



**Broward
Gold Coast
Down Syndrome
Organization**

UPDATES & NEWS

CALENDAR OF EVENTS

- Broward ESE Advisory Monthly General Meeting
Wednesday, April 20th at 6:30PM
Boyd H. Anderson High School
- BGCD SO Member Event - New Family Breakfast
Date, time and location - TBA
- BGCD SO Member Event - Special Needs
Financial Planning
Wednesday, April 27th 6:30PM-8:30PM
Hampton Inn Plantation
- Down Syndrome Committee General Meeting
Thursday, April 28th at 6PM - Virtual
- BGCD SO Member Event - Children's Social
(up to 12 years old)
Mother's Day Flower Arrangements
Sunday, May 1st, time and location - TBA
- BGCD SO Member Event - Teen & Young Adult
Social (13+ years old)
Mother's Day Celebration - Pizza & Painting
Friday, May 6th, time and location - TBA
- BGCD SO Member Event - Family Fun Picnic
(All ages)
Saturday, May 14th
Plantation Heritage Park
- Broward ESE Advisory Monthly General Meeting
Wednesday, May 18th at 6:30PM
Location - TBA
- Family Café Disability Conference - In Person
Friday-Sunday, May 27th-29th
Hyatt Orlando
- BGCD SO Member Event - The Summer
Celebration Dance
Sunday, June 5th, 12PM-3PM
Location - TBA
- Early Release Day/Last Day of School for Broward
County Public Schools
Thursday, June 9th

World Down Syndrome Day (see inside story, p4)



Greetings from Executive Director Bach Todaro:

Happy spring! I hope everyone had a wonderful spring break with your loved ones.

- Broward Gold Coast had a great turnout for our World Down Syndrome Day (WSDS) Celebration at the bowling event along with our fundraiser. It was a happy day reconnecting with our friends and meeting some new families all while raising awareness, acceptance and friendship throughout the world. We could not have done it without the help from our board members, staff, volunteers, community partners, and most importantly, our members for all the help with our WSDS fundraiser. We truly appreciate it!
- Make sure to look at the calendar for our upcoming events for members.
- If you haven't renewed your BGCD SO membership for 2022, please do so at bgcdownsyntax.org/membership
- Save the Date for our annual Step Up 4 Down Syndrome 2022 Walk: Saturday, October 1, 2022.

Regards,

Bach Todaro, Executive Director

Family Spotlight: The Johnson Family

After 3 years of marriage, we decided to start a family. Getting pregnant was not easy, as I was already 40 years old. After months of trying, I finally got pregnant and gave birth to a baby boy, who is now almost 6 years old. We decided that it would be good to give our son a sibling to grow up with, in addition to my husband's 14 year old daughter as it was such a joy for him when she spent time with us. I ended up having a miscarriage with my second baby at 10 weeks of gestation, and that was a heartbreaking experience, but we were able to pull through that with help of our family and our faith. After years of trying, I finally became pregnant again at 44. Due to my age, I was given a blood test that eventually revealed there was a 98% chance that our baby would have Down syndrome. The news was devastating to hear as we understood that this meant our baby would have health and developmental challenges. We cried every day for months and became obsessed with reading about the condition. Things only got worse after I was admitted to the hospital at 20 weeks and was told I would remain there until I gave birth due to concerns with my placenta not providing enough nutrients to the baby and his heart rate taking dips. Being hospitalized during COVID was yet another difficult challenge as I could not receive any visits. At times, even being surrounded by medical staff constantly, it felt very lonely and sad. Having access to technology, such as video chatting, was my lifeline. Being able to speak and see my family on video was a priceless relief that helped me overcome the overwhelming emotional struggle. Though we had decided to continue the pregnancy, at times I wondered if I secretly wanted to miscarry. Eventually, I got my answer. The day came where the nurse came in because the 24 hour baby monitor moved out of place and when she tried adjusting it, as they did many times before, this time was different. I saw panic in her eyes. She pressed a button, and suddenly there were about 15 other people in the room and I was given a mask with oxygen. The nurse was frantically saying to her peers "I've been looking for the baby's heartbeat and I can't find it for the past few minutes!" At that moment, I felt like they probably wouldn't have found my heartbeat either because my own heart stopped when I heard that. Different nurses and doctors tried to locate my baby's heartbeat and couldn't find it. After several minutes that seemed like an eternity they finally found his heartbeat. After I was reassured the baby was still alive and his heart was beating fine, it's like I finally started breathing again. I was crying uncontrollably out of relief and appreciation to Jehovah God because my baby was still alive. That's when I knew that what I wanted and battled with was wishing I could "miscarry" the extra chromosome and



