

"It is only with the heart
that one can see rightly;
what is essential is invisible
to the eye."

-The Little Prince



Sharing Down Syndrome Arizona Annual Report Sept. 2019 - Oct. 2020

Our Impact on the People & Community
We Serve



A Year of Sharing & So Much More...

It was 30 years ago in July that I held my first Sharing Down Syndrome Meeting in my home. Five dear families attended as we shared the joys and unique challenges that loving a child with Down syndrome bring us.

I never could have imagined that now 30 years later we would be over 5,000 strong!

Something that I love is what my son David continues to teach me. He does not judge another by the color of their skin, their status in life or how much money they have. He has the uncanny ability to just look inside their hearts and accept them for who they are.

Without a doubt, this is a hard time in our lives. Between the pandemic and and the economic and social injustice endured by many, our lives seem to be in an unsettling place. If I could just find my magic wand, that I have misplaced, I would wave it and take all this heartache from our world.

However, I believe there is a purpose in all things and that we will all get through this together. When it is behind us, we will see the wonderful way we have helped each other. Thank you all for being a part of what we do this year and hope to do for many years to come.

Love,

David's Mom (aka Gina Johnson)



Angels Among Us Program

Hospital and Home Visits to New Parents 2020



- Number of hospital/home visits to new parents of a child with DS: [112](#)
- Number of journals, books, tote bags, homemade blankets, DVDs and onesies distributed to families: approximately [120](#) of each

Geographic areas reached in Arizona:

Phoenix, Mesa, Gilbert, Chandler, Tempe, Queen Creek, SanTan Valley, Glendale, Peoria, Scottsdale, Fountain Hills, Buckeye, Maricopa, Surprise, Prescott, Flagstaff, Tucson, Gila Bend, Casa Grande, Apache Junction, Goodyear, Avondale, Florence, Yuma, Snowflake, Winslow, Show Low.

We visited families in over 29 cities and the Navajo Nation





Executive Director and
Founder of Sharing
Gina Johnson visits with
baby Airleigh at Phoenix
Children's Hospital - Airleigh
is fighting Leukemia.

Sharing's volunteer
Barb Wilkins (left) with
her adult son and
employee of Sharing **Eric
Gardner** visiting baby
Oakley in the hospital
(prior to COVID-19)



Meet Eric Gardner
Eric works in our Sharing
office as an Ambassador.
He helps with our events,
attends our meetings, visits
new families and much
more.

From our community...

“Thank you for the hospital packets you so generously provide. Our families who receive them truly appreciate it. What you do for our children with Down syndrome and their families is amazing, a labor of love, and is greatly appreciated.”

– Annamarie

Social Worker at Phoenix Children’s Hospital

“We just wanted to express our appreciation to you for all of your help with our baby today. Thank you for all of the books, the blanket, stuffed animals, and the music CD. You are a blessing to our family. Thank you!

– Jason and Mary

Proud parents of newborn daughter with Down syndrome

“Thank you so much for the gift of 'Mental Wellness in Adults with Down Syndrome' book. It contains information that is invaluable as our young man is almost 18 years old. Thank you for your years of service to our dear children.”

