Our Wrestling Journey

Jen Hora

A few days after returning from Winter Break, we received an email from Brogan’s teacher that was titled “Wrestling.” Our first thought was “Oh no! Who was he wrestling and what did he do?!” Instead the email informed us that earlier that day in 6th grade PE, they participated in a wrestling unit and listened to the coach trying to recruit boys for the team. His teacher informed us that Brogan took great interest and asked us if we would like her to speak to the coach. At this point, we chuckled aloud and said that Brogan takes interest in a ton of things, but wrestling?? He doesn’t know much about the sport and that it was probably just one of his many interests of the day. Little did we know, that email to the coach started a month long journey that we wouldn’t in our wildest dreams would we be on. The coach then invited Brogan to come to a practice so that they could evaluate his skills. We reluctantly agreed to this (still thinking that this really wasn’t going to lead to much!) and allowed him to stay the following day (he had never stayed after school for any activities, so a new set of worries ran through our heads— who would walk him there? Where would he change? Would he behave and stay with the group?) We then met with the coaches after that initial practice. To our great astonishment, we found out that Brogan had “a ton of potential” in wrestling and that they would love for him to be on the team! And so our journey officially began.

For the next five weeks, Brogan attended two hour practices, went to meets, met new friends, and unlocked a talent in him that we never knew existed. It was not always an easy ride, however. There was constant communication between us and the coaches and things had to be modified at times. He did not always wrestle (depending on the other team and if they had a wrestler in his weight class willing to give him a mock match) and we had to console him when he didn’t understand why. There were many hills to overcome (most of which were within myself and being able to “let go” and trust that he...
Wrestling

Continued from page 1

could do things on his own) and I had to realize that I needed to let go of some of these fears and trust that he would be able to independently be a 6th grade boy.

We learned many things during this process. We learned to trust in the coaches. We learned to let the reins go a bit. We learned that our son had abilities we didn’t know existed. Above all, we learned that sometimes opportunities can come out of nowhere and you need to just go with it. Our entire family was so proud of Brogan and this great accomplishment. We were so beyond pleased with the coaches, teachers, and administration of Cary Jr. High for allowing him this opportunity. We were at times brought to tears by the show of support and caring that was exhibited by his teammates and parents. We were also so impressed with the opposing teams’ wrestlers, who treated him with respect and equality not always seen in boys of this age. He was given an opportunity that we did not have to fight for, and that above all is the best part of his story. The school embraced Brogan for who he is and they led us on a journey we will continue to follow in the coming years!

2017 Bowl-A-Thon

Many thanks to all the many people who supported this year’s Bowl-A-Thon. It was another fun-filled family day and a great way to celebrate our Down syndrome community and to help raise crucial funds for NADS. We are grateful everyone who came and for the many volunteers who helped plan the day and ensured all ran smoothly. We are also grateful to Angie Picchi and Sheila Hebein for taking photos at the event and to Dan LaChapelle for doing the announcing. Thank you to all!

An Interview with Bowl-A-Thon Volunteer, Jody Comeau

Tell us a little about yourself and your family.

Hi! My name is Jody Comeau and I have two daughters, Ashley (20), and Lindsey (18). I have been a nanny since 1988, and received a degree in Early Childhood Education while working full time. It’s given me the opportunity to help raise many children along with my girls in more one on one and small group settings. Ashley is a sophomore at Augustana College double majoring in Pre Med, and Biology. Lindsey will be a freshman at NIU in the fall, majoring in their SPED (Special Education) program.

How did you become involved with the Bowl-A-Thon?

Wow, this goes back many years! Until February 26, 1986, I’d never heard of Down syndrome before. That day changed me. Forever. That’s the day Nick Schubert, my neighbor, was born. Knowing Nick and his family well, they introduced many of the neighbors to the Bowl-a-Thon and what Down syndrome was all about. After bowling a few years, doing my part to get sponsors and donations, I knew I wanted to help more. When I started out as a bowler, I gradually progressed to helping donate and put baskets together. As my daughters got older, it was the three of us helping other friends and neighbors volunteering our time any way we could. We were asked to help in the prize room a few years back, and do our best to return/continue every year. It’s such
a fun day, and an incredible experience.