not my baby. I wished I could do something to avoid my baby from being born with anything that could potentially make his life harder and threaten his health. Three days later, at 28 weeks now, his heart rate was dropping and it kept dropping constantly. I was then rushed to the O.R. for an emergency C-section. Nikhil was born on July 30th 2020 at 1 pound 15 ounces.

Nikhil was taken straight to the NICU. The first few months were the most difficult. I couldn't hold him for about 2 weeks due to his delicate condition, so the bonding period was delayed. Additionally, since he was premature, the typical features that are common in a person with Down syndrome were not so obviously visible; however, some of the concerns that are common were there, such as low muscle tone and holes in his heart. Nikhil remained in the NICU for 4 months, which felt like 40 years, but thankfully his health began to improve and we were finally able to bring him home.

After hearing the confirmation that he in fact does have Down syndrome, and already seeing the health challenges, as there were discussions about possible need for heart surgery and anticipated need for a blood transfusion, we became overwhelmed with worries and anxiety for his future. Eventually, we realized that, though we were in a rollercoaster of emotions, it is needed, and healthy to "mourn" our "loss", the loss of our expectations of a healthy baby, in order to accept our new reality, the changes we would now face and the challenges up ahead. Through having open conversations as his parents, we also realized that most of the anxieties we had, which kept us up at night, were concerns about the future. We then became determined not to continue that path because it was robbing us from the now and so we took life one day at a time instead. That made a huge difference after almost a year of "trying to predict and figure out his future". Today, we feel better equipped to handle the challenges. Nikhil will turn 2 at the end of July and though he's been hospitalized several times and gone through several surgeries, he's resilient and a fighter. He is the source of our strength, along with our faith, family and close friends. Despite the struggles, Nikhil has filled our lives with joy and he's already given us more than we have given him. He's opened up the doors for us to become better parents, better people, stronger people and more aware, accepting and sensitive to not just people with disabilities, but of their families as well. A simple smile from him transmits so much love and innocence, that you can't help but to love him. Nikhil is special, not because of his special needs but because HE alone is special.

BGCDSO Member Events

Children's Social Group Bluefoot Pirate Adventure

Thank you, Patricia Garland for organizing the event for our Children's Social. We all had a fun time!

*This event is for 2022 Broward Gold Coast members/children's social group 12 years and under.

Join us for

Friday, March 18th
Meet at 3:30pm
 801 Seabreeze Blvd
 Dock I-909
 Fort Lauderdale 33316
 Kindly RSVP to Patricia Garland by 3/11/22 to speeoy88acg@aol.com with names and ages of kids and adults.





FAMILY MOVIE NIGHT
 FEATURED MOVIE:
Sing 2

Sponsored by DB Cinemas
 3984 W. Hillsboro Blvd. Deerfield Beach, FL 33442

MARCH 19 | **FREE ADMISSION for Entire Family**

*Concessions NOT included. Meet at theater between 4:30-5:00pm. Movie starts promptly at 5:00pm.
 RSVP to events@bgodownsyndrome.org by Wednesday, March 16th.




Family Movie Night

Thank you DB Cinemas for sponsoring this event for our families.

