

NADSNEWS



Casey Deegan Soars -
see story on page 3

The Newsletter of the National Association for Down Syndrome

May, 2008

"A Night at the Movies"

At our Annual Meeting this year, we will show the movie *Body & Soul: Diana & Kathy*. The movie, directed by Academy Award nominee Alice Elliott, is a new 40-minute documentary about two disability rights activists, Diana Braun and Kathy Conour. Diana, who has Down Syndrome, and Kathy, who has Cerebral Palsy, met at a sheltered workshop in Illinois three decades ago and vowed to fight to live independent lives. Fearful of being shut away in a nursing home or forced into a state run institution, they broke the rules and escaped the system. Not content to earn menial wages and have their living situation change with the whim of government appropriations, Diana learned to drive, they moved, built their own house, and survived to tell their story. *Body & Soul: Diana & Kathy* chronicles their ongoing struggle to live independently outside of institutions. Diana Braun is a wonderful exam-

Presenting
**BODY &
SOUL: DIANA
& KATHY**

Tuesday, May 20th, 2008

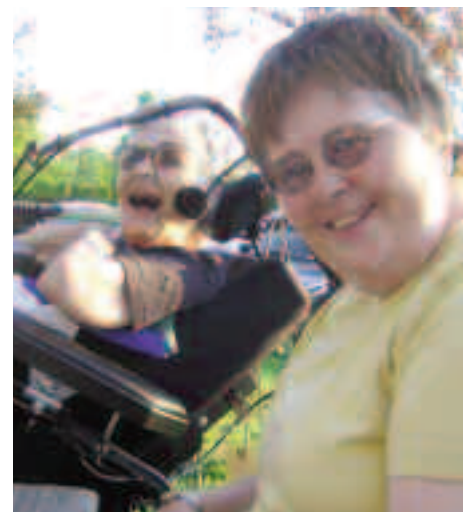
Business meeting 7:00 pm
Program 7:15 – 9:00 pm

JOHNSON AUDITORIUM
Lower level of the Parkside Center
at the west end of Lutheran
General Hospital
1875 Dempster Street
at Luther Lane
Park Ridge, IL

ple of a self-advocate with Down syndrome. At the age of 8, she found herself living in a state run nursing home in Freeport, Illinois. Taken away from an abusive family, Diana and her brothers and sisters were scattered. At 12 she was sent to the Dixon Developmental Center. She vowed to one day close those institutions and has devoted her life to doing just

that. At 19 Diana left the state run institution at Dixon. Since that time her activist commitments have led her to be president of People First, a self-advocates group, and a member of the Illinois Council on Developmental Disabilities.

Bring a friend and join us on May 20th, and you will leave feeling inspired by this wonderful story of a profound, creative friendship and how these two women have made a difference. ▲



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NADS 2008 Bowl-A-Thon – Great Success!

To say the 2008 Bowl-A-Thon was successful is an understatement. On March 2nd we had more bowlers than ever before. Babies, little kids, big kids and adults had a blast and helped to raise more than \$100,000 for NADS. They also won terrific prizes connected with old friends and met some new ones as well. Once again, Ronald MacDonald was a big hit with many of the children, while others enjoyed him from a distance – not quite able to pose for a photo or slap him a high five. Ronald always brings big smiles as he goes from lane to lane greeting everyone.

We are very grateful to everyone who bowled, collected pledges, gave pledges, and also to the many individuals and businesses that were lane sponsors and prize donors. We also appreciate all those who bought and sold raffle tickets.

Special thanks to members of the fundraising committee who worked hard for several months in preparation for this event. We also had a wonderful group of volunteers on the day of the Bowl-A-Thon. THANK YOU!

Please take a moment to recognize our generous sponsors:

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Learn more on page 7 >>



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Casey Deegan Soars!

By Elizabeth Drea

(Reprinted with Permission from 881 Progress January/February 2008)

Local 881 member Casey Deegan, Jewel 2855—Naperville, IL, took up skydiving in May of 2007. Many people will never even try skydiving because of fear. For Casey, he loves it because he is free. Casey has Down syndrome, and he is only the second documented individual with Down syndrome to skydive.

