

## Rock Issue #2

Summer 2016

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We are families and friends of children with Down Syndrome. Many challenges that arise for families with a loved one who has special needs stems from the lack of social awareness and education in our communities. For us, Rock the 21 and the awareness events we host, and the organizations and families we support, serve as an opportunity to help foster social awareness and educate our friends, family, local businesses and community on Down Syndrome.

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Have a question or comment? We'd love to hear from you. Please send us an email or visit our new website:

[rockthe21ds@gmail.com](mailto:rockthe21ds@gmail.com)

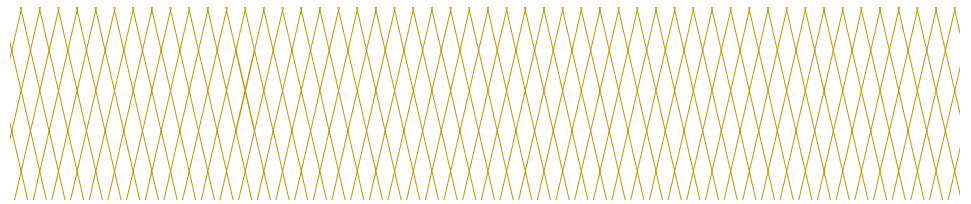
[www.rockthe21.org](http://www.rockthe21.org)

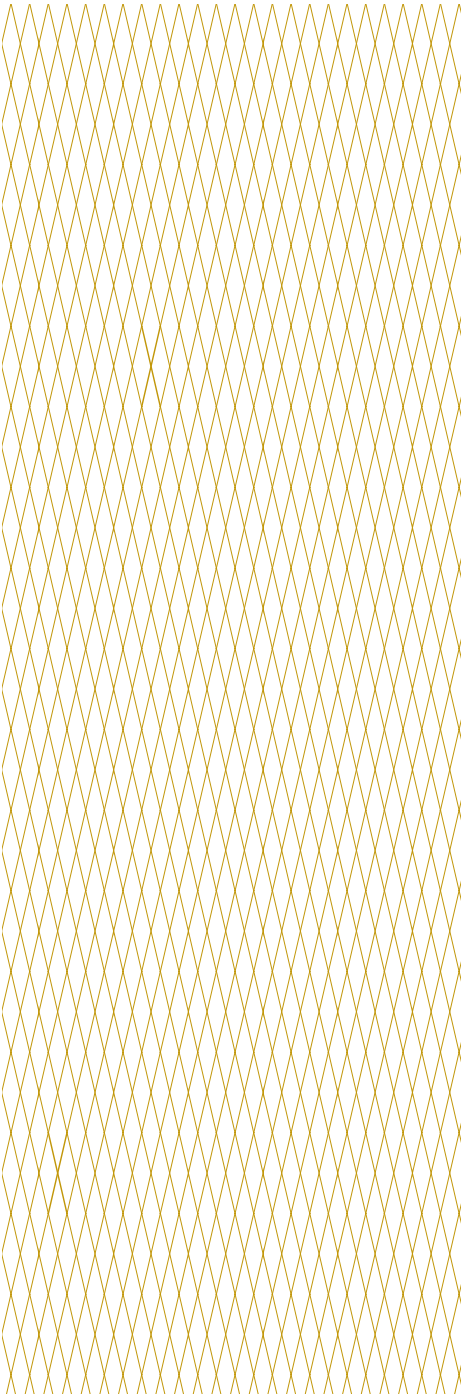
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Please follow us on Facebook, Twitter and Instagram!

# Rock

## THE 21





**I**t has been a busy few months and we are excited to share Rock the 21 updates with our second newsletter. One of our more important announcements is that Rock the 21 is now a stand-alone, not-for-profit organization and designated as a 501(c)(3) public charity by the IRS.

*It is through your generosity that we are able to do what we do. More information about our organization and Board of Directors is detailed at the end of our newsletter.*

*We are thankful for your support and can't wait for you to read about the activities we've funded and families we've assisted with your help.*

*Keep rockin' with us and read on...*

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### **New Therapy Room Provides Interactive Learning Space**

