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## BACKGROUND



### History

The Down Syndrome Association of Greater Toledo (DSAGT) was founded in 1983 by a group of parents with the goal to create more opportunities for their children with Down syndrome. The organization was granted 501(c)(3) federal tax exemption status in November 1984.

As a parent-led organization for over 30 years, the Down Syndrome Association of Greater Toledo has experienced success in fundraising through events and outreach, while growing various programming and resources to benefit local families touched by Down syndrome. Since creating a part-time Executive Director position in 2013, our organization continues to meet and exceed our goals by increasing our net profits with the annual Toledo Buddy Walk®, developing relationships for third-party fundraising opportunities, gaining membership in a workplace giving federation, and further pursuing new, sustainable funding streams in order to position ourselves in a stable financial state so that we can not only continue our existing programs and services, but also create new opportunities for our families as well.

### Mission and Purpose

The mission of the Down Syndrome Association of Greater Toledo is to empower all individuals with Down syndrome to achieve their goals and reach their fullest potential by providing support, education and advocacy not only for the individual, but also their families and communities. The Down Syndrome Association of Greater Toledo envisions a community where all individuals with Down syndrome are accepted, included, and given limitless opportunities to pursue their dreams as respected members of society.

We exist for the purpose of providing a wide-range of support throughout all stages of life to our nearly 400 families residing in 17 counties throughout Northwest Ohio and six counties in Southern Michigan.



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### Accomplishments to Date

A highlight of the Down Syndrome Association of Greater Toledo's program and support accomplishments in 2016 and 2017 include: began The Learning Program Toledo, a research-based program focusing on developing math and literary skills for the child and empowering parents to be educators at home (serving 10 children with Down syndrome, and a total of 14 families); experienced a record-setting Toledo Buddy Walk program hosted at Fifth Third Field in Downtown Toledo for the first time in the event's 15 year history, with over 1,100 people in attendance; currently has a 25-year-old self-advocate with Down syndrome on Board of Directors who has held the director position for over four years; began DSAGT Community Groups to improve serving families in outlying counties; and further developed the DSAGT Young Leaders Committee, comprised of eight dedicated, passionate college-aged students who are volunteers and advocates for our cause.

### Current Programs and Services

The Down Syndrome Association of Greater Toledo aims to provide comprehensive support through programs and services from as early as a mother's prenatal diagnosis of Down syndrome, to assisting with the aging process of a person with Down syndrome. Such programs and services include:

- Life Stages Programming and Services
  - Medical and New Parent Outreach
    - Packets and training provided for medical professionals
    - Packets and personalized connection for new parents of babies with Down syndrome, including the V.I.P. (Visiting Infants and Parents) Program and mentoring



## **BACKGROUND CONTINUED p3**

### Programs and Services Continued

- Early Childhood
  - First Steps Baby and Toddler Education and Play Group
  - The Learning Program
  - Smart Start Kindergarten Preparation Program
- School Age
  - Connection to inclusion and school advocate consultants and resources
  - Multi-sports program
- Teen/Adult
  - Life skills workshops: cooking/baking, art and music, relationships and sexuality
  - Social dances: Valentine's Dance, Spring/Summer Dance, Halloween Dance
  - Advocates in Action volunteering
- Aging
  - Connection to healthy aging resources; currently developing a parent/caregiver support group
- Family/All Ages/Greater Community
  - Social gatherings such as: Outing at the Toledo Walleye, Spring Party and Egg Hunt, Summer Pool Party, Outing at the Toledo Mud Hens, Fall Festival at Fleitz Pumpkin Farm, and Holiday Party.
  - Scholarships for camp, recreational or therapeutic activities
  - Lending Library resources such as books, DVDs, CDs, kits and equipment
  - Inclusion and awareness training opportunities for schools and businesses

