



**DSAWMF
ENDOWMENT
CAMPAIGN**

Down Syndrome Association
of West Michigan Foundation





“When we showed up with our brand-new baby at an ARC program about independent living for people with Down syndrome, we knew it wasn’t for new parents. But we were desperate to gather information, anything at all, about people with Down syndrome. There was very little available. As people introduced themselves, we found other parents at exactly our stage with the same intent. Finding others on the same journey, with the same questions, gave us comfort, knowledge, and encouragement. The DSAWM was born from that group of parents. We are delighted that today, new parents immediately turn to DSAWM to find answers to questions, others who listen with an open and knowing heart, and knowledgeable, committed staff.”

**- Steve & Brenda Heacock,
Founding Members**

Our Mission

The Down Syndrome Association of West Michigan strives to create communities that embrace Down syndrome, empower individuals, and promote opportunities for meaningful lives.



The 6 in 5 Endowment Campaign

The purpose of this campaign is to raise \$6,000,000 over the next 5 years in a permanent endowment. The interest from this endowment account will provide the financial resources to ensure that the Down Syndrome Association of West Michigan will remain operational forever!





The Foundation and Association

The Down Syndrome Association of West Michigan Foundation (DSAWMF) was established to provide endowed funds to forever support the Down Syndrome Association of West Michigan (DSAWM). The Foundation also provides funding to other nonprofit organizations that serve individuals and families living with Down syndrome in West Michigan. DSAWMF is a separate not-for-profit organization from DSAWM.

Who We Serve

The DSAWM serves twelve counties in West Michigan: Allegan, Barry, Ionia, Kalamazoo, Kent, Mecosta, Montcalm, Muskegon, Newaygo, Oceana, Ottawa and Van Buren. Our membership is comprised of over 850 individuals with Down syndrome and their families. We also service community partners, including medical professionals, educators, therapists, and disability organizations. Anyone who wishes to join the Association may become a member; however, only those living in the aforementioned counties receive full access to DSAWM programs and services.

Why Support DSAWM

DSAWM does a lot with a little. Nearly 100% of our budget comes from donors like YOU. When you give, your contributions directly fund the many programs and services that we offer our members. Most importantly, your support allows us to continue providing programs and services free of charge to members, making our work accessible to all. As our membership grows year after year we are reliant upon your generosity to ensure that the West Michigan Down syndrome community is given every opportunity to prosper.



“The Down Syndrome Association of West Michigan provides wonderful opportunities for individuals with Down syndrome and their families. The Down Syndrome Association of West Michigan Foundation ensures that these activities are available through funding and financial support. The purpose of this campaign is to provide sustainability for decades to come for the DSAWM and the DSAWMF. Your investment in this campaign will allow individuals with Down syndrome and their families to continue to learn life skills and provide social interactions with their peers and the community. The smiles created through your support are priceless!”

- Bob Boylen,
Foundation President

Programs that Make a Difference

DSAWM programs and services are designed to address barriers and support opportunities for people with Down syndrome and their families throughout their lives.



Step Up Awareness Walk:

DSAWM’s largest awareness event, this family-friendly celebration attracts over 1,400 families, friends, and supporters of people with Down syndrome.



Cooking Capers:

Teens and adults learn culinary terminology, cooking methods, measurements, and kitchen safety while crafting a delicious and healthy meal.



Buddy Up Tennis:

Buddy Up Tennis teaches our members with Down syndrome the game of tennis while supporting healthy activity and motor function.



Shape Up:

Shape Up is a weekly health and fitness program consisting of nutrition instruction and aerobic exercise.

Financial Assistance to Support Families

Member Financial Assistance:

Designed to provide general support to families of persons with Down syndrome who need help with Down syndrome related expenses including educational support services, medical care, adaptive devices, and therapeutic devices.

Respite Assistance:

Designed to provide financial support for parents in need of respite care for their child with Down syndrome.

Adoption Assistance:

Designed to provide specific financial support to families for adoption.



“Adopting my son, Sam, has been the greatest blessing and challenge of my life...Adopting a child with Down syndrome should not be a burden for an adopting family. I am so grateful for the Adoption Assistance Program that DSAWM offers our community. Everyone deserves a family!”

- Erica Bode,
DSAWM Board Member

“As we processed Natalie’s birth diagnosis, I remember Rich saying, ‘think of all of the new friends that we’re going to meet because of Natalie.’ And boy was he right! We are so thankful for the parent support groups and the role that they have played in our journey as a family.”

- Lindsey Kloeckner,
Member



Association Assistance to Support Parents

Aging With Down Syndrome

This program invites caregivers of individuals with Down syndrome over the age of 30 to a support group sponsored by DSAWM and the Alzheimer’s Association. Participants share experiences and discuss the process of caring for loved ones growing older with Down syndrome, learn about the signs and treatments of dementia, while also focusing on self-care.

Dads Group

West Michigan Dads raising loved ones with Down syndrome come together to connect with other dads and relax and share experiences. This group meets for dinner and drinks, volunteers in the community, and seeks to make a difference in the local disability community and beyond.

Mom’s Night Out

At Mom’s Night Out gatherings, mothers raising children with Down syndrome meet at local restaurants to share experiences and support.

Food For Thought

Aimed at educating parents, caregivers, and self-advocates about the opportunities available to them and their loved ones in West Michigan, this program welcomes guest speakers each month to lead presentations on a variety of topics related to Down syndrome.



“Whitney LOVES the DSAWM programs because of the life-long friends she has made over the years doing different events with the DSAWM. She very much enjoys the fact that these are “her” programs with “her” friends.”

**- Maggie McPhee,
Past DSAWM Board President**



How to Give:

Interested in making a life-changing impact on families in West Michigan by making a personal contribution? Maybe you would like to donate in honor or memory of a loved one? Or perhaps you want to get everyone involved by hosting a fundraiser or benefit? Every dollar is appreciated and supports the vital programs and services offered to members!

Give online at foundation.dsawm.org

**Mail gifts to DSAWMF, 233 Fulton St. East,
Suite 124, Grand Rapids, MI 49503**

If you would like to view our current list of staff and board members, please visit our websites:

Association: dsawm.org

Foundation: foundation.dsawm.org





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