



Broward  
Gold Coast  
Down Syndrome  
Organization

# UPDATES & NEWS

## CALENDAR OF EVENTS

- Weston Hooters Family Night  
**Thursday, November 30th, 5pm-9pm**
- December Read Along  
**Tuesday, December 5th at 6:30pm**  
Broward Gold Coast Office
- Coffee and Conversation  
**Saturday, December 9th, 10am-12pm**  
Broward Gold Coast Office
- BGCD SO Holiday Party  
**Sunday, December 10th**  
**Member's Only Event**
- Down Syndrome Committee General Meeting  
**Thursday, December 14th, 6pm-8pm**  
Broward Gold Coast Office
- Broward ESE Advisory Monthly General Meeting  
**Wednesday, December 20th**  
Virtual
- Coffee and Conversation  
**Saturday, January 13th, 10am-12pm**  
Broward Gold Coast Office
- Broward ESE Advisory Monthly General Meeting  
**Wednesday, January 17th, 6:15pm-8:45pm**  
Plantation High School media center

## Step Up 4 Down Syndrome Walk



**Thank you to all our Sponsors, Members, Volunteers, and Staff for a fun and exciting Step Up 4 Down Syndrome Walk!** It was a hot one, but the atmosphere was full of laughter and smiles!

**We thank all of our participants: members, teams, individuals and sponsors/vendors for taking the time to make our Walk so successful!** We raised 77% of our fundraising goal! Our site will remain open for donations until 12/31/23, please help us reach our goal which helps our non-profit organization, continue to fund our Mission. [www.ds-stride.org/su4ds](http://www.ds-stride.org/su4ds)

**We cannot thank our official Volunteers enough for spending the day with us,** helping where ever they were needed, AND to our impromptu volunteers who saw a need and filled it without being asked! Our set up went smoothly, and clean up was made possible by a handful of dedicated helpers that left the park area pristine!

We hope that everyone enjoyed the day: the walk, the vendors, the entertainment and the company of each other! We thought we utilized this new area well, and had many compliments on the set-up. Once again, thank you for a Wonderful Day celebrating our families and friends with Down syndrome!

*continued on p2*

Happy  
Holidays





# THANK YOU

## Step Up 4 Down Syndrome Walk Sponsors!

# Walmart



**CRAIG ZINN**  
AUTOMOTIVE GROUP

Lexus of North Miami • Acura of Pembroke Pines  
Subaru of Pembroke Pines • Toyota of Hollywood  
Lexus of Pembroke Pines

