

The 21 DreamS Team

Awareness. Acceptance. Inclusion. Inspiration.

Dear Dr. Wagner and Clearvista Women's Care,

August 21st, 2010, was a day that brought a lot of something EXTRAs to our family. Our youngest daughter, Lauryn, was born with an extra 21st chromosome (*Trisomy 21/ Down syndrome*).

Lauryn's birth presented our family with a new journey - one that was different from what we expected or had previously experienced - one that involved Down syndrome and special needs.

We spent our first month with Lauryn in the NICU, where, one day, one of Lauryn's wonderful nurses brought me a brochure and some information on the Buddy Walk® hosted by Down Syndrome Indiana. Our family - along with many extended family members and friends - took part in our first Buddy Walk® when Lauryn was just over 6 weeks old. That first year, in a matter of about 4 weeks, we were able to raise just over \$1000. That was the beginning of our continual efforts to spread a message of awareness...acceptance...inclusion...and inspiration.

We've since made many connections along the way and have formed a special bond with Down Syndrome Indiana over the years. 2016 will mark the fourth year our family has merged with many other families on this same journey to form The 21 DreamS Team. Over the last four years, the families on The 21 DreamS Team have worked together to raise over \$75,000 for Down Syndrome Indiana.

We are back again this year. We have the same big dreams. We have even bigger goals. Our family, along with the other families on this year's 21 DreamS Team, is again working to raise money for Down Syndrome Indiana - an organization that has become our extended family - one of our "rocks" in helping to navigate this journey we are on in sharing our lives with an individual who sports an extra chromosome.

You, your family, and your business or organization have touched our lives in a special way, and we truly thank you for your love and support. We would like to graciously ask you to continue to join us in our efforts to make more DreamS come true at the 2016 Buddy Walk® Indianapolis.

Lauryn has brought so much joy to our lives. It is a blessing and an honor to be able to join others in paving the road for all of our children's futures...by making efforts today.

We know we can't do this without the love and support of others, including businesses and organizations like yours.



A Little About Lauryn

Lauryn loves to sing and dance. Her favorite picks are Taylor Swift, Adele, and Michael Jackson! ☺

She absolutely loves babies and dogs/animals. She loves pretend play, including giving "check-ups" to anything/anyone she can! Lauryn loves being outside - swimming, swinging, sliding, climbing, riding bikes, etc.!

Lauryn receives numerous weekly therapies - OT, PT, Speech, Recreational Therapy, and Music Therapy. Hippotherapy (horses) is part of her OT and PT - riding (big) horses is her favorite!

Lauryn adores her big brothers and big sister - they are her biggest encouragers and advocates. Learning from them, keeping up with them, and snuggling with them are top priorities for her.

Lauryn will be 6 years old in August and will start Kindergarten at St. Jude Catholic School.



How Can You Help?

• Consider becoming a Buddy Walk® sponsor in honor of Lauryn Buechler and The 21 DreamS Team.

There are many different sponsorship levels - each including special acknowledgements to your company/organization for your generous sponsorship. All sponsorships directly benefit DSI and are tax-deductible. More information is included.

• Join us at the 2016 Buddy Walk® Indianapolis on Oct. 8th!

Mark your calendars for Saturday, October 8th to join us for the 19th Annual Buddy Walk® presented by Down Syndrome Indiana. It's a fun-filled day for all - we'd love for you to be a part of it!

• Spread the message of awareness...acceptance...inclusion...and inspiration!

Share our story and others with friends and family. Share how knowing Lauryn (or other individuals who are labeled as different) has changed your perceptions and enriched your life. Help us by challenging stereotypes, demanding change, and promoting inclusion and acceptance.

Why Down Syndrome Indiana?

Down Syndrome Indiana is a non-profit organization dedicated to enhancing the lives of individuals with Down syndrome and their families through education, support and advocacy. Supported by a dedicated Board of Directors (*of which I am blessed and honored to now serve as Secretary*), a full-time Executive Director, several additional staff persons, and numerous volunteers, DSI offers a wide variety of resources for families and medical professionals and provides active support groups and events to connect families. DSI works to raise money to continue its services, as well as to help

in national research efforts and legislative policies surrounding the lives of individuals with Ds. DSI receives no funding from other national or local organizations.

DSI provided us with some of our first resources about Down syndrome - resources that gave us information and hope. DSI helped us quickly make connections with other families in the Ds community and has guided us in muddling through many of the complicated processes of signing up for waivers and accessing early intervention programs. They've been active in helping to shape, promote, and move forward new legislation such as the ABLE Act to give our loved ones with Down syndrome more inclusive, enriched, and economically independent lives. DSI has provided our family the opportunity to attend several workshops and conventions centered on up-to-date research, current educational practices, medical needs and issues, etc. for individuals with an extra chromosome. Getting involved with DSI helped me to quickly become a true and active advocate in spreading awareness...encouraging acceptance...promoting inclusion...and inspiring others to do the same. Without DSI, the DreamS project

(<http://www.21dreamsproject.com>) would not be where it is today...with SIX volumes published (and more to come!). DSI has helped us make our dreams for Lauryn a reality.

Participating in the Buddy Walk® hosted by Down Syndrome Indiana and working to raise money for the cause is one way our family can "give back" to this incredible organization so that they can continue doing such great work in helping our family and families like ours.

BUDDY WALK® INDIANAPOLIS

19th Annual Buddy Walk® presented by Down Syndrome Indiana

What is the Buddy Walk®?

- Buddy Walk® was established in 1995 by the National Down Syndrome Society (*NDSS*) as an event to promote acceptance and inclusion of people with Down syndrome. This event is officially licensed by the National Down Syndrome Society to support groups and organizations across the country to positively influence on a local level the awareness of the Down syndrome community. Walks usually occur in October in observance of Down Syndrome Awareness Month.
- Nationally, Buddy Walk® is the most widely recognized public awareness program for the Down syndrome community. Locally (*Buddy Walk® Indianapolis*), it is currently the largest fundraising event for Down Syndrome Indiana, with this year's goal set at \$215,000 for corporate and team sponsorships.
- The Buddy Walk® has three primary goals:
 - To promote acceptance & inclusion of people with Down syndrome
 - To raise funds locally and nationally for education, research and advocacy programs
 - To enhance the position of the Down syndrome community, enabling us to positively influence local and national policy and practice

When and Where is the Buddy Walk®?

In Indianapolis, the Buddy Walk® presented by Down Syndrome Indiana takes place in and around Celebration Plaza in White River State Park. Proceeds from the walk help fund Down Syndrome Indiana programs and services that help individuals with Down syndrome and their families. These programs and services include, but are not limited to:

- New Parent Information & Resource Packets
- Educators' Resources
- Social Activities
- Support for Research and Advocacy
- Informational and Educational Conferences

What is "The 21 DreamS Team" ?

- The 21 DreamS Team is a multi-family Buddy Walk® team comprised of families involved with the 21 DreamS project.
- Each family on The 21 DreamS Team has their own "family group name." While The 21 DreamS Team has a team page with a cumulative fundraising goal, each family also creates their own page within the team. Our family's specific fundraising page for The 21 DreamS Team is Little Lauryn's League of Awesomeness, where family and friends can make donations towards The 21 DreamS Team in honor of Lauryn.

Little Lauryn's League of Awesomeness -
<http://downsyndromeindiana.donordrive.com/participant/lauryn>

The 21 DreamS Team -
<http://downsyndromeindiana.donordrive.com/team/21dreamsteam>

