



Annual Report

2021-2022



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2020-2025

Vision:

ACT Down Syndrome Association leads the way in building an inclusive community for people with Down syndrome and intellectual disabilities.

Mission

ACTDSA works with individuals and families through lifelong engagement to enable them to reach their full potential as active and contributing members of the wider community.

ACTDSA collaborates and builds relationships with business, government and community organisations to create better outcomes for all of society.

Our Core Values:

Inclusion

**Honesty
& Integrity**

Ethics

Our People

Committee Members

Name	Position	Dates acted
Alicia Flack-Kone	President Vice President	Oct 2021 - Aug 2022 Aug 2021 - Nov 2022
Patricia Murray	Vice President President	Oct 2021 - Aug 2022 Aug 2022 - Nov 2022
Tracey Crump	Treasurer	2021 - 2022
Joy Bartholomew	Secretary	Oct 2021 - Mar 2022
Marie Katselas	General Member Secretary	Oct 2021 - Aug 2022 Aug 2022 - Nov 2022
Nicola Cohen	Parent Support Coordinator	2021 - 2022
Lauren Murray	General Member (Down Syndrome Advisory Network Rep)	2021 - 2022
Annie Lee	General Member (Confident Speakers Rep)	2021 - 2022 2021 - 2022
Kathryn Lee	General Member	2021 - 2022

Patron

Georgeina Wheelan	Commissioner, ACT Emergency Services
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Our People

Employees/ Sub- Contractors

Name	Position
Shannon Kolak	Executive Officer
Gemma Clark	Community Resource Coordinator
Molly Stanley	Project Administrator
Tarnee Dymock	Office Administrator
Charlotte Bailey	Aministration Support ACT Employment Ammbassador
Kim Adams	ACT Health Ambassador
Dr Vanessa de Kauwe	Adult Educator

Volunteers

Name	Position
David Williams	Confident Speakers Facilitator
Liz Milbourne	ACT Voice Magazine Editor
Sam Chapman	ACTDSA Photographer
Sarah Johnson	Education Consultant
Kelli Gowland	Workshop Presenter
Karen Garrity	Workshop Presenter
Sharon Moore	Workshop Presenter

President's Report By Patricia Murray

I am both proud and nervous to be writing this as the new President of ACTDSA. I would like to thank the previous President Alicia Flack-Kone for her drive and passion and for getting us to this point.

ACTDSA has come a long way the past ten years and I look forward to working with the amazing staff, my fellow Committee members and the Association's members to maintain that momentum.

The past year included the ongoing challenge of transitioning out of this never-ending pandemic. The Committee is proud of how the staff at ACTDSA continued to provide online services and support to our community during yet another lock down from August until October 2021 and as we transitioned to the new "normal" of living with Covid in the community. Thank you to Shannon, Gemma, Charlotte and Molly for continuing to be the friendly faces and voices of the Association and for making all the events mentioned below so successful. If you haven't had a chance to visit them at the new offices please don't hesitate to drop in and say hello and check out our amazing new meeting room (available to hire!).

It was great to see the return of the opportunity to volunteer at the breakfast tent at the Balloon Festival this year. One of our volunteers was even lucky enough to be given a free balloon ride when an extra person was needed to balance one of the hot air balloons. If you haven't tried it before, the Committee would encourage you to consider volunteering on behalf of ACTDSA for the next Balloon Festival in March 2023 - you get to see the early morning smiling faces, the balloons launch, and your time is recognised through a generous donation from the Lions Club Belconnen.

The social event of the year was the Alderson Awards - an opportunity to dress up in your finest and enjoy a night where members of the community are recognised for their achievements and support for the Down syndrome community. Our patron Georgina Whelan gave an inspirational virtual speech and our Committee member Annie Lee gave a speech on behalf of the Confident Speakers to thank David Williams for his 25 years of running of the popular program. Congratulations also to Joel Herbert, Taryn Sbirakos and Dr Vanessa de Kauwe for receiving awards this year. I would also like to thank David and Sue Alderson for their ongoing support of this amazing event.

