

ROCK NEWS
ISSUE 3 - SPRING 2017

We are families and friends of children with Down Syndrome. For families with a loved one who has who has special needs, many challenges stem from the lack of social awareness and education in our communities. The awareness events Rock the 21 hosts, and the organizations and families we support, serve as an opportunity to help foster social awareness through the education of friends, family, local businesses and our communities.

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

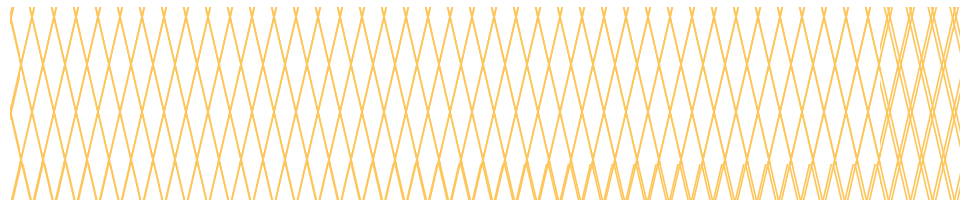
rockthe21ds@gmail.com

www.rockthe21.org

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Rock

THE 21



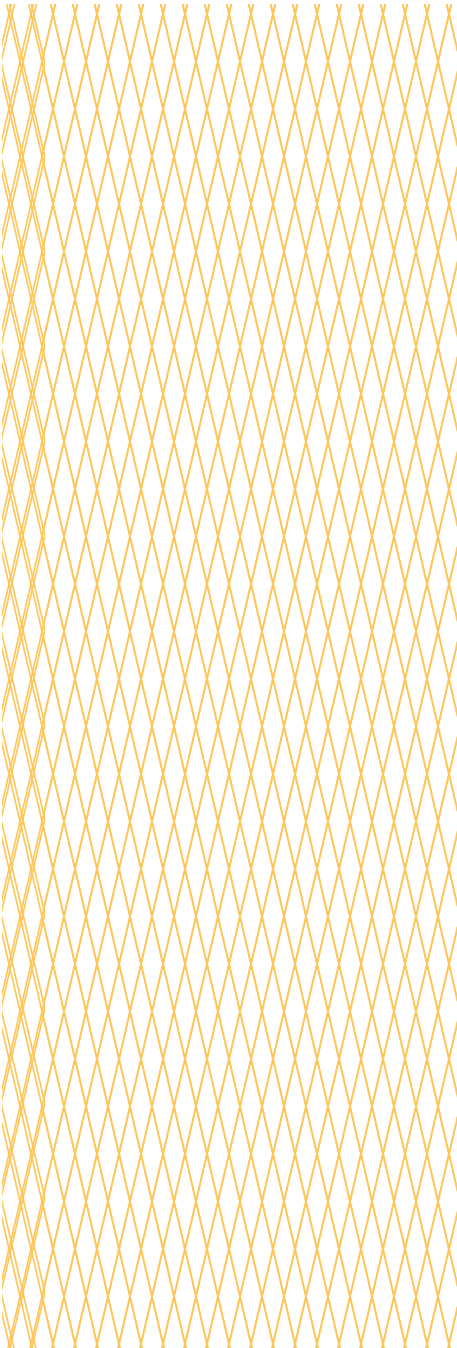


YES, WE ARE STILL ROCKIN'!

And we definitely did in 'Rocktober! With more than 300 guests, Rock the 21 kicked off October's Down Syndrome Awareness Month with our gala and fundraiser at Maritime Parc in Jersey City.

Thank you to our donors and attendees who helped us raise nearly \$60K in proceeds. We are grateful 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. Please keep rockin' with us and read on...

P.S. Photos from our gala are up! Please check out our website: <http://www.rockthe21.org/october-2016/>

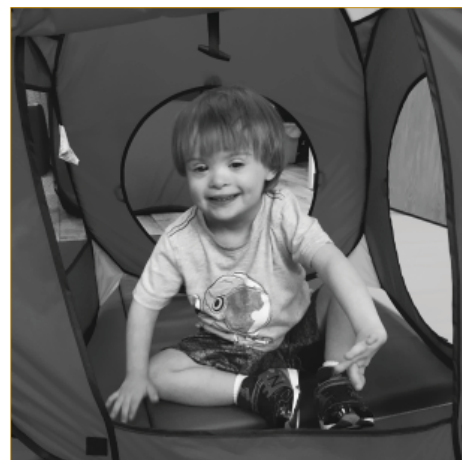


SCHOLARSHIP AWARDED FOR EARLY INTERVENTION PROGRAM

To help our youngest community members achieve their fullest potential, Rock the 21 awarded a scholarship to the Stepping Stones' early intervention program. Our scholarship will provide 160 hours of therapy for two toddlers with Down syndrome (DS) who would otherwise not benefit from the program due to financial constraints.

Early intervention, which is provided to children with disabilities prior to their third birthday, is a set of critical services — most often speech, occupational and physical therapy — to help improve gross and fine-motor abilities, language skills, social development and self-help skills.