**What is involved in managing the Prize Room?**

Dedication. It takes dedication and time from so many people to make the entire day run as smoothly as possible. Everyone chips in and manages to get individuals and companies to donate so every bowler feels like a winner! Once all the donations are collected, it’s a number and organizational skills game. NADS wants every bowler to be able to win! That’s a lot of bowlers, not to mention the age range! Collecting a huge variety of donations to fit and match everyone is a fun project! Everyone is special. And special is exactly how they deserve to feel!

**What have been some of your favorite moments from your work there?**

There have been so many, I’m not sure I can even come close to narrowing it down. Each year, seeing how each child grows up and the challenges they overcome and conquer absolutely amazes me. Nothing holds them back! Their determination, the support from family and friends... It’s incredible. It’s proof that we can do anything we set our minds to! Each year we meet more new families that we will watch grow and knock their goals out of the park! And every year driving home after the Bowl-A-Thon, it never fails how our conversation ends talking about how all the kids are always smiling, and always so happy. To us, they made our day perfect, without knowing the positive impact they have on us.

**What impact has volunteering at the Bowl-A-Thon had on you? On your daughters?**

I am able to spend my day volunteering and learning from a great group of people. The kids we see every year are happy, fearless, and positive. It has definitely taught me to be more appreciative of life and everyone in it. Ashley and Lindsey have seen the importance of helping others. Their want/need to help and give back grows more every day. Ashley wants to help find a cure for everyone. She’s chasing her dreams of being a pediatrician. She’s determined. Lindsey wants to physically help and teach children to make their daily lives easier, more manageable and fun! Watching and seeing my children’s reactions and the impact NADS has had on them, is priceless. They have learned to be the kids holding doors, helping anyone they can. They have learned respect, appreciation, and patience. NADS has helped me help them! Thanks to all of you for your kindness, strength, and perseverance. It’s such a positive impact.

**What have you valued most about the experience?**

Over the last 20+ years, having the opportunity to return each year and seeing how the kids have grown, advanced, and matured to become the individuals they are today. To hear stories from families about new accomplishments, big or small, makes it all worthwhile.

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**Bowl-A-Thon Lane Sponsors**

Many thanks to our 2017 Bowl-A-Thon Lane Sponsors.

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**Bowl-A-Thon Donors**

We are grateful to all who donated or helped to secure our grand raffle, choice raffle, and door prizes. Thank you to all the members of the NADS Board, to families and friends who provided gifts and helped put together the baskets, and to the corporations and businesses who donated items. We appreciate your generosity and your support for NADS. A complete list of donors can be found on our website: http://www.nads.org/2017-bowl-a-thon-donors/.

**Bowl-A-Thon Grand Raffle Winners**

Congratulations to the following winners of our grand raffle prizes:

**1st Prize:** High Definition Smart TV 50 inch – Patricia Niemaszyk

**2nd Prize:** SOUNDVISION – Virtual Reality Glasses with Stereo Headset – Jim Iovinelli

**3rd Prize:** Keurig Cappuccino-Latte System – Mason Schiller
ON THE TOPIC OF...

Paying It Forward

Nancy Goodfellow

My girls have swim lessons every Friday night at a local fitness center. Our usual routine is that they spend an hour swimming while I spend the time catching up on email or reading. Then we meet in the locker room and I help Lily get changed while Holly heads into a stall (because she prefers privacy).

But one Friday night a few months ago, our routine was interrupted. As I asked Lily to hold her towel around herself while I tried to help her change out of her suit, I felt someone watching me. A mother and her two teenage daughters were in the locker room with us, and Lily was distracted by the girls. A few minutes later, Holly was back from the bathroom fully changed, Lily was getting her socks and shoes on, and the other mother had exited the locker room.

But then she came back. And she walked right up to me.

“Excuse me. Could I please give you a hug?”

Without pausing, I looked her in the eyes and said, “Sure.”

She embraced me in a tight hug for a moment, then stepped back and said, “I just want you to know that you’re a great mom.”

I smiled and thanked her and she walked out of the locker room. I was still smiling when I saw the look of shock on my daughters’ faces.

“Do you know her?” Holly asked.

“Nope.”

“Then why did she hug you?” asked Lily.

“I don’t know.”

“Isn’t that kind of weird?”

