



**DOWN SYNDROME
OF LOUISVILLE**
SERVING KENTUCKY & INDIANA

Strategic Plan

2020-2022



A Message from the Executive Director

DSL Family,

We are excited to share our strategic plan with you. This will be the guiding force behind our growth efforts for years to come.

With the help of over 293 online survey responses, 4 intense focus groups made up of family members, members served, staff and volunteers - we now have a clear plan of what we need to accomplish to achieve the growth we are hoping to see during the next 3 years.

We are stronger than ever due to our continually expanding family which continues to come together to donate their time, resources, and talents.

I am looking forward to the journey with each of you!

With Gratitude,
Julie



A message from our Board President: Preparing for the Plan

After many years of service, our long-standing Executive Director stepped into a new role, marking a critical time in DSL history. A new vision and fresh perspective emerged under the leadership of Julie Torzewski, who began her term as Executive Director in January of 2019. In April of 2019, Down Syndrome of Louisville started a strategic planning process with the mindset of making our community a place that supports, educates, and advocates for all individuals with Down syndrome. Leaders created a process that would be both collaborative and transparent. Working with Ashley Roundtree and Associates, Chairman Ed Kenny established a timeline, recruited individuals to serve on a special committee, and engaged with numerous stakeholders to gain insights into what an effective plan would look like.

The plan was met with resounding enthusiasm and participation. Throughout the journey hundreds of individuals responded to our surveys, along with others participating in focus groups and interviews and in late November the collective efforts culminated with a presentation to the Board of Directors that included the recommended strategies and actions that had been derived from the data.

We thank everyone who has given their time and energy to help pave the way of DSL for years to come!



*Best Regards,
Thom Nicholas*

Our Strategic Planning Committee

Julie Torzewski
Executive Director

Thom Nicholas
Board President

Ed Kenney
Strategy Chairman

Greg Coomes
Treasurer

Karen Lane
Board of Trustees

Susan Dever
Board of Trustees

Harish Chandan
Board of Trustees

Andrea Kruchinski
Board of Trustees

Jenny Kimes
*DSL, Clinical and
Early Education Director*

Linda Davis
DSL Grant Manager

Ann Steiner
DSL, Community Member/Parent

Laura Leaton
*DSL Community Member & New
Board Member*

Max Sander
DSL Intern & Community Member

Introduction

Down Syndrome of Louisville, Inc. (DSL) is a non-profit organization founded in 1977 by Mary Carter. Mary, an early childhood educator established the first Early Intervention Education program for children with Down syndrome in Kentucky. In 1991, our grassroots organization incorporated and began offering services for individuals of all ages with Down syndrome.



This strategic plan signals a new chapter in the Down Syndrome of Louisville story. Three years ago, we set a plan in motion when we became the first DSAIA* Gold Accredited association in the country. As the only known Lifelong Learning Center in the world, now it is time to reassess and recommit to our values and beliefs as we plan the future of Down Syndrome of Louisville.

Our Mission

At DSL, our mission drives our success and shapes our vision for the future. Our mission ensures that we will continue to be alongside members and their families every step of the journey. Our mission is:

To support, educate, and advocate for individuals with Down syndrome; thus enabling each individual to reach their full potential.

Our Values

DSL Staff developed the following values in 2019 at their first staff retreat. The team agreed that they speak to who we are.

We care.

- We show compassion.
- We are there when people need us the most.
- We respectfully serve.

We don't settle.

- We listen.
- We keep learning.
- We keep getting better.

We stay open.

- We don't ask if, we ask how.
- We ask what would it look like if it worked?
- We share information.

We have fun.

- We don't take ourselves too seriously.
- We assume positive intent.
- We keep joyful hearts.