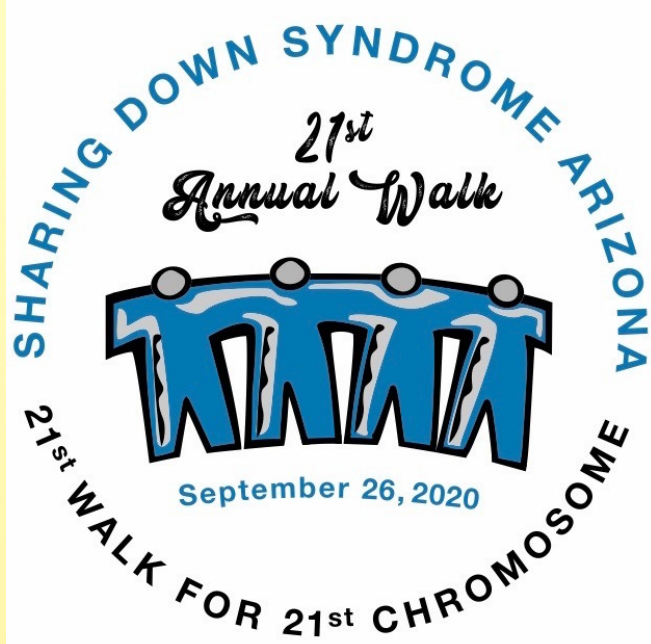
– Bonnie

Proud Mom of an adult son with Down syndrome



Sharing Down Syndrome Arizona's **Pajama and Pizza Party with Santa** happened Dec. 5, 2019 from 5-8pm. The FREE event was held for our Sharing families at the beautiful Bella Rose Estate and had inflatables, reindeer games, music and dancing, face painting, toys, food and crafts, a hot cocoa bar sponsored by blackrock.coffee - and of course, Santa and Mrs. Claus were there. **Over 450 people turned out for the event.** A local Boy Scout earned his Eagle Scout badge by getting all the toys donated for Santa to give to each child with Down syndrome and their siblings.





Parade for 2020

Because of the **COVID-19 pandemic of 2020**, we offered an innovative '**Sharing Walk Drive Thru Parade**' celebrating all those we love with Down syndrome on Saturday, Sept. 26, 2020 at Tempe Diablo Stadium parking area.

The event was a big success! Local media **Fox10 Phoenix and ABC 15 Phoenix** covered the event.

The drive thru was entertaining, interactive and included a welcome area with *goody bags and prizes, DJ playing music, silent auction, food trucks, several special guests cheering on our participants, and a merchandise shop.*

Successes of the 2020 Parade:

- Over 500 people participated
- Online auction raised over \$3,200
- Merchandise sales raised over \$2,000
- Sponsorships raised \$53,750
- Individual Teams raised over \$15,000
- Event reached annual goal of generating over \$100k in donations to support our free programs

Sharing Walk 2019

Our Sharing Walk 2019 was held in September at Tempe Diablo Stadium.

An estimated **3,000 people** turned out for the event, raising much needed funds to continue with our free programs for families and individuals with Down syndrome.

We are fortunate to have the support of **The Phoenix Suns, The Arizona Coyotes, The Arizona Diamondbacks** and so many community organizations sponsor and participate in this event - our **20th annual walk celebrating people with Down syndrome.**



Changing our Outreach During COVID-19



With the shortage of PPE (Personal Protective Equipment) happening with the pandemic, one of our team members had an idea. So, between April-September 2020, our staff member, Jennie Bradfield, made **740** cloth face masks for our families.

These face masks were distributed **FREE** to Sharing families throughout Arizona.

Services Offered During the Pandemic:

- Provide an online '**Parent Packet**' and schedule a Phone Call/FaceTime visit for new parents to receive in lieu of a personal hospital visit; schedule home visits and use face masks and social distance.
- Send gifts and resources to new parents of a baby or child with Down syndrome. The gifts include several books on raising a child with Down syndrome, a Sharing tote bag, a Baby Signing Times DVD, a onesie, a journal and a handmade blanket. **Our new parent gifts are valued at \$100-\$150.**
- Produce a **monthly newsletter** (in English and Spanish) to communicate with parents instead of our monthly in-person public Parent Forums
- Offer **referrals** and a 'listening ear' whenever needed. Our staff is available by cell phone, email, and social media messaging for anyone who needs help.
- **Deliver products** from fundraisers or online shopping; **delivery of other essential** items to communities, including hand-sewn cloth face masks to slow the spread of COVID-19.
- Produce a community event (our annual Sharing Walk) which was a **Drive Thru Celebration** in 2020 due to the pandemic.
- Offer **online classes** starting November 2020 - a yoga class is planned via Zoom on Nov. 7

Major Milestones in Social Media (Marketing & PR)