“It’s unusual,” I answered. “But it seemed safe enough to let her give me a hug. And it’s always nice being told I’m a good mom.”

They were both still confused. They couldn’t understand why a total stranger would hug another person and pay them a compliment.

“Why do you think she did that, Mom?”

“I don’t know. It could be that I was more impatient with Lily being distracted than I realized and she thought I was having a tough day and needed a hug. It could be that she has someone with Down syndrome in her life and wanted to let me know that she understands. Or it could be that she needed the hug and wanted to do something to make herself feel good. Either way, I’m happy to have been the recipient of her unexpected kindness.”

A few weeks later I saw the woman again. I asked her if she had someone with Down syndrome in her life and she said no. She explained that years earlier (nine years to be exact), someone had come up to her in a grocery store and done the same thing. And that it had made such an impact on her that she wanted to pay it forward. She joked that it had taken her all those years to get up the courage to do so, but seeing me with Lily that day in the locker room, she decided to finally go for it.

“I’m so glad she did. Not only did I appreciate the hug and the compliment, but more importantly, I loved the lesson it taught my girls. I have overheard them tell others the story many times, about the stranger who hugged their mom. I try to help out my neighbors and do good deeds to model kindness and generosity for my children. But for them to see me be the recipient of a random act of kindness from a stranger gave them the opportunity to witness the impact firsthand.

Thank you, lady in the locker room, for paying it forward and providing a loving example for my children. I promise I will do the same for someone else… And I’ll try not to wait nine years!”

UPCOMING EVENTS

Illinois Includes Conference
May 4-5
DoubleTree by Hilton
Chicago – Oak Brook
1909 Spring Rd
Oak Brook, IL 60523
www.illinoisincludes.org

45th Annual NDSC Convention
July 20-23
Sacramento, CA
www.ndsccenter.org

12th Annual NADS Luncheon & Fashion Show
October 15th, 2017
Donald E. Stephens Convention Center
Rosemont, IL

DOWN SYNDROME STUDY SEEKING ADDITIONAL PARTICIPANTS

Additional participants are needed for a new study, “Effects of Aerobic Exercise on Cerebral Blood Flow and Cognitive Function in Individuals with Down Syndrome.” The study is being conducted by Sang Ouk Wee at UIC’s Rehabilitation Sciences Department. If you are interested, please contact him at 312-996-9607 or swee3@uic.edu or see the flyer on our website: www.nads.org/aerobic-exercise-study.
Summer Recreation Resources

Looking for activities for the summer? The Chicago area offers many options for children and adults with special needs. Local park districts and special recreation programs are a good place to start (if you don’t know how to contact the special recreation association in your area, you can look it up here: www.specialrecreation.org). Other possibilities:

**ATHLETIC PROGRAMS**
- Special Olympics www.soill.org
- BuddyUp Tennis www.buddyuptennis.com
- TopSoccer www.topsoccer.us
- Kids Enjoy Exercise Now www.keenchicago.org
- Actors Gymnasium http://bit.ly/2o6LYO1

**DANCE**
- Center Stage Dance www.centerstagedanceonline.com
- DancEsteem Special Needs Dance Classes dancencounter.tripod.com/dancesteem.html
- Evanston Dance Ensemble Jump for Joy evanstondanceensemble.org/jump-for-joy

**ICAN BIKE CAMPS (WWW.ICANSHINE.ORG)**
- June 12th - 16th, 2017
  Spencer Crossing Intermediate School, New Lenox, IL
  New Lenox School District 122
- July 17th - 21st, 2017
  Vaughan Athletic Center, Aurora, IL
  Fox Valley Special Recreation

**SUMMER CAMPS (Illinois)**
- Camp Hope; www.camphopeillinois.org; 312-401-HOPE
- Camp New Hope; www.campnewhopeillinois.org; 217-895-2341
- Camp Red Leaf jcy.s.org/locations/ingleside/camp-red-leaf; 847-740-5010
- Keshet Special Needs Camps; www.keshet.org/camps.html; 847-205-0274
- Shady Oaks Camp; www.shadoakscamp.org; 708-301-0816
- Special Camps; www.specialcamps.org; 630-690-0944
- Walcamp Outdoor Ministries Summer Camps; www.walcamp.org; 815-784-5141