A personal highlight for me was the return of the Step Up Family Day - one of the reasons I volunteer with ACTDSA is for the sense of community and it was a joy to see families and members of all ages reconnect face to face after two years of the picnic day being cancelled. The weather was just right for a picnic, the Lions Club Belconnen were there serving snags and the PCYC Crusin' Café selling well received coffee. The Xtreme Stars had everyone up dancing and the Circus Warehouse were handing out hula hoops to many willing participants. It was lovely to see all the smiling painted faces and sparkly sticker tattoos. Thank you to Pelli Bags for donating the raffle prize and to Dennis from Complete Entertainment for his time.

The Committee is also proud to see members of the association in public speaking roles representing their views on issues such as health and employment. We took our son to the Canberra Centre earlier in the year so he could see photos of people just like him hanging proudly on display as part of the Down Syndrome Australia Employment Project. Thank you to Kim Adams for her role as the Health Ambassador, Charlotte Bailey for her role as Employment Ambassador and Lauren Murray for continuing as our voice on the national Down Syndrome Advisory Network.

We have been fortunate to continue to create a new partnership with GoBoat following successful fundraising days both last year and again as recently as this month. If you didn't make it to the latest event please show your support to GoBoat by taking a boat out in this warmer weather.

Thank you to all our volunteers including Karen Garrity, Sharon Melhuish, Kelli Gowland, Liz Milborne, and my fellow committee members Alicia Flack-Kone, Lauren Murray, Annie Lee, Marie Katselas, Tracey Crump, Kathryn Lee and outgoing members Veronica Ellsmore and Joy Bartholomew. I look forward to continuing to work with you on achieving the Vision of ACTDSA towards an inclusive community for people with Down syndrome and intellectual disabilities.



Patricia Murray

President - ACT Down Syndrome Association Inc.

Treasurer's Report

By Tracey Crump

The 2021-2022 financial year has been difficult for many small not-for-profit organisations due to the COVID lockdown and overall post COVID financial climate. ACTDSA however, has weathered the storm with only a small deficit and a solid outlook for next financial year.

In December 2021 we took over the lease on a new office space in Building 2 of at the Pearce Community Centre. We carried out some basic renovations from December to February – new carpet, painted the office and installed a phone system. By March 2022 we had operations up and running in the new office and began offering our workshops and classes from our own meeting space.

When we were in the old office space in Building 1, we were also renting the SHOUT meeting room for our workshops and classes. The rent on the old office space and the SHOUT meeting room came to approximately t \$16,000 per year and we could only use the meeting room for a limited amount time. The rent on the new space (which is more than 4 times our original space) is approximately \$21,000 per year and we have unlimited use of the space 7 days a week. After receiving a grant from the John James Foundation, we were able to renovate the kitchen in our workshop space and have begun creating an additional and sustainable income stream for the Association through rental of our meeting space to other community groups for meetings and other events.

With bookings already in the calendar for next year, we believe we will be able to cover our room costs with this income while being able to expand our services and offer more classes and groups. We are conscious of ensuring that we protect the image and reputation of the Association, and will ensure that we will only rent to organisations and or purposes that don't conflict with our own purpose and ethos. Much of our funding comes from project grants from Down Syndrome Australia and the Department of Social Services. In addition to this we were lucky enough to receive the Community Support and Infrastructure grant (CSIG) and a Technology Upgrade grant. These grants purchased much needed furniture, computer and audio-visual equipment.

While we do receive grant funding from Down Syndrome Australia and the Department of Social Services, we do rely heavily on the generosity of our community to keep our doors open. Due to COVID restrictions we were not able to run StepUP! for Down Syndrome in 2021 but were able to run an online fundraising campaign which raised over \$2,000. In November 2021, GoBoat Canberra began a fundraising partnership with ACTDSA and by March 2022, they had raised over \$17,000! We raised further funds at the Alderson Awards in May 2022 and received over \$12,000 in donations from the Canberra Southern Cross Club Community Rewards program. I would like to thank everyone who made a donation to the Association over the last 12 months, without your support, the Association would not exist.

