The Rio Grande Down Syndrome Network is a nonprofit organization whose mission is to empower individuals with Down syndrome and their families through advocacy, education and support. We are a collaborative network which seeks to create awareness, assure inclusion, and promote independence in individuals with Down syndrome.

Today, the average lifespan of a person with Down syndrome is approximately 60 years.

As recently as 1983, the average lifespan of a person with Down syndrome was 25 years. The dramatic increase to 60 years is largely due to the end of the inhumane practice of institutionalizing people with Down syndrome.

In the U.S., Down syndrome is the least funded major genetic condition by our National Institutes of Health despite being the most frequent chromosomal disorder. Because of this, and because of lack of funding from other government organizations, there is surprisingly little known definitively about the condition. Fortunately, in the fiscal year 2022, members of the Linda Crnic Institute for Down Syndrome secured more than $18 million in research funding from the National Institutes of Health. These funds will support continued research on a wide range of co-occurring conditions affecting individuals with Down syndrome with the explicit goal of elongating the lifespan and improving health outcomes in this underserved population.

In the U.S. it is required by law that public schools accept and provide an appropriate education to them. This requirement is outlined in the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA). IDEA stipulates that all children with disabilities must have available to them a free, appropriate public education that meets their unique needs and prepares them for further education, employment, and independent living. Further, studies show that including students with disabilities in the classroom improves the academic progress of students without disabilities.

An increasing number of adults with Down syndrome in the U.S. are living independently with limited assistance from family members or the state. A small percentage are able to live entirely independently.
RGDSN Core Programs

**Support Groups**
- Parent Care Committee
- Under 7 Playgroup
- School Age Playgroup
- Teen/Adult Get Togethers
- Mom’s Night Out
- Dad's Night Out

**Network Gatherings**
- Annual Summer Picnic
- Annual Holiday Party
- Outings - Sports, Activity Centers

**Communications**
- Digital (Social, Web, Email)
- In Person
- Bi-Monthly Newsletter

**Organization Efforts**
- Board Meetings
- Board Development
- Partnerships
- Annual Network Meeting
- National Memberships

**Member Scholarships**
- National Conference
- Camps/Workshops/Therapy

**Programs**
- Youth Adaptive camps
- Life skill classes
- Therapy programs
- Arts programming

**Advocacy**
- World Down Syndrome Day
- Buddy Walk
- IEP Support
- Lucky Few Balloon Partnership

**Annual Fundraisers**
- Buddy Walk
- Denim & Diamonds Gala
2022 Highlights

Inaugural Denim & Diamonds Gala
RGDSN held its first Denim & Diamonds Gala April 2, 2022 at the Sheraton Uptown and included a live and silent auction, entertainment, live music, and an intimate look at the work and programs offered by our Network.

Denim & Diamonds raised more than $130,000 which helped provide individuals with Down syndrome access to educational assistance and opportunities, including cooking and art classes for young adults and a nationally acclaimed bike riding program for members to take advantage of in the summer of 2023.

The Lucky Few Balloon takes advocacy to new heights!
In partnership with Cordova Contracting LLC, the Lucky Few Balloon took part for a second year at the Albuquerque International Balloon Fiesta. The Balloon also participated in a Balloons Aloft program at Cibola High School.

In addition to raising awareness of RGDSN, the Balloon gives individuals with Down syndrome opportunities for once in a lifetime balloon rides!

RGDSN Partners with Lobo Football for 2022 Buddy Walk, Inclusive Camp
Thousands joined in for the 2022 Buddy Walk held at the University of New Mexico Lobo Football practice field on September 22, 2022 raising nearly $75K for RGDSN.

The Lobos also hosted a football camp offering members an exclusive day as Lobo, running drills and games with Lobo players and staff.
Amplifying Our Work

Programming Expansion
Considering the growing interests and needs of our young adult members, RGDSN incorporated additional summer programs focused on life skills that will help grow their independence.

Post-Secondary Education Scholarship Established
An effort launched during the Denim & Diamonds Gala, RGDSN established a scholarship committee and processes to offer financial assistance to adults with Down syndrome who wish to enroll in a class or program that will build life skills, lead to greater opportunities for employment, support independent living, or in some other way empower the individual to succeed in living an enriched and fulfilled life.

Increased Community Partnerships
Through our advocacy and outreach efforts, we were able to connect with community and business leaders, advocates and medical professionals to jumpstart partnerships that will serve our community for years to come.
RGDSN By the Numbers

Revenue

Buddy Walk: $60,196.87
Donations: $78,340.93
Holiday Party: $4,791.00
Denim & Diamonds Gala: $126,125.38
Total: $269,454.18

Expenses

Programming: $8,329.64
Networking Events: $14,253.96
Fundraising Events: $59,091.51
Scholarships: $2,288.25
Management & Operations: $53,938.85
Total: $137,902.27

Families Served: 350
Members Registered for Camps and Programs: 200+
Scholarships Given to Attend National NDSC Conference: 3

RGDSN.ORG
Our Team

2022 Part-Time Staff

Billy Thiebaut, Program Manager
Susan Parkins, Bookkeeper

2022 Volunteer Board

Donyelle Lucero, President
Jeannine Barreras, Fundraising Chair

Laurie Magovern, Secretary, Board
Dawn Halfacre
Recruitment

Shari Cordova
Lena Armstrong

2022 Volunteers & Committee Members

Parent Care Committee - Nichole
Moberly, Jennifer Warren

Playgroups - Angie McDaniels

Buddy Walk - Paul Lopez (chair),
Donyelle Lucero, Jamie Martin, David
Rogers and Rosie Gonzalez, Christine
and Rich Delmolino, Angie McDaniels

Mom’s Night Out - Christine
Delmolino

Dad's Night Out - Brandon Lucero

Denim & Diamonds Gala - Jeannine
Barreras, Dawn Halfacre, Rosie
Gonzales, Laurie Magovern, Shari
Cordova, Consuelo Cowder, Brittany
Howell, Joya Ferril, Alisha Hull, Stacy
Mossman, Marianne Melloy, Donyelle
Lucero

Vendors

Siarza Social Digital
LET'S CONNECT

Are you a business owner interested in sponsorships? Passionate about volunteering? A professional who can contribute to our programming? We want to hear from you!

Together we can continue our efforts to improve the lives of individuals with Down syndrome and their families.

MAILING ADDRESS
PO Box 6759
Albuquerque, NM 87197

CONTACT INFO
Phone: 505-382-5061
Email: info@rgdsn.org
Web: www.rgdsn.org