

KIDZ



www.texaskidz.com

ADVOCATES FOR KIDZ AND FAMILIES WITH SPECIAL NEEDS

Volume 2, Issue 1

January/February 2005

Monthly Meeting Info

November 2004 Summary:

Sue Haywood spoke about our next steps to take with the Spring Hill Park project where our goal is to get a wheelchair accessible playground installed.

We also drew raffle winners. Thanks to all who were involved in that!

December 2004 Summary:

Thanks to all who joined us for our Christmas party and to all who brought food and drinks!

Upcoming Meetings:

NOTICE: We have changed the monthly meeting time to 6:30 in order to better accommodate those who have children in school.

Margo Dewkett will be our guest speaker on January 11, 2005. Be sure to read about Mrs. Dewkett on pg 3.

KIDZ MONTHLY MEETINGS

PLACE: NEW BEGINNINGS BAPTIST CHURCH
600 GEORGE RICHEY RD.
LONGVIEW, TX
(SEE MAP)

TIME: 2ND TUESDAY OF EACH MONTH
FROM 6:30 PM TO 7:30 PM

Childcare is available at no charge.

About Us...

KIDZ is a group of parents with special needs children who have joined together to provide support and information for other parents with special needs children regardless of how minor or severe the disability.

- Monthly Meetings
- Bi-monthly Newsletters
- First Contact Brochures
- Support Line
- Special Events

Visit us on the web at www.texaskidz.com or call or write for more information about KIDZ and our programs. KIDZ mailing address and phone number can be found on the last page of this newsletter. ■

Family Focus

This column highlights stories from different families.

By Cathi & Ed Hoffman

My name is Cathi Hoffman and I thank you for the opportunity to share my story with all of you. I know this is supposed to be about Julia, but there is no way to completely understand what Julia represents, until you have heard the story of our other two children.

For the longest time, my husband Ed and I thought we would never have any children. We had a few pregnancies, however, I would miscarry. It did take a lot out of me, but eventually I learned a fine lesson in life.... Never count your losses.

Later on, that started making sense to me.

In 1993, I got pregnant with our oldest daughter, Jessica Erin. It was a rough pregnancy, and she was born too soon. Jessica was born two and a half months prematurely and weighed 3 pounds 3 ounces at birth, and then she dropped to 2 pounds 12 ounces. No medical complications, but due to

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her size, she had to remain at the hospitals NICU until she obtained a good weight.

After a 24 day stay at LSU Medical Center in Shreveport, La, she came home to East Texas.

Today she is a healthy, happy, athletic, and intelligent ten year old girl. She plays Basketball and is a 5th grader at HISD.

When Jessica was three years old, we conceived again, but this pregnancy had to be terminated due to the fact it was an ectopic pregnancy (a pregnancy in my right fallopian tube). After surgery I was left with a 25% chance of ever conceiving again.

So, after seven years we concluded that we would only have one child, but on Jessica's 7th birthday, we conceived our son Jacob. If what we went through with Jessica hadn't been scary enough, we had to go through it again, only this time it was more severe. Our son, Jacob Edward was born in our 5th month of pregnancy, weighing 1 pound 12 ounces. He was so early that his eyes were still fused shut (like a puppy's). They opened up five days after he was born, on Easter Sunday of 2001.

Jacob excelled in the NICU. He had very little complications, such as Apnea. He stayed for two months at Christus Shumpert in Shreveport, La., under the care of Dr. Julia A. Elrod. During his stay in the NICU, I was told that he had a 22% chance of living with major complications. Apparently the white male preemies at this gestation have the lowest survival rate. He did well.

To date Jacob is a very talkative, active, and very healthy three year old little boy. After Jacob came home, we weighed everything out and decided to "Count our Blessings" and not do this again. It was painful to not know if you would ever get to take your baby home.

So, we took all the preventative measures to not do this again. Three months after I had my tubal ligation (having my fallopian tube tied off), I discovered that we were 3 months pregnant. Dr. David Doerrfeld told me that I apparently conceived within 24 hours surrounding my tubal ligation. Hmmm, ok.

Well, after crying for two days I decided it was beyond me to question what God has put within my path so I accepted the new pregnancy with all the respect and love that I had with the others. With a lot of Prayers and help from my family and few friends, I did survive another pregnancy and I just about carried full-term. My husband and I agreed that if we were to have a girl this time, that we would name her after Dr. Julia Elrod. We did just that. Dr. Elrod will always be a part of us.

