

down syndrome community connections

INCLUSION + SUPPORT + ACCEPTANCE

March 2025



WORLD DOWN
SYNDROME DAY
merchandise to wear & share!

The Swains

Where passion for hockey meets
heartfelt advocacy and Down syndrome
awareness



PLUS

World Down
Syndrome Day
events to add
to your
calendar

AWARENESS

World Down Syndrome Day 2025

Across the globe, organizations, advocates, families and supporters are calling on their governments to “Improve our Support Systems” for people with Down syndrome.

“We have the right to support that meets our needs and gives us choice, control and dignity.”

-Down Syndrome International

3.21.2025

Celebrate with Purpose



William Swain with his daughter, Saoirse Swain, working outside their home

Unity & Support

World Down Syndrome Day (WSDS) is a Global Day of Celebration for people with Down syndrome, observed by the United Nations since 2012. The date 3.21 signifies the triplication of chromosomal material on the 21st chromosome, which causes Down syndrome. Down Syndrome International partners with the National Down Syndrome Society and Down's Syndrome Association to create unity for organizations worldwide by selecting a theme for World Down Syndrome Day.

The theme for 2025 is "Improve our Support Systems," which calls on governments worldwide to pay special attention to the policies that affect people with Down syndrome and those who care for them. The reality for people with Down syndrome around the world is that they are still poorly treated. They are denied a quality education, good health care, and opportunities to work and learn alongside their peers. As we celebrate the rights and support individuals with Down syndrome receive in our community, let us reflect on the energy, effort, and work it takes to maintain and improve existing services.

Support is a key human right that helps make other rights possible

There are countless ways to show your support for WSDS, including buying our WSDS merchandise, available at Jilly's Socks 'n Such, 3900 Old Cheney, during the month of March. Also, wearing colorful, mismatched socks, or performing random acts of kindness are perfect ways to raise awareness and celebrate.

DSAF is hosting Down Syndrome Awareness Night with the Omaha Lancers. Player jerseys designed for this event will be auctioned off after the game. Every ticket purchased through our link enters the purchaser for a chance to win one jersey!



DID YOU KNOW?

Wearing mismatched, bright, and eye-catching socks on WSDS was started as a way to get attention and start conversations about Down syndrome. When people ask about your socks, tell them what you want them to know about your loved one(s) with Down syndrome!

Power in Passion

The Swain family opened the floodgates of support, awareness, and advocacy by pairing their family's favorite pastime into an inclusive family celebration



Hillary Swain, holding Saoirse, Zephram & Spencer with the Ice Girls

In late 2021, the Swain family attended hockey games at the Ice Box, where they discovered a passionate community supporting the Lincoln Stars. Prepared to protect their children from the noise and chaos of the game, they strategized to enjoy the game as long as possible and head out early. Instead, they discovered that their children would be keenly attentive and immersed in the chaos on the ice, particularly Saoirse, youngest of the three, with Down syndrome. She banged on the glass and danced the whole time, even when her big brothers, Spencer & Zephram, got heavy eyelids. As the tradition of attending the games grew, so did Saoirse's excitement. The Lincoln Ice Box has become a second home for the Swains and all the staff, players, and coaches recognize Saoirse and give her high fives and shoutouts.

In 2022, Saoirse attended her first NHL game to see the Nashville Predators and ran into several members of the Down Syndrome community. Filip Forsberg, left wing for the Predators, stopped to smile, wave at her during warm-ups, and passed her a warm-up puck. She continued this trend at her second NHL game, watching the Winnipeg Jets, meeting more people with Down syndrome and their families, and has built a community, whether USHL, AHL, or NHL.

Hillary and her husband, William, established relationships with General Managers for the Lincoln Stars and Omaha Lancers and launched the Down Syndrome Awareness Nights for both teams each season. This partnership has been a game-changer the Down syndrome community. This provides an opportunity to raise awareness and much-needed funds for programs and services.



Hillary & William Swain, with children Spencer, Zephram, & Saoirse

Hillary, born in Moriarty, NM, and William, from Tulsa, OK, moved to Lincoln with the Lincoln Air National Guard. They met and married during their service in the United States Air Force and started their family in 2012, welcoming their firstborn son, Spencer. Zephram was born in 2016, and Saoirse was born in 2020. Hillary retired from the USAF in 2023 and works as the marketing director for Great Plains Nursery and is building her Marketing firm. William left the USAF to pursue a career in the private sector, primarily focusing on aviation and providing professional development, coaching, and training.

