One service DSANV members consistently request is information about community resources for people with Down Syndrome and their families. These resources can be challenging to identify, but they have the potential to sustain a lasting positive impact on members of the Down Syndrome community. In order to address this need, DSANV has compiled a list of community services in northern Virginia that may be relevant to our members.

This list is based on organizations that have a history of supporting DSANV and/or that have received positive reviews from our members. DSANV does not necessarily intend to explicitly recommend these resources. Rather, we hope to help our members become aware of services in the community that are supportive of our organizational mission. If you have a resource that you would like to suggest for the list, please feel free to reach out to us at our website or Facebook.

We hope you find this information helpful!!
**UPDATE: COVID-19 Specific Resources**

*Please note that we have endeavored to find a wide selection of relevant community resources for our members. That being said, we have not had the opportunity to thoroughly investigate each one individually, so we welcome feedback from our members if any resources turn out to be unrelated to their needs. Thank you!

The changes brought about by COVID-19 have been incredibly taxing on families, especially those parenting children who have a developmental disability. In response to these circumstances, DSANV has implemented a number of virtual resources for the quarantine period and has worked to compile information on relevant community resources for COVID-19. These services are explored below, but please visit our [COVID-19 page](#) for more information.

**DSANV Virtual Resources**

**DSANV Virtual Cooking Club:** DSANV created the Virtual Cooking Challenge to support members during quarantine. There will be a new Virtual Cooking Challenge every two weeks from March 18 – June 24. All DSANV members are welcome to participate.

**DSANV Virtual Relationship Activities:** During the *Stay at Home Order* issued in response to the COVID-19 pandemic, DSANV is presenting a series of online lessons and activities from our *Relationshapes* program that can be conducted at home.

**Webinar Series with Dr. Chris Hoffner Barthold:** DSANV is proud to present a three-part webinar series with Dr. Chris Hoffner Barthold, a Behavior Analyst from George Mason University! We are excited to collaborate with Chris to facilitate webinars that address the unique challenges of quarantining at home while parenting a child who has a developmental disability.
Community Resources

211 COVID-19 Resource Guide: The 211 helpline, facilitated by United Way, is available to provide information on accessing food, housing bills, and other essential services during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Administration for Community Living: The Administration for Community Living has compiled some information for older adults and people with disabilities about COVID-19.

The Arc of VA COVID Resource Library: The ARC of Virginia has created a library of resources for people in the disability community during COVID-19. The library includes information on staying healthy, disability services, and more!

Aunt Bertha: Aunt Bertha is a search engine that allows you to search by zip code for social services available in your area.

COVID-19 Virginia Resources: The Virginia Department of Social Services has created a guide with information on assistance for food, childcare, finances, and more.

Department of Education Documents: The Department of Education has compiled several informational resources on who education for people with disabilities is impacted during the coronavirus: Q&A on Providing Services to Students with Disabilities During COVID-19 and Supplemental Fact Sheet.

Helping Kids Cope While Sheltering in Place: The American Academy of Child and Adolescent Psychiatry compiled a list of tips to help parents as they care for their children through quarantine.

Plain Language Booklet on Coronavirus and Información de COVID-19 Por y Para Personas con Discapacidades (courtesy of the Arc of NOVA): This booklet was created in collaboration with self-advocates and explains coronavirus in plain language. It is available in both English and Spanish.

Respect Ability Resources: Respect Ability, a disability-support nonprofit, has assembled some information about COVID-19 resources for people who have disabilities

Virtual Parent Support Group from the Arc of NOVA: The Arc of Northern Virginia is offering a virtual parent support group during COVID-19 for local families who care for children, youths, and young adults with developmental and/or behavioral challenges. Click the link for more information.

Grants and Financial Relief

CommonHelp: CommonHelp, an agency of the Commonwealth of Virginia, has created a portal for aid applications to help people cover the costs of healthcare, childcare, food, housing costs, and more during COVID-19.
COVID-19 Insurance Premium Payment Assistance: Information from Healthwell Foundation on insurance premium payment assistance during COVID-19 for people with cancer or chronic conditions.

Financial Resilience Center: The Financial Resilience Center, facilitated by the National Disability Institute, offers resources and assistance to help those with disabilities and chronic health conditions navigate financially through the COVID-19 crisis.

Government Resources: The IRS offers a number of resources to explain the government’s tax response to the COVID-19 crisis. You can find more information here: Economic Impact Payments and Economic Impact Payments Explained.

Moonlighting.com: A free job-searching resource for freelance and work-from-home jobs.

Northern Virginia Family Service: Northern Virginia Family Service is offering COVID-19 emergency assistance for residents of northern Virginia. Click the link to learn more.

