

## OUR MISSION

**To strengthen opportunities for individuals with Down syndrome and those who support them to learn, earn and belong.**

### CIRCLES OF SUPPORT

Three circles of support shape the work of Designer Genes: Learning, Earning and Belonging. These circles represent the triplicate copy of the 21st chromosome, as well as wholeness, completeness and protection. Designer Genes embraces people as they are, aiming to create supportive and protective communities.

#### LEARNING

Designer Genes believes learning is a powerful tool and works to empower individuals, and educate professionals, parents and the community.

#### EARNING

Designer Genes strives to find earning opportunities for members and the organization through education, employment, independence and support.

#### BELONGING

Designer Genes believes everyone has the right to belong and works to create connections, opportunities and outcomes.

## ABOUT DOWN SYNDROME

Down syndrome isn't a disease. It is a chromosomal abnormality that affects about one out of every 700 babies.

- Down syndrome affects people of all races and income levels.
- Down syndrome is a trait – not a condition or affliction.
- People with Down syndrome have 47 chromosomes instead of the usual 46. Most people have two copies of chromosome 21; Down syndrome occurs among people who have a third copy.
- People with Down syndrome may have mild to moderate intellectual disabilities, low muscle tone and higher chances of some health conditions.
- People with Down syndrome lead fulfilling lives. They attend school, hold jobs, participate in decisions that affect them, get involved in community activities and contribute to society.
- High-quality educational programs, a stimulating home environment, good health care and positive support from family, friends and the community enable people with Down syndrome to develop to their full potential.



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## WITH A LITTLE HELP FROM OUR FRIENDS

Designer Genes enjoys the generous support of individuals, businesses and organizations in the Bismarck-Mandan area and beyond. The non-profit organization receives donations at the annual Buddy Walk, as well as grants and charitable contributions. Become one of the many who support us, learn more and donate at [DesignerGenesND.com](http://DesignerGenesND.com).

## DESIGNER GENES FAMILIES KNOW HOW TO HAVE FUN!

- **BUDDY WALK**
- **FAMILY PICNIC**
- **BOWLING PARTY**
- **ICAN SHINE - BIKE CAMP**
- **SUPPER WITH SANTA**
- **FAMILY SUPPORT**



## OUTREACH

**North Dakota Families:** Designer Genes helps fill gaps in information and services available to families who receive a Down syndrome diagnosis.

**Schools and Communities:** We are more alike than different – Designer Genes works to build understanding of this important message among educators and the public.

## GROWING THROUGH A SHARED JOURNEY

Now more than 300 members strong, Designer Genes serves families across the state, working to strengthen opportunities for people with Down syndrome and those who support them. Designer Genes provides encouragement and information to help families, whether it's dealing with a pre-natal or at-birth Down syndrome diagnosis or assisting them throughout the lifespan.

Designer Genes took root in the early 1980s when a group of Bismarck-Mandan parents shared the challenges and rewards of raising children with Down syndrome. Over the years, this network of families broadened their support system by reaching out to others with the same diagnosis.

**Healthcare Professionals:** With considerable expertise in supporting people with Down syndrome, Designer Genes is a valuable asset and partner to the medical community.

**Government Officials:** Designer Genes advocates for the value, acceptance and inclusion of people of all abilities, not only Down syndrome.

## IMPACTING EXCEPTIONAL PEOPLE

Designer Genes' outreach efforts improve the quality of life for people with Down syndrome and their families. The organization touches families throughout North Dakota by:

- Providing early visits and informational packets to families of babies with Down syndrome.
- Organizing and hosting family activities and networking events.
- Sponsoring an annual Buddy Walk, one of 250 Down syndrome advocacy and awareness walks in the nation.
- Partnering with educators for improved awareness of the abilities and challenges of students with Down syndrome.
- Providing information to healthcare professionals.
- Advocating for state and federal policies and legislation to support the provision of services for people with Down syndrome.

