, you'll have the option to register for a second location.

To register: dsaco.net/events/improv

Questions? Please contact Boo Krucky at ekrucky@dsaco.net

TEENS

High School Social Group Building Friendships and Independence

Tuesday, January 14 | 6:30-8:30 PM

Star Lanes

8655 Lyra Dr, Columbus, OH 43240
Bowling & Pizza

Wednesday, February 12 | 6:30-8 PM

Taranto's Pizzeria

1282 E Powell Rd, Lewis Center, OH 43035
Valentine-themed Bingo & Pizza

Friday, March 14 | 6-8 PM

Glen's Sports Barn

11283 Fancher Rd, Westerville, OH 43082
Sports, Games, and Dinner

Age Group: High School Aged Teens (up to 21)

Does your high schooler with Down syndrome want to connect with peers and make new friends? DSACO's free monthly High School Social Group is the perfect place! Each gathering is designed for teens who are mostly independent and eager to enjoy a fun, safe, and social environment. Every month features a different location filled with games, food, and activities!

Parents are encouraged to take a step back and let our amazing volunteers lead the outing, giving teens the chance to enjoy their time together independently. Families are welcome to stay nearby, but we hope this group can help build both friendships and independence. We're excited to see your teen there!

Please register one week in advance at: dsaco.net/events/hssocialgroup

Questions? Please contact Boo Krucky at ekrucky@dsaco.net

Register here!



COMMUNITY



Community Access Funds: Get out there and experience everything!

There is an abundance of incredible events and activities within our communities. That's why DSACO offers Community Access Funds, a program designed to offer financial reimbursement to people with Down syndrome. These funds can be utilized for inclusive activities in the community, with a maximum reimbursement of \$250 per year!

Important Dates for 2025:

Q1 | Submit form & receipts by March 15 for payment by March 31

Q2 | Submit form & receipts by June 15 for payment by June 30

Q3 | Submit form & receipts by September 15 for payment by September 30

Q4 | Submit form & receipts by December 15 for payment by December 31

Questions? Please contact Kirsti Osborne at kosborne@dsaco.net

Special thanks to the Barbour family for their generous support of Music & Performing Arts activities in memory of Ann Barbour.



Celebrating Black History Month

Every February, Black History Month serves as a time to honor the struggles, achievements, and resilience of Black individuals throughout history. This month-long celebration in the United States and Canada shines a spotlight on Black excellence across diverse fields, including science, arts, politics, sports, literature, and business.

More than just a commemoration of the past, Black History Month is an opportunity to reflect on the progress made toward racial equality and justice while recognizing the work that remains. Communities celebrate with educational events, performances, art exhibitions, and activities designed to honor Black heritage and foster greater understanding and respect.

Each year, the Association for the Study of African American Life and History (ASALH) selects a theme to focus on specific aspects of Black history. For 2025, the theme is “African Americans and Labor,” exploring how work and labor experiences have shaped and intersected with the collective Black experience throughout history.

As we celebrate Black History Month, let’s honor the past, learn from it, and continue striving for a future rooted in equity and understanding.

Join us on Facebook



WE ARE HIRING!

The **Family Navigator** is responsible for ensuring that we provide the highest quality services to all of our families by accurately representing the rich ethnic, racial, and socioeconomic diversity of the people with Down syndrome in our community.

If you are interested in learning more about the position, please visit dsaco.net/careers.

COMMUNITY

Somali Outreach Ramadan Mubarak

Saturday, February 8 | Waqtiga 6- 8 PM

Alive 614

5303 Norwich St., Suite 400, Hilliard, OH 43026

Dhacdo bilaash ah oo loogu talagalay qoysaska DSACO

Marka bisha barakeysan ee Ramadaan ay nagu soo ururiso fikir iyo mahadnaq, waxaa sharaf noo ah in aan idin la qabanno xaflad. Aan isu diyaarinno soo dhoweynta bisha barakeysan, waxaan idin martiqaadaynaa inaad nagu soo biirtaan xaflad gaar ah oo aan ku dabaaldegayno bilowgeeda.

Waxaan ku raaxeysan doonaa cunto macaan, shirkad wanaagsan, iyo wada hadallo kor u qaadaya markii aan si qalbi furan u soo dhaweyno Ramadaan. Waxaan rajeyneynaa in aan bilowno bisha quruxda badan ee tan la idin la joogo!

Fadlan iska diiwaan geli kahor Janaayo 27: dsaco.net/events/somalioutreach.

Su'aalo? Fadlan la xiriir Amina Said: asaid@dsaco.net.