Casey is a sports buff—his favorite sports are football and baseball. He is a big fan of the Chicago White Sox and the New York Yankees. Between working 20 hours a week at Jewel and participating in activities through the Western DuPage Special Recreation Association (WDSRA), Casey keeps very busy. He plays basketball on Tuesdays and bowls on Thursdays. He has participated in Special Olympics since he was eight, involved in nearly every sport possible.

In 2006, Casey and his siblings gave their father Mike a gift certificate to go skydiving at Skydive Chicago in Ottawa, IL. Mike took Casey with him to the airport when he went for his first jump. Mike fell in love with skydiving instantly, and has jumped over 180 times since. Casey has often gone with to watch his dad and was fascinated by the jumpers. Then in April 2007, Casey asked Mike if he could jump too. His dad was apprehensive at first, but knew he had to fulfill his promise to himself that he would never handicap his son. So he talked with family members, checked with Casey's doctor, did some research, and contacted the family of a woman with Down syndrome in Texas he had read about who had jumped to ask a few additional questions. Satisfied, Casey was cleared for take-off.

One month past his 31st birthday,



on May 20, 2007, Casey took his first jump. He has completed a total of six tandem jumps so far. With the warm weather coming, Casey is anxious to go again and is planning a jump for his April birthday. "I was nervous the first time, but I don't get nervous anymore," said Casey. "I wanted to skydive to be like my dad. I like to be in the sky and the best part is when the parachute opens and you float in the air."

To Casey, his job at Jewel is a lot more than just employment and an income. "I really like the people at Jewel, and I like to stay busy and work hard." His dad believes that as a Local 881 UFCW member at Jewel Casey has gained a sense of purpose, mental stimulation, social interaction, and a positive sense of belonging to a team. His co-workers and supervisors treat him like family and Casey benefits from the routine of his schedule.

Besides skydiving, sports, and work, Casey likes to hang out with his friends. He also enjoys listening to

country music, "Tim McGraw is my favorite." Casey also enjoys spending time with his Dad and the rest of his family; he has four younger sisters. Casey has enjoyed a level of celebrity for his skydiving and has been featured in the Naperville Sun newspaper (and its syndicates) and in Parachutist Magazine, the international publication of the United States Parachutist Organization.

When it comes to skydiving, Local 881's Casey Deegan is fearless. His passion and enthusiasm for skydiving and for life is definitely contagious and inspiring!

A skydiving fundraiser to benefit the Western DuPage Special Recreation Association is being tentatively scheduled at Skydive Chicago on Memorial Day. The goal is to raise \$5,000 for the organization through pledges raised by people planning to skydive for the first time. Casey is also scheduled to jump as part of the event. For more information, please contact Lea Jackman at WDSRA at 630-681-0962.▲



2007-2008 National PTA "Reflections Program" Award Winner

I Can Make a Difference

By Sophie Shepley

Each of us can make a difference in the world if we make a difference to only one person. For me, that person is my brother, Wyatt.

Wyatt is special to me. And he has special needs. I am making a difference by teaching my brother new things like sign language. He also learns new signs from his therapists that he uses with me, and so I end up learning from him.

I teach my brother many things, even when we're playing. One day, we made up a game that taught Wyatt how to shake hands. Now, every time you put out your hand, he takes it and shakes it. If there's one thing about Wyatt, it's that he sure loves making new friends!

I love my brother very much. And I am glad to know that he loves me too.

Each of us can make a difference in the world if we make a difference to only one person. For Wyatt, that person is me!

I'm including this photograph to go along with my essay to show everyone how happy Wyatt and I are when we are together. This picture is from one of our favorite days, on Loon Lake, Minnesota, September 2006. Artist Michael Johnson painted a beautiful portrait of me and Wyatt from this photograph. Michael Johnson has Down syndrome and so does Wyatt.

Sophie Shepley is a 9 year-old 4th grade student at Patton School, Arlington Heights, IL.▲

NIH Develops Down Syndrome Research Plan

The National Institutes of Health has developed a research plan to advance understanding of Down syndrome and speed development of new treatments for the condition, the most frequent genetic cause of mild to moderate mental retardation and associated medical problems. The plan sets research goals for the next 10 years that build upon earlier research advances fostered by the NIH.