**SUBARU OF PEMBROKE PINES**

**TOYOTA**  
OF HOLLYWOOD

**LEXUS OF NORTH MIAMI**

**LEXUS**  
OF  
PEMBROKE PINES

**Acura**  
OF  
Pembroke Pines

  
**Joe DiMaggio**  
Children's Hospital  
AT MEMORIAL

 **GMTS**  
Global Maritime Transportation Services

**BLACK DIAMOND HOUSING**

 **Tropic Supply, Inc.**  
AIR CONDITIONING  
EQUIPMENT

 **asphaltos**

**The Marion**  
Roletti  
Foundation

**EVANS**  
ROOFING

  
**R&R**  
ELECTRIC  
954.894.2900

  
**MUSEUM**  
OF DISCOVERY  
& SCIENCE  
AT FLORIDA MUSEUM OF NATURAL HISTORY



**A Special Miracle**

**ATI Electrical Supply**

**Bizzies On the Go**

**Hot Worx**

**I Can Living & Learning**

**JB Garage Door**

**Levy Jones**

**MQ Realty Group**

**Power Assemblies**

**Power Financial Credit Union**

**PNC Bank**

**Shirley Lopez, Liz & the Heart Dr.**

**Special Education Advocacy**  
**Service, LLC**

**Square Feet Contractors Inc.**

**The Media Lab**

**5 Star Vinyl Graphics & Printing**

**501st Legion Everglades**

**Alysun Joseph Salon**

**Associated Printing**  
**Productions, Inc.**

**Cheesecake Factory**

**Entertainment, Inc.**

**Exceptional Theater Company**

**Hooters**

**Koromoro Gifts**

**Lisa Hoddinott's Graphic Design**

**Maggie Design Party Planner**

**Nailed It DIY Studio Ft Lauderdale**

**Nancy Smith, CPA**

**Personal Ponies Florida**

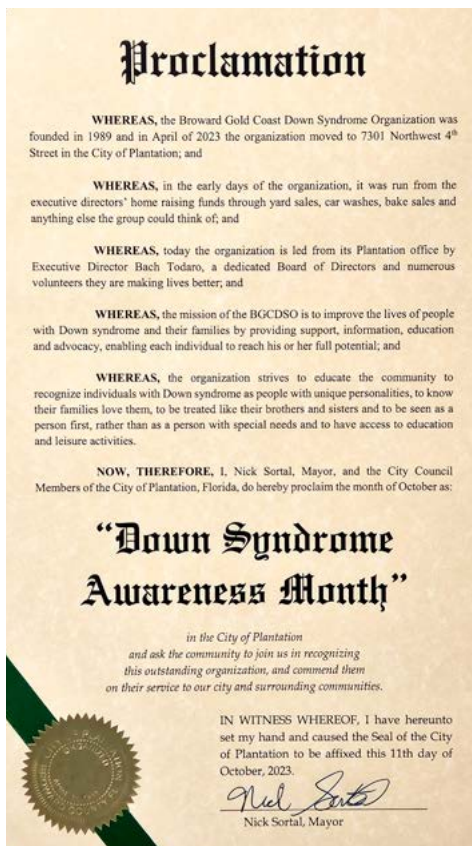
**Publix Supermarkets, Inc.**

**Starbucks**

**Sunshine Tents & Event Rentals LLC**

**Walgreens**





We had a special presentation at the Plantation City Hall for our Proclamation's "October Down Syndrome Awareness Month." Special thanks to the Mayor and the City Council Members of the City of Plantation for having us. Thank you to our members, who braved the rain and came out to celebrate this special night with us. Happy National Down Syndrome Awareness Month!

## Coffee and Conversations



**Coffee and Conversations** is a new service we started offering this year. It is an opportunity for parents to get together the second Saturday of every month to talk about current issues they may be experiencing. It is a time to share advice or offer support, to get some validation or just experience the comradery that comes with parenting. You are welcome to join when you can, but please RSVP by the Thursday before the meeting to [events@bgcdowns syndrome.org](mailto:events@bgcdowns syndrome.org). We hope to see you there!



When: 2nd Saturday of each Month  
Time: 10am-12pm  
Where: BGCDSO Office  
7301 NW 4th Street Suite #103  
Plantation, FL 33317

\*Please RSVP the prior Thursday to [events@bgcdowns syndrome.org](mailto:events@bgcdowns syndrome.org)

### UPCOMING DATES

November 11th	March 9th	July 13th
December 9th	April 14th	August 10th
January 13th	May 11th	September 14th
February 10th	June 8th	October 14th

\*\*This is a group for parents only, we will be discussing adult topics. However, if you bring your child, we will make accommodations.\*\*

\*If less than five people RSVP, the meeting will be cancelled.



# Broward Gold Coast Member Events

Our very first **Halloween Dance Party** was a success! Special thanks to I Can Living and Learning Center for hosting the event. Thanks to their staff and volunteers for all their help. We had so much fun dancing and mingling with everyone. Also, a huge shout out to our long-time community partner, Special Populations of Broward County, who booked the venue for us. We appreciate your continued support of the Broward Gold Coast Down Syndrome Organization. Thank you to everyone who shared your photos and videos with us. Until next year!



Thank you, Lauderhill Police Department and the Commissioners for inviting us to your annual **Halloween Safety Night**.

We had a great time and we appreciate your partnership!







What a great turn-out for our first **Read Along!** We had so much fun reading along with the book and interacting with each other. Thank you to everyone who came out to join us. Special thanks to Liz and her mom, Shirley Lopez, BGCD SO Member, Author, and Bronze Sponsor, for starting the series Read Along. More children's books based on Liz's journey coming soon, check out her website: [cloudsstars.com](http://cloudsstars.com).