ENGLISH:

As the holy month of Ramadan brings us together in reflection and gratitude, we would be honored to celebrate with you. Let’s prepare for the arrival of the blessed month, we invite you to join us for a special gathering to celebrate its beginning.

We'll enjoy a delicious meal, some good company, and uplifting conversations as we welcome Ramadan with open hearts. We look forward to starting this beautiful month with you!

Please register by January 27, at dsaco.net/events/somalioutreach.

Questions? Please contact Amina Said at asaid@dsaco.net.

COMMUNITY

Empoderando a las Familias a través de la Conciencia de Seguridad

Febrero 22 | 10 AM- 12 PM

Columbus Metropolitan Library

96 S Grant Ave, Columbus, OH 43215

Ya sea en el trabajo, la escuela, eventos comunitarios o en nuestro propio hogar, la seguridad es importante porque ayuda a prevenir accidentes y a proteger la salud y el bienestar de las personas.

Hablar de seguridad en familia es esencial ya que ayuda a reducir riesgos, promover independencia, fomentar la cultura de respeto y apoyo además de la inclusión en la planeación de emergencias y la protección en general.

Impartido por:

Oficial Samuel James

Columbus Division of Police/ Diversity and Inclusion Liaison

Incluir a las personas con discapacidad en las pláticas de seguridad y adaptar estas a sus necesidades es clave para crear un entorno seguro, equitativo y que valore el bienestar de todos.

Acompáñenos a esta charla gratuita y en español para familias de DSACO. Desayuno y cuidado de niños disponible durante la platica.

Si tienen alguna duda por favor contacten a Vanessa Armenta por correo a varmenta@dsaco.net o por teléfono al 614-263-6020 ext. 1060.

Dia de Reyes

Enero 6, 2025 | 10 AM - 4:30 PM

Oficina de DSACO

510 E. North Broadway, Suite 401, Columbus, OH 43214

La tradición de la Rosca de Reyes se celebra cada 6 de enero, el Día de Reyes, y es especialmente popular en países de habla hispana como México, España y otros de Latinoamérica. La festividad conmemora la llegada de los Reyes Magos —Melchor, Gaspar y Baltasar— al lugar de nacimiento de Jesús, llevando regalos.

La rosca, que es una especie de pan dulce en forma de anillo, tiene simbolismos específicos:

Forma Circular: La forma de la rosca simboliza el amor eterno, sin principio ni fin.

Frutas Confitadas: Las frutas de colores que decoran la rosca representan las joyas de una corona y los regalos que los Reyes Magos llevaron al niño Jesús.

Muñeco Escondido: En el interior de la rosca, se esconden pequeños muñequitos que representan a La Sagrada Familia lo escondió de Herodes.

Esta tradición es una mezcla de festividad religiosa y de convivencia familiar, y comer la Rosca de Reyes se convierte en un momento especial para compartir y disfrutar en comunidad.

Para celebrar juntos la llegada de los Reyes Magos DSACO los invitamos a compartir este dulce momento de tradición y alegría.

Su registro para recibir una Rosca es necesario a más tardar el 20 de Diciembre 2024.

¿Preguntas? Por favor envíe un correo a Vanessa Armenta a varmenta@dsaco.net



ENGLISH:

The Rosca de Reyes tradition is celebrated every January 6th, on Three Kings' Day, and is especially popular in Spanish-speaking countries like Mexico, Spain, and others in Latin America. This holiday commemorates the arrival of the Three Wise Men —Melchior, Caspar, and Balthazar— to the birthplace of Jesus, bearing gifts.

The rosca, a sweet, ring-shaped bread, carries specific symbolism:

Circular Shape: The round shape of the rosca symbolizes eternal love, without beginning or end.

Candied Fruits: The colorful fruits decorating the rosca represent the jewels of a crown and the gifts the Wise Men brought to the child Jesus.

Hidden Figurine: Small figurines representing the Holy Family are hidden inside the rosca, symbolizing how they hid Jesus from Herod.

This tradition combines a religious festivity with family gathering, and sharing the Rosca de Reyes becomes a special time to enjoy together as a community.

To celebrate the arrival of the Three Wise Men, DSACO invites you to share in this sweet moment of tradition and joy.

Your registration to receive a Rosca is required by December 20, 2024.

medically speaking

with Dr. Michael Neiger, MD



From Personal Experience to Professional Care

Michael Neiger, M.D. is a primary care physician for both adults and children. He currently practices at Ohio State Internal Medicine and Pediatrics in Hilliard and recently joined the Adult Down Syndrome Clinic at the Nisonger Center.

