



# ANNUAL REPORT

[www.dsadelaware.org](http://www.dsadelaware.org)





# About the DSADE

In 1979, a small group of parents founded the Down Syndrome Association of Delaware, meeting around kitchen tables and park benches to share space and resources with families who understand their experiences. Today, we are a statewide nonprofit organization that provides a lifetime of support to individuals with Down syndrome and their families, led by the guidance of our board of directors, staff, and community.

As we continue to expand our impact throughout the state, our mission remains central: to support families, promote community involvement, and encourage a lifetime of opportunities for people with Down syndrome. We envision a community where individuals with Down syndrome are healthy, happy, and successful, and where they and their families are empowered to effectively advocate for their needs.



# Staff

- LAUREN CAMP GATES**, Executive Director
- SANDRA SEARLE**, Director of Development
- DOUG GERDTS**, Chief Financial Officer
- TARA LENNON**, Director of Marketing and Events
- JESS WALLS**, Community Liaison
- SUSAN BLESSINGTON**, Outreach Coordinator
- ARI AVILA**, Spanish Outreach Coordinator
- NANCY BENNETT**, Office Manager
- DANA FRAIL**, Bookkeeper, Frail Financial Solutions

# Board

- PRESIDENT: BRIAN RAY**  
DE Department of Education
- VICE PRESIDENT: BRETT EMERICK**  
ERCO Ceilings & Interiors
- TREASURER: PAUL MITCHELL**  
Precision Wealth Partners
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- CINDY OLSAVSKY**  
Ronald McDonald House of DE
- COLEEN POPP**  
NJ Institute of Technology
- MAYRA SANTIAGO**  
Bryan Realty Group
- EILEEN VOLTZ**  
University of Delaware





# Our 2025 Impact



**794**

FAMILIES SERVED IN DE & SURROUNDING AREAS



**76**

EVENTS HOSTED ACROSS THE STATE OF DE



**600+**

VOLUNTEERS INVOLVED IN OUR EVENTS & PROGRAMS



**109**

FAMILIES ENGAGED WITH US FOR THE FIRST TIME



**145**

TEACHERS & SUPPORT STAFF ATTENDED OUR EDUCATORS CONFERENCE



**44**

SCHOLARSHIPS AWARDED FOR OUR PROGRAMS & CAMPS



**83**

PEOPLE ADOPTED IN THE HOLIDAY SEASON



**343**

HOURS OF WEEKLY PROGRAMMING OFFERED

# 2025 Revenue



**GRANTS: 39%**



**FUNDRAISERS: 31%**



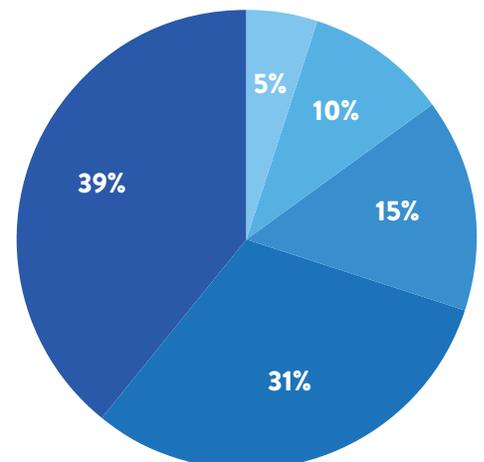
**ROCK YOUR SOCKS: 15%**



**DONATIONS: 10%**



**PROGRAMS & EVENTS: 5%**





# 38 New Babies with Down Syndrome Welcomed

“When we received Abby’s Down syndrome diagnosis prenatally, our world shifted in an instant,” said DSADE member Madison, reflecting on the impact of our outreach services.

As families who recently received a Down syndrome diagnosis navigated unfamiliar territory, DSADE Outreach Coordinators Susan Blessington and Ari Avila met families where they were. Whether it’s Susan, Ari, or a New Family Basket showing up at the doorstep, our coordinators helped families see the path forward—as Susan and Ari, moms to young adults with Down syndrome Conor and Eric, have been there too.

“In those early months, the Down Syndrome Association of Delaware helped provide our family with support, resources, and a community that reminded us that we weren’t alone,” said Madison. “They helped turn fear into hope and isolation into connection.”

*They turned fear into hope and isolation into connection.*

## 110 Campers

On day one of our iCan Swim Camp, many teary-eyed swimmers didn’t release their grips from the edges of the pool for the entirety of their swim lessons. On day five, they confidently splashed, swam, made bubbles, or achieved their version of success in the water.