Social Security COVID-19 Information: The Social Security Administration has published some information on how COVID-19 impacts social security.
DSANV, or the Down Syndrome Association of Northern Virginia, is a not-for-profit organization in northern Virginia. DSANV's mission is to ensure that all individuals with Down syndrome and their families receive the support necessary to participate in, contribute to and achieve fulfillment of life in their community. DSANV offers a number of programs and events that are detailed below:

**DSANV Programs**

**DSANV Champion Football**: Champion Football aims to provide a safe and fun environment where individuals with special needs can experience the excitement and camaraderie associated with team football. The friendly games will be played in a non-contact, modified flag football style in order to encourage teamwork and inclusion.

**DSANV Cooking Club**: The cooking club is designed to promote families cooking together to encourage healthy eating choices and active (hands on) engagement. Each cooking club class involves preparing new recipes, and they are often led by self-advocate graduates and their parents/guardians.

**DSANV Learning Program (TLP)**: TLP is an innovative program that delivers evidence-based educational support to children, parents, and teachers with the goal of improving the overall development and academic success of children with Down syndrome. During monthly classroom sessions, parents receive instruction and educational materials while sharing their experiences with other parents in their group. Concurrently, children work in small groups on literacy, math, fine motor, and communication skills.

**DSANV Relationshapes**: Relationshapes is a program offered by DSANV that helps individuals develop healthy relationships, good boundaries, and awesome social skills. The class typically meets once a week for several months.
DSANV Special Education Support: DSANV offers individualized education plan (IEP) support for our members to assist with issues surrounding the education of school-age children with Down syndrome. The IEP Support Program is implemented by Special Education Consultant Cathy Thornton, owner of Advocacy by Pegasus.

DSANV Events

DSANV Buddy Walk®: The DSANV Buddy Walk® program is a yearly fundraising event that focuses on ways to better the lives of people with Down syndrome. It is an exciting, full-day event filled with food, fun, speakers, local sponsors, and a community walk!

DSANV Calendar of Events: DSANV maintains a calendar of both events that we facilitate and interesting ones that are taking place in the community. You can find information about both types on our calendar. You can also look into specific activities from DSANV or the community on these two pages: DSANV events and community events.

DSANV New Parent Breakfasts: DSANV periodically hosts breakfasts for families who have recently received a prenatal or pediatric diagnosis of Down Syndrome. During these gatherings, families have the opportunity to connect with other families in NOVA, receive information about Down Syndrome from DSANV, and enjoy a delicious breakfast! Please check the DSANV calendar or Facebook page for upcoming dates.

DSANV Holiday Party: Every December existing and new DSANV member families gather to share a pancake breakfast, have their photo taken with Santa, decorate cookies, play games, dance, and celebrate the holiday season! With annual attendance of 500, the Holiday Party our second largest community event each year.

Spring Picnic: When Spring rolls around each year, DSANV members gather together on a warm afternoon and enjoy a picnic! It is a great event for meeting people in the DSANV community and having fun with the whole family.

Organizations Supporting the Down Syndrome Community

Local Down Syndrome Associations

There are a number of organizations that, like DSANV, serve the Down syndrome community in their local area. We have listed a few such organizations that are in close proximity to northern Virginia: Down Syndrome Association of Delaware, Down Syndrome Association of Greater Richmond, and Down Syndrome Network of Montgomery County.
National-Level Resources

National Down Syndrome Congress (NDSC): The National Down Syndrome Congress is dedicated to fostering an improved world for individuals with Down syndrome. They are a leading national resource of support and information for anyone touched by or seeking to learn about Down syndrome.

National Down Syndrome Society (NDSS): The National Down Syndrome Society is a leading human rights organization for all individuals with Down syndrome. They envision a world in which all people with Down syndrome have the opportunity to enhance their quality of life, realize their life aspirations, and become valued members of welcoming communities.

Global Down Syndrome Foundation: The Global Down Syndrome Foundation is a public non-profit dedicated to significantly improving the lives of people with Down syndrome through research, medical care, education and advocacy. Formally established in 2009, Global's primary focus is to support the Linda Crnic Institute for Down Syndrome, the first academic home in the United States committed solely to research and medical care for people with Down syndrome. Since Down syndrome is the least-funded genetic condition in the United States, fundraising and government advocacy to correct the alarming disparity of national funding for people with Down syndrome is a major goal.

Organizations Supporting the Wider IDD Community

Local IDD Support Organizations

The Arc of Northern Virginia: The Arc of NOVA is the local branch of the Arc organization, which is a group committed to promoting and protecting the human rights of people with intellectual and developmental disabilities and supporting their full inclusion and participation in the community. The Arc as an organization makes fantastic efforts for IDD advocacy, and they publish transition guides that offer invaluable information for navigating transition points relevant to the IDD community.