World Down Syndrome Day Bowling and Fundraiser

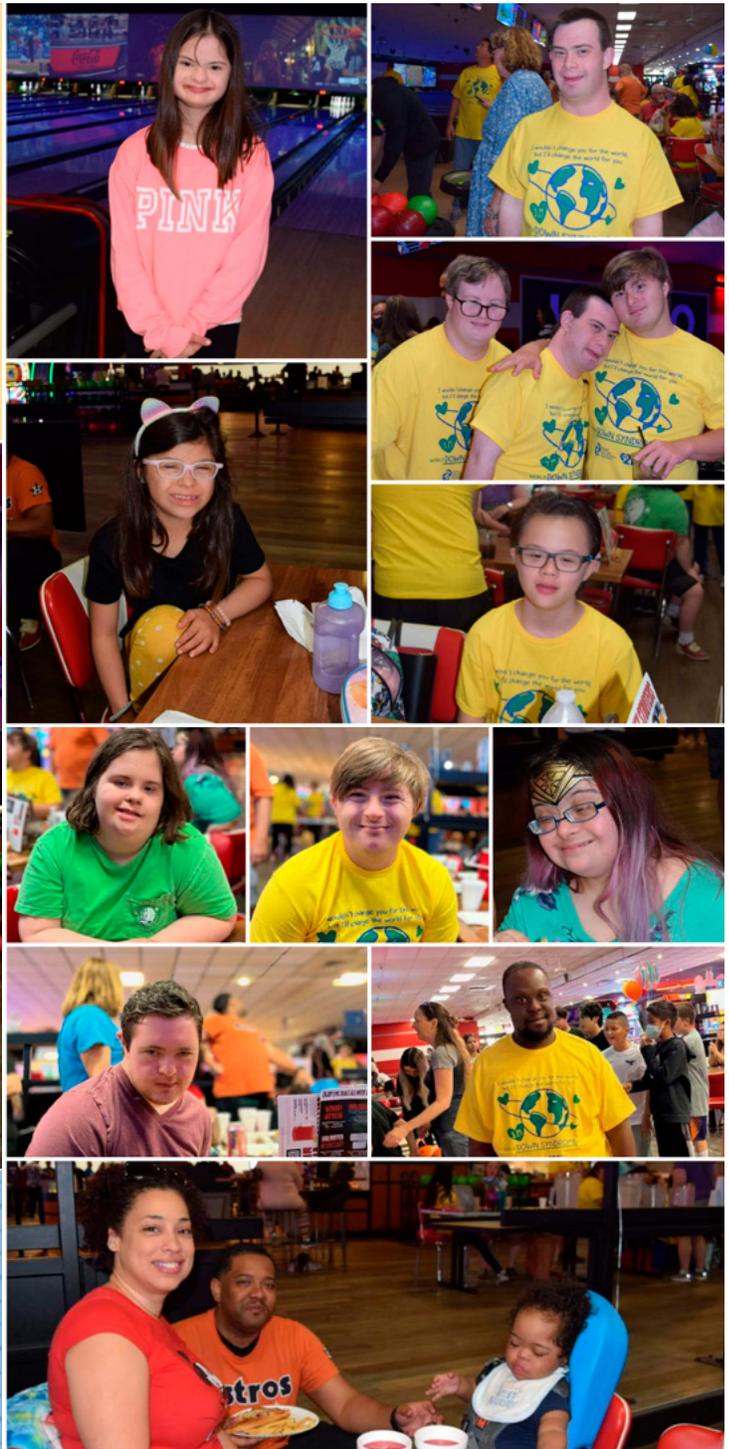
Broward Gold Coast celebrated our loved ones with Down syndrome.

Broward Gold Coast invites you to... **STRIKE UP FUN** **March 20 2022** 1:00-3:00pm
Sawgrass Lanes
8501 N University Dr.
Tamarac, FL 33321
(954) 722-2700

In Celebration of World Down Syndrome Day!

This event covers individual with DS (toddlers, teens and young adults) and one parent only. Siblings are welcome to join for \$25 extra which includes pizza, chicken tenders, soda, 2 hours of bowling and \$7 Arcade card.

*Make sure your membership with Broward Gold Coast for 2022 is up to date before you RSVP! Please RSVP to MaryBeth at events@bgcdownsyrndrome.org by Wednesday, March 16th, 2022.



WORLD DOWN SYNDROME DAY RAFFLE

\$5 a chance

Ticket Sales 3/1—3/19/2022 via link below
<https://bgcdownsyrndrome.org/donate-volunteer/>

Drawing 3/20/2022-Video posted on FB Page

1) \$348 Cole Haan Large Tote
Style is Benson
Color—Black/Ivory
Approx. 11" L x 8" H x 5" W

2) \$100 Brighton Jewelry
Petite Contempo Ice—Reversible
Pendant & Earrings, Length 16"-19" Adjustable, 3/4" Pendant Drop, Swarovski Crystals

3) \$50 Darden Gift Card
Olive Garden/Longhorn/
Cheddars/Yard House/
Bahama Breeze/Seasons52

*** 3 WINNERS ***
All proceeds donated to:

Broward Gold Coast Down Syndrome Organization

Our Gratitude
Walmart 
Save money. Live better.

