Annual Report
2021
As the pandemic continued into 2021, the losses, needs, and impact on individuals with Down syndrome increased. Individuals with Down syndrome experienced loss in many areas of their lives including school, employment, and social connections. The needs for families increased as well, and families shared with us things like, “Mark was not the same...he struggled to understand why he didn’t do anything anymore and how to occupy his time.” As the pandemic continued, so did DSAGR. We persisted in educating, empowering, and engaging individuals and families. Services were provided virtually and, when it was safe to do so, in person. We hosted the Summer Employment Academy in person again. We worked to restore employment opportunities for individuals with Down syndrome in the community by demonstrating how businesses can work with job coaches to support employment. In a time when more people had “we’re hiring!” signs out than ever before, we were advocates about the skills individuals with Down syndrome have to offer.

As the year continued, new stories emerged, stories of hope, restoration, and wholeness. Families who experienced the loss of employment now called and shared, “Kelly got a job again,” and “eighteen months later Mark has finally returned to the workforce...He is so excited he often gets ready to go to work hours in advance.” Parents shared that the individuals who were once “a shell of themselves” were now “thriving” and “so happy to be working” again. 2021 was a year of amazing impact with many individuals with Down syndrome and their families! Yet, there are still more families to reach and more work to do to reach our vision for a community in which all individuals with Down syndrome are fully included and valued members. Thanks to the generosity and giving of our many donors, businesses, board members, and volunteers, onward we go into 2022!

Jennifer Case, LCSW, Executive Director
Mark Boone, President

A Special Note from Terri Lancaster, former Executive Director:
In 2021 I concluded my 8th year as Executive Director and I’m very thankful to have served our Down syndrome community, alongside the amazing staff and Board of Directors. During my tenure we experienced enormous growth and have changed the way individuals with Down syndrome are educated, employed and included in our community. DSAGR is well positioned to move into its next phase of growth with the development of a robust multi-year strategic plan, committed community partners, and donors who value how we always have our mission at the forefront of everything we do. I have every confidence that the leadership team and staff will continue to grow, diversify and provide the most effective programs and services that meet the unique needs of our families. It’s been an honor and joy for my family and I to be part of such a great organization for over 25 years. We look forward to continuing to support the DSAGR as volunteers and wish you all the best.

Mission Statement
To benefit the lives of individuals with Down syndrome and their families through individual and family support, education, community awareness and advocacy.

Vision
We envision a community in which individuals with Down syndrome are fully included and valued members.
WHAT IS DOWN SYNDROME?

Down syndrome is the most common genetic condition, yet its cause is still unknown. Individuals with Down syndrome have three copies of the 21st chromosome. While there are some common characteristics and physical traits associated with Down syndrome, each individual with Down syndrome is unique. The additional genetic material impacts an individual’s course of development.

- People with Down syndrome have an increased risk for certain medical conditions, including congenital heart defects, respiratory problems, hearing impairments and Alzheimer’s disease.
- Down syndrome is the leading cause of intellectual and developmental delays, which are typically mild to moderate. More importantly, each individual also has many strengths and talents to be celebrated.
- Life expectancy for people with Down syndrome has increased dramatically in recent decades, from 25 in 1983 to 60 today.

Down syndrome in the U.S.

14 per 10,000 live births annually. 6,000 babies with Down syndrome are born annually.

Down syndrome in Virginia

In Virginia, approximately 123 babies are born with Down syndrome annually.
Jessica, a DSAGR member and mother to Everett, who has Down syndrome and is hearing impaired, accessed DSAGR’s IEP support in 2021. Jessica shared with DSAGR staff that a month before school began (and without an IEP meeting), she was informed that Everett would not be allowed to attend his neighborhood school alongside his peers. Jessica said, “After many tears, I got to work committed to changing the outcome for both our sons. One of the most important things I did was pick up the phone and get connected with Kim Owens, Education Director at DSAGR. Her knowledge coupled with her passion for inclusion gave me the courage and connections to advocate for what I knew to be best for Everett and our family. I will forever be grateful that the DSAGR, and their connections, stood beside us; because of the actions of many, Everett is fully included and thriving in his neighborhood school. We hear consistently that he is a ‘beloved member of his classroom community,’ and is meeting benchmarks in both language arts and math!”  - Jessica, mother to Everett