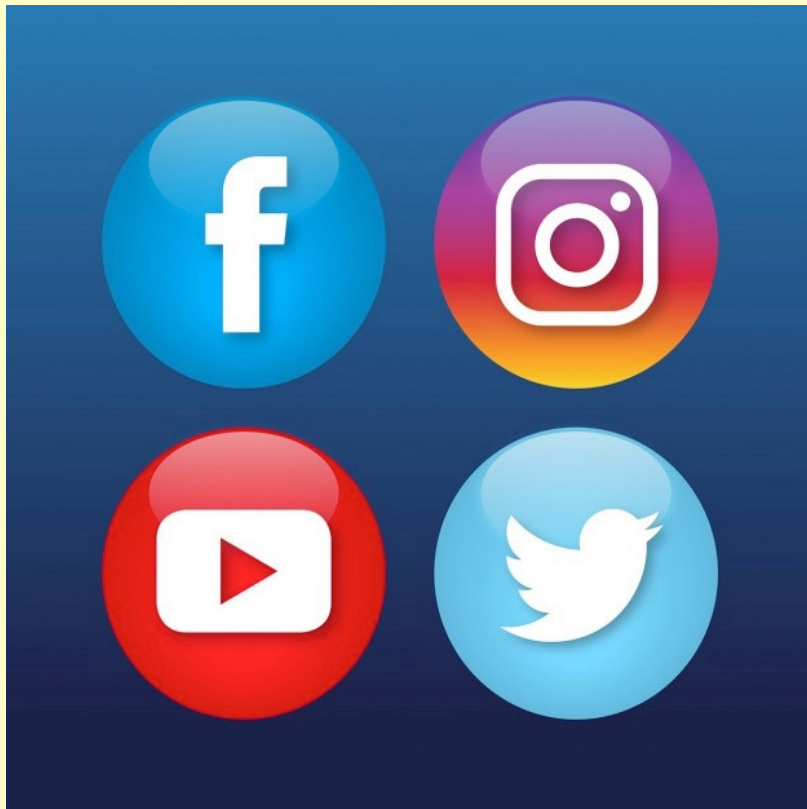
SDSA increased social media following across all platforms. Note, all posts were organic, no paid ads or boosted posts.

Facebook - SDSA Facebook followers increased more than 1k between Sept. 2019-2020 with **4,238 total followers**.

Twitter - SDSA followers TRIPLED to **186 followers** from just 50 followers between Sept. 2019 - October 2020.

Instagram - SDSA followers more than doubled from just under 400 followers in Sept. 2019 to **960 followers** in October 2020.

YouTube - The YouTube channel increased its content and subscribers this past year. Over the past 365 days, Sharing made **2.1k impressions**.

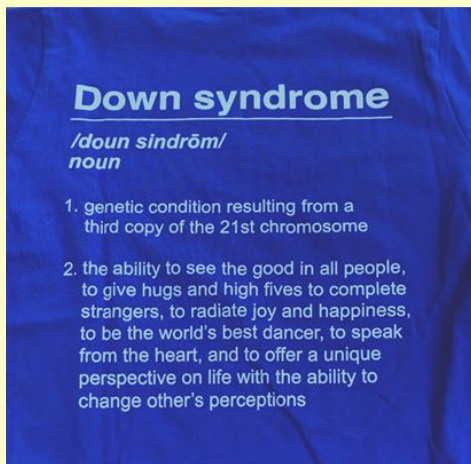


E-commerce

Prior to October 2019, there was no online way to purchase items (merchandise) from SDSA. In the fall of 2019, SDSA opened a **FREE Facebook shop** and it has generated hundreds in merchandise sales, with no ongoing expenses. (Amazon and many other sites have monthly fees of \$40 to sell merchandise).

Our overall merchandise sales in 2019-2020 were approximately \$5,000. Our Facebook Shop is treated as an extra customer service for people who missed an in-person event to buy special merchandise.