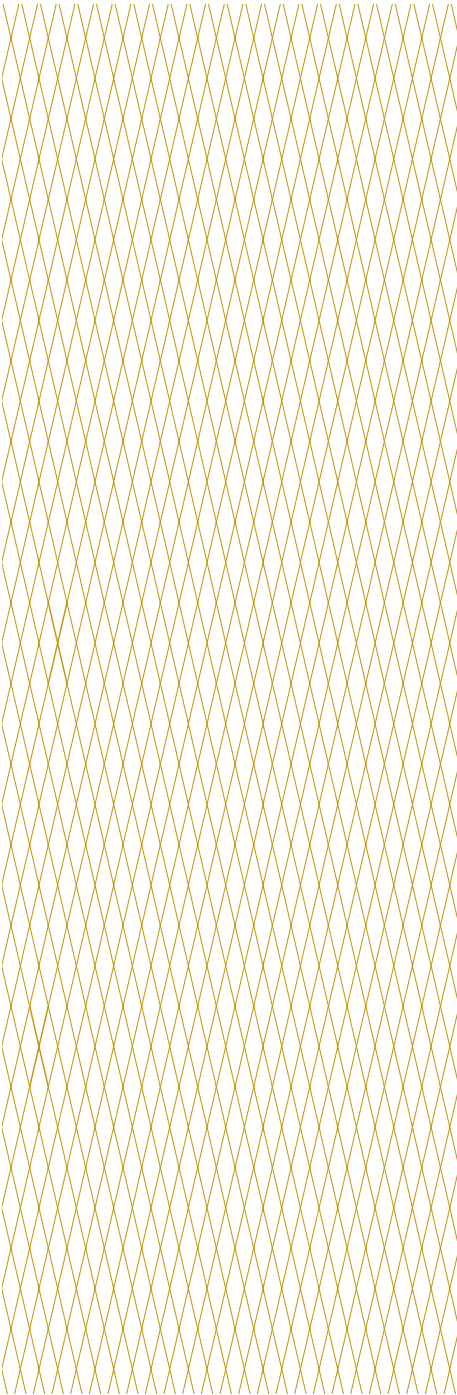
In partnership with the Candle Lighters, Rock the 21 helped to fund the construction of a state-of-the-art early intervention, therapy and sensory room at a local school for children with Down Syndrome. This light-filled, three-room space features a classroom, ball-pit, rock climbing wall (coming soon!) and swings.

Therapists now have the appropriate space to work with the children, ages birth to nine years, in small groups and one-on-one to help improve their gross and fine motor abilities, language skills, social development and self-help skills.

The exercises and activities are designed to help the children reach their developmental milestones — something we can all be proud of helping them achieve!







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## LETTERS AND GIFTS OF SUPPORT ARE ON THE WAY!

We know first-hand how surprising it can be to receive a diagnosis of Down Syndrome. With current medical advances, that diagnosis can be received as early as 10 weeks gestation, before most couples have even gone public with their news that they are expecting a baby. With endless information available at a click of button, it can be incredibly lonely and stressful for parents to sort through information.

Rock the 21 wants to be the first to congratulate a family and offer support and resources. And, what better way to congratulate than with a gift?

Our diagnosis support packages include a congratulations card signed by a parent currently raising a child with Down Syndrome and their contact information, along with every baby's favorite toy — Sophie the Giraffe, as pictured above with our Rocker Cael. We started delivering our gift packages around the NJ/NYC metro area. They will be offered to parents as soon as a DS diagnosis is given.

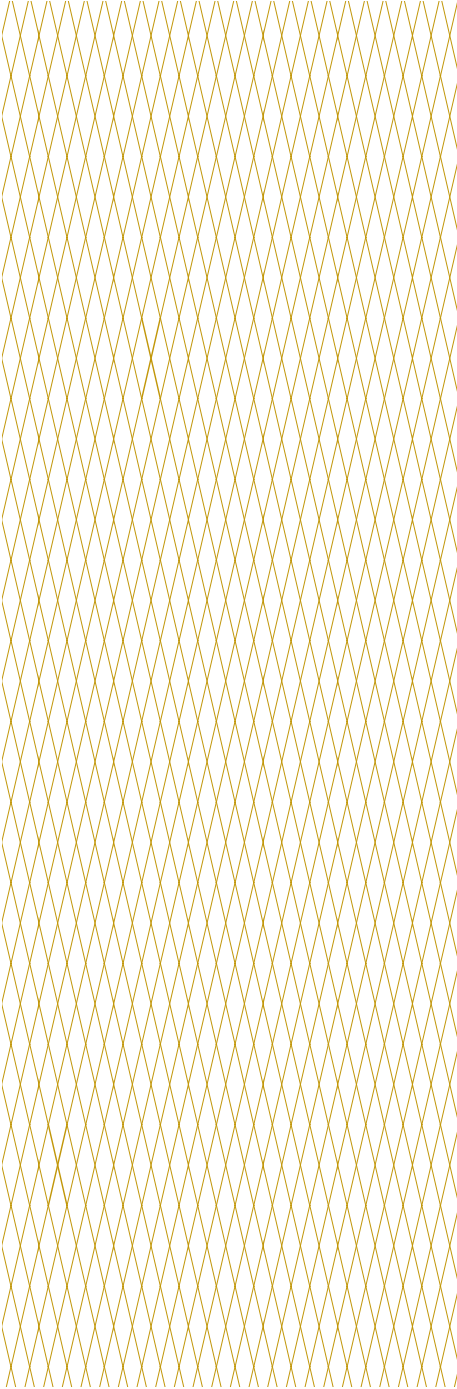
If you know of a doctor or family that would be interested in receiving a diagnosis support gift package, please contact us at: [rockthe21ds@gmail.com](mailto:rockthe21ds@gmail.com)

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## ARE YOU READY FOR 'ROCKTOBER'?

Every October, people across the U.S. celebrate DS awareness month, taking the opportunity to spread awareness and celebrate the abilities and accomplishments of people with DS.