This year we began working with a new bookkeeper, accountant and auditor and have streamlined our financial processes which have helped us build a solid foundation on which to continue to build a sustainable future for the organisation. I would like to thank Bellchambers Barret for providing services as our auditor pro-bono.

While our project grant funding is everchanging, we are constantly looking at new and diverse income streams to enable the Association to continue to operate long into the future. I attach the Audited Financials for the information of our members and supporters.



Tracey Crump
Treasurer - ACT Down Syndrome Association

Executive Officer Report

By Shannon Kolak

The last 12 months have seen some huge changes for ACTDSA. We survived our second COVID lockdown, moved into a new office space at the Pearce Community Centre, Alicia, our President stepped down after 10 years in the position, we employed additional staff, we have expanded the capacity building groups we offer to people with intellectual disability and we started a new employment project with Down Syndrome Australia.

We celebrated a new fundraising partnership with GoBoat Canberra who donated a massive \$17,000 to us in March 2022. We received several government grants to purchase items for our new office space including a reception desk and chairs, kids play equipment, a new laptop and a video conferencing system. We also received funding for a new kitchenette from John James Foundation via the Canberra Foundations Collaborative (CFC) Grant Round.

We celebrated World Down Syndrome Day with a fabulous community morning tea, photographic exhibition at the Canberra Centre, dinner with DSA and then the Alderson Awards held a few weeks later. I always enjoy celebrating special days with our community and I'd like to thank everyone who participated in our events.

We have been building strong relationships with the ACT Government, often providing feedback and commentary on various topics including the upcoming ACT Disability Strategy. We also support Kim Adams, Down Syndrome Australia ACT Health Ambassador to sit on the ACT Disability Health Strategy Steering Committee.

Despite our growth over the last 12 months, managing our financial resources has been (and will continue to be) a juggling act. We are funded through a complex series of Down Syndrome Australia ILC project grants, fundraising, donations and sponsorship. We do not receive any ACT Government funding and are constantly looking for new funding opportunities. I would like to thank everyone from our community who has attended one of our fundraising events or personally donated to our organisation. Your support is appreciated more than you will ever know.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank our wonderful staff and volunteers who help make ACTDSA the fabulous organisation it is. To our wonderful staff Gemma, Charlotte, Molly, Kim and Dr V, thank you for your enthusiasm, hard work and commitment. To our volunteers – our Committee, workshops presenters, Confident Speakers coordinator David Williams (who celebrated 25 years of Confident Speakers this year) and Lauren Murray our Down Syndrome Advisory Network representative, thank you for so generously donating your time and expertise for the benefit of our community.



Shannon Kolak
Executive Officer



Community Report

By Gemma Clark

The 2021/2022 financial year was a whirlwind of changing COVID19 restrictions and COVID safe activities for our members. Our wonderful community showed such strength and resilience during the August – November 2021 lockdown and then again with the uncertainty that was seen over the Christmas period.

While we were all once again at home, our groups seamlessly went back online. Our Science Alliance and Numeracy for Everyday Living groups continued to meet online and expand their skills and knowledge, while also having a bit of a laugh with each other. Due to the COVID19 lockdown our Science Alliance group were unable to participate in the 2021 National Science Week as originally planned. As restrictions began to ease, the group was able to get together and record a COVID safe “21 Gun Salute” for Down Syndrome Awareness Month celebrations in October.

We were unable to get together for StepUP! for Down Syndrome like we had hoped for. Our members were once again encouraged to participate in the online #21YourWay challenge as an Australia wide celebration.

The beginning of 2022 was a whirlwind of activity. The ACT Down Syndrome Association Office moved in February and a massive renovation project began. We held our “Diversity in the Classroom” workshop for teaching professionals in early March while we also ramped up preparations for World Down Syndrome Day.

This year World Down Syndrome Day celebrations were held at our new office and we took part in a the Down Syndrome Australia Right To Work campaign focusing on Employment. We were very proud to partner with Down Syndrome Australia and have some of our members photos displayed in the Canberra City Centre. These photos are now proudly displayed at the ACT Down Syndrome Office.