Dr. Neiger is a Columbus native. He completed his residency training in combined Internal Medicine and Pediatrics at both The Ohio State University and Nationwide Children's Hospital and completed his medical and undergraduate education at The Ohio State University. Dr. Neiger grew up in Worthington with his family, including an older brother, Matthew, with Down syndrome. He looks forward to

giving back and being a resource to the Down Syndrome community in Columbus through his primary care practice.

Dr. Neiger plans to use his specialized training to provide evidence-based care for people with Down syndrome of all ages. Medical care for people with Down syndrome has undergone drastic change over the past 20-30 years—adults with Down syndrome are living longer than ever before and facing new challenges of age-related healthcare. Pediatricians have historically provided significant care for individuals with developmental disabilities, but they are often less comfortable managing the “adult”

health conditions this population is increasingly facing. Likewise, many physicians providing adult care have less experience working with individuals with developmental disabilities and the particular conditions they face. Dr. Neiger's dual certification in both pediatrics and internal medicine enables him to provide care for individuals with Down syndrome across the age spectrum, including through difficult transitions from traditionally pediatric to traditionally adult healthcare.

Looking for a new primary care doctor?

Individuals of all ages with Down syndrome in need of a new primary care doctor (particularly those aging out of pediatric care) are welcome to make an appointment at **OSU Internal Medicine & Pediatrics Hilliard** with Dr. Neiger. You can make an appointment by calling (614)688-9220 – mention Down syndrome as specific appointments are set aside for these patients, typically on Monday afternoons.

Down syndrome regression disorder (DSRD) is now recognized as a new complication of Down syndrome.

Click the QR code to read the article "Down Syndrome Regression Disorder: Not One-Size-Fits-All" by Dr. Murugu Manickam, Clinical Geneticist, at Nationwide Children's Hospital. Dr. Manickam explores Down Syndrome Regression Disorder (DSRD), a condition where individuals with Down syndrome may unexpectedly or gradually lose previously developed skills. The article stresses the importance of a personalized approach to DSRD, as each individual's experience with the disorder is unique, requiring customized treatment and support rather than a one-size-fits-all approach.



February is American Heart Month

Did you know that approximately **50% of babies born with Down syndrome** are also born with a congenital heart defect? For many of these little ones, open-heart surgery becomes a necessary step to repair their hearts.

At DSACO, we understand how challenging this journey can be for families. That's why we're proud to offer our Heart Charm Program as a source of comfort and support during this time.

As part of the program, each family receives a beautiful heart charm necklace from Red Giraffe Designs. This special gift is more than just jewelry—it's a meaningful reminder of their strength, a symbol of hope, and a tangible connection to a caring community that stands beside them every step of the way.

Through the Heart Charm Program, DSACO is honored to be a part of your family's journey, providing encouragement and a reminder that you're never alone.

Questions? Contact Courtney Frost cfrost@dsaco.net



Hospital Care Packages: Comfort During Challenging Times

DSACO understands that hospital stays can be difficult. We're here to provide comfort and support to families navigating extended hospital stays with their loved ones with Down syndrome.

For stays longer than two nights at any hospital in our 23-county service area, DSACO offers Hospital Care Packages. These packages, delivered in a reusable tote bag, include:

- Blanket handmade with love
- Tissues
- Cozy Socks
- Toiletry Kit with additional toothbrush
- Deck of Playing Cards
- Crosswords & Puzzle Books
- Bath and Body Works hand sanitizer, lotion, and body wash
- Gift card to a surrounding restaurant
- Gift card to Nationwide Children's Hospital (only included if you are staying at NCH)
- DSACO Calendar

To request a package or learn more, visit dsaco.net/contact-us/hospitalcarepackage

For questions, contact Kirsti Osborne at kosborne@dsaco.net

D.A.D.S.

**Meets once per month
6 PM** (Food ordered at 7 PM)

January 6

Gatto's Pizza
3420 Indianola Ave.