**DOWN SYNDROME CAMPS**
- Camp Hi-Lite (Camp Riley program), IN; May 28-June 2
  www.bradwoods.org/campriley; 765-342-2915
- Camp PALS Chicago, Elmhurst College, Elmhurst, IL; July 23-29
  www.palsprograms.org
- Camp Super Smile, VA; July 24-27
- Destination Smile, Camp Eden Wood, MN; July 23-28
  www.truefriends.org; 800-450-8376.
- Down Syndrome Foundation Camp, MN; June 11-15
  www.downsyndromefoundation.org

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**NEW ILLINOIS DISABILITY AWARENESS CARD**

A new disability awareness card was introduced in Illinois this year as part of a law sponsored by Democratic Rep. Stephanie Kifowit of Oswego and Democratic Sen. Linda Holmes of Aurora to help people with intellectual, developmental or mental disabilities to communicate better with first responders, law enforcement officers, or public officials during stressful situations. The “Person with a Disability Wallet Card” was the brainchild of Lori Price, who has a child with autism spectrum disorder. People with autism or other disabilities can often respond to stressful situations by shutting down or panicking, which can sometimes cause a fraught situation to escalate. The card provides a quick and easy way for those individuals to identify themselves and includes descriptions of some of the behaviors first responders might observe in their interactions with the person with a disability. The card is available free of charge from any Secretary of State Driver Services Facility to individuals 16 or over after the individual’s disability has been verified. For more information, see the recent Daily Herald article at http://bit.ly/2lWpqTd or the Chicago Tribune article at http://trib.in/2o6f6Ux, or go to cyberdriveillinois.com.

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Editor’s Note: For a list of camps in the Midwest, see our website: www.nads.org/summer-camps-in-the-midwest/
World Down Syndrome Day Celebrations

This year, we launched our new virtual art gallery on our website in honor of World Down Syndrome Day on March 21. Check out the wonderful works of those who contributed: www.nads.org/nads-gallery/. We are still accepting entries, so if you have examples of your art you would like to submit, please send them to us!

We Rocked the Socks!

Teresa Unnerstall

Just three weeks ago, I started a campaign centered around World Down Syndrome Day to raise awareness and funds for The National Association for Down Syndrome (NADS). I was approached by We Help Two, which sells these funky socks online. With each pack purchased, We Help Two donates 60% to NADS. On top of this, We Help Two also donates a pair of thermal socks which Nick and I will be taking to our local homeless shelter. My son Nick is 23 years old, and he has Down syndrome and autism. We have exciting news to share. After just three weeks in this campaign, we raised $501.00 for The National Association for Down Syndrome! In addition, 57 people will receive warm socks at our local homeless shelter. I want to thank everyone for being a part of this campaign, rocking those socks and supporting Down syndrome awareness by purchasing socks and promoting World Down Syndrome Day on social media.

A special thanks to We Help Two for a WONDERFUL campaign. It was super easy to set up, and the socks are shipped and at your door in two days! We Help Two partners with schools, organizations, individuals and non-profits to make twice the difference. They are truly making a difference by raising funds for organizations, and giving back to the community, with thermal sock donations to local homeless shelters. What an impact they make, by helping two ways! For more information about We Help Two go to www.wehelptwo.com.

Editor’s Note: We are grateful to Teresa Unnerstall and her family for doing this fundraiser. Many thanks to all who supported it!

Partnership Advocacy Council (PAC) Patricia Shimanek

PAC had its first meeting of 2017 on April 2, 2017 at Elmhurst Memorial Hospital. Approximately 30 people attended with 15 of them young adults with Down syndrome. The first part of the meeting was to review recent survey results and discuss next steps. Nineteen people participated in the survey. Overall, many positive answers and comments were given. Eighteen out of 19 participated in at least 1 or more PAC events, as well as more than half participated at each of the 4 NADS events (Bowl-A-Thon, Conference, Fashion Show and Buddy Walk). Service projects were important to all 19 surveys as well as 13 requested more leadership opportunities. In regards to how many meetings should be planned per year, 10 responded with 5-6 with the request to move location around to allow people from all over to participate as well as alternate Saturdays and Sundays. The name PAC to describe this group was liked by 12, and a few comments regarding name change to something easier to remember. Many comments at the end included that PAC was a great opportunity and wanted to see this program continue. There were a few comments in regards to more typical peer volunteers to facilitate meetings/service projects and training for self-advocacy and leadership. The results of this survey have assisted in planning the next steps for PAC. The group will continue to hold meetings 2-3 times per year at Elmhurst Memorial Hospital, but plan various service projects in the community at different locations to allow people from all over to participate. More than likely a service project will be done in conjunction with a meeting. To assist with those requesting leadership training and opportunities, a plan is in place to set up a half day training for leadership in early fall as well as looking for potential committees in NADS that would benefit from a PAC person’s participation.