Their website also contains a wealth of useful resources, including information on events and services in northern Virginia. The Arc of NOVA runs a calendar of fantastic events relevant to the NOVA IDD community here!

State Level

The Arc of Virginia: Like the Northern Virginia Branch of the Arc, the Arc of Virginia advocates for the rights of people with intellectual and developmental disabilities. This branch of the organization serves the state of Virginia.
Virginia Board for People with Disabilities: VBPD serves as Virginia’s Developmental Disabilities (DD) Council. DD Councils are in every state and territory of the United States. They work for the benefit of individuals with DD and their families to identify needs and help develop policies, programs, and services that will meet these needs in a manner that respects dignity and independence.

Va-LEND: Va-LEND, or the Virginia chapter of the Leadership Education in Neurodevelopmental Disabilities program, is committed to the preparation of professionals, family members, and people with disabilities in the field of childhood neurodevelopmental disabilities. The Virginia program is housed in Richmond, but this organization functions nationwide and is an excellent source of opportunities for education and training within the IDD community.

National Level

Autism Society: The Autism Society of America is committed to working towards a world where individuals and families living with autism are able to maximize their quality of life, are treated with the highest level of dignity, and live in a society in which their talents and skills are appreciated and valued. This organization provides advocacy, education, information and referral, support, and community at national, state and local levels.

The Arc: Like the local and state chapters, the national Arc organization is committed to promoting and protecting the human rights of people with intellectual and developmental disabilities and actively supporting their full inclusion and participation in the community throughout their lifetimes. The Arc is a pillar of IDD activism.

Advocacy Corner: Why is Advocacy so Important?

Advocacy is a word often thrown around in the IDD world, but it may not always be clear why it is so critical. In essence, advocacy is work that seeks public support for a cause. It is an essential component of organizations that seek to support the IDD community. Advocacy is the work that pushes for legislation to expand school and continuing education resources, vocation training and job placement support, and breakthroughs in medications that lengthen the lives of people in the IDD community.

Typically, many children who have intellectual and developmental disabilities will have access to a variety of resources during their schooling. As people age, however, the amount of support offered by organizations dwindles significantly. Advocacy is the work that can improve the services available to adults with IDD. Supporting advocacy is an investment in the future of a person with IDD. The best ways to support advocacy in your community are to be informed, be aware of national level trends in disability, and vote for policies and representatives that you believe will best support your advocacy values.
Community Resources through Critical Life Transition Points

Diagnosis

Understanding Down Syndrome

![Image Courtesy of Nature](image)

**DSANV Down Syndrome Overview**: An introduction to what Down Syndrome is created by DSANV. The page includes responses to frequently asked questions and links to excellent resources for becoming educated about Down Syndrome, like the National Down Syndrome Society.

**Understanding a Down Syndrome Diagnosis**: This resource comes from the National Down Syndrome Society, and it offers information for families that have recently received a Down syndrome diagnosis. It includes information on diagnosing Down syndrome, prenatal screenings, and links for more information.

Early Healthcare Resources

**Fairfax Neonatal Associates**: An organization that provides services in neonatology, pediatrics, pediatric pulmonology, pediatric allergy and immunology, pediatric sleep medicine, and pediatric surgery to babies and children in Northern Virginia. FNA has been a long-time generous supporter of DSANV.

**Pediatric Associates of Alexandria**: A group of providers who provide medical care to infants, kids, and teens in the D.C. metro area. This organization has supported DSANV.
School-Age

Education

Catholic Diocese of Arlington: The Catholic Diocese of Arlington administers several high schools that offer programs for students who have developmental and intellectual disabilities. The services offered by these schools could be relevant to families interested in pursuing private, faith-based education for their children.

Public School System Parent Resource Centers: In northern Virginia, the public schools typically facilitate a “parent resource center” for families in the school system. These centers allow parents to learn about the special education process, meet other families who have kids with special needs, and access information on special education processes like IEPs. Click here for the PRCs from various NOVA counties: FCPS PRC, APS PRC, ACPS PRC, LCPS PRC, PWCS PRC.

Pozez JCC Special Needs Program: The Pozez Jewish Community Center of northern Virginia offers a variety of resources for families who have members with special needs, including educational opportunities like classes/workshops and recreational gatherings.

Therapeutic Resources

Advocacy by Pegasus: A family and educational consulting service that specializes in students who have special needs. Some examples of the services offered by this provider include social skills training, testing services, and advocacy help in IEP and other educational meetings. This organization has a history of supporting DSANV.

Aveanna Healthcare: A pediatric healthcare provider that supports people with special needs. They provide a range of services including personal care, physical therapy, occupational therapy, speech therapy, ABA therapy, nursing care, and more. This organization has supported DSANV.
**Building Blocks Therapy**: A pediatric speech-language and occupational therapy provider with a long history of supporting DSANV.