Hope has done the Summer Employment Academy over the course of several summers and we now prioritize it for her summer plans. It is invaluable to experience different locations for work, and to discuss her feelings about it afterwards, as we consider her first real job. Kim Owens, Education Director, and Cassie DiFrango, Teacher, do an amazing job organizing the sites with community partners who truly understand what a valuable workforce we have in our community. The best part, though, is the pride in Hope's eyes as she shares her workday with us. - Jill, mother to Hope
Empowering our Community

**Empowerment through Connection**

“Two weeks after David was born, we received his Down syndrome diagnosis. Having a lot of questions and even more anxiety, I contacted the DADS group at DSAGR. That very same day, another Dad contacted me, and in the process shared his own positive experience of parenting a child with Down syndrome. He encouraged me to attend the next DADS meet-up, and I’ve been involved ever since. The DADS group is friendly, inclusive, and incredibly knowledgeable, with years of experience and advice that’s always willingly shared.” *Billy, father to David*

**Empowerment through Skill Development**

During The Fun4Life Lunch Club students joined in a Zoom call to make a variety of foods. One parent, Emily, says “This was one of the only zoom classes that my son attended enthusiastically every week. He learned about virtual participation and following directions on a zoom call. The social aspects were wonderful...Mary Margaret [Family Care Coordinator for DSAGR] worked magic at getting the participants to tune into each other and have conversations, as well as following instructions for cooking some healthy and delicious dishes. It was a real self-esteem and social boost.” *Emily, mother to Max*

**Empowerment through Employment**

During the pandemic Kelly lost both of her jobs. Lucy shared, “we took advantage of the unexpected free time by developing Kelly’s skills in the kitchen and around the house, indoors and out. Kelly continued her childcare training online so she would be ready when called back to work. The DSAGR network and its place in the broader Richmond area – along with Kelly’s experience and desire to work with children – were integral to Kelly’s re-employment. Kelly started two jobs working with children in January 2022. She is thrilled to be working again and to be working with children.” *Lucy, mother to Kelly*

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**Programs**
- Dads Night Out
- Moms Night Out
- Splash Day
- Williamsburg BBQ
- Miniature Golf
- Picnics
- Tazikis Dinner Out
- Potlucks
- Park and Play
- Trunk or Treat
- Trail Walk & Scavenger Hunt
- Ornament Decorating
- Annual Holiday Party
- Williamsburg Holiday Party
- Charlottesville Holiday Party
- Step Up Singers
- Winter Games (virtual)
- Hands Up Meet and Greet (virtual)
- Lunch Club 8 sessions (virtual)
- Valentine's Memory (virtual)
- Spring Games Jeopardy, Word Scramble, Cinco de Mayo Bingo, I Spy (virtual)
- Preschool Art & Play (virtual)

**Data**
- 12 Moms’ Gatherings (Virtual & In-person)
- 3 Dads’ Gatherings (Virtual & In-person)
- 14 Kids’ social group events (Virtual & In-person)
- 15 Adult social group events (Virtual & In-person)
- 11 Family Programs

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Annual Report | 2021
Engaging our Community

Welcoming Livie

*Thoughts from mom, Jessie, about our *New Parent Series* for parents during the first year of life*

Jessie, a new mom, shares about the impact of the Learn to Grow program. She said, “I loved this class! I found it helpful in multiple ways. Each week was a different topic. PT, OT, eye and ear exams, feeding, speech, what to expect after you age out of EI, etc. I took notes and still refer to them each time we visit the doctor. For example, I had no idea there was a certain type of dilated eye drops that cannot be given to a person with DS. And I make sure each time we visit the eye doctor that they know this information... Livie was a 2020 baby, and more than the 1st year of her life was spent in hospitals and then in quarantine. It was lonely. This class gave me a chance to virtually connect with other parents of kiddos the same age having similar experiences. I am forever thankful for the knowledge I gained through this series.”

Welcoming All

*Reflections from Mi Familia volunteers*

Maria and Ynma, mothers of children with Down syndrome, volunteer by providing Spanish interpretation services. Maria shared that she feels “if you have a good network of parents, you can get answers immediately... I wanted to help other parents. You’ll be surprised how many new parents are going through the same situation.” Ynma Tejada says, “for me, being a very joyful family ambassador, I know that I may have the opportunity to share and help many parents with my experiences in one way or another since I have a girl with Down syndrome... Our children need much of us and we must be the ones who teach and direct them in their lives to become independent and strong. More than that, just seeing that smile that fills the soul and makes us continue.” Volunteers like Maria and Ynma make what we do at DSAGR possible.

