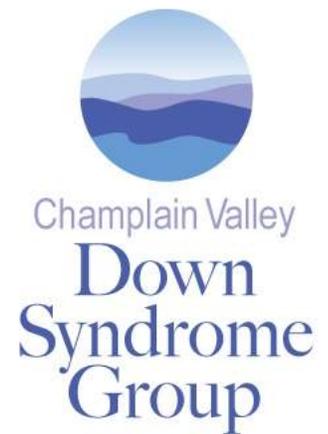
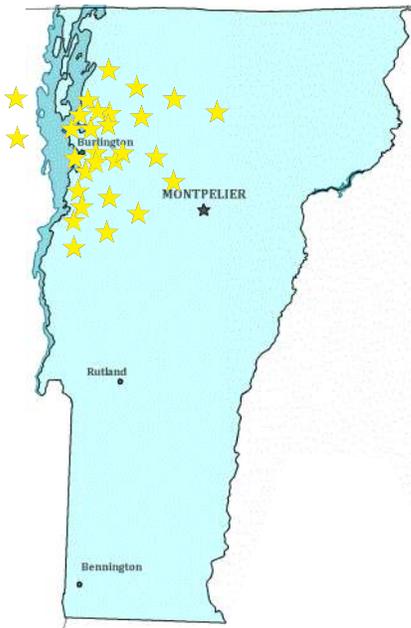


# Annual Report

*The mission of the Champlain Valley Down Syndrome Group is to provide information, resources, and support to individuals with Down syndrome and their families and to promote awareness and inclusion in our communities of people with Down syndrome to help them achieve their full potential.*



## Who We Are



The Champlain Valley Down Syndrome Group (CVDSG) was established in 2011 as a 501(c)(3) non-profit organization to better connect and support families within our region as described in our mission statement. Since that time, the membership has continued to grow, now totaling over 50 families throughout Northern Vermont, the Champlain Region of New York, and even as far away as Texas! We continue to add member families each year. The group's bylaws establish the roles for a Board of Directors as well as Group Officers. At present, the group consists of four officers, currently filled by Dave Mentzer (Chair), Joe McNamara (Vice Chair), Lisa DeNatale (Secretary), and Eileen Haupt (Treasurer). The Officers hold two-year terms and the next elections will take place in January of 2019.

The bylaws require the Board of Directors to meet quarterly to conduct group business, including decisions needed to support the timing and nature of the group's activities, such as the summer barbeque in July and the Buddy Walk in October. The scheduling of these meetings are posted on the group's website and all are open to any member interested in attending. In addition to these recurring annual events, one to two additional family gatherings are typically scheduled during the year. All members are invited and encouraged to reach out to the Board with any ideas that could help further the Group's mission. The bylaws also require the group to hold one Annual Meeting, traditionally held soon after the new year, so that the Board can report on the events and finances of the previous year.

## Program Highlights

### 8th Annual Buddy Walk

This year's Buddy Walk, held on October 8, 2017 in downtown Burlington, had approximately 150 participants. This annual event is a great way to connect with old friends, meet new members, and get some visibility and media attention for our group. The Haupt Family volunteered and was interviewed on October 4th, on Channel 22/44 and Megan Carpenter, the morning anchor for Local22 & Local44, volunteered to be the emcee.

The event would not be possible without our generous corporate sponsors and the help of many individuals. We received direct financial support from People's United Bank, Dore & Whittier Architects Inc., CCS Constructors Inc, and Little City Speech and Language. We also received in-kind contributions from Starbucks Coffee, Ben & Jerry's Ice Cream, Subway, Shaws Supermarket, Hannaford Supermarket, Price Chopper Supermarket, Bagel Place, The Bagel Cafe & Deli, and Burlington Bagel Bakery & Cafe. Many thanks to all the volunteers, fundraisers (especially Ellen Riley), food-getters and Carleton Plourde and his spirited crossing guard team.



## Financial Assistance to MDSC Conference

Each year, the CVDSG provides financial assistance to 1-2 group members interested in attending the Massachusetts Down Syndrome Congress' annual conference in March, in recognition that the costs of registration, travel and lodging might be prohibitive for member attendance. In 2017, the CVDSG supported the attendance of one member family. The conference is well worth attending, covering a range of topics from infancy to adulthood, and we are fortunate to have it hosted in an adjoining state. Contact: Eileen Haupt / [Vteileen@comcast.net](mailto:Vteileen@comcast.net).



## Annual Barbeque at Oak Ledge Park

Once again, we were afforded beautiful weather for the annual Barbeque at Oak Ledge Park in July on the shores of Lake Champlain in Burlington. Approximately 20 families attended and spent the afternoon swimming in the lake, playing in the park, and sharing food and experiences.

## "Near Future" Discussion Group

The "Near Future" discussion group sprung up when a group of families with young adults decided to meet periodically to discuss issues related to transition: housing, jobs, social assimilation, aging, guardianship, adult medical issues, and finances. Occasionally speakers from government or service organizations have attended to give background information and answer questions about families' specific situations. In the past year, discussions focused on the benefits and requirements of housing options such as Section 8 vouchers, independent living, mixed-community models (such as Heartbeat in Hardwick), or remaining in-family. The group has been a rich source of support to the dozen or so families who have attended, and meetings are open to anyone with interest. Contact: Elizabeth Campbell / [info888@comcast.net](mailto:info888@comcast.net).

## Financial Report

At the start of 2017, the CVDSG had \$5,315.76 in assets. A total of \$3,463.48 was raised during the year through a combination of corporate and private donations, registration fees and t-shirt sales, as well fundraising conducted by a group member – all in support of the Buddy Walk. A total of \$3,535.61 was spent during the year, primarily in support of Events, such as the Buddy Walk (including park rental, insurance and police assistance) and financial support to send a member to attend the Massachusetts Down Syndrome Conference in March. Other funds were expended to pay membership dues to the NDSS and NDSC, as well as web site hosting. At the end of 2017, the CVDSG had \$5,243.63 in assets.