DOWN SYNDROME AWARENESS NIGHT WITH THE LANCERS!

Friday
March 21st, 2025

Omaha Lancers
vs.
Des Moines Buccaneers

Liberty First
Credit Union
Arena

\$10.00
Doors: 6:00 PM
Puck Drop: 7:05 PM

 **down syndrome**
association for families
of nebraska
dsafnebraska.org

WHY YOUR SUPPORT MATTERS!

Enjoy a night of spectacular hockey and contribute to a cause that makes a real impact in the lives of individuals with Down syndrome and their families! Your ticket purchase provides essential support for a range of enriching programs including:

- Educational Workshops
- Recreational Activities
- Parent Scholarships
- Social Gatherings to foster a vibrant community for individuals and their families!

\$10 tickets!



Scan the QR Code to Secure Your Tickets Now!



<https://fevo-enterprise.com/event/DSAF25>

World Down Syndrome Day in Omaha

The Omaha Lancers are hosting the first Down Syndrome Awareness Night for DSAF on Friday, March 21, 2025. We encourage every individual with Down syndrome, every family member, neighbor, supporter, advocate, and friend of someone with Down syndrome, to take this opportunity to celebrate a night of inclusion and awareness with the Lancers and our community. We have 250 tickets to sell, and a jersey auction concludes the night. These commemorative jerseys are designed for this one event only. The artwork and design represent our mission of inclusion and acceptance of people with Down syndrome and the support systems needed to ensure their success in the world.

Every ticket purchased using link will automatically enter purchaser into raffle for a FREE jersey! Jerseys are designed for this event only and the remaining player jerseys will be sold in auction following the game

WDSD Merchandise

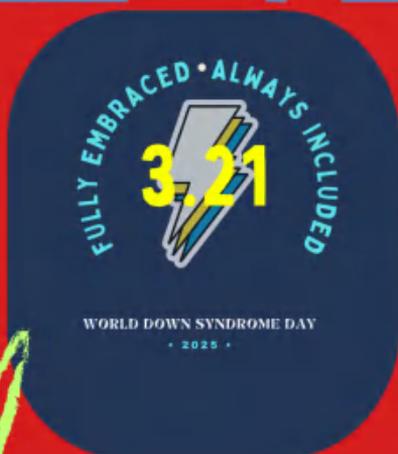


HOODIES,
SWEATSHIRTS, &
LONG-SLEEVE
SHIRTS AVAILABLE
TO PURCHASE AT



IN ADDITION TO OFFERING SOCKS FOR EVERY MEMBER OF THE FAMILY, JILLY'S IS HOSTING A WDSD SHOP WITH DSAF MERCH. AVAILABLE UNTIL 3.31

JILLY'S SOCKS 'N SUCH
3900 OLD CHENEY RD
SUITE 204
LINCOLN, NE



FOR ORDER ONLY!
ORDER SHIRTS BY 3/13
FOR 3/21 PICKUP

DIRECTOR@DSAFNEBRASKA.ORG
NO INFANT SIZES AVAILABLE

Make it Count



World Down Syndrome Day Proclamation signing at the Nebraska State Capitol in 2024.

YOUR SUPPORT MATTERS

Whether you shop our WSD merchandise at Jilly's, wear colorful socks on the big day, support the Lancers at the Hockey game, or attend our WSD celebration, know that you are making a difference. Help us spread the word this year by sharing these details with friends, family, co-workers and neighbors. We can't wait to see you all on 3.21!



It's EASY to make an impact this World Down Syndrome Day: gift hockey tickets to friends, wear your mismatched socks and DSAF merch, and show your support for people with Down syndrome!

We value your partnership!



RAYMOND JAMES



HALEON



UBT
Union Bank & Trust

ENABLE
SAVINGS PLAN



Bryan  Health



WEST GATE BANK.
Our interest is you
Member FDIC



LINCOLN COMMUNITY
FOUNDATION



Cattle
— BANK & TRUST —



MORROW, POPPE,
WATERMEIER & LONOWSKI, P.C.