Overall, PAC is off to a great start for 2017 and two service projects have already been planned. If interested in participating please contact Diane Urhausen at 630-325-9112 or durhausen@nads.org.
With spring in its early days, NADS came together once again in the town of Elmhurst on the afternoon of April 2nd for a PAC Service Project. Members and family came together in one of Elmhurst Hospital’s community rooms to perform craft projects that would later be given out as gifts to patients at the Park Ridge Care Center.

Kicking off the project were series of conversations over drinks and cookies, many a member catching up with friends and fellow members before a simple icebreaker began and announcements of future community service projects. In addition to more opportunities for projects and potential interaction with the residents at Park Ridge, also planned were providing support to cancer patients by Phil’s Friends and providing meals to children by Feed My Starving Children.

Before the project’s development, a group of NADS members met with the Activities Manager, Byron, to hear in person how NADS can further assist with the residents of the Center and hear more about the work they do in caring for their patients. There they learned the varieties of activities the Center provides to keep its patients occupied, ranging from board games to movies to weekend entertainers. One particular activity they were preparing for that day was their twice weekly afternoon bingo game, which was said to be a greatly enjoyed activity. During the visit it was discovered that holiday activities were extremely popular ones for the residents and there was not a holiday that went uncelebrated. The Center even goes as far as making one up every August with a different theme every year; that way every month will give their patients a reason to celebrate.

Bringing us to the most recent PAC Service Project, whose purpose was to create Easter and spring seasonal themed crafts as gifts for the Center. The headlined crafts were tissue paper mosaic eggs cut out of foam and cards with cupcake liner flowers on the front as well as decorated messages inside. While the projects were quick and easy, they provided a platform on which the members could fully express themselves in bright colors and unique patterns. Through the flurry of fragile paper, glue, and socializing, one saw how truly incredible their minds were at work putting their crafts together, some on their own and some needing a helping hand along the way. There were egg cutouts with either a vibrant mixture of multiple colors or carefully laid out patterns with colored cords to hang on doors and wall, as well as cards featuring cupcake liner flowers in every combination imaginable nestled on backgrounds of green paper strips on the front and inside were messages composed of paper and stickers wishing one a ‘Happy Easter’ or ‘Happy Spring.’

As the stickers informing the bearer these gifts were from NADS were placed and as the final pictures were taken, another service project had ended with a great deal of positive energy. Diane Urhausen and PAC member, Alex Tello, took the finished crafts and passed them out to patients at the Center, with hopes that they will catch the case of Spring Fever fervently displayed throughout the craft.
Presentation at CTU

Emilia Walasik

On March 7, 2017, self-advocates from the National Association for Down Syndrome came to present at Catholic Theological Union in Hyde Park. Catholic Theological Union is a graduate Theology and ministry school whose mission is “to prepare effective leaders for the Church, ready to witness to Christ’s good news of justice, love, and peace” (CTU’s Mission Statement).

As a student at Catholic Theological Union and a member of the school’s student-run social justice organization, Witness, I realized that it would be immensely beneficial for the students to be able to hear stories first-hand from those who have disabilities, and to be given effective education and tools to be able to work with individuals with disabilities within their various ministries. For instance, there are many students at Catholic Theological Union who are preparing to become priests for the Roman Catholic Church or are planning to enter the field of education, and certainly may encounter individuals with Down syndrome and other disabilities within their parishes and places of work. Many people are unaware of ways to approach and talk with persons with various disabilities, and this is an especially important and necessary skill for ministers.

