Greetings from Executive Director Bach Todaro

On behalf of the Board of Directors, staff and myself, we wish you Merry Christmas and a Prosperous New Year!

Here are a few important reminders and updates:

Expectant/New Parent: If you are expecting or a new parent of a baby with Down syndrome, congratulations! Contact us at www.bgcdownsyndrome.org for your New Parent package. We have “Babies with Down syndrome” books in English and Spanish, along with medical resources waiting for your family. You don’t have to sail this journey alone; we are here to help.

Med Waiver: If your child with Down syndrome is 3 years old or older and is not on the Medicaid Waiver, make sure to apply for his/her Medicaid Waiver soon as possible, as there is a long wait list at the Agency of Persons with Disabilities (APD). The Florida Medicaid waiver provides services to those with intellectual disabilities. Many people who qualify are not even aware of eligibility. The waiver is applicable to all ages. Go to www.apd.myflorida.com for more details and to apply.

Guardianship: By law, parents of an adult child with special needs can no longer make medical or financial decisions for them once they turned 18 years old. Therefore, preparing for their transition is crucial. You can contact Stephanie Schneider at www.fl-elderlaw.com for more details.

Social Security: If your son/daughter is 18 years old, they are eligible for Supplemental Security Income (SSI) and Social Security Disability Insurance (SSDI). These are federal programs that provide assistance to eligible children and adults with disabilities. www.socialsecurityoffices.info/co/fl-broward

Broward Gold Coast Membership: Our membership for 2022 will be available soon for your renewal at www.bgcdownsyndrome.org. Stay tuned for our email of any changes in the membership. As always, your membership has to be current before you RSVP to any social events, or request to be eligible for our scholarship help.

Regards,
Bach Todaro, Executive Director
We had an Amazing day at the Step Up 4 Down Syndrome Walk & 5K Run on Sunday, October 10th! We had 700 people participate in our Walk & 5K Run. Thirty-three teams were present to participate and we loved seeing the specialized team masks, shirts and all the “I AM” signs that filled the park! The weather was fantastic, just a perfect day! There was music and laughter heard throughout our event!

We are grateful for the support of our walkers and runners in attendance, but no less grateful to our friends and family who donated and the local businesses who sponsored this wonderful event! This year with your support the Broward Gold Coast Down Syndrome Organization (BGCDSO), raised $51,111 of our $120,000 goal. Donations will be accepted until December 31, 2021 at www.stepup4downsyndrome.com. You can check out our Sponsors and Team pages at the above website as well.

Our Top 10 Fundraising Teams this year:

- Biyanca’s Friends: $7,317.00
- Amazing Grace 2021: $3,350.00
- Chad’s Buddies: $3,145.00
- Team Etienne & Amelie 2021: $2,900.00
- Team Coby Chesal: $1,862.18
- Darren’s Dawgs: $1,340.00
- Cameron’s Crew 2021: $1,260.00
- Zara & Friends: $870.00
- Team Preston: $851.00
- Zara Montague: $790.00

Our Top 5 Teams with the Most Participants:

- Team Preston: 61
- T-UNIT: 40
- Chad’s Buddies: 39
- Team Jesus: 25
- Amazing Grace 2021: 24

Thank you again for supporting our Step Up 4 Down Syndrome Walk & 5K Run, and the Broward Gold Coast Down Syndrome Organization. We pledge to continue walking for as long as it takes to ensure that people with Down syndrome are fully accepted and included. We are grateful that you support our steps along the way!
This is David and his stepmom, Kim. They were blessed to become family almost 3 years ago. David has taught Kim a lot about Down syndrome and they enjoy exploring and learning together. David is almost always happy and loves to make EVERYONE smile and laugh. It’s not uncommon to see David giving a stranger a hand shake or hug. Often he serenades people with songs from his favorite musicals (especially pretty girls).

Together they ride bicycles, dance, sing, swim, take walks and hikes, read, travel, go to beaches and parks, shop, paint, watch movies, bake, attend church, theatre performances, concerts, try new foods, and adore making new friends. David especially likes riding with Kim on motorcycles. David demonstrates independence too by picking out his clothes, dressing himself, taking walks, surfing YouTube, and making sandwiches all by himself. He just finished his first Special Olympics golf season and is looking forward to trying other sports.