Any revenue generated goes right back into our programs and paying for expenses of merchandise.



Online Fundraising Campaigns

SDSA participated in **(3) online giving events in 2019-2020**, generating a little more than **\$15k** in revenue.

Our most successful event was **Giving Tuesday** in December 2019 raising more than **\$10k**. Our **AZ Gives Day** in April 2020 **raised \$1,124** and **Giving Tuesday Now** on May 5, 2020 raised **\$3,956.95**.

All of the listed efforts above raised more than in past years from the information collected.

(Giving Tuesday Now was a first-time ever event in the time of pandemic relief, so there were no benchmarks for this event).



We made our fundraising goal of **\$10k for Giving Tuesday** in December 2019.

As promised, Executive Director Gina Johnson took the **Polar Plunge Challenge**.

Gina stated, "I would do almost anything for people with Down syndrome."

Advisory Board

Current Board of Directors: Gina Johnson, Executive Director & Founder
Sharing Down Syndrome Arizona

Other Board Directors: Pat Hammons, Curt Johnson, Seth Johnson, Leon Ricks, Ibrahim Abdullah.

Board of Advisors: (alpha order) Gina Barreras, Dave Case, Chris Claridge, Adam Dixon, Josiah Friedman, Andrea Friedman, Keith Killourie, Sheri Reed, Sylvia Ricks, Emma Sewell, Daren Shumway, Stephanie Spade, Barbara Wilkins, Stacie Wylie.

The Board of Advisors meet several times per year at the Sharing Down Syndrome Headquarters in Mesa, Arizona. During the COVID-19 pandemic, meetings are held via Zoom.

All Board positions are held by people who work with, are related to and are all committed to helping improve the lives of people with Down syndrome.



Impacting Future Leaders



"It was so inspiring to listen to you and the other mothers talk about your experiences, both good and bad. I, myself, do not have any family or friends with Down Syndrome. My first real experience interacting with these amazing people was in Shannon's research class (at ASU).

As soon as we started conducting the research and getting to know the participants in our study, I realized how much I had been missing.

Having the opportunity to participate in something like that was life changing and further assured me that this career in healthcare is the right path for me. I decided I wanted to continue expanding my knowledge on Down Syndrome by taking her special populations class this semester. I loved hearing about David's, Eric's, and Parker's accomplishments.

They have all done such amazing things. I am so excited to see you guys again at the Sharing Down Syndrome Walk and to continue being a part of the loving community that you guys have established.

Nicole B.
Arizona State University

Note: This photo was taken prior to COVID-19 in the Fall of 2019; In 2020, a virtual meeting was held via Zoom. Member of our Club 3/21 (teens and adults with Down syndrome) speak with future medical professional students at Arizona State University.

From a Proud Parent...