The NIH's National Institute of Child Health and Human Development convened a working group of NIH scientists. Through a public comment process, the scientists listened to comments and suggestions from families of individuals with Down syndrome, as well as from Down syndrome research advocacy organizations. The NIH scientists then developed the research plan in collaboration with researchers in the national scientific community.

The plan cites the need for increased research on the medical, cognitive, and behavioral conditions that occur in people with Down syndrome. These conditions include leukemia, heart disease, sleep apnea, seizure disorders, stomach disorders and mental health problems.

The working group also identified the need to study whether aging has a greater impact on mental processes in people with Down syndrome than in people who do not have Down syndrome. As adults, individuals with Down syndrome age prematurely and may experience dementia, memory loss or impaired judgment similar to that experienced by Alzheimer's disease patients.

The National Institute of Child and Human Development (NICHD) has supported Down syndrome research since the institute was established in the 1960s. The NICHD is currently studying specific genes and gene groups that may play a role in developing Down syndrome. Researchers are also studying the role that the age of the mother's egg plays in developing the disorder.

A NICHD-sponsored study is examining whether individuals with an additional complete copy of chromosome 21 differ as they age from people with only a portion of the extra chromosome. Another long-term study will examine the prevalence of dementia in adults with Down syndrome and whether certain medications, like hormone replacement therapy, slow the aging process in Down syndrome.

Other NICHD-supported projects include devising a

Learn more on page 11 >>

Up Close and Personal

By Teresa J. Unnerstall

It all started with the first grade school field trip to the Shedd Aquarium. I had never seen such sheer delight from my son, Nick, while watching the dolphin show. His face lit up with such joy and he was mesmerized. A few years later, at SeaWorld in San Antonio, my sister literally cried as she saw his pure happiness during the dolphin and beluga whale show. What was it about them that my son was so completely drawn to? I knew that I had to find a way for him to get up close and personal with dolphins as they seemed to be able to connect to Nick, who is now in seventh grade with a dual diagnosis of Down syndrome and autism.

We were planning a family trip to the Florida Keys to escape the gray, bitter winter and snow. I started checking resources to incorporate a dolphin swim on the agenda. There are many opportunities for dolphin encounters in that area but I decided on a more personal experience at Hawk's Cay Resort. The Dolphin Connection provided this with small groups of 4 or 5 participants. I spoke to the head trainer to discuss our son and his special needs and they were very experienced with handling such. We armed ourselves with sunscreen and a social story filled with icons to support Nick in understanding the schedule of events. It was a beautiful day with the warm sun cascading over the aqua waters of the Keys last December. There was excitement in the air and the kids were anticipating a great adventure.

The first part consisted of a brief classroom instruction to go over rules and education on dolphins. Nick along with his Dad, brother and cousins squeezed into wet suits and headed down anxiously to the docks. The second part of the experience



was very hands-on where each participant individually got to touch, feed, hug and even kiss these amazing mammals. Nick was completely engrossed in this dolphin encounter. As the trainer had the dolphin roll over Nick quickly bent down to give the dolphin a “raspberry” on its belly. The trainer remarked, “that, was a first”. Leave it to our Nick to do this; I have a feeling the trainer will never forget him! The final portion of the dolphin encounter included interaction using hand signals. This was literally a huge splash with Nick and the kids as they were able to signal and the dolphin would clap, twirl around, move backwards, and jump high in the air. As I stood behind the camera watching all of this I was deeply moved. This day was such a beautiful gift and the photo tells the story that Nick indeed was connected and absorbed in this moment.

Nick still likes to watch the video footage from that day. I have to think that this unique experience will forever be one of the best things we have done together as a family and for our son. When you have a child with special needs and limited speech it can

be extremely challenging to know what they are thinking, feeling and what they truly love. I had a hunch that this experience would be a slam-dunk. Indeed, it was and then some. My heart is warm in knowing that we could give this to him. We hope to explore more opportunities like this in the future!▲

Every Donation is Appreciated

Knights of Columbus

We appreciate the generosity of the Divine Word Council #7331 in Techny, IL – they sent us a check for \$1,322 and the Mayslake Council #4053 in Darien, IL donated \$1,400. Thanks to all who helped with the Tootsie Roll Drives.