In May we celebrated the Alderson Awards and received fabulous nominations from our members. Our members were celebrated for everything from enthusiastically attending school, learning to drive a car, building up strength in the gym and starting a new business. Congratulations to all our Nominees and Winners!

Throughout 2021/2022 we continued to support members to participate on the Down Syndrome Advisory Network and in the Down Syndrome Australia Health Ambassador Program. We also launched our National Employment Program which has allowed us to employ an ACT Employment Ambassador and support 11 people with Down syndrome to gain employment.

Although we didn't start the 2021/2022 the way that we would have liked our community was quick to respond and the ACTDSA team was once again blown away by our communities resilience and kindness.



Gemma Clark
Community Resource Coordinator



ACT Employment Ambassador & Admin Officer Report

By Charlotte Bailey

Hello my name is Charlotte Bailey and I am the ACT Employment Ambassador and I work for the ACT Down Syndrome Association as an office administrator and receptionist. I also have a casual job at Gungahlin Eastlakes football club in the bistro. I love my jobs, because I love being busy each day so that I can work harder to earn more money and learn lots of new skills.

This year has been very busy for me. I got to speak for Down Syndrome Australia at the United Nations. It was the best feeling ever because I represented all people living with Down syndrome and spoke about what I would like Australia to be in the future- to be inclusive and supportive of helping people living with a disability to find meaningful employment . I have loved being a role model for people living with disabilities.

Being employment ambassador I have worked hard talking to businesses and government to help other people become successful and to be incredible at doing their jobs because it is important for me and for everybody else as well.

I got to meet the Prime Minister this year and I also had a meeting with Minister Bill Shorten, who said he would visit me at my workplace where I could have a coffee with him. I am looking forward to showing him what I do at work and how great it is for me to work like everyone else. Inclusion in employment is important to me because it helps me build confidence and I get to earn money to spend like everyone else does. I have great coworkers at Eastlakes Gungahlin who are always happy when I am working with them.

I hope that 2023 is a fabulous as 2022 has been and that I can continue to represent everyone as Employment Ambassador and keep helping people reach their goals and live their best life like me.



Charlotte Bailey

ACT Employment Ambassador & ACTDSA Admin Officer

Health Ambassador Report

By Kim Adams

Following the last AGM, the Health Ambassadors were not able to carry out many of our duties because of the restrictions of COVID. However, we were able to continue to have our group meetings online each fortnight. It has been possible to give presentations to some health care groups via the internet and more recently, since COVID restrictions have been lifted, we have been able to have some face-to-face meetings.

Earlier this year I was invited to join the ACT Health - Disability Health Strategy Steering Committee. We meet regularly online to do this. Most of my online meetings are done from the DSA office and I am very grateful to Shannon and Gemma for all of the support that they give me. We spoke to Judith and Imogen from Canberra Health Services about how we think the community could influence teaching and learning at the Canberra Hospital. I gave a short presentation on the health needs of people with Down syndrome and explained that this was a good example of a presentation I could give to other health professionals.

I also participated in the Health and Well-Being session at Australia's Disability Strategy National Forum at the National Museum. The group spoke about the health needs of people with a disability and a woman with an intellectual disability told us about a negative experience she had with her GP and how she had to educate her doctor. We also heard from an emergency doctor who has a disability himself. Dr Palipana is in a wheelchair, and he spoke about the need for people with a disability to get exactly the same care in hospitals as people without a disability.

In December I will be travelling to Melbourne for a special group meeting with all the DSA Health Ambassadors from around Australia. Our Health Program Manager is Natalie Graham, who is a registered nurse. During our group meetings Natalie has spoken to us about what we need to do to ensure our own health.

I really enjoy being the Health Ambassador for the ACT Region and am looking forward to another year of representing the DSA to health professionals.



Kim Adams
ACT Health Ambassador

Down Syndrome Advisory Network DSAN Report

By Lauren Murray

It has been another busy year for our group.