Dear Gina,

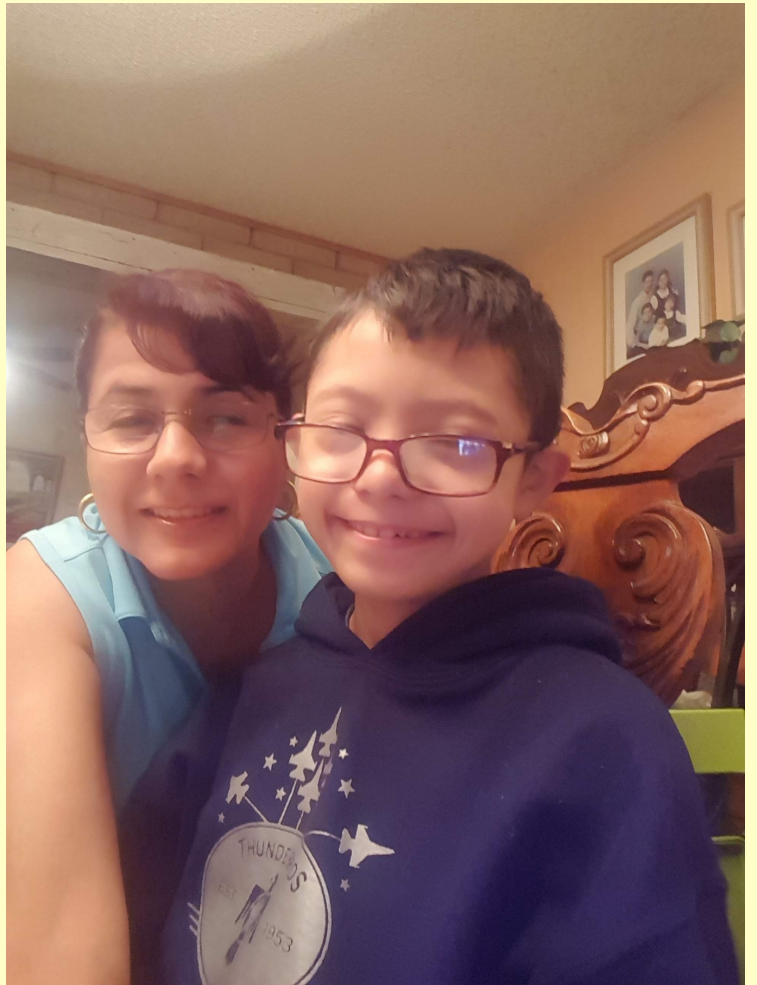
We are a family who has been blessed with your presence. We are so grateful to you. In our community, our kids are better because of you.

Sharing Down Syndrome is a enormous source of support, and that makes all the difference.

We'll keep supporting the SDSA events and fundraising to walk with other families that are living similar circumstances, and keep learning from role models like Gina Johnson, and the whole Sharing Down Syndrome family.

Sincerely,

Rebeca G.
Proud Parent





Hip Hop Homies with Extra Chromies



One of our most popular teen and adult programs is called *The Hip Hop Homies with Extra Chromies*. This dance troupe has evolved over the past 2 ½ years for people with Down syndrome ages 16-55.

Participants come together each week for one hour to have a great time and learn the new Hip Hop dances. The Director of this program is Carol Tingey. Carol has been involved in the disability community since she was on her student council at 15 years old. She went into a special ed class thinking she could serve the students and she realized very quickly, she was the one being served.

She has maintained friendships with many of those students for over 35 years. She is beloved to all the students in her class. Through a private donation, she has been able to hire two teachers and pay the rent to use a dance studio each week.

She knows a need in our community is to have good physical activity and this weekly program provides that. Carol makes this all about our friends with Down syndrome and they feel like they are the stars!

The Hip Hop Homies have been asked to perform at a local high school basketball game and last year, they performed at the Phoenix Suns basketball pregame show. We are always looking for grants or funding to help us expand this wonderful program as members of the Hip Hop Homies remind us to dance like nobody's watching.

**Work like you don't need the money.
Love like you've never been hurt.
Dance like nobody's watching.**

SATCHEL PAIGE



Funding Sources

Grants in 2020 helped SDSA with \$28,800 in revenue for our programs.

SDSA received grants from the *Global Down Syndrome Foundation, Thunderbird's Charities, Scottsdale 20/30 Club, Albertson's/Safeway, Arizona Community Foundation and Network for Good* (through Facebook).

Fry's Community Rewards Program helped raise \$718 for 2020

AmazonSmile helped raise over \$1,000 for 2020

Sharing received \$15,000 through the *Paycheck Protection Program*

Employer Match Giving Programs helped raise over \$10k for 2020

SAECO (Smith and Annala Engineering Company) held their 7th annual fundraising golf tournament on Oct. 5, 2020 with proceeds benefiting SDSA (funding pending)

The *Sharing Drive Thru Walk Parade* helped raise over \$100k in donations and sponsorships in 2020

Earnhardt Auto Centers employees donated \$7,700 to Sharing for the months of April, May, June 2020



Pictured from left to right: SAECO golfers, Drive Thru Parade 2020 fun