Rock the 21 is in full preparation mode as we plan to kick-off DS awareness month with our *next gala and fundraiser, scheduled for October 8th, 2016 at Maritime Parc in Jersey City, NJ*. We have planned a special evening of great food and drinks, dancing, silent



auction and raffle baskets. All proceeds from the event will fund our future endeavors, which currently include:

- ◇ An **“Educate the Educators” session** — a workshop on creating a successful educational program and inclusive environment for children with DS in the public school systems.
- ◇ A **vocational training program** for adults with DS to help enhance their skills and increase their ability to be independent in the workplace.
- ◇ Funding of **an assistance dog**, specifically trained to help individuals with DS and other medical issues.
- ◇ **Let’s Rock!** A dance and networking event(s) for teens and young adults with DS.

Additional opportunities will be identified throughout the year to fund services, resources and tools for individuals with DS and their families, and to support other non-profit organizations with missions similar to Rock the 21.

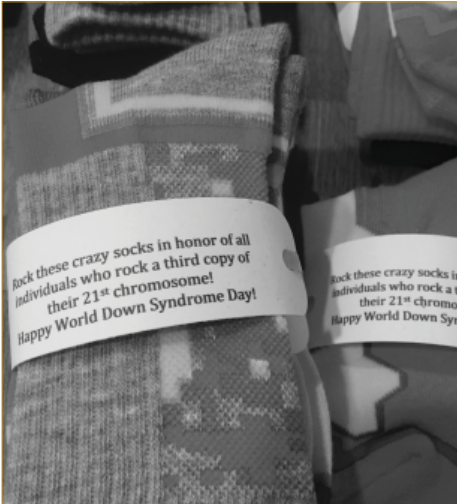
*If you have a suggestion for something our organization can help with, please let us know!*

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## SPREADING AWARENESS: HOW TO GET YOUR COMMUNITY ROCKIN’

Do you want to celebrate and spread awareness in your community? There are a variety of activities you can coordinate locally during DS Awareness Month in October, such as:

- ◇ **Dress Down Day at School or Work** - Request a minimum monetary donation amount for students, teachers or colleagues to dress in jeans or other casual clothes. If casual clothes aren’t appropriate, ask colleagues to dress in blue or yellow — DS awareness colors.
- ◇ **Host a “Rock your Socks Day”** at work or in your child’s classroom to celebrate and honor individuals that rock the extra 21st chromosome.
- ◇ **Dimes (or Dollars) for Down Syndrome** - Display a “Dimes for Down Syndrome” jar in a prominent local business, such as a doctor or dental office, dry cleaner or restaurant, and include a short note about raising money for awareness and proceeds going to a DS support organization, such as Rock the 21 or the National Down Syndrome Society (NDSS).
- ◇ **Share a Book** - Ask your child’s teacher to read a children’s book on DS, such as *47 Strings: Tessa’s Special Code* by Becky Carey or *The Prince Who Was Just Himself* by Silke Schnee.
- ◇ **Get Walking & Talking** - Coordinate and/or participate in the NDSS’ Buddy Walk Program, which takes place in communities across the U.S. during the month of October.





## ROCK THE 21 CELEBRATES NON-PROFIT / PUBLIC CHARITY APPROVAL

Because of the success stemming from our first social awareness cocktail reception and fundraiser, and the organizations and families we've been able to support, *we formally incorporated a stand-alone, IRS 501(c)(3)-approved, not-for-profit corporation to further our mission.* This was a huge accomplishment for us, as many organizations are required to wait two reporting years to receive approval. Rock the 21 was founded on the heartfelt goal of wanting to share our stories and help others. Although our stories are different, we believe in their power to help other parents and families of rockin' children and adults with DS.

Rock the 21 will work with our supporters to create social awareness and educational opportunities for those who may not know the specifics of DS. Our mission is to provide resources and support to individuals of all ages with DS and their families.

Most importantly, we will celebrate all individuals with DS. Details on our team are below.

- ◇ **Beth Freeman** - President, mother of twin daughters with DS
- ◇ **Ana High** - First Vice President, mother of a son with DS
- ◇ **Tara Stauber** - Second Vice President, mother of a daughter with DS
- ◇ **Stephanie Dotto** - Treasurer, mother of a daughter with DS
- ◇ **Teresa Marzocca Inauen** - Secretary, special needs therapist and caretaker of children with DS
- ◇ **Andrew Darcy** - Legal Advisor
- ◇ **Elias Marengo** - Finance Advisor
- ◇ **Chinoy Edwards** - Graphic Design Support
- ◇ **Katherine Brown** - Website / Technology Support



## AND...WE NOW HAVE A WEBSITE!

We have formally launched our website, which includes a variety of helpful tools and resources.

Please check us out to learn more about our story and mission: [www.rockthe21.org](http://www.rockthe21.org)

Rock the 21 is a not-for-profit organization dedicated to celebrating, educating, and fostering social awareness of Down Syndrome.

WE PROVIDE SUPPORT TO INDIVIDUALS OF ALL AGES WITH DOWN SYNDROME ACROSS THE NJ/NY METRO AREA.