

Gray's Story

Have you ever found a four-leafed clover? I have a few times and it felt so good. I found the special one, in with all of the other ones. I now get the same feeling when I see someone with Down syndrome. You see, I never really looked for someone with Down syndrome until March 2009, when my son, Gray, was born. Now, our whole family looks for them and we get so excited when we find them. This may seem silly to some, but just like the fourth leaf on the clover, the little "extra" on the 21st chromosome is what makes them special. The other three leaves on the clover and all of the other chromosomes in the body are what makes them "more alike than different".

Most of you have heard this analogy and the phrase, "more alike than different". I had not heard of the four-leafed clover analogy when we picked it for our team logo when Gray was less than a year old. Our first experience with the Down Syndrome Association of Memphis and the Mid-South (DSAM) was at a new parent barbeque. It was there that my husband, Kevin, and I got to meet some of the children that happened to have Down syndrome. It was a family event so there were children of all ages. The children with Down syndrome were doing all of the things that the typical children were doing. The parents were talking about their children participating in sports and having sleepovers and I found so much hope in that one meeting.

The next event was the Step Up event in October. Gray was 7 months old at this time. We did not know what to expect so we were pleasantly surprised at the "abilities" of the talented people who happened to have Down syndrome. We attended more events and the more we attended, the more we wanted to be a part of this organization. DSAM has grown so much since our first association with them. They have grown so much that they need more space in order to add programs and staff for the programs. They only have 1125 square feet to work with at the present time. They pack so much into this small space. They even have to ask board members to use their attics and garages for storage because they are out of space. There are so many more children and adults that could benefit from the programs of DSAM if they had more room to expand and add programs.

PLEASE! PLEASE! PLEASE! Consider giving to the capital campaign. Your gift could make a difference in so many of our children's lives. There are many giving opportunities so pick the one that suits you and your family. Have a fundraiser and buy a brick in your loved one's name. Just GIVE! I am giving because the DSAM has given so much to the DSAM community and I know they will continue to do so.