This journey from apprehensiveness to confidence is the story of our 2025 summer camps, including our iCan Swim Camp, along with our Days of Summer Camp in all three counties. Since 2012, Days of Summer Camp has been a cornerstone of our organization, offering a unique, no-cost experience for children with Down syndrome and welcoming their siblings to join as well. Our ability to uplift our campers would not have been possible without a nearly one-to-one camper to counselor ratio and the dedication of around **100** volunteers.

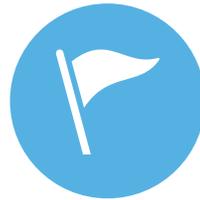
“Working with these children has become something that I look forward to every summer,” said camp volunteer Maddy, who completed her sixth year as a Days of Summer counselor in 2025. “I’ve had the opportunity to meet so many amazing and resilient children and their families. Seeing the happiness and joy on their faces every year absolutely warms my heart.”





**42,471**  
SOCKS

Rock Your Socks is the bright and bold yearly reminder for everyone across Delaware of the Down syndrome community and our enduring need for inclusion and advocacy. Through mismatched socks that represent the extra chromosome which occurs in Down syndrome, Rock Your Socks 2025 united **300** volunteers in the tedious and loving task of mismatching and packing socks that we sent across the country. In Delaware, people from **140+** schools, businesses, and organizations ditched their normal sock drawer to sport their Rock Your Socks, creating conversations about Down syndrome in classrooms and conference rooms alike.



**58**  
TEAMS

At the 22nd annual DE Down Syndrome Walk & 5K, we flooded Glasgow Park—our new venue—with families, runners, and community supporters from up and down the state. A strong showing of over **100** volunteers made families feel special from the moment they arrived until the moment they left, unloading cars at 8:00 a.m. and taking down tents at 2:00 p.m. Performances, activities, food trucks, an Awareness Loop, and a 5K kept our attendees busy throughout the day.

“The Walk, for us, was a small way to show Amelia how loved and supported she is, not just by our friends and family, but also by a whole community,” said DSADE member Kendra, Amelia’s mom and Walk first-timer.



**299**  
TEENS & ADULTS  
GETTING SOCIAL

At our 2025 teen and adult events, we aimed to plant the seeds of lifelong friendships—an integral step in our mission to provide a lifetime of support for our members.

This year, we organized **23** opportunities for individuals with Down syndrome ages 14 and older to get together, including formal dinner dances, pottery painting, bowling, a baseball game, and monthly cooking classes.

“[My son] Stuart went to a Blue Rocks game with his bestie and proudly said, ‘We big boys now!’” said DSADE member Shelvia. “These outings give him a sense of independence, all within a safe and supportive space.”





# Our Year Ahead

## MARK YOUR CALENDARS FOR 2026!

Join us for one of our upcoming events to support our mission and programs.

**MARCH 18 & 19:** Guest Bartending Fundraisers

**MARCH 21:** Rock Your Socks for World Down Syndrome Day

**MARCH 22:** Run for the Buds 5K (New Location: The Starboard in Dewey!)

**APRIL 25:** A Night Under the Stars Gala (Chesapeake Inn)

**OCTOBER 2:** Annual Golf Tournament (Deerfield Golf Club)

**OCTOBER 17:** DE Down Syndrome Walk & 5K (Glasgow Park)

## NEW OFFICE & LOCATION

We love our new home at CSC Station in Wilmington. Along with this presence at the Wilmington Riverfront, we continue to engage with the Sussex County community at our office in Milton and provide programming and events throughout the entire state.



**THE STARS SOCIETY** is our monthly giving community—created to provide steady, reliable support for individuals with Down syndrome and their families throughout the year. Monthly gifts allow us to sustain the programs our community depends on, from summer camps to prenatal baskets for expecting parents who are just beginning their journey.

By joining the Stars Society, you become part of a dedicated group of donors who ensure our programs remain strong, accessible, and available across the state of Delaware. Your ongoing support helps us plan ahead, respond to needs as they arise, and continue creating opportunities.

To become a Stars Society member, scan this QR code and select “monthly.”

Questions? Please contact [sandra@dsadelaware.org](mailto:sandra@dsadelaware.org)



## STAY CONNECTED WITH US

[www.dsadelaware.org](http://www.dsadelaware.org) | [@dsadelaware](https://twitter.com/dsadelaware) | 302-995-1004 | Office locations: Wilmington and Milton (DE) | Tax ID number: 201874295