**Stay tuned for our next Read Along on December 5th, "Twas the Night before Christmas" & "How to Catch Santa Claus", with Noah Turner.**



Come enjoy an evening to get you in the Holiday Spirit. Read Along "Twas the Night before Christmas" and "How to Catch Santa Claus"

**Tuesday, December 5th, 2023**

**6:30pm – 7:30pm**

**BGCD SO Office**

**7301 NW 4th St, Suite#103**

**Plantation, FL 33317**

- Dinner will be served
- Wear Pajamas
- Bring your favorite Teddy/Pillow
- Everyone welcome

**RSVP TO: [events@bgcdsyndrome.org](mailto:events@bgcdsyndrome.org)**





## FAMILY SPOTLIGHT: The Rivera-Lopez Family

**Mom:** My name is Shirley Lopez and I was 22 years old when I gave birth to my princess, Elizabeth. She changed our family and my whole world as I knew it.

**Dad:** Ngullen Rivera, a huge pillar for all of us. He has played an important role in all of our lives by showing love and support. We couldn't do it without him!

**Liz:** The Queen in our household. She loves to dance, sing, play and eat her favorite cultural foods, especially ice cream! She also loves to do gymnastics, equestrian swimming and so much more. She has plenty of self-confidence and is always ready to help her friends!

**Matthew:** the big little brother. He has been a blessing in Liz's growth. A role model to look up to. A shoulder to lean on when things get tough for her. Without her by her side, things wouldn't be the same.

**Charlotte:** the little sister. The little firecracker that Liz practices patience with and teaches simple manners to.

**Victoria:** the new baby sister. Where Liz learned how to be gentle and caring.

## BGCDSO Community Resource Events



What a resourceful day for the special needs community at **Joe DiMaggio's Special Needs and Inclusion Fair**. There were so many organizations available to share their information! We have some at the office, please take what you need next time you're there!







We had a busy and informative day at our 5th Annual DS Exceptional Educators Training on October 24th! It was so great to see our educators engaged and enjoying the activities! Thank you for spending the day with us learning about your DS student's needs.

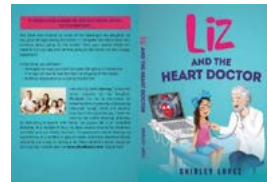


We would like to thank our sponsors and community partners for their continued support of our Broward teachers. Special thanks to Broward County Public Schools - ESE dept., **Andrea Ciotti** - ESE Director of Specialized Instruction, **Andrica Thomas** - InD Curriculum Supervisor, and the staff for collaborating with the training!

Thank you, **Sue Davis-Killian** - Director of Education for Gold Coast Down Syndrome Organization from Palm Beach County, for her training on Down Syndrome 101.

Last but not least, our gratitude to the amazing staff and parent volunteers to show up before dawn and helped with the setup and stayed until the end of the event for the clean-up! We appreciate your support of the Broward Gold Coast Down Syndrome Organization, and the Down Syndrome Committee of Broward ESE Advisory Council.

Thank you, **Behavior Management Consultants, Shirley Lopez from Above the Clouds & Stars, and The Kar Collection** for Sponsoring our DS Exceptional Educators Training Program! This training is offered only to teachers that educate students with Down syndrome. Our Sponsors make these large trainings possible for us to coordinate! We appreciate your support and generosity making sure our students are better understood and their needs are met at school.







What an informative evening! We had a full house at our first **DS Committee Meeting Workshop** in person. We hope that parents and caregivers walk away with useful information for their children.

*Thank you, Broward County Public Schools ESE staff:*

- Andrea Ciotti, Director of Related Disabilities, SLP, OT, and service providers
- Camille Edwards, Transition Program Specialist
- Shalita Aldridge, ESE Job Coach

*Special thanks to our special speakers from I Can Living and Learning Center, Debbie Telsey and Alison Pleskow, for their time and expertise. We appreciate your partnership!*



**Thank you Ronnie and Steve Larporte, for your support!**



"Take a look at the article featuring **The Fish Joint** and their efforts to both raise awareness for Down Syndrome and to raise money to donate to Broward Gold Coast Down Syndrome Organization. Another plus, my two handsome guys are featured. Be sure to make it in this month to help support such an amazing organization and business.

