



**F**amilies  
**R**espect  
**I**nspire  
**E**ducate  
**N**etworking *for*  
**D**own syndrome &  
**S**pecial needs  
**W**est Florida

**Families Respect, Inspire, Educate, & Networking for Down syndrome & Special needs** is non-profit 501c3, private operating foundation that was founded in 2007 by parents of children impacted by Down Syndrome. In 2019, we became all-inclusive and welcomed all special needs individuals and their families. We proudly serve Hillsborough, Pinellas, Pasco and surrounding counties.

### **FDSWF MISSION**

Our Mission is to provide educational and support services to new parents, families, and individuals with special needs. To empower individuals with special needs and help them become more independent. To promote community integration and together celebrate the lives of people impacted with special needs.

### **FDSWF GOALS**

Our goals provide a foundation on which we will meet the demands of the future.

- To provide accurate and up-to-date information to new parents and families.
- To change people's attitudes about special needs and promote respect and esteem.
- To enable people with special needs to speak up and be heard.
- To help individuals with special Needs become a productive part of society.
- To train volunteers to represent and promote "best practice" programs in meeting the needs of all individuals with special needs and their families.
- To offer a safe, positive and welcoming environment where our families can build friendships and experience the joy of getting together.
- To create a community that embraces, supports, and inspires individuals with Special Needs to live happy, healthy, full-filling lives.

## OUR VALUES

- We are **TRUSTWORTHY** in our daily responsibilities.
- We use **EMPATHY** in our interactions and **RESPECT** toward others in all that we do.
- We **COLLABORATE** and create **PARTNERSHIPS** within our community.
- We are **DEVOTED**, investing our time, effort and energy to our mission

## F.R.I.E.N.D.S. PROGRAMS

**PARENT INFORMATIONAL PACKETS** - We provide free FRIENDS Parent Packets. The packets are filled with Down Syndrome materials and Special Needs resource information. For new and expectant parents receiving a diagnosis of Down syndrome, the packet includes a free copy of the book “Babies with Down Syndrome, A New Parents Guide”. Available in English/Spanish.

**PARENT LIAISON PROGRAM** – Upon request our Parent Liaisons offer peer to peer support for new and expectant parents, grandparents, and other family members. A bilingual Parent Liaison is available.

**F.R.I.E.N.D.S. PRESENTATIONS** - We offer Down Syndrome presentations to the medical community. To request a packet, parent liaison, or presentation, send your request to [info@friendssupport.org](mailto:info@friendssupport.org) or call (813)245-2782.

**F.R.I.E.N.D.S. MEMBER PROGRAMS** - We understand that a strong support system can make a great impact in the lives of parents raising a special needs child. We provide connection and support through our monthly Playgroups and Social Clubs.

❖ **BABY FRIENDS PROGRAM (Birth to 5yrs)**  
Meets monthly at We Rock the Spectrum (Brandon & Largo), LoLo’s Play Place (Brandon), and K Pea’s Place (Westchase). For more information check our Facebook Events page or call Kathy Boisseau (603)438-2886.

❖ **AFTER SCHOOL SPECIALS (All ages)** Meets for fun outings throughout the year. For more information call (813)245-2782.





F.R.I.E.N.D.S. offers a safe, positive, and welcoming environment where special-needs adults can create lasting friendships and experience the joy of getting together monthly for a fun dance.

*\*VOLUNTEERS AND A DJ ARE NEEDED! – Earn Volunteer service hours by helping set up the dance, serving snacks to our guests, and dancing!*



We meet monthly in Brandon at Livingstone Academy and in Seminole at the The Oakhurst United Methodist Church. Check our website calendar for dates and times.

F.R.I.E.N.D.S. (823)245-2782 [www.friendssupport.org](http://www.friendssupport.org)

❖ **FRIENDS SELF-ADVOCATES (FSC) PROGRAM** (15yrs +) is available for *all special For all special need's adults*. Meets monthly at Livingstone Academy's Bloomingdale campus in Brandon and at The ARC Tampa Bay in Clearwater. For more information call (813)245-2782. Visit our website calendar, [www.friendssupport.org](http://www.friendssupport.org) or FRIENDS Down Syndrome West Florida Facebook Page Events for more info.