Cars4Charities

We received \$3,835 from Cars4Charities as a result of Claire Halloran donating her car to NADS.



Dress Down Day for NADS

Sean Nelson, a 2nd grader at St. Thecla School in Chicago, served as Principal for the Day in November. His grandparents, Tom and Nancy Haran, won the opportunity for him at the school's Silent Auction last spring. In addition to bringing "munchkins" for all the students and teachers that day, Sean's principal duties included designating a "Dress-down-day" in December where all students who brought in \$1 for NADS, could be out of uniform. The St. Thecla School community raised \$280 for NADS.

Our thanks to a very special principal and his parents and all the students and staff at St. Thecla! ▲

Summer Camps

Superstar Gymnastics Camp

Elk Grove Gymnastics School,
Elk Grove Village, IL
4 nights and 5 days

This camp provides an incredible opportunity for athletes with special needs.

Spaces are limited – registration deadline – June 1, 2008.

For more information contact Patty Hermann –
847-843-1887

Joni and Friends Family Retreat

Syracuse, Indiana--A retreat for the whole family.
Information and online registration is available here:

<http://www.joniandfriends.org>

Walcamp--Kingston, Illinois--Summer camp for teens and adults with disabilities. Information and online registration are available here:

<http://www.walcamp.org/summer/handycamp.html>

Spring Hill Camps

Ewart, Michigan--Inclusion opportunities for kids 18 years old and younger. Information and online registration is available here:

<http://www.springhillcamps.com/MI/summercamp/>

Inspiration Center

Walworth, Wisconsin--Summer camp opportunities exclusively for children and adults with disabilities. Information and online registration is available here:

http://www.inspirationministries.org/summer_camp.aspx

Easter Seals also runs a number of day and residential camps--there are several in Illinois. Here is the link for the national camp directory:

http://www.easterseals.com/site/PageServer?pagename=ntl_directory_camprec

Conferences

National Down Syndrome Congress – 36th Annual Convention - Boston, MA July 11 – 13, 2008.

A conference for parents, professionals, teens and adults with Down syndrome and brothers and sisters. Something for the whole family. For more information, go to the NDSC website at: www.ndsccenter.org.

NADS 2008 Conference Saturday, November 8th Rosemont Conference Center

Featuring Self-Advocate – Carrie Bergeron Desai
Come hear about Carrie's marriage to Sujeet Desai and their life together. Watch for the conference brochure in the summer.



Bowlathon

Continued from page 2

Patti & Al Gustafson, Woodbridge
 Peter Rousonelos Family Farm of
 Gladstone
 Recon, Incorporated
 SAC PAC INC., Frankfort

Synthetic Turf of IL, New Lenox
 The Waters Dental Group, Sandwich

Grand Prize Raffle

Congratulations to all the winners
 and thanks to the donors for their
 generosity

1st Prize: Hawaiian Vacation

Accommodations (Donated by Frank
 and Lyn Brown)
 Winner: Jerry Millard, LaPorte, IN

2nd Prize: Digital Piano (Donated
 by Casio, Inc.)

Winner: Jason Yung, Aurora, IL

3rd Prize: Copier (Donated by
 Benefax and Maxwell Family)

Winner: Leo Deely, Chicago, IL

4th Prize: Convection/Microwave

(Donated by Tanglewood Homes)
 Winner: Mosbacher/Katz Family,
 Chicago

**NADS is grateful to the following
 donors of choice raffle and door
 prizes. Please support these busi-
 nesses if they are in your commu-
 nity:**

Adler Planetarium & Astronomy Museum
 Alberto Culver Products
 Arlington Park Racecourse
 Aurelio's Pizza, Frankfort
 Aurelio's Pizza, Homewood
 Bob Chinn's Crab House
 Bob Evans Farms
 Brenda Hopkins – Creative Memories
 Burger King, Deerfield
 Chicago Children's Museum
 Chicago International Children's Film
 Festival
 Chicago Bulls
 Chicago Cubs
 Chicago Fire Soccer
 Chicago Sky Basketball
 Chicago White Sox
 Chicago Wolves