Our presentation was titled “Disability’s Hidden Truths: The Up Side of Down” in hopes to help students realize that individuals with Down syndrome are able to live, work, dream, and be joyful just as anyone else who does not have a disability. Since I am also a public speaker for NADS and a sister of a young man with Down syndrome, within our presentation I spoke about what Down syndrome is, my personal experiences with my brother and through volunteering, and I provided concrete tips and examples of how to work with those with disabilities in the educational setting and ministerial setting.

The highlight of our presentation was hearing several girls who are NADS self-advocates with Down syndrome, speak about their own lives and experiences. Their stories were truly inspirational, moving, and eye-opening to the audience.

I was able to speak with many of the students who attended our presentation and the response has been incredible. Robert Baiocco, OSA, shared with me the following: “When I was a child, I had a friend named Guy who had Down syndrome. My Mom told me that I always loved playing with him, or just sitting with him and watching him entertain himself. I remember wishing that I could be like him because he always seemed as though he was having such a great time, whether we were playing with toys or just sitting under a tree. He was able to entertain himself by simply moving his hands around in front of his face. Often looking up at the sun through the cracks between his fingers, he would laugh hysterically and I envied him. During the presentation at CTU, I was reminded of a comment that I once made... ‘Mom, how come the thing that Guy has is called Down syndrome? I think it should be called Up syndrome, because Guy is almost always happy.’ Your co-presenters displayed the same quality, such as being ecstatic because of having a job or singing a song together.”

Samuel Joutras, OSA, shared the following thoughts: “The presentation about ministering to people with Down syndrome was very inspiring because people with Down Syndrome spoke fearlessly and very enthusiastically about their lives, and very inspiring because of having the same quality, such as being excited because of having a job or singing a song together.”

The girls who came to speak truly shined light on the truth about Down syndrome. This disability does not take away a person’s God-given dignity and it does not stop an individual from chasing and achieving their hopes, dreams, and life goals. Down syndrome does not take away a person’s ability to love and be loved and it does not take away a person’s emotions. On the contrary, Down syndrome is truly a gift and a blessing. Individuals with this disability are able to love profoundly, live with pure joy, and as I always like to say, they are able to see the world in colors rather than just in black and white.

Benjamin Le, SVD, said: “The girls shared with us their daily struggles, routines and dreams of the future. I am amazed that they are no different than many of us. I am just amazed by how courageous these young girls were. I myself have fears of public speaking but it comes so naturally to them. God has given us different talents and these girls are developing theirs, while helping others like me to grow in my awareness of others as well!”
As a lifelong dancer, I have experienced firsthand the power of dance: Dance helped me find my voice, my friends, and myself. I also witnessed dance’s value in connecting me to others. Two experiences that stood out to me involved dancing with a young girl I babysat for who was battling Leukemia, and an individual I met at camp with Down syndrome who loved Lady Gaga. These two wonderful people struggled to communicate their thoughts and feelings verbally, yet through dancing with them I knew exactly what they meant. I saw how we could use dance as a powerful way to create relationships and communicate feelings and wanted to explore that more. Over the next twelve years, I graduated college with a major in dance, earned a master’s degree in dance/movement therapy and counseling, and now, as a Registered Dance/Movement Therapist (R-DMT), I have the privilege of working with children and young adults with special needs and older adults with memory loss from dementia.

Dance/movement therapy uses movement as both a form of assessment and therapeutic intervention. Through embodiment and mirroring techniques, dance/movement therapists are able to communicate empathy non-verbally, demonstrating understanding and creating relationships. Since movement is our first and most basic form of communication, there is so much that can be done within a therapeutic movement relationship. As educator and board certified dance/movement therapist, Nana Koch described, “Movement is a basic form of communication that provides us with opportunities for socialization, the development of community and the experience of expressing our aliveness and our innermost thoughts and feelings.”

As a therapist, I enter a client’s world by matching or “mirroring” their movements or movement qualities to help them feel seen, heard, and understood. I strive to experience their perspective and worldview by attuning to their breath patterns, trying on their postures and gestures, and mirroring their movement qualities. Through dance/movement therapy, I am able to boost a client’s self-esteem and confidence by validating their movement choices, and helping them feel heard and understood on a non-verbal level. The non-verbal communication that happens in a movement relationship creates awareness and opportunities for developing new ways of socializing and relating to others. By responding to movement choices in a therapeutic movement relationship, I am showing individuals that they have an effect on their environment. Dance/movement therapy also creates a multi-sensory experience that may be both stimulating and regulating. Through the use of auditory stimuli, including recorded music and simple percussion instruments, visual stimuli like brightly colored scarves, tactile stimuli, such as a variety of balls and parachutes, participants are given a multi-sensory experience that is engaging and enlivening. The multi-sensory experience creates an extension of the movement our bodies make to express and communicate with others. The retreat ended with a big dance party where participants were able to express themselves freely, and socialize safely through movement.

