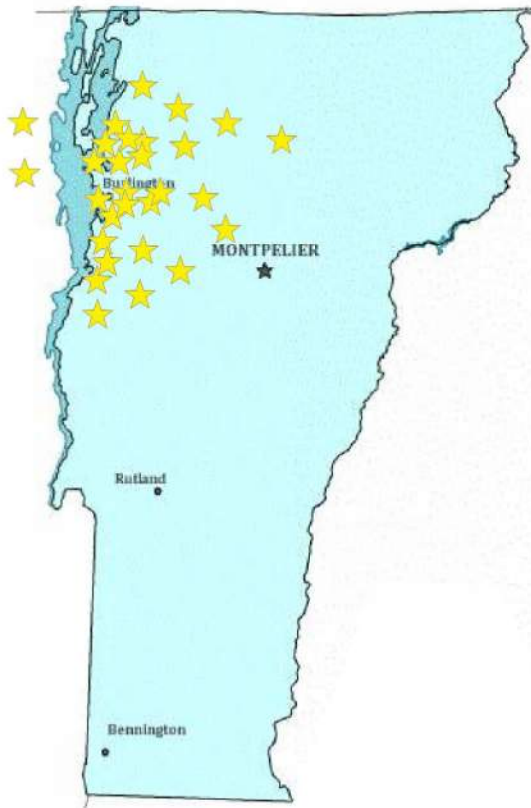


2019 Annual Report



Champlain Valley
**Down
Syndrome
Group**

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. Our membership currently includes over 70 families throughout Northern Vermont and the Champlain Valley of Upstate New York. Membership is free and open to anyone who wants to join.

The Board of Directors consists of four officers (President, Vice-President, Treasurer and Secretary), each serving 2-year terms. The Board meets quarterly to conduct group business, including decisions needed to support the group's activities, such as the summer barbeque and Buddy Walk in the fall, and programs such as financial support for attendance at a nearby conference. Meetings are posted on the group's website (cvdsg.org) and are open to all members. Typically, another family gathering is scheduled in the spring. The required Annual Meeting, traditionally held soon after the new year, allows the Board to report on the events and finances of the previous year.

Members of the CVDSG often provide critical outreach and facilitate networking for families, connecting groups with similar interests or concerns and often serve as the first point of contact for families who are new to the area or may have just learned about a diagnosis of Down syndrome for a newborn. The CVDSG is also an affiliate of the two primary national advocacy groups for people with Down syndrome: the National Down Syndrome Society (NDSS) and the National Down Syndrome Congress (NDSC).

Members are invited and encouraged to reach out to the Board with any ideas that could help further the Group's mission.

Programs

United Dance

Founded in 2018, United Dance provides structured, professionally-led dance programs specifically designed to meet the unique needs of individuals with Down syndrome. Workshops are typically held in major metropolitan areas, such as New York and Boston, as well as cities in Europe. A special thank you to group member Julie Chauvin, whose daughter attended a session in Boston, and who was so impressed, invited the group to put on a workshop in Burlington in October, which was attended by ten participants. By all accounts, the session was a huge success and opportunities are being explored to bring the group back. The CVDSG was able to provide financial assistance to help defray the costs for the children of group members who were able to attend.
Contact: Julie Chauvin / julie@ccscraneservice.com.



Summer Camp

In 2019, the CVDSG was able to offer three camp scholarships of \$250 each to help defray the costs of summer camps for group members who requested assistance. Contact: Steve Boutcher / steveboutcher@gmail.com

Massachusetts Down Syndrome Congress (MDSC) Conference

The MDSC Annual Conference, was held in Worcester, MA on March 23rd, 2019. The long running conference (this edition was the 35th annual) provides national-level caliber speakers on wide variety of topics, such as medical issues, speech, and school age transition. While CVDSG members are very fortunate to have this conference held in an adjoining state, costs for participation can be prohibitive for some group members. To help provide access to this valuable conference, the CVDSG is able to provide financial support each year to support the attendance of two families, including: registration, lodging, meals and incidental expenses. Contact: Steve Boutcher / steveboutcher@gmail.com

Event Highlights

Annual Meeting

The Annual Meeting & Family Gathering was held (once again) at the lovely home of Kathleen and Tex Lynch. In addition to providing an opportunity for families to gather and welcome new members, the meeting also provides a chance for the Board of Directors to share highlights from the previous year, offer an update on the group's finances, and provide a look ahead to the coming year. This meeting also served as the bi-annual opportunity to elect officers, with the following results: Lisa DeNatale (President), Joe McNamara (Vice-President), Steve Boutcher (Treasurer) and Dave Mentzer (Secretary).

10th Annual Buddy Walk

This year's Champlain Valley Buddy Walk, was held on Sunday, September 29th, in Battery Park and downtown Burlington under sunny and cool conditions, with approximately 125 people participating in this year's event. This event was one of 250 Walks across the country held in the fall to raise awareness and funds for programs that benefit people with Down syndrome and their families.



The walk is an annual highlight for the group and is a great way to visit with old friends, greet new members and gain some media exposure. The Plourde Family volunteered and was interviewed on Channel 22/44, and Patty Prelock, the Provost at the University of Vermont, graciously agreed to be the emcee for the event.

The Walk 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, Ben & Jerry's Ice Cream, Shaw's and Hannaford's Supermarkets, Burlington Bagel Bakery, The Bagel, The Bagel Place and Vermont Business Magazine. Many thanks to all the volunteers, food-getters and crossing guards. Contact: Tim McQuiston / mcq@vermontbiz.com

Financial Report

The CVDSG had \$5,375 in assets at the beginning of 2019. A total of \$5,423 was raised during the year through a combination of corporate and private donations, Buddy Walk registrations and t-shirt sales. A total of \$5,649 was spent during the year, primarily in support of Events, such as the Buddy Walk (including park rental, insurance, etc.) and programmatic financial support to members, as outlined above. Other funds were used to cover administrative expenses, such as membership dues to the NDSS and NDSC, as well as web site hosting, redesign and maintenance. At the end of 2019, the CVDSG had \$5,149 in assets.