Clean Plate Club, Evanston
 Cooper's Hawk Winery, Burr Ridge
 Cooper's Hawk Winery, Orland Park
 Court Theatre, University of Chicago
 Creative Memories – Brenda Hopkins
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 Six Flags Great America, Gurnee
 Tony n' Tina's Wedding
 Tre Volte Salon, Orland Park
 Lindsey, Shelly and Debbie
 University of Chicago – Court Theatre
 Walt's Food Centers
 Windy City Thunderbolts, Crestwood
 WLS AM Radio

Book Review

Rachel and the Magic Beads

By Beth Conway & Johnny
 Buchanan

\$7.99 – includes book and beads

Order online:

rachelandthemagicbeads.com

Reviewed by: Barb & Erin Healy

My daughter Erin, age 7, and I
 read the book together. She
 found it fascinating, as she too
 gets sad when mom and dad
 leave her. It was very easy to fol-
 low and kept her attention. The
 book also comes with green
 beads in a pouch. Erin enjoyed
 playing with the beads, which
 made her feel like she was part of
 the story. It's a delightful story
 that any young child would enjoy!

More Fashion Show Models



Tony Natale – My Brother Tony (A Sister's Perspective) - I have learned a lot in both college and graduate school, but the most important and life-changing things I have learned have been from my little brother Tony. These things include how to belly laugh until my stomach hurts, finding excitement in everyday tasks, including laundry and dishes, and how to genuinely love a child. Tony is a remarkable little boy whose smile is contagious and whose spirit is relentless. His charismatic personality has our entire family (including the family dog) absolutely crazy about him. When he puts on his tap shoes and dances it is impossible not to burst into applause. The innocent joy he radiates is powerful. As I watch Tony discover and fulfill his own capabilities, I am humbly grateful to be his sister.



Emily Panuska – Very active, adventurous, fun loving and happy are words that describe who Emily is and what this 8 year-old brings to our family. She can easily bring a smile to your face when things are a little tough, put a hop in your step when you're moving a little slow and show you the good side of life when things seem a little bad.

Emily loves to dance in the morning with the stereo blasting, followed by her favorite breakfast of Cheerios and cranberry juice while watching TV. Some of her favorite activities include singing, playing dress-up, creating recipes, reading books and drawing. She enjoyed playing baseball for the first time last year while continuing to do ballet. She also had her first experience with summer camp and loved it. All would agree that Emily really enjoys being around others and she will always be your friend.



Garrett Anderson – Garrett is the youngest of 3 brothers. His willingness to work hard and his perseverance are two traits that Garrett's family most admire about him. In December of his junior year in high school, Garrett received his driver's license. He loved driving himself to school his senior year! In September 2006, Garrett earned the lead role of Johnny in Vision Point's production of "Johnny the Bagger – A True Story of Customer Service." This was one of the productions featuring individuals with Down syndrome that were exhibited at the 2007 National Down Syndrome Congress Convention in Kansas City, Missouri. In June 2007 Garrett graduated 72nd out of a class of 512 and earned a regular high school diploma from Lake Zurich High School. This year he is attending the Career Foundation's Project at Harper College in Palatine. From there, Garrett is planning on going away to college and majoring in Early Childhood Education.



Katelyn Grunewald – Katelyn enjoys the dance of life. She loves a party and never passes up an opportunity to sing and dance. Katelyn is a 16-year-old junior at Palatine High School. Her favorite class is chorus. She enjoys many clubs and activities at school, including Pep Squad, Special Olympics, football games and school dances. Katelyn is very independent and definitely moves to her own "beat". She has an outstanding "will try anything" attitude. She works part-time during the summer and is saving up for her dream vacation to New York City. The highlight of this past year was attending Lake Zurich Senior Prom with her boyfriend, Garrett. Katelyn reminds us that "Life might not be the party we hoped for, but while we are here we might as well dance!"