Dance/movement therapy has become my passion. I aim to continue to share my love of dance and to help others find their voice, their friends, and themselves through movement.

For more information about dance/movement therapy and to find a dance/movement therapist in your area please visit: www.adta.org.
Bowl-A-Thon
family album

We Need Photos!
Send your Family Album photos to NADS!
shebein@nads.org

Cameron Tucker
Maggie, Tessa & Ellie Lay
Dale DeBarba
Cheryl & Louie Herrera
Kerry Doremus
Ryan Burke
On Monday, February 6th, many members of the Adult Matters Committee were welcomed by the staff of Brookdale of Glen Ellyn. We received a tour of the facility and popped in on Kevin Lee while he was at his Monday job. After the tour we went up to the apartment he shares with his mother, Marjorie, and continued our meeting. Marjorie has always been so open and informative about her experiences for others to learn and grow from, and today was no exception. Our committee intends on visiting other living arrangements to see what families have created to meet the needs of their loved ones. I am unaware of any other arrangement like Marjorie’s and she may be the pioneer in this area as she has been in so many throughout her life.

It was interesting to see Kevin and hear about how well he has adapted to his new environment. Marjorie had visited Brookdale on many occasions with her children and got to know the staff well as they also got to know her and Kevin. I think, for me, this was an important step. She was patient and thorough in her consideration of Brookdale and allowed for a relationship to form. Kevin’s happiness in their arrangement is also an important consideration. Although initially apprehensive about the move, he quickly realized what a great place Brookdale was for him. The residents and the entire staff have all welcomed him and that is a wonderful thing. I am hoping that if this is an option that sounds like it would be ideal for your family’s consideration that Brookdale can be a model for other senior living facilities.

Senior Residence – Mother & Son

Marjorie Sullivan Lee

All senior retirement centers have their special features and choosing appropriately is a challenge. My decision actually was a lengthy one with careful analysis of social and financial issues. But my final quick moment of decision surprised my sons and daughters. It came about because I received an assurance that my son Kevin, who is identified as a person with Down syndrome, could join me as my housemate. Although 62 is the usual minimum age for residents, a special concession was made for Kevin at age 54, and even more important was an agreement that Kevin could continue as an independent resident after my demise “as long as appropriate.” What more could I ask?

Our lovely apartment is in a center for independent living – so it is much like a regular community neighborhood. It does include one floor of assisted living if needed. We have a lovely dining program – much like a fine dining restaurant – for breakfast and dinner. It is a nice time for neighborly interaction, but still as private as we may choose. Many activities are available to enjoy or ignore as we choose—internally or as “field trips” to nearby areas. Transportation is part of the special features. However, I continue to be a licensed driver, even at age 95, and we have our own car. This enables us to keep up our contacts in our old neighborhood and church.

Immediately after our arrival Kevin was offered two volunteer jobs and he has enjoyed them thoroughly. On Monday, Tuesday and Wednesday mornings he reports to his special work station to prepare bowls of individual coffee cream containers and then distributes them to 40 or 50 tables that are being prepared for dinner. On Friday afternoons he works in the mailroom distributing the weekly newsletter neatly to 250 pigeonholes. Thursday is his “day off” and usually is spent at the College of DuPage where he has been an individualized student for decades. Friendships on campus are mainly with staff members.

In our residence there is a similar pattern as administrative personnel are Kevin’s age mates and all have welcomed him beautifully. He is also well-known to an incredible number of the senior residents and he is friendly and respectful to all of them. He became acquainted almost faster than I did. Our two bedroom, two bath apartment is spacious and family members from far-flung locations join us frequently for visits – togetherness with two sleeper sofas.

After more than a year in residence our summary would be that we have made a good decision.
Membership Application

Membership dues can be paid online at www.nads.org

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Category of Membership (check one)
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