February 3

Harry Buffalo Westerville
6150 S. Sunbury Road

March 3

Rooster's Polaris
1041 Gemini Place

Brian Stumpo

bstumpo@columbus.rr.com

Justin Whitley

whitleyj@icloud.com

For information: [facebook.com/groups/273810587540605](https://www.facebook.com/groups/273810587540605)

M.O.M.S. – Chillicothe

3rd Thursday of the Month | 6 PM

Rooster's

Chillicothe, OH

January 16

February 20
March 20

Keely Wescott

redmnm0607@hotmail.com

Michelle Wallace

michelle_rn@outlook.com

For information: [facebook.com/groups/297727160607506](https://www.facebook.com/groups/297727160607506)

M.O.M.S. – Delaware

2nd Wednesday of the Month | 6:30 PM

Yabo's Tacos

5915 Evans Farm Blvd Ste H
Lewis Center, OH 43035

January 8

February 12
March 12

Crystal Vitullo

crystalmowry@gmail.com

Allison Schwab

allieb1220@gmail.com

For information: [facebook.com/groups/297727160607506](https://www.facebook.com/groups/297727160607506)

M.O.M.S. – Marion

The Marion M.O.M.S. group is currently on "pause." Stay tuned for updates and in the meantime, check out one of our other locations.

M.O.M.S. – Marysville

3rd Saturday of the Month | 6 PM

Tres Potrillos Mexican Restaurant

435 Colemans Crossing Blvd,
Marysville, OH 43040

January 18

February 15
March 15

Katie Furr

katiel617@hotmail.com

Lauren Roush

lauren.roush1107@gmail.com

For information: [facebook.com/groups/297727160607506](https://www.facebook.com/groups/297727160607506)

M.O.M.S. – Northwest

3rd Tuesday of the month | 6:30 PM

The Goat

4265 Brooklands Dr., Hilliard, OH 43026

January 21

February 18
March 18

Hannah Reid

hannahreid329@gmail.com

For information: [facebook.com/groups/297727160607506](https://www.facebook.com/groups/297727160607506)

M.O.M.S. – Southeast

2nd Wednesday of the month | 6 PM

January 8 | Rooster's

February 12 | Zapatas
March 12 | Rooster's

Yirha Torres

dtefamily4@gmail.com

Whitney Garrett

wpwalker86@gmail.com

For information: [facebook.com/groups/297727160607506](https://www.facebook.com/groups/297727160607506)

M.O.M.S. – Westerville

1st Thursday of the month | 6:30 PM

January 2 | Agape Mediterranean Polaris

February 6 | Local Cantina Westerville
March 6 | Buffalo Wild Wings Polaris

Lucy Pagán

lucillepagan@gmail.com

Jackie Johnston

jackierosejohnston@gmail.com

For information: [facebook.com/groups/297727160607506](https://www.facebook.com/groups/297727160607506)

Little Buddies Parent Connection Group

Little Buddies Parent Connection Group is a monthly group for expecting and new parents or families of children with Down syndrome in the Central Ohio area. We offer support and information for families prenatally through preschool. Dinner and childcare are provided.

January - Topic TBD

February - The Gab Lab

Join us for an interactive class with **The Gab Lab!** Gab Lab classes incorporate music, play, sensory experiences, and evidence-based language development techniques to promote the growth of your child's receptive and expressive language skills. We're excited to bring this unique experience to our Little Buddies families! This class is taught by certified speech-language pathologist, and very interactive so be prepared to have fun!

March - Topic TBD

SOUTHEAST

3rd Thursday of the month | 6:30 PM

Grace Fellowship

575 Diley Rd. Pickerington, Ohio 43147

January 16

February 20
March 20

Whitney Garrett

wpwalker86@gmail.com

Jen McGhee

jenny.a.mcgee@gmail.com

NORTH

2nd Monday of the month | 6:30 PM

All Saints Luthern Church

6770 N. High St. Worthington, OH 43085

January 13

February 10
March 10

Jessica Huber

jesshuber86@gmail.com

Cory Guindon

righterc@gmail.com

Teen Connections:

High School Social Group

Does your high schooler with Down syndrome want to connect with peers and make new friends? DSACO's free monthly High School Social Group is the perfect place! Each gathering is designed for teens who are mostly independent and eager to enjoy a fun, safe, and social environment. Every month features a different location filled with games, food, and activities!

Bowling and Pizza Night

Tuesday, January 14 | 6:30–8:30 PM

Star Lanes Polaris

8655 Lyra Dr, Columbus, OH 43240

Valentine-themed Pizza and Bingo
Wednesday, February 12 | 6:30–8 PM

Taranto's Pizzeria

1282 E Powell Rd, Lewis Center, OH 43035

Sports, Games, Fun and Dinner
Friday, March 14 | 6–8 PM

Glen's Sports Barn

11283 Fancher Rd, Westerville, OH 43082

To Register: Events are free but registration is required. Please register one week before event at [dsaco.net/hssocialgroup](https://www.dsaco.net/hssocialgroup)

Mandy Peterson

mpeterson@mvcasd.us
740-501-8206

Mary Elliott

columbuselliotts@gmail.com
614-301-8461

Both Teen & Adult Connections:

Stamping Club-East (Ages 16+)

January 14, February 11, March 11
6–7 PM

Licking County Board of Developmental Disabilities (LCBDD)

Adult 18+ Connections:

Adult Stamping Club-Central

February 5, March 5
6:30–8 PM

Location varies based on availability

Cooking with YOU...and Who?