On February 16, 2002, I gave birth to Julia Elise. She was the biggest I had had and weighed only 4 pounds 1 ounce. Of course, being that tiny still, Good Shepherd thought that she too needed to stay hospitalized for a bit. I didn't think so, however they did keep her for ten days. I was complete the

day that I brought her home, even though I already had a ten month old at the house. This baby was a Godsend. When I filled out the paperwork for her Birth Announcement, the only family comments we could think that was fitting, was: "Here by God's Will." We had solid proof of that when she was three months old. When I took her to a new pediatrician in town, he told me that he had concerns with her possibly being Down Syndrome. After three weeks, it was confirmed. Our little Julia is Translocated Trisomy 21. I never was sad, disappointed, nor did I feel anything less than completely complimented knowing that God had entrusted me with this wonderful gift. I have truly been blessed. I know that Julia was a gift to us for keeping such Faith in God to help our other two get passed their harsh beginnings. To date Julia is a very happy, very healthy, two year old and not far behind any other child. She is absolutely amazing. All who are around her are amazed at what all she has accomplished in her short life. She is starting to walk now and is using a few words. She is so full of life. She is so eager and has a hunger for learning new things. The energy that she has is remarkable. Julia is outstanding.

I know why my others did so well, with such very low odds; it was all in God's plan. He knew that I would one day receive Julia. I just had to earn her first. I thank God every single day for the three Miracles that I have. My husband and I truly believe that our children made us the people that we are today and would trade lives with no one. Ever since the day we have known that our little Julia is DS, we have agreed that she is our "Earthbound Angel." So the finest lesson I learned in life to date is that you should never count the losses, only the Blessings, and we do every day. We have no sadness, only laughter with the joys. It is like 'Three Wishes'. When I was lonely, I wished for LOVE and I got Jessica. When I was confused I wished for FAITH, and Jacob showed me that. And then I wished for JOY, and there is no other way to describe our Julia. So, hug your little Angels for me and give them a kiss on the cheek. We all share a Gift from God and that makes us all family, not just friends. ■

If you would like to be on the mailing list to receive our KIDZ newsletter, please call Amber at (903) 663-5936 or e-mail us at info@texaskidz.com

Encouraging Words

"Happiness always looks small while you hold it in your hands, but let it go, and you learn at once how big and precious it is."

- Maksim Gorky



- **KIDZ** now has a website! You can view our newsletters, current and past issues, along with many other interesting things at www.texaskidz.com.
- We need your help! One of our goals is to have a "library" of information pertaining to different diseases, afflictions, or disabilities that you have dealt with. We would like to make this information available to others who are faced with the same situation for the first time. Please ensure that all the information you submit is 100% accurate. Send articles or references to info@texaskidz.com or mail copies to KIDZ, PO Box 10015, Longview, TX 75608-0015.
- If you are interested in purchasing advertising space in our newsletters, please e-mail us at info@texaskidz.com. Ads will be restricted to a limited number per issue and will be accepted/denied and placed at our discretion.
- **KIDZ** is working on getting a wheelchair accessible playground area placed in the proposed Spring Hill park project. If you are interested in helping with this effort which will benefit your children and the entire community by allowing all children to play together in one place, please contact us!

FAST FACTS

"Named after John Langdon Down, the first physician to identify the syndrome, Down syndrome is the most frequent genetic cause of mild to moderate mental retardation and associated medical problems and occurs in one out of 800 live births, in all races and economic groups. Down syndrome is a chromosomal disorder caused by an error in cell division that results in the presence of an additional third chromosome 21 or 'trisomy 21.'"

National Institute of Child Health and Human Development. Facts About Down Syndrome. Retrieved December 20, 2004, from

<http://www.nichd.nih.gov/publications/pubs/downsyndrome/define.htm>

"All individuals with DS have extra chromosome 21 material. There are 3 genetic mechanisms for trisomy 21. The first and most common, is called non-disjunction, where there is an entire extra chromosome 21 in all cells."

"The second is mosaic DS, where trisomy 21 cells are mixed with a second cell line, usually "normal" (46,XX or 46,XY). Individuals with this form of DS are frequently a bit milder in their presentation, depending on the proportion of normal cells."