PS. It's a win all around cuz the food is amazing. I recommend the buffalo shrimp tacos and the boils. Yummmmm"

**The Fish Joint in Coral Springs Supports Another October Cause: National Down Syndrome Awareness Month | Coconut Creek, FL News TAPinto**



**Thank you to Lucy Whitson  
& Laura Laurenzo for  
holding another raffle to  
support the BGCDSO.**

**See flyers on right for details.**

**BGCDS RUBBER DUCK POND**

Try your luck, buy a duck! Great prizes!

**\$10 for 1 Duck or \$20 for 3 Ducks**

Donate thru 11/29 via link or QR Code  
<https://bgcdowndownsyndrome.org/donate-volunteer/>

In Donation for field when paying, enter: DUCK

**Drawing 11/30/2023 - Video posted on FB**

**3 Winners**

- 1) \$150 Brighton CanvasTote
- 2) \$75 in Gift Cards
- 3) \$60 Brighton Glean On Keynote Bracelet

All proceeds donated to: 

**BGCDS RUBBER DUCK POND**

**\$10 for 1 Duck or \$20 for 3 Ducks**

**WINNER #1 - \$150**  
 Brighton Red, White & You Tote



**WINNER #2 - \$75 in Gift Cards**  
 \$25 American Express  
 \$25 Barnes & Noble  
 \$25 TJ Maxx/Marshalls/HomeGoods/Sierra/HomeSense

**WINNER #3 - \$60**  
 Brighton Glean On Keynote Bracelet



All proceeds donated to: 



## Education/Community Services

We are happy and proud to partner with **A Special Miracle** in supporting new families and their loved ones with Down syndrome. A Special Miracle founders Tressa Rebek-Nagy & Marlena Roland along with our Children's Group Coordinator, Patricia Garland, are excited to work together to continue visiting families of newborn babies with Down Syndrome and/or new families moving to our South Florida area! If you meet someone with a Down syndrome individual in their family, please share their information with us, so we can congratulate them and offer our support with private and government service information.