Hailey Wedel – Our daughter Hailey was born on March 30th 2007. We are so blessed to have her. She is healthy and beautiful. She is just the light of our lives. Hailey has an older brother, Christopher, who is 16. He's still adjusting to having a baby around, but he loves her. Hailey was diagnosed with Down syndrome shortly after her birth. We hadn't known in advance so we have had a crash course in parenting a child with special needs. I now realize it is not much different than raising a typical child. She is reaching all of her milestones a bit slower than typical children, but she is reaching them none-the-less. Hailey is such a joy. She is a very determined little girl and I know nothing will ever stop her from getting what she wants. We are just enjoying watching her grow.



Edward Sitzman (Eddie)
I wish I knew four and a half years ago how much we would have to celebrate on Eddie's 4th birthday. I wish I knew I would be awakened each morning to my child's singing; or that I would for no apparent reason, receive hugs and kisses while I am working around the house. I wish I knew that a small baby would cry in church and my child would offer his own blanket to the mother and kiss the baby on her head. I wish I knew that one day, sitting in traffic, my child would yell "Mommy" as if there was an emergency and when I turned around he would stick his tongue at me and break into a fit of giggles. Now I know, without a shadow of a doubt, that we are blessed to celebrate everything about Eddie – in spite of and including Down syndrome.



Marissa Bloodgood –
"Her name is Marissa, she is my daughter."
By Cynthia Bloodgood

It was a perfect day, a perfect moment, and a perfect baby girl. "Thank you God," I said as tears of joy flowed down my face. Euphoric, my first-born! I am in a place closest to heaven. Wow! I did it, and she is more gorgeous than I ever imagined.

Marissa was born exactly as I had planned. I couldn't paint a prettier picture. Our bond was instantly felt. Connected we were. Nine days later – the diagnosis confirmed Down syndrome it is.

This is the beginning chapter of my 6-year old book. It has been a little over six years since that August 7, 2001 day and a lot has happened since then. My emotional, spiritual and physical being has now gone through a total transformation I embrace and owe to my teacher, my daughter **MARISSA**. She has made me the woman I am today and the person I have always wanted to be. I love my daughter and she is and always will be my "perfect baby girl!"



Alejandro Tello – Alex is as energetic and full of life as any boy his age. I see him and am shocked at how fast time has flown by. At 14, he has learned and accomplished many things, including his recent graduation from Portage Park Elementary School in Chicago. He received his diploma with honors, and we could not have been more proud. His next goal is completing high school, and after that he aspires to go to college.

Alex is a very busy guy. He loves school and plays sports all year round. He is an annual participant of the Special Olympics, where he especially enjoys competing in swimming, basketball, softball, and floor hockey.

Alex is bright, smart, strong, sweet (but sometimes sour), but surely one of his greatest talents is making people smile. He is the family jokester, always taking pleasure in his duty of keeping us laughing.

familyalbum

Loretta Anderton



We Need Your
Photos!

Send them to
shebein@nads.org

Cameron Tucker

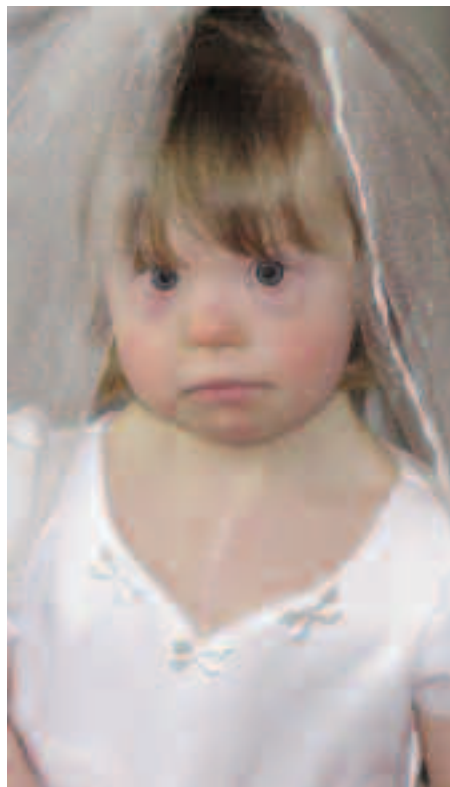
Eli Alvarez

Anna Dearhamer

Taylor Grace Snoddy



Katie Kissamis



NIH Research Plan

Continued from page 4

weight loss program for adults with developmental disabilities, and a computer program to help children with Down syndrome learn.