January 8 & 22, February 12 & 26, March 12 & 26

5:30–6:30 PM

via Zoom

Improv Central

February 4, 11, 18
March 4, 11, 18, 25,

April 1, 8

6:30–8 PM

Ruling Our eXperiences (ROX)

Improv Southeast

February 3, 10, 17
March 3, 10, 17, 24, 31

April 7, 14

6:30–8 PM

Combustion Brewery and Taproom

Stay Connected!

Stay up-to-date on all the events in your area by visiting [dsaco.net](https://www.dsaco.net).

 [dsaco.cbush](https://www.facebook.com/dsaco.cbush)

 [dsaco.cbush](https://www.instagram.com/dsaco.cbush)

Facebook Groups:

DSACO's Black and African American Outreach Group

DSACO D.A.D.S.

DSACO "Lending" Library

DSACO Little Buddies-Down Syndrome

Parent Resource Group

DSACO M.O.M.S.

DSACO Parents of Adults with

Down syndrome

DSACO School Aged Group

Mamas Latinas De DSACO

DSACO Families with Medcially

Complex Needs

Our Mission: To support families, promote community involvement, and encourage a lifetime of opportunities for people with Down syndrome.

Keeping Up is a publication of the Down Syndrome Association of Central Ohio (DSACO), reporting items of interest relating to Down syndrome. DSACO does not promote or recommend therapy, treatment, institution, or professional system. Any editorials are the opinion of one person and not meant to represent the exclusive opinion of DSACO.

DSACO is a 510(c)(3) non-profit organization and a community of ElevateDD. Contributions are fully tax-deductible.

CALENDAR of EVENTS

January

- 2 Westerville M.O.M.S.
- 6 D.A.D.S.
- 6 Rosca de Reyes
- 7 Aging & Down Syndrome Support (40+)
- 8 Adult Virtual Cooking Class
- 8 Southeast M.O.M.S.
- 8 Delaware M.O.M.S.
- 13 Little Buddies - North
- 14 Adult Stamping Club-East
- 14 High School Social Group
- 16 Chillicothe M.O.M.S.
- 16 Little Buddies - Southeast
- 18 Marysville M.O.M.S.
- 18 High School Social Group
- 19 Athens County Connection Event
- 21 Northwest M.O.M.S.
- 22 Adult Virtual Cooking Class
- 28 Aging & Down Syndrome Support (40+)
- 31 Post-Secondary Scholarship Apps Due

February

- 1 Dancing with Our Stars Gala
- 3 D.A.D.S.
- 5 Adult Stamping Club-Central
- 5 Renew & Recharge Kit Pick Up
- 6 Westerville M.O.M.S.
- 8 Ramadan Mubarak
- 10 Little Buddies - North
- 11 Adult Stamping Club-East
- 12 Adult Virtual Cooking Class
- 12 Southeast M.O.M.S.
- 12 Delaware M.O.M.S.
- 12 High School Social Group
- 15 Marysville M.O.M.S.
- 18 Northwest M.O.M.S.
- 20 Chillicothe M.O.M.S.
- 20 Little Buddies - Southeast
- 20 Connecting Parents of Adults
- 22 Latino/Hispanic Safety Talk
- 25 Aging & Down Syndrome Support (40+)
- 26 Adult Virtual Cooking Class

March

- 1 Planning for the Future Seminar
- 3 D.A.D.S.
- 5 Adult Stamping Club-Central
- 6 Westerville M.O.M.S.
- 10 Stamping Club-East
- 10 Little Buddies - North
- 11 Adult Stamping Club-East
- 12 Adult Virtual Cooking Class
- 12 Delaware M.O.M.S.
- 12 Southeast M.O.M.S.
- 14 High School Social Group
- 15 Marysville M.O.M.S.
- 18 Northwest M.O.M.S.
- 20 Chillicothe M.O.M.S.
- 20 Little Buddies - Southeast
- 22 WDSO Celebration
- 25 Aging & Down Syndrome Support (40+)
- 26 Adult Virtual Cooking Class
- 28 Summer Learning Academy Opens