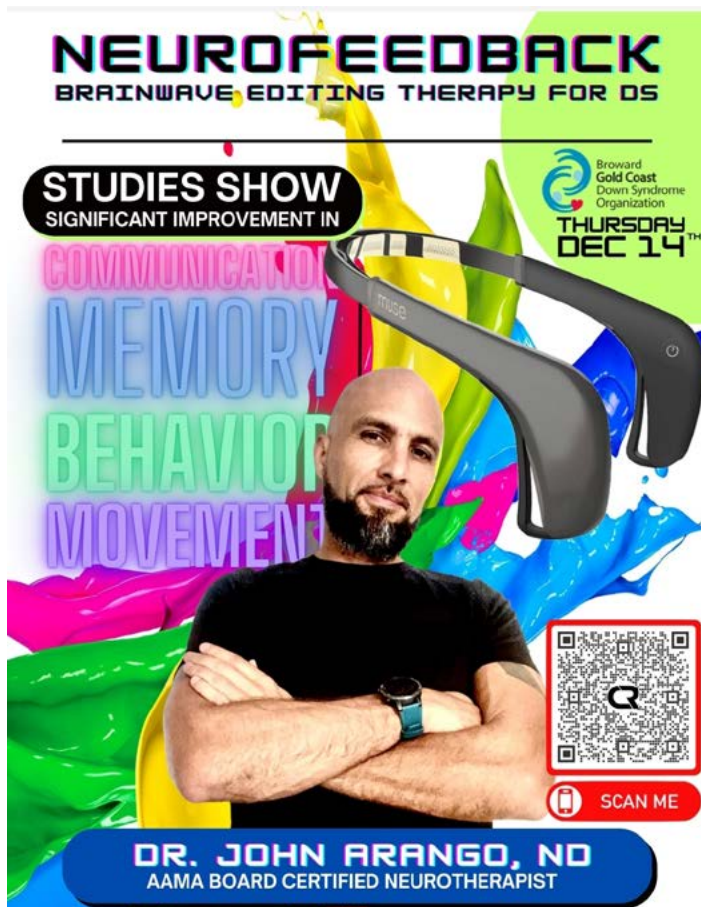


A Special Miracle (ASM) is a non-profit organization, 501(c)3 with a steadfast commitment to uplifting families with Down syndrome members through support, education, community, and possibility. Our organization was established in South Florida in 2017, when our two families spent time together. Through our different stories, we laughed and reflected on the similar commonalities between Alex and Marcia, both the good times and the challenging moments. What started out as a small gathering between our two families, quickly transformed into talks about our siblings' future and the possibility of starting a non-profit organization that would have a profound impact on our lives and other families.

Our families are looking forward to welcoming new bundles of joy diagnosed with Down syndrome in the South Florida area. We want to bless these families with a special tote bag filled with goodies as our way to say Congratulations. Each tote bag will be personalized by Alex and Marcia to encourage and inspire and bring hope to families as they celebrate their newest addition on their amazing journey. We appreciate Broward Gold Coast for partnering with A Special Miracle in spreading the word about our mission and helping us provide brochures and other resources to educate families with Down syndrome. You can be a blessing by creating a memorable moment for an expecting family. Help us support our tote bag program and provide financially or through item donations at [www.Aspecialmiracle.org](http://www.Aspecialmiracle.org).







Reunión y presentación del Comité de Síndrome de Down ESE de Broward será el Jueves, Diciembre 14 a las 6:00 pm:

"El Dr. John Arango, ND, CAS es un Investigador Clínico Certificado en Medicina Alternativa desde el 2006 por la Asociación de Medicina Americana y Especialista en Autismo por el International Board of Credentialing and Continuing Education Standards.

El Dr. Arango trabaja con adultos y jóvenes con dificultades de desarrollo para maximizar su potencial de crecimiento, aprendizaje e independencia evaluando su dieta, estilo de vida y factores del medio ambiente, así como factores físicos, emocionales y mentales.

También hacen parte de su presentación evaluaciones psicológicas, bioquímicas y metabólicas especializadas, incluyendo pruebas de laboratorio, escáneres cerebrales, y estudios físico-sociales para desarrollar intervenciones clínicas.

Si desean explorar como las innovaciones medicas más avanzadas están siendo utilizadas para empoderar individuos con síndrome de Down, no se van a querer perder esta presentación"

## CALENDARIO DE EVENTOS

- Noche de Familias – Weston Hooters  
**Jueves. Noviembre 30th de 5:00 pm a 9:00 pm**
- Sigue Leyendo – Diciembre  
**Jueves, Diciembre 5 6:30 pm - Oficina de Broward Gold Coast**
- Café y Conversación  
**Sábado, Diciembre 9 de 10:00 am a 12:00 pm - Oficina de Broward Gold Coast**
- BGCSO Fiesta de Navidad  
**Domingo, Diciembre 10 - Evento para Miembros únicamente**
- Reunión del Comité de síndrome de Down  
**Jueves, Diciembre 14 de 6:00 pm a 8:00 pm - Oficina de Broward Gold Coast**
- Reunión General Mensual del Comité de ESE de Broward  
**Miércoles, Diciembre 20 - Virtual**
- Café y Conversación  
**Sábado, Enero 13 de 10:00 am a 12:00 pm - Oficina de Broward Gold Coast**
- Reunión General Mensual del Comité de ESE de Broward  
**Miércoles, Enero 17 de 6:15 pm a 8:45 p, - Plantation High School Media Center**

Gracias a todos nuestros patrocinadores, miembros, voluntarios y equipo por una super divertida y emocionante caminata Step Up 4 Down Syndrome! El ambiente estuvo caluroso pero lleno de muchas sonrisas.