They are so thankful God brought them together and they have each other. Kim says the best part is the many hugs and kisses David lavishes on her every day.
I am Angela Viveros. I am married to an amazing man, Alejandro, and am the mother of two sons: Daniel (15 years old) and Nicolas (12 years old). Nicolas also known as “Nico”, was the reason we joined Broward Gold Coast Down Syndrome Organization (BGCDSO).

I work in the Financial Department of a Production Company. In addition to working, taking care of my home and running from one place to another, I have been volunteering for the BGCDSO for the last year. It feels so good giving back to this amazing organization who is giving our children and families different opportunities and valuable information to succeed in these times.

I love reading, watching movies and series, and traveling, but what I really love is enjoying quality time with my family!

Congratulations to Darren De Braga, one of the Exceptional Theater Company’s 2021 Actor Heroes at the 5th Annual Heroes Gala in November 2021.

Exceptional Theater Company is an all-inclusive theater program for teens and adults with special needs. Through the power of theater our actors learn and improve important life skills that teach them to be the best versions of themselves! ETC takes pride in bringing happiness, fulfillment, independence and a love for the arts into the lives of all our actors, their families and audiences. From 12 original actors, ETC now serves over 150 which include many of our original 12. Exceptional Theater Company turned 30 this year and has remained a pillar of the South Florida special needs community. Through our theater classes that refine acting, singing and dancing we improve physical and developmental disabilities. Their programs also teach additional skills via theater games, improvisation and music that often enhances verbal skills, movement, self-confidence, and socialization. ETC classes provide a setting for inclusion, creativity, learning, building lifelong friendships and so much more.

For more information or questions about enrollment please contact our Executive Director, Daniela Roeder daniela@exceptionaltheatercompany.org.
Teen & Young Adult Event
Chocolate Candy Making Class

Welcome Back to School
Waterpark Fun
New Children and COVID-19 Updates

In December 2020, the CDC officially categorized people with Down syndrome as “high risk” for COVID-19, meaning that they have a higher likelihood of having more severe symptoms and sadly death. A few studies on COVID-19 underscore the risk to be especially acute in people with Down syndrome who are 40 years old or older, so we must remain vigilant and update our resources as available information and recommendations evolve.

Broward Gold Coast Down Syndrome Organization is proud to share the valuable, free COVID-19 & Down Syndrome Resource published by GLOBAL and the national consortium - DSMIG-USA, GLOBAL, LuMindIDSC, NDSC, NDSS, and NTG. The Resource focuses on new and updated information specific to the Delta variant, vaccines for kids aged 5-11, COVID-19 boosters, breakthroughs, mental health, ways to stay safe in schools, precautions for people with Down syndrome, and advocacy.

We strongly recommend you read through this important resource.

We applaud the national consortium of Down syndrome organizations for updating this important resource for community. Please remember we are here for you during this difficult time and do not hesitate to call or email. In the meantime, please stay healthy and be safe!
Thank you so much to Angels for Humanity for their surprise appearance and donation of 60+ presents for our kids at our annual Holiday Party. The kids were so excited and with the amazing variety of gifts brought, many had received exactly what they were wishing for! Thank you to our Angels who assisted in the gift-giving, we appreciate the kindness and generosity more than you know! And a big thanks to Gordon Garland for connecting us with this amazing organization, it truly was a wonderful surprise!
Q&A Sessions - Zoom Edition

We are thrilled to have hosted the Q&A Sessions - Zoom edition for our members:

1. Speech-Language Pathology with Melixsa Acosta, M.S., CCC-SLP
2. Physical Therapy with Jordana Faine-Siadman MSP

Any Questions?
Victoria Whitson Robinson, President victoria_2391@aol.com
Adrine McKenzie, Vice President ambroward@gmail.com
Jeanne DelVecchio, Secretary jeannedelvecchio@me.com
Nancy Smith, Treasurer info@bgcdownsyndrome.org
Bach Todaro, Executive Director l.hoddinott@att.net
Lisa Hoddinott, Creative Director admin@bgcdownsyndrome.org
MaryBeth Gebbia, Editor Carolina Echeverry, Spanish Translator

Broward Gold Coast Down Syndrome Organization
9900 West Sample Road • Suite 339 • Coral Springs, FL 33065
954.825.0400 • bgcdownsyndrome.org

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 (BGDCSO) does not promote or recommend any therapy, treatment, etc. BGDCSO 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@bgcdownsyndrome.org.