The Process

A good plan requires good planning. With that in mind, clarity, collaboration and transparency were at the forefront during the strategic planning process. Here is how the process was structured:

Board of Directors

- Established the guidelines and timetable
- Oversaw and provided insight to the Strategic Planning Committee
- Monitored and ensured strategies were in line with core values

Strategic Plan Committee

- Gathered data
- Analyzed and discussed data
- Ranked data to reflect the needs of the constituents and DSL's values
- Presented developed plan to the Board of Directors

Analyzing Results

- Every good strategy in the final stages includes a metric or measurable outcome. These metrics will be created with input from the staff and committee and be tracked moving forward and reported out to the Board of Directors and the community at large on a quarterly basis.

Community Feedback

- Even before the formal process began, DSL sought input from the staff, Board of Directors, families, and even friends. This feedback continued throughout the formal process with hundreds responding to our survey, and even more input was gathered through interviews and focus groups. Once the plan is developed, it will be shared with the community once more before being finalized.

Understanding the Plan

Our strategic plan guides our short-term, tactical agenda and keeps us aligned with our mission and vision. The plan drives accountability in our actions ensuring that current actions never stray from the long-term path. Therefore, we have devised benchmarks and milestones that allow us to understand where we are, measure our results, and adjust as needed

1. **Define our Community and their Goals while Understanding our Core Processes**
2. **Build out our Core Processes as is fits for each Community Segment**
3. **Evaluate our Path and Determine our Direction**
4. **Scale our Operations**
5. **Transparent Communication between us and our Stakeholders**

At the end of the next few years, we will have built a strong foundation and executed a number of key initiatives while assessing what worked and why it worked along the way. Of course, we will always be sharing our successes with the cherished members of our DSL community.

We will...

Support
Educate
Advocate
Develop
Communicate



Support

DSL **supports** its members by providing them with the tools they need to be successful in the present and the future.

By utilizing the data we have collected, we will continue to implement and develop programming that addresses the overall and individual needs identified by our members and their caregivers.



Strengthening our Programs

- We will strengthen and develop programming for members of all ages in areas that we serve.
- We will fully invest in members throughout their entire life.
- We will consistently evaluate program effectiveness through members' participation and success rates.

Maintaining Lifelong Engagement

- We will proactively communicate and provide resources for our families as they experience life transitions.
- We will guide our members toward the next available program to help them achieve success.
- We will also continue to be of service in crisis situations.

Encouraging Feedback

- We will continue to listen to our stakeholders and gain insights from them.
- We will continue to be a platform for those who want to offer input or feedback.
- We will adjust our approach as needed so we may continue to provide excellent services for our members.

Educate

We will **educate** our members, their families, and the community. Education is the foundation of DSL. We will provide robust educational services for all ages and areas we serve. We will collaborate and share our knowledge locally, nationally, and globally to support all individuals with Down syndrome.

Support Locally. Share Globally.



Share our Expertise

- We will foster a global understanding of Down syndrome for all.
- We will intentionally partner with community organizations and professionals to increase knowledge of Down syndrome.
- We will develop educational, programmatic, and operational materials to share with Down syndrome organizations.

Academic Services for All

- We will make it a priority to grow our portfolio of educational programs.
- We will partner with more colleges and universities to provide options for our college-bound students.
- We will research opportunities and use technology to enhance education for all age groups and outlying service areas.

Fostering Independence

- We will analyze and evaluate our current focus on adult learning and independence programs.
- We will listen to and support those who provide independent living options for our members.
- We will continue to adapt our life skills classes to include changing technology and standards for independent living.

Advocate

DSL will **advocate** for its members at all times. We will be transparent in our actions and communications while being purpose-driven in our work. We will be vocal supporters of our members and their families, enabling them to live their best lives. We will provide education and foster opportunities for our members to advocate for themselves. We will be active in advocating for our members' rights. We will lobby for legislative changes, educate future medical providers, and create awareness within our community.



Engagement Opportunities

- We will offer clear and consistent engagement opportunities for members, families, donors, volunteers, staff, corporations and our community.
- We will collaborate and encourage interaction with our community by inviting them to be a part of our members' success.
- We will engage the community deeply, evoking pride in our community and broadening our base of supporters.