**Exceptional Children’s Center**: An organization that offers services in speech, occupational, and feeding therapy to children with special needs. This organization has a history of supporting DSANV.

**Skill Builders**: An organization that offers speech-language therapy and occupational therapy services to children and adults with special needs. They have locations in Annandale, Mclean, and Alexandria, and they have a history of supporting DSANV.

**Washington Speech**: A private speech therapy practice located in Fairfax that treats children and adults with speech, language, voice, and cognitive disorders. Washington Speech has also been the longtime host of DSANV Bingo.

**Recreational**

**Smithsonian Sensory-Friendly Mornings at the Museum**: Morning at the Museum is a free sensory-friendly program for families of children with disabilities. Programs are scheduled on specific Saturday or Sunday mornings throughout the year at various Smithsonian museums. Each program consists of providing pre-registered families early entrance, facilitated activities, pre-visit materials, and a take a break space.

**Special Olympics of Northern Virginia**: Special Olympics provides year-round sports training and athletic competition in a variety of Olympic-type sports for children and adults with intellectual disabilities. The programming offers continuing opportunities to develop physical fitness, demonstrate courage, experience joy, and share friendships in the community.

**Adulthood**
Continuing Education and Employment Resources

Career and Transition Services: School counties in NOVA typically offer a variety of career and transition services, which can include opportunities for students with disabilities to receive career education, applied academics, self-advocacy, and independent living skills. The following are links to relevant websites for several NOVA counties: ACPS, APS, FCPS, LCPS, PWCS.

Service Source: ServiceSource is a nonprofit organization with a mission to facilitate services and partnerships that support people with disabilities, their families, their caregivers, and community members in order to build more inclusive communities. They offer a variety of services, including employment and housing opportunities.

Mason LIFE: The Mason LIFE Program is an innovative post-secondary program for young adults with intellectual and developmental disabilities who desire a university experience in a supportive academic environment. The Mason LIFE website provides relevant information about the program like how to apply, frequently asked questions, and tuition.

Virginia Department for Aging and Rehabilitative Service (DARs): The mission of VA DARS is to improve the employment, quality of life, security, and independence of older Virginians, Virginians with disabilities, and their families. They have a special section of their website devoted to organizations in Virginia that offer employment-related services to people with disabilities.

Support for Independence

CityCenter NOVA: An organization dedicated to creating inclusive, affordable housing options for people with special needs in Northern Virginia.

Color-Coded Chef: A business that promotes life skills for all ages and abilities through the power of cooking. They offer kitchen tools that emphasize visual communication and that are designed to be accessible to people of all abilities.

Department of Behavioral Health and Developmental Services (DBHDS): This department of the Commonwealth of Virginia offers behavior and development services in Virginia. These include options like housing, employment, crisis, and community-service board services.

Developmental Services offered by CSBs: Each county has a community-service board that organizes and provides services for people in the community, including individuals who have developmental disabilities. They typically offer services to help people with developmental disabilities live, work, and take part in the community, such as services for housing and employment. The following are links to relevant CSB pages for several NOVA counties: Alexandria, Arlington, Fairfax, Loudoun, Prince William.
The Washington Group Special Planning Care Team: This organization helps families who have members with special needs build holistic life care plans. Click here for NOVA location information. This organization has a history of supporting DSANV.

Caregiver Support

Dads Appreciating Down Syndrome (D.A.D.S.): D.A.D.S. meets monthly to assist and support the fathers and families of individuals with Down syndrome through fellowship and action.

Easterseals Camp Fairlee: An organization in Maryland that offers a safe, accessible camp experience to people with special needs. The camp offers campers opportunities to acquire new skills, make new friendships, and enjoy recreation while their caregivers are able to enjoy some R and R!

Healthcare Services

Amy Adair Pediatric Dentistry: A pediatric dental practice with first-rate reviews from families of people who have Down Syndrome and with a history of supporting DSANV.

Chirogroup: A chiropractic practice that offers prenatal, postpartum, and pediatric chiropractic services in the D.C. metro area. This organization has a history of supporting DSANV.

Deirdre Maull Orthodontics: An orthodontic practice in Mclean that has a history of supporting DSANV.
Firstcare Orthopaedics Inc.: An orthopaedic group in Warrenton that offers orthotic and prosthetic services, including in-home appointments, in Northern Virginia. This organization has a history of supporting DSANV.

Medicaid: Medicaid is a joint federal-state program that provided health care coverage to an estimated 72.4 million people in fiscal year (FY) 2017. It provides coverage for health and other related services for the nation's most economically disadvantaged populations, including low-income people with disabilities. Over 10 million people qualify for Medicaid based on a disability.

Thanks for reading!

If you would like more information, please visit our website here.