Thank you, Walmart Store #1349 in Sunrise for your generous donation through the Walmart Community Grant Program.
We appreciate Walmart's support of the Broward Gold Coast Down Syndrome Organization over the years.

Deliver the Dream Down Syndrome Family Retreat

Some of our members had a fabulous time at the Down Syndrome Family Retreat weekend.



THE FAMILIES HAD AN INCREDIBLE TIME

Down Syndrome Family Retreat March 11-13, 2022

From Deliver the Dream



"Deliver the Dream has been around since 2002 providing therapeutic programs to families facing a serious illness, crisis or disability. Our programs restore hope, strengthen relationships and change perspectives to provide inspiration for the future."

Rebecca Haheesy - Community Relations Manager
rebecca.haheesy@deliverthedream.org • 954-564-3512
www.deliverthedream.org



"We had the most amazing experience at the retreat. The volunteers were absolutely fantastic and we could feel the compassion and love that they have for what they do. It made such an impact on our family and every other family there. All the activities were designed to help with mindfulness and each had a meaningful purpose. We all truly needed this retreat, and it filled our hearts with beautiful memories that will remain."

Marly Magalhaes

Community Resources/Events



BE BEAUTIFUL BE YOURSELF™ FASHION SHOW

MENU

2022 MODEL AUDITIONS

Be Beautiful Be Yourself Fashion Show Model Auditions

Registration Opens Wednesday, April 6, 2022
VIRTUAL Model Auditions on Friday, April 29, 2022

Registration for the 2022 Be Beautiful Be Yourself Fashion Show Model Auditions will go live on this webpage on Wednesday, April 6, 2022 at 12:00pm MT.

GLOBAL invites up to 50 individuals with Down syndrome ages 7 & older who have not previously walked in the Fashion Show (but may have previously tried out) to

ABLE United
Sponsored ·

Start saving with ABLE United, Florida's only disability savings program, and get \$50 in your account.

Get \$50

It pays to save for a rainy day.

DSC2U
Down Syndrome Clinic to You

Login EN

Caregivers Providers Organizations Ins

A personalized care plan

We're here to help you. We know it may not be easy to get expert medical care for

MASSACHUSETTS GENERAL HOSPITAL
Harvard Medical School
HARVARD MEDICAL SCHOOL TEACHING HOSPITAL

ETC EXCEPTIONAL THEATER COMPANY PRESENTS

SOMETHING NEW AN ETC MUSICAL

19th Annual Benefit Show
A drive-in event | April 23, 2022

\$25 per ticket on Eventbrite

5741 S Flamingo Rd,
Southwest Ranches, FL 33330

PURCHASE YOUR TICKET NOW

YOUNG ADULT CIRCLE

YOUNG ADULT VOLUNTEERS AND YOUNG ADULTS WITH SPECIAL NEEDS

come together twice monthly to form a social group in a non-judgemental and accepting environment.

TWO THURSDAYS A MONTH

1302 East Las Olas Blvd.
Fort Lauderdale, FL 33301

Office@FriendshipFL.org
Register at FriendshipFL.org

THE GROUP EXPERIENCES AN ARRAY OF EXCITING ACTIVITIES SUCH AS karaoke, unique art projects, baking, dance Olympic day, movie night and more!

A Division of Chabad Lubavitch of FLL



Presents

Special Needs Financial Planning Covering Legal Guardianship, Special Needs Trust Accounts and ABLE Accounts.

Stephanie L. Schneider is a Board Certified Elder Law Attorney who guides individuals and families in the areas of guardianship, special needs planning, estate planning, probate and government benefits. Her guest speaker is Alan Linker, Senior Vice President/Investments with Stifel Financial, who focuses on Special Needs Children and Adults.

WEDNESDAY, APRIL 27TH AT 6:30PM-8:30PM

Hampton Inn Plantation

7801 SW 6th Street, Plantation, FL 33324

RSVP by April 24th to events@bgcdownsyrndrome.org with "Financial Planning" in heading, along with number of participants.