**Miss Bonnie's**

**Arts & Crafts Corner**

❖ **FRIENDS Socials** – Meet monthly at Livingstone Academy for Crafts & Games. See our Facebook Events page for more info. Visit our website calendar, [www.friendssupport.org](http://www.friendssupport.org) or FRIENDS Down Syndrome West Florida Facebook Page Events for more info.

- ❖ **D.A.D.S.** - Dads Appreciating Down Syndrome or D.A.D.S. is to assist and support, through fellowship and action, the fathers and families of individuals with Down syndrome. For more information call (813)245-2782. Visit our website calendar, [www.friendssupport.org](http://www.friendssupport.org) or FRIENDS Down Syndrome West Florida Facebook Page Events for more info.
- ❖ **F.R.I.E.N.D.S. - DOWN SYNDROME ESPANOLA** - Bienvenido a la zona española de la Asociación FRIENDS - Down Syndrome West Florida para el área de Hillsborough & Pinellas. La misión de F.R.I.E.N.D.S. - Down Syndrome West Florida proporcionará servicios educativos y de apoyo que abarquen a todas las familias afectadas por el Síndrome de Down; al tiempo que promueve la integración completa de la comunidad de las personas afectadas por el síndrome de Down. En esta área, queremos compartir los artículos y la información sobre el Síndrome de Down. Esperamos que esta sección te sea útil. Call Gloria Zepata (813)766-8061.

## **FDSWF FAMILY AWARENESS, CONNECTIONS, AND FUN**

For Down Syndrome awareness, advocacy, and family fun, FDSWF hosts these events each year:

- **March – F.R.I.E.N.D.S. & NDSS BUDDY WALK**
- **April - FDSWF Spring Picnic & Egg Hunt**
- **May - Mad Hatter's Mother's Day Tea**
- **June - Dad's Pancake Breakfast**
- **July- Buddy Walk Kick Off Party!**
- **October – Halloween Party Pinellas & Hillsborough**
- **December FDSWF Holiday Party**

## **FDSWF MEMBERSHIP**

Want to join FDSWF? It's free and easy! Log onto our website, [www.friendssupport.org](http://www.friendssupport.org) and fill out the membership form to receive our newsletters and events emails. FDSWF is run by a dedicated group of volunteers made up of Down syndrome parents, business and community leaders, and professionals. If you would like to participate on our board, volunteer to help with a function, become a parent liaison, or volunteer on a committee we'd love to have you! To volunteer, just send an email to [info@friendssupport.org](mailto:info@friendssupport.org). We are looking forward to meeting you and your family.



**HELP US ADVOCATE  
FOR  
DOWN SYNDROME**  
F.R.I.E.N.D.S. DOWN SYNDROME  
WEST FLORIDA  
**(813)245-2782**  
[www.friendssupport.org](http://www.friendssupport.org)

**BUDDY WALK – HELP US RAISE FUNDS FOR FDSWF AND ADVOCATE FOR DOWN SYNDROME!**

F.R.I.E.N.D.S. - Down Syndrome West Florida, together with the National Down Syndrome Society (NDSS) are happy to announce they will host our annual Buddy Walk. More than 3,000 families, friends, and professionals are anticipated to attend this event, making it one of over 250 walks taking place across the country to raise awareness, acceptance and inclusion for individuals with Down syndrome in their communities.

*Ninety-three percent of every dollar raised by F.R.I.E.N.D.S. - DOWN SYNDROME WEST FLORIDA serves our West Florida community. Five percent of every dollar raised is sent to National Down Syndrome Society for national advocacy and support efforts.*

## SPONSORS, WE NEED YOU!



We Need You! Your company can reach a large, loyal audience in a fun and upbeat atmosphere while supporting the mission of FREINDS. There are many ways your business or organization can be a part of the Buddy Walk, from sponsorship packages, to forming a team, to much more! We appreciate all that you do for us and thank you for supporting FRIENDS! Your donations help to provide funds for:

- Printed materials for informational packets and presentations.
- Books – “Babies with Down Syndrome A New Parents Guide”
- Support for our playgroups and social clubs.
- Educational presentations for our physicians, nurses, and community.
- Community activities, picnics, and parties.
- July 4<sup>th</sup> & Christmas Parade Floats.
- Picnic’s, Parties, and Family Activities.



Your In-Kind donations are raffled off and the monies raised go right back into our FDSWF programs.