"The third is a translocation DS, about 3-5% of the total, where part or all of chromosome 21 is translocated to another chromosome, usually 14. Translocation DS does not vary with age. Children with translocation DS are indistinguishable from individuals with the usual form of DS."

Risk and Recurrence Risk of Down Syndrome. Retrieved December 20, 2004, from

<http://www.nas.com/downsyn/benke.html>

SPOTLIGHT! – Margo Dewkett (Exec. Dir. / Head Instructor of Windridge)

From 1971 to 1983, Margo Dewkett was a racehorse breeder, trainer and jockey. During her career, Mrs. Dewkett was instrumental in developing two area farms; working with veterinarian colleges to strengthen breeding programs as well as establish and lead the first 4-H club in Gregg County.

From 1983 to 1988, Mrs. Dewkett was a free-lance trainer and instructor specializing in instructing children and first-time horse owners, as well as rehabilitating abused or mishandled horses.

In 1988, Mrs. Dewkett founded Windridge Therapeutic Equestrian Center of East Texas, Inc., a non-profit organization which provides education and therapy to children and adults with disabilities. Windridge students participate weekly in one of four programs; therapeutic riding, driving, hippotherapy and juvenile intervention.

As the Executive Director/Head Instructor, Mrs. Dewkett is responsible for developing future growth for Windridge, developing and strengthening Windridge's staff and overseeing the training of the horses at Windridge.

As a certified instructor, Mrs. Dewkett holds a master level of certification, one of 43 in the United States. Mrs. Dewkett is married, a member of First United Methodist Church of Longview, a member of the North American Riding for the Handicapped Association (NARHA) and a lifetime member of Horsemasters Training Club. ■



KIDZ would like to say a special "thanks" to ...

All of those **volunteering** to watch the kids during our meetings!

*Shannon - sorry we missed listing your name in the last newsletter ☺

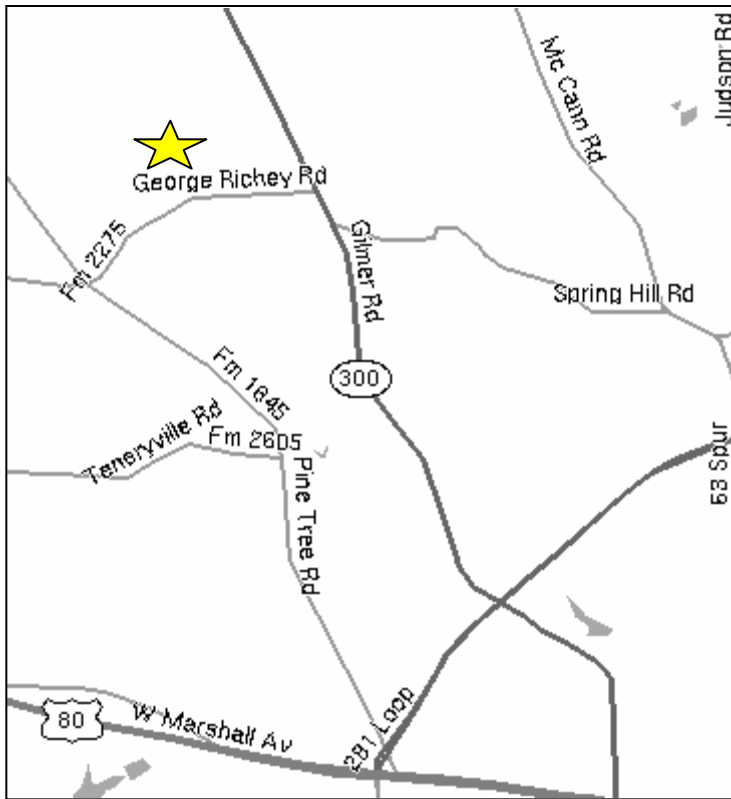
Early Childhood Intervention (ECI) for providing copying and mailing services for our newsletters!

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If you would like to make a donation to KIDZ, please make checks payable to:

NBBC c/o KIDZ

Donations are tax deductible.

KIDZ is a bimonthly publication. As the KIDZ fiscal sponsor, New Beginnings Baptist Church oversees donations and disbursements on behalf of KIDZ in order for KIDZ to direct its efforts to the families in need.

KIDZ
P.O. Box 10015
Longview, TX 75608-0015

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