Stepping Stones' program, which is held in a state-of-the-art therapy and sensory room, provides an interactive environment for the children to work individually and in small groups to acquire skills such as walking and balancing, strengthening their pincer grasp, and drinking from a straw, to name just a few. These important skills will be the foundation for a future filled with many successes and milestones.



SPREADING AWARENESS ON WORLD DOWN SYNDROME DAY

Tuesday, March 21st was World Down Syndrome Day (WDS), a date formally recognized by the United Nations to signify the uniqueness of the triplication (trisomy) of the 21st chromosome which causes DS. Every year on this day, schools and businesses across the world honor and celebrate individuals with DS.

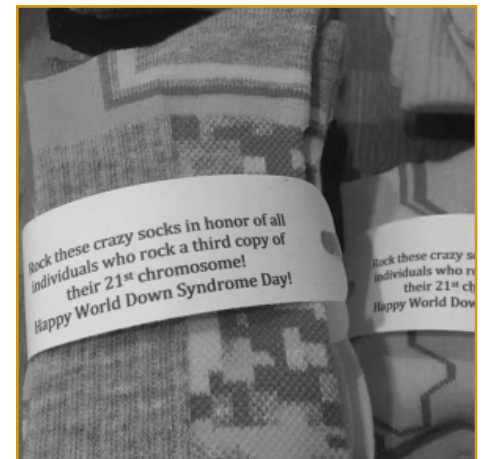
Rock the 21 was busy celebrating and spreading awareness on WDS — as were our family and friends across the country. Several schools and businesses participated in a “Rock your Socks” day, wearing their brightest, spunkiest, craziest socks to celebrate the unique differences that make our communities a brighter place.

Rock’s Vice Presidents Ana High and Tara Stauber were guest speakers at a local rotary luncheon where they shared their stories and information on Rock the 21 resources.

Rock the 21 also received a proclamation from Mayor Dawn Zimmer to recognize March 21st as WDS in the City of Hoboken, as well as honored Rock for our efforts in creating social awareness and educational opportunities for the City, and for supporting individuals with DS.

We ended our evening celebrating with members of our community that rock their 21st chromosome and their families. This event served as an opportunity for parents to network and share experiences, and for kids to form friendships and have fun! Part of the celebration included supporting [Hudson Milestones](#) — another non-profit who is dedicated to the care, support and advancement of persons with developmental disabilities.

Rock the 21 donated a variety of therapeutic toys to benefit the children who attend Hudson Milestone’s Child Development Center.





ROCK ON THE MOVE - WHAT'S NEXT?

Future activities and events we are currently organizing:

- ◆ Planning efforts are underway for our “Educate the Educators” seminar for teachers. This session, tentatively planned for October 28th, will provide strategies for educators to develop successful inclusion programs in their classrooms for children with DS and other special needs. More information will be posted in June.
- ◆ Stop by and say hello at our booth at Hoboken’s Art and Music Festival on June 11th.
- ◆ Get ready to ROCK at our next gala and fundraiser, which will be held in March 2018 to coincide around World Down Syndrome Day celebrations. Save the date to follow.

Do you have an event idea, or know of a family that needs support? Please let us know.

JOINING THE WORKFORCE

Having a job is important and fulfilling, but even more so for persons with intellectual disabilities. The satisfaction of a job, financial independence, as well as social interaction provides an important sense of purpose and belonging. Rock the 21 provided a scholarship for six adults with DS to participate in a job sampling program at [Employment Horizons](#) — a non-profit organization that provides employment, training and job placement services to people with disabilities. This program provides participants, such as Beau pictured to the left, the opportunity

to explore several different careers to find a job that matches their skill set and interests. Career counseling and instruction in job-seeking skills will also be provided.

Additionally, Rock the 21 also provided a scholarship for a three-month training program for one culinary arts trainee with DS. This person will receive hands-on training in the kitchen. When ready to graduate, Employment Horizons will provide the individual assistance in contacting employers and help with scheduling interviews.

IN MEMORIAM

Rock the 21 is grateful to have recently received generous donations in memoriam of two individuals who had loved ones with DS.

Anthony “Cheech” Scipione was a loving father to a now 57-year-old son, Anthony, who has DS. The love and tireless commitment that he and his wife Lucy gave to their son Anthony is one that is worthy of all of our praise.

Rosemary Freeman was a great-grandmother to two children with DS. She dedicated her life to helping

children, welcoming thousands of babies as a labor and delivery nurse.

Understanding the care and support Anthony and Rosemary gave to their loved ones with DS, their families requested donations to Rock the 21 in their honor.

We thank the Scipione and Freeman families. The contributions received in memory of Anthony and Rosemary will lovingly go towards helping persons with DS and their families.

DELIVERING RESOURCES AND LOVE

Rock the 21 has prepared diagnosis support packages to offer support and resources to families.

The support packages include a congratulations card signed by a parent currently raising a child with DS and their contact information, along with every baby’s favorite toy — Sophie the Giraffe.

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