With Covid still increasing in most states our DSAN meetings have always included the need to keep in touch and discussing new ideas on how to keep busy during periods of lockdown.

I had Covid myself recently and I was grateful for the messages of support from my family and friends while I was in isolation.

There has been a strong focus on Inclusion, Employment and Self Advocacy. This theme was displayed on World Down Syndrome Day in March where in the Canberra Centre we had large posters suspended from the ceiling with photos of some of our members.

This was to bring awareness to the general public that people with Down Syndrome deserve a job like any one else.

There have been workshops online on how to do your resume and tips on self advocacy and decision making. It was lovely to finally meet our chairperson Claire Mitchell who came from Queensland for a visit to see the display and join us at the dinner that evening.

I hope 2023 will be an exciting year for all of us and that people with Down Syndrome continue to do great things and achieving their goals.



Lauren Murray

ACT Down Syndrome Advisory Network Representative



Science Alliance Report

By Max Grinsell-Jones

My name is Maxwell and I go to Science Alliance on Tuesdays every week during school terms. Science Alliance has been going for 3 years now. It has been so popular a second group has been started.

This year it has been good to be able to do Science face to face in the Association's new premises.

A lot of time this year has been spent studying biology. We learnt that living things can be divided into plants and animals. We learnt that plants are made up of numerous organs including roots, leaves, bark, stems, buds, flowers, fruit and seeds. We did an experiment to see whether grass could grow in the dark. We found out that it can although it was not as healthy as grass that was growing in the light. We also learnt that plants are important for human beings as they create oxygen.

We have continued with our Jedi training which has helped us deal with our emotions by analysing our actions. For StepUP! for Down Syndrome Day Dr V took her Jedi training skills out to the public.

We also studied the planets and where Earth fits into the Solar System. I think it is important that people learn about science so that they can understand how things around them work. I really enjoy learning with Dr V as she makes learning about science fun. I believe we have shown that people with Down syndrome can learn about science if the right approach to learning is taken.

I would like to thank Dr V, Shannon, Gemma, Molly and Charlotte and all my science alliance buddies for the last year. We have become such good friends we have our own WhatsApp group and regularly message each other outside of classes.



Max Grinsell-Jones
Science Alliance Member



Confident Speakers Report

By Annie Lee

Hi everyone, my name is Annie. I will tell you about Confident Speakers and what we have been doing. We meet once a month to do a speech on a topic.

We did topics like my Favourite Card Game. I chose Uno and so did Neave. We talked about the rules and some memories of playing the game.

We also did a debate on which is better: AFL or NRL. Me and a couple of other people chose AFL, and we won the debate.

We learnt how to do a Magic trick and then we showed the group. I learnt a card trick and I practiced it a lot and showed it off to my family. They were very impressed.

I would like to congratulate David for running Confident Speakers for 25 years!



Annie Lee
Confident Speakers Representative



Our Supporters

The ACT Down Syndrome Association Committee and Staff would like to thank all of our supporters for the 2021/2022 financial year.

Without your support we would not be able to continue to serve our community.



Australian Government
Department of Social Services



Down Syndrome
Australia



Canberra
Foundations
Collaborative

G5BOAT



Beyond Bank
AUSTRALIA



bellchambers
barrett

independent

australia
we serve



Become a member

To become a member of ACTDSA, please contact the office on 02 6290 0656 or admin@actdsa.org.au for a membership form.

You can also fill out the form online at: www.actdsa.org.au

Membership to ACTDSA is free.

Make a donation

To make a donation, scan the QR code and follow the prompts, **or** email the office admin@actdsa.org.au for a donation form.



To support an event or fundraising activity or become a corporate sponsor.

Please contact our office on **02 6290 0656** or executive@actdsa.org.au

Contact Details

PO Box 717
Mawson ACT 2607

Building 2, Level 1,
Pearce Community Centre
Collett Place
Pearce ACT 2607

02 6290 0646

General enquiries
admin@actdsa.org.au

Shannon Kolak
Executive@actdsa.org.au

Gemma Clark
Community@actdsa.org.au