The National Heart, Lung, and Blood Institute (NHLBI) is supporting studies of the genes that contribute to heart malformations found in Down syndrome patients. The NHLBI also is supporting investigations of the causes and potential treatments for obstructive sleep apnea, a disorder in which throat tissue blocks the airway during sleep, temporarily shutting off air to the lungs. Obstructive sleep apnea is common in Down syndrome children.

Children with Down syndrome are 10 to 15 times more likely than other children to develop leukemia. The National Cancer Institute is investigating various types of leukemia that affect children with Down syndrome.

Other NIH institutes continue to investigate additional aspects of Down syndrome. The National Institute on Aging is conducting research on ways to treat Alzheimer's disease in people with Down syndrome.

The National Institute of Allergy and Infectious Diseases is studying the significance of two genes recently found in a region of chromosome 21. These genes are involved in the development of the immune response against disease.

The National Institute of Mental Health is investigating rates and possible treatments for mental disorders found with Down syndrome. These include autism, obsessive-compulsive disorder, depression, and psychosis.

The National Institute of Neurological Disorders and Stroke (NINDS) is investigating how the brain is affected by Down syndrome. The intellectual disability seen in people with Down syndrome is caused when neurons die or do not function properly. One NINDS study is investigating the potential role of a specific gene called APP, for amyloid precursor protein. It is thought that disruption of the APP gene may kill neurons by interfering with a growth factor needed for neurons to survive. APP is believed to be related to Alzheimer's disease and may play a role in Down syndrome.

The research plan on Down syndrome "is intended to provide the NIH, and its member Institutes and Centers, with guidelines for prioritizing and coordinating future research related to Down syndrome," wrote the members of the NIH Down syndrome working group in the report.

The report is available on the NICHD Web site at http://www.nichd.nih.gov/publications/pubs/upload/NIH_Downsyndrome_plan.pdf

Extra Folate for Men May Reduce Birth Defects

A new study published in *Human Reproduction* concludes that increasing folate intake for men may reduce the risk of fathering a child with a chromosomal defect, such as Down syndrome. Researchers have long known that increasing folate in the mother's diet can lower the risk of neural tube defects, such as spina bifida or anencephaly, but new research is showing that paternal diet also can affect the health of the child.

The study, which was funded by the National Institute of Environmental Health Sciences, the NIH, the EPA, and the U.S. Department of Energy, followed 89 healthy, non-smoking men, ranging in age from 20 to beyond 70. Participants' sperm was analyzed for genetic errors. The errors decreased significantly when daily folate intake was increased. Along with other errors analyzed, the study concluded that the men with high folate intake had about 30% lower frequencies of disomy 21, which causes Down syndrome.

Because of the correlation between folate intake and neural tube defects, the government requires food manufacturers to add folic acid to grain products so that women are more likely to consume the recommended 400 ug of folic acid daily. For men, the daily intake may be even higher. In the study, benefits were shown for men who consumed more than 700 mcg per day, which is 1.8 times the recommended dietary allowance, though still below the upper limit of 1,000 ug/day.

The researchers involved in the study observed that if other studies confirm their findings, "a possible public health intervention would be to increase the recommended daily allowance for men considering fatherhood to reduce the risk of chromosomal anomalies in their offspring." In the meantime, men contemplating fatherhood should try to eat a healthy diet, including green leafy vegetables and other sources of folate. Dr. Brenda Eskenazi, Ph.D. of the University of California at Berkeley, who was one of the authors of the study, notes, "The diet of men is important also, not just the diet of women, when they're thinking of having a child."

Summarized from "Extra Folate for Men May Reduce Birth Defects," by Chrystal Phen, Staff Writer, *MedPage Today*, published March 20, 2008.▲



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