**2018 Buddy Walk Volunteers**

## **BECOME A FDSWF VOLUNTEER!**

Thank you for your interest in volunteering for F.R.I.E.N.D.S. - Down Syndrome West Florida. We are always in need of great volunteers who are hard-working, organized, and who love interacting with our families. As a volunteer, you are essential and play an important role in making our events so special. Please visit our website, [www.friendssupport.org](http://www.friendssupport.org) to register as a volunteer and start receiving emails notifying you of upcoming volunteer opportunities. Thank you for supporting FDSWF and our special needs community!

**FACEBOOK PAGE** - Please "LIKE" our **FRIENDS DOWN SYNDROME/SPECIAL NEEDS** Facebook page. To join our private FDSWF "closed page (for families in West Florida only) send us a request to join.

**TWITTER** - [https://twitter.com/Friends\\_DSWF](https://twitter.com/Friends_DSWF)

**INSTAGRAM** - [friendsdownsyndrome](https://www.instagram.com/friendsdownsyndrome)

**FDSWF NEWSLETTER** - FDSWF Newsletter is published monthly and furnishes information on our programs, event's and connections.

## **WE BELIEVE IN TRANSPARENCY**



FDSWF has been awarded a Platinum Seal of Transparency since 2017 from GuideStar USA, Inc. - an information service specializing in reporting on U.S. nonprofit companies.

FDSWF posts for public inspection the last three years of its IRS Forms 990, yearly Budget, and Annual Report. You will find each of these documents posted on our website, [www.fdswf.org](http://www.fdswf.org).

Our Tax EIN #651261646.

## **BOARD OF DIRECTORS**

Heather Carpenter - President (813)433-4383  
[Heather@friendssupport.org](mailto:Heather@friendssupport.org)

Kathy Boisseau – Vice President/ Playgroup  
Director (603)438-2886 [Kathy@friendssupport.org](mailto:Kathy@friendssupport.org).

Brenda Wando - Secretary (760)472-3509  
[Brenda@friendssupport.org](mailto:Brenda@friendssupport.org)

Jeff Green - Treasurer (813)453-1632  
[Jeff@friendssupport.org](mailto:Jeff@friendssupport.org)

Ann Foyt, R.N. - Executive Director (813)245-2782  
[info@friendssupport.org](mailto:info@friendssupport.org)

Tish Knotek – Raffles/Events (813)436-6872  
[Anglerair@msn.com](mailto:Anglerair@msn.com)

## **SUPPORT STAFF**

Biz Central Accounting Marie Caballero  
[mcaballero@bizcentralusa.com](mailto:mcaballero@bizcentralusa.com)

Tamera Dyer – Website Management (614)407-3937  
[tamera@dyermediagroup.com](mailto:tamera@dyermediagroup.com)

## **ADVISORY BOARD**

Jamie Santillo – JS Creative Concepts & Marketing  
LLC. [jamie@jscreativemarketing.com](mailto:jamie@jscreativemarketing.com)

Sara Bataglia – Dancing for Donations  
[sara\\_battaglia95@yahoo.com](mailto:sara_battaglia95@yahoo.com)

Joe & Vicki Wright – Realtor  
[thewrightchoice@verizon.net](mailto:thewrightchoice@verizon.net)

Julie Hirsch – Julie Hirsch Photography  
[jhirsch4@tampabay.rr.com](mailto:jhirsch4@tampabay.rr.com)

Laurie Ohall, P.A. – Special Needs Attorney  
[lohall@ohalllaw.com](mailto:lohall@ohalllaw.com)

Steve Hitchcock, P.A. – Special Needs Attorney  
[steve@hitchcocklawyer.com](mailto:steve@hitchcocklawyer.com)

Aubrey Posey, P.A. – Special Needs Attorney  
[Aubrey@hitchcocklawyer.com](mailto:Aubrey@hitchcocklawyer.com)

Danny Esposito – Boundless Global  
[danny@boundlessglobal.org](mailto:danny@boundlessglobal.org)

Natalie Killebrew – Hyland IT Specialist/Volunteer  
[Natalie.Killebrew@Hyland.com](mailto:Natalie.Killebrew@Hyland.com)

Betsey & Geoff Tingey- Parent Liaisons  
[tingeyg@gmail.com](mailto:tingeyg@gmail.com)