Agradecemos a todos los participantes: miembros, equipos, individuos, patrocinadores y proveedores por tomarse el tiempo y hacer de nuestra caminata un éxito! Recaudamos un 77% de nuestra meta. Nuestra pagina web sigue abierta para recibir donaciones hasta el 12/32/23, por favor ayúdanos a alcanzar nuestra meta, la cual permite que nuestra fundación sin animo de lucro continúe con su misión. <https://www.ds-stride.org/su4ds>

No podemos agradecer lo suficiente a nuestros voluntarios oficiales por pasar el día con nosotros, ayudando donde fueran necesitados, y a nuestros voluntarios espontáneos que vieron la necesidad y ayudaron sin que les preguntaran. Nuestro set up fue sin problemas, y la limpieza fue posible gracias a unos pocos ayudantes que dejaron el parque perfecto.

Esperamos que hayan disfrutado el día: la caminata. Los proveedores, el entretenimiento y la compañía mutua. Pensamos que hemos utilizado la nueva are muy bien y tuvimos muchos cumplidos en el set up.

Una vez más, gracias por un día maravilloso celebrando nuestras familias y amigos con síndrome de Down.

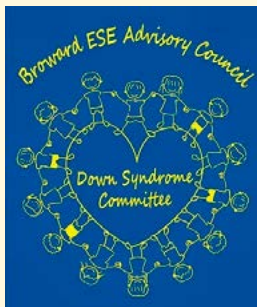


**Down Syndrome Committee of Broward  
ESE Advisory meeting and presentation on  
Thursday, December 14th at 6pm  
@ Broward Gold Coast office:**



"Dr. John Arango, ND, CAS a clinical researcher and is double board certified as an Alternative Medical Practitioner by the American Alternative Medical Association since 2006 and an Autism Specialist by the International Board of Credentialing and Continuing Education Standards.

Dr. Arango works with adults and children with developmental



challenges to maximize their potential for growth, learning, and independence by evaluating diet, lifestyle, and environmental factors as well as physical, emotional, and mental factors.

Specialized physiological, biochemical, and metabolic assessments, including laboratory tests, brain scans, and psycho-social studies used in

developing clinical intervention strategies will be discussed during Dr. Arango's presentation.

If you are ready to explore how the most advanced medical innovations are being used to empower individuals with DS, you are not going to want to miss this one."

## SAVE THE DATE



INVITE YOUR FAMILY & FRIENDS FOR A NIGHT OUT! SHARE ON SOCIAL MEDIA! THE MORE THE MERRIER!

**We'll donate 20% of your bill!**

**DONATIONS TO BENEFIT  
Broward Gold Coast  
Down Syndrome Organization!**

Let your server  
know you're  
there to support  
BGCDSO!

Weston Hooters  
2282 Weston Road  
Weston FL 33326



**Broward  
Gold Coast  
Down Syndrome  
Organization**

7301 NW 4th Street • Suite 103  
Plantation, FL 33317

954.530.3089 • [bgcdownsyrndrome.org](http://bgcdownsyrndrome.org)

### Any Questions?

*Victoria Whitson Robinson, President*

*Daniela Roeder, Vice President*

*Nancy Smith, Treasurer*

*Paola Herrera, Secretary*

*Bach Todaro, Executive Director*

*Lisa Hoddinott, Creative Director*

*MaryBeth Gebbia, Editor*

*Carolina Echeverry, Spanish Translator*

[president@bgcdownsyrndrome.org](mailto:president@bgcdownsyrndrome.org)

[vice-president@bgcdownsyrndrome.org](mailto:vice-president@bgcdownsyrndrome.org)

[pahego9@hotmail.com](mailto:pahego9@hotmail.com)

[info@bgcdownsyrndrome.org](mailto:info@bgcdownsyrndrome.org)

[l.hoddinott@att.net](mailto:l.hoddinott@att.net)

[admin@bgcdownsyrndrome.org](mailto:admin@bgcdownsyrndrome.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 (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@bgcdownsyrndrome.org](mailto:info@bgcdownsyrndrome.org).