2021 Highlights

- Provided $15,698 in Scholarships to 37 individuals with Down syndrome
- Served 651 individuals with Down syndrome and their families
- Provided 116 Social & Educational Opportunities with 1308 attendees participating
- 3 Holiday Celebrations and Santa Visits for 436 families across VA (398 in RVA)
- Launched the 1st Learn to Grow 8-Week Class covering a variety of early childhood development topics
- Held the 1st Virtual Education Conference - 136 attendees from 30 school districts across Virginia and 14 states joining together for 3 sessions of learning, networking, and inspiration
- New partnership with Longwood University, Beyond Boundaries, Mike King Radio, and Henrico County
**FINANCIAL DATA & COMMUNITY COLLABORATORS**

**Community Partners**
- ARC of Northern Virginia
- ARC of Virginia
- Beyond Boundaries
- Department of Aging and Rehabilitative Service
- Dominion Energy
- Henrico County
- Home Care Delivered
- Knights of Columbus
- Longwood University
- Mike King Radio Show
- Partnership for People with Disabilities
- Parent Educational Advocacy Training Center
- Penn Station East Coast Subs
- T/TAC at VCU
- VA Department of Education
- VCU Department of Occupational Therapy
- VCU Rehabilitation Research and Training Center
- VCU School of Dentistry
- VCU School of Medicine
- VCU School of Physical Therapy

**National Partnerships**
- Down Syndrome Affiliates in Action
- Global Down Syndrome Foundation
- National Down Syndrome Congress
- National Down Syndrome Society

**Strategic Priorities in 2022 & Beyond**
- Grow community partnerships and collaborations
- Deepen programs and services
- Focus on diversity, equity, and inclusion
- Rename to reflect expanded service area
- Expand First Call Program
- Expand Adult Programming

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**SUMMARY**

2021 Total Revenue is **$491,836**, which includes **$41,825** of in-kind donations. DSAGR has **$439,685** in cash funds and investments.

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**2021 REVENUES**

- Fundraisers (42%)
- Sponsors (21%)
- Programs (2%)
- Other (1%)
- In-Kind (9%)
- Grants (8%)

**2021 EXPENSES**

- Fundraising (21%)
- Operations (10%)
- Programs (69%)

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Annual Report | 2021
# SPONSORS & SUPPORTERS

## Presenting ($10,000+)
- Atlantic Union Bank
- County of Henrico

## Partner ($5,000 - $9,999)
- John Ledder Memorial Golf Tournament
- Mix 98.1
- PeaTc

## Step Up ($2,500 - $4,999)
- Dollar General Literacy Foundation
- Fox Richmond
- Home Care Delivered

## Team ($1,000 - $2,499)
- Cotivi Cares
- David Tiller & Associates
- Entwistle Company
- Greater Richmond CiviTAN Club
- Keiter CPA
- Main Street Homes
- Manchester Moose Lodge #699
- Miller & Associates
- National Down Syndrome Society

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## FUNDRAISERS [ INDIVIDUALS ]

### Distinguished ($7,500)
- Angie Evans
- Bob & Terri Lancaster
- Bobby & Debbie Abernathy
- Tom & Kris Haskins

### Champion ($5,000 - $7,499)
- Ken & Cynthia Lantz
- Greg & Mara Weed

### Superstar ($2,500 - $4,999)
- Kevin & Amy Hughes
- Mike & Bobbi Jones
- John & Priscilla Nemetz
- David & Jamie Nicholls
- Aundrea Smith
- Aaron Steelman & Tracy Robinson

### Premier ($1,000 - $2,499)
- Justin & Krisy Noel
- William & Elizabeth Oldaker
- Paul & Michelle Pasowicz
- Stephen & Andrea Peeks
- Kacie Privitera
- Bob & Kathleen Redmond
- Casey & Allison Seabolt
- Vince & Kersa Sheehan
- Al & Krista Stenger
- Barbara Stewart
- Chris & Julie Waskey
- Joshua Wilson
- Peggy Wingo

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