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Down Syndrome Self-Advocate's Book Urged as a Must-Read for Members of Congress

Vienna, VA (April 14, 2021) – At a young age, David Egan used to watch C-SPAN and dream of making speeches like members of Congress. When he published his book, “More Alike Than Different,” his hope was that it would inspire lawmakers to raise their expectations about what people with disabilities can accomplish with the right policies and incentives.

“We all have challenges and opportunities,” Egan says. “After all, we share in the same humanity, and our lives become richer when we focus on abilities.”

His book is now on the reading list of every Member of Congress, thanks to the efforts of the National Down Syndrome Society (NDSS), which purchased copies of the book and had them delivered to each Senator and Representative.

“This book reveals to the world what the Down syndrome community already knows about David Egan - that he is a true leader in the disabilities community,” said NDSS President and CEO Kandi Pickard. “We hope it will inspire policymakers and business leaders to see individuals with disabilities not as passive recipients of services but as resilient and innovative drivers of change. We also hope it will inspire more people with Down syndrome and other disabilities to tell their stories.”

Born in the 70's, Egan is one of the older generation of individuals with Down syndrome, and he is a trailblazer in early inclusive education, inclusive neighborhood sports and competitive employment. He started working in a clerk position and has grown into a career of advocacy working as a Community Relations Coordinator at SourceAmerica.

In 2015, Egan became the first person with an intellectual disability to be chosen as a Joseph P. Kennedy Jr. Public Policy Fellow, initially working for the House Ways and Means Committee and then with NDSS, where he worked to develop an employment resource guide for employers and employees with Down syndrome and other disabilities. He is a leader in Special Olympics and served as a Sargent Shriver International Global Messenger. He is also an eager advocate and participant for NIH research on the human brain and related conditions, such as Alzheimer's.

Egan is well known in the halls of Congress. He testified at hearings on competitive employment opportunities for people with disabilities and lobbied to help secure enactment of the landmark Stephen Beck Jr. Achieving a Better Life Experience (ABLE) Act, named after his close friend who championed the bill but passed away suddenly on the eve of the legislation's enactment in late 2014.

"Thanks to NDSS, my book will be read by many of our elected officials," said Egan. "I hope it will inspire them to work with me and my fellow advocates with Down syndrome to build on the progress of the last 30 years and ensure that we are 'More Alike Than Different.'"

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About NDSS

The National Down Syndrome Society (NDSS) is the leading human rights organization for all individuals with Down syndrome. NDSS envisions 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. Founded in 1979, NDSS supports and advocates for the Down syndrome community by focusing on three key areas of programming: Resources & Support, Policy & Advocacy and Community Engagement. Within these focus areas NDSS engages in various activities, events and programs such as the National Advocacy & Policy Center, which seeks to create systemic change through engaged advocacy; the National Buddy Walk® Program, which honors and celebrates individuals with Down syndrome in local communities across the world, and other initiatives that provide support, informational resources and community engagement opportunities for individuals with Down syndrome and those who support them. Visit www.ndss.org for more information about NDSS.