

Finding Your Balance

Carrie Bergeron Desai is a thirty-year old young woman with Down syndrome from upstate New York. She radiates joy and warmth when you meet her.

Carrie Bergeron Desai – email: chbergeron@aol.com

Carrie is presently participating in a NYS Consolidated Support Services/ Self Determination plan, living in Rome, NY with her husband. She is married to Sujeet Desai, a talented musician, who also has Down syndrome. They were married in July 2006 in two lovely ceremonies, one Hindu and the second Christian. They celebrated their 1st year anniversary in July of 2007 and have settled happily into their new life together. They have staff support with their daily routines and have done very well in this transition. Carrie and Sujeet's love story and life accomplishments have been featured in the "Wall Street Journal", ABC's "The View", ABC's "20/20", "Time magazine", "Woman's World magazine", and the "Oprah Winfrey Show".

At twenty-one years of age, Carrie graduated from her local high school with an IEP diploma. A post-graduate year was spent at Herkimer County BOCES where she received a certificate in Early Childhood Education. She then went on to receive a two-year degree (obtained in 4 1/2 years) from Herkimer County Community College as a teacher's assistant in 2003.

She presently volunteers two days a week at Upstate Cerebral Palsy Center, helping with the toddler program. She also volunteers at the Rome Memorial Hospital three days a week doing of-

office work and assisting with the Tai Chi program on the geriatric floor. Daily visits to the local YMCA plus two classes per week in Tae Kwon Do to maintain her black belt status help Carrie keep physically fit.

She is a former board member of the National Down Syndrome Congress Board of Directors and now serves on the Self Advocacy Committee. She loves to share her experiences as a young adult with Down syndrome and has been doing this nationally for the past twelve years. Carrie is a current member of the Rome Speakers Bureau where she and her husband give motivational and inspirational speeches locally. In June Carrie was the keynote speaker for the commencement ceremony at one of her alma maters, Herkimer County BOCES.

This spring Carrie received the "Voices" Award from the National Down Syndrome Society (NDSS) in New York City. She was also the recipient of the Christian Pueschel Memorial Citizenship Award in 2005 at the annual National Down Syndrome Congress (NDSC) convention. Both awards celebrate the distinguished achievements of young people with Down syndrome. She truly believes that all children with Down syndrome should be given every opportunity to meet their potential and have success and happiness.

Photos: Carrie Bergeron Desai receives the "Voices" Award from the National Down Syndrome Society (NDSS) in New York City.