Broward Gold Coast Down Syndrome Organization

9900 West Sample Road, Suite 339
Coral Springs, FL 33065
954-825-0400

email: director@bgcdownsyrndrome.org

www.bgcdownsyrndrome.org

<https://www.facebook.com/groups/BGCDSO>

Broward Gold Coast Down Syndrome Organization is a family support and resource organization dedicated to serving families who have an individual with Down syndrome. Our mission is to improve the lives of people with Down syndrome and their families by providing support, information, education, and advocacy, thus enabling each individual to reach his or her full potential.

CALENDARIO DE EVENTOS

- Reunión General Mensual del Comité de ESE de Broward**
Miércoles, Abril 20 a las 6:30 pm en el Boyd H. Anderson High School
- Evento para miembros de BGCDSO - Desayuno para Familias Nuevas**
Fecha, Hora y lugar por confirmar
- Evento para miembros de BGCDSO - Planeación Financiera para Necesidades Especiales**
Miércoles, Abril 27 6:30 pm en el Hampton Inn Plantation
- Reunión General del Comité de Síndrome de Down**
Jueves, Abril 28 6:00 pm – Virtual
- Evento para miembros de BGCDSO - Evento Social para niños (hasta 12 años)**
Arreglos de Flores para el Día de Las Madres
Domingo, Mayo 1, hora y lugar por confirmar
- Evento para miembros de BGCDSO - Evento Social para Adolescentes y Jóvenes Adultos (mayores de 13 años)**
Celebración del Día de las Madres – Pizza y Pinturas
Viernes, Mayo 6, hora y lugar por confirmar
- Evento para miembros de BGCDSO - Picnic Familiar (todas las edades)**
Sábado, Mayo 14 en el Parque Plantation Heritage
- Reunión General Mensual del Comité de ESE de Broward**
Miércoles, Mayo 18 6:30 pm. Lugar por confirmar
- Conferencia Family Café - en Persona**
De Viernes a Domingo, Mayo 27 al 29. Hyatt Orlando
- Evento para miembros de BGCDSO - Baile de Celebración del Verano**
Domingo, Junio 5 de 12 pm a 3 pm. Lugar por confirmar
- Ultimo día de Escuela en el Condado de Broward / Salida Temprano**
Jueves, Junio 9

Congratulations to Zofia Perez!

"God arranges everything for us so that we need have no more fear or trouble and may be quite sure that all things will come right in the end." - Johanna Spyri, Heidi



Zofia, we are more resilient as a community because of your contributions:

- A gifted ENTREPRENEUR who designs WAND-erful Sensory Wands so we can #sharehappy
- A passionate INFLUENCER who educates about sensory challenges so can achieve wellness
- An awarded ARTIST who creates transcendent art so we can stretch our imaginations
- A compassionate HELPER who discerns unspoken needs so we can respond to others more hospitably
- A loyal FRIEND who loves without expectations so we more fully comprehend God's unconditional love

WE ARE SO PROUD OF YOU, LADY ZAP! YOU MAKE OUR HEARTS RACING!! HAPPY SENIOR YEAR!



The Erin's World frame line, by Specs4us improves the sight and quality of life for individuals by providing a custom frame, fit for their unique needs!



Specially formatted to fit individuals with low bridges

Are you tired of glasses that are uncomfortable? Too big? Keep slipping?

Erin's World frames are custom designed with extra wide frame fronts, and a lowered bridge. Temples are either 180° spring hinges or TR90.



Before & after Specs4us frames!



9900 West Sample Road • Suite 339 • Coral Springs, FL 33065
954.825.0400 • bgcdownsyntax.org

Any Questions?

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- Bach Todaro, Executive Director info@bgcdownsyntax.org
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- MaryBeth Gebbia, Editor admin@bgcdownsyntax.org
- Carolina Echeverry, Spanish Translator

Broward Gold Coast Down Syndrome Organization • Statement of Policy and Disclaimer

This newsletter reports items of interest relating to Down syndrome and provides a forum for others. The Broward Gold Coast Down Syndrome Organization (BGCDSO) does not promote or recommend any therapy, treatment, etc. BGCDSO will not espouse any particular political or religious view. Individuals or organizations referred to are not necessarily endorsed by this publication or its editor. We wish to bring together those interested in Down syndrome and attempt to create an optimistic outlook and attitude. The editor reserves the right to make corrections as are appropriate and in accord with established editorial practice in material submitted for publication. Please submit articles to info@bgcdownsyntax.org.