Intentional Legislative Action

- We will be a community advocate making others aware of our actions and intentions.
- We will share successes with our legislators and develop personal relationships with them.
- We will garner meaningful support through positive conversations.

Community Education

- We will strive to make others in the community aware of our impact.
- We will teach others how to be a Kindness Warrior and understand the meaningful work we do.
- We will provide the community opportunities to support, educate and advocate so that they can help strengthen our mission to allow our members to reach their full potential.

Development

DSL will **develop** our resources so that we can continue to provide sustainable programs and services now and in the future. We provide meaningful opportunities for our supporters to engage with our work. We will develop new donors while maintaining our current supporters. We will focus on gratitude and stewardship to develop relationships and commitments that lead to impact.

Increase Board Involvement

- DSL will strategic in recruiting board members who have talents that support our strategic plan and our mission.
- We will provide clear expectations to board members and opportunity to engage and find value in their service.
- We provide education and support for these ambassadors as they play a key role in our success.

Leverage Sustainable Giving

- DSL will find new and sustainable revenue sources.
- We will improve our communication and stewardship of our donors.
- We will work to retain our current donors by showing our thanks and offering them opportunities to the engage in our work.

Nurture Infrastructure

- DSL will stay committed to creating standard operating procedures at all levels of the organization so that we can not only continue our success but learn new ways to be most efficient.
- We will anticipate needs and changes within our organization and in those that support us.
- We will work to have a succession plan for leadership and develop the talent we have. We will stay committed to excellence now and in the future.

**MEANINGFUL ENGAGEMENT = MEANINGFUL IMPACT = MEANINGFUL SUPPORT
= MEMBER SUCCESS**

Communicate

DSL will always **communicate** our plans and intentions to our community. We will be transparent so others may understand what we do and why.

Our growth begins with our amazing supporters which is why we intend to adapt an open-door policy; which we hope will create a direct line of communication ensuring all voices are heard.

We will take advantage of all available technology and continue to look for new ways to reach our community ensuring our message is received in real-time and becomes proactive.



Intentional & Impactful

- Develop a “living” communication plan
- Schedule consistent and directed communications
- Share success stories and impactful moments across multiple platforms
- Explore new platforms to communicate such as podcasts, blogs, and videos.

Meaningful

- Provide proactive communications to our community
- Provide specific communications to our community
- Develop communications that reflect our gratitude and appreciation
- Seek out stories and meaningful moments to share with our community

Transparent

- Create intentional communications
- Proactively share the views and goals of the board with our community
- Regularly share the impact your support makes in our community
- Create direct lines for communication and adhere to an “open-door” policy

2020 and beyond

We will initiate the goals, strategies and actions of this plan in January of 2020 under the leadership of our new Board President, Dr. Wes Sublett and our Executive Director, Julie Torzewski.

The Strategic Planning Committee will be responsible for ensuring the overall vision of the plan is taking shape, while the DSL Board of Trustees will safeguard our mission, values, and integrity as an organization.

We are committed to keeping our constituents updated on our progress and will be open to your feedback along the way.



Measure to Grow

DSL will **measure** our success. We will spend the early part of 2020 defining meaningful metrics for each of strategies set forth in this document.

These metrics will become indicators of our success over the next three years. We must be both confident and adept as we take a step forward in the process – confident enough to admit our faults and adept enough to adjust due to unforeseen circumstances.

We will continue to keep our stakeholders updated as we develop these strategies and reach our goals.



Onward & Upward

We are thrilled to begin a new chapter at DSL and to continue our Kindness Warrior movement. Kindness Warriors support the mission of Down Syndrome of Louisville which supports, educates, and advocates for individuals with Down syndrome.

We hope that you will
JOIN US!



A Special Thanks!

Thank you to everyone who took time out of their days to participate in our interviews and focus groups. Your perspectives not only provided key insights into how we can serve you better today, but also helped set our direction for the future.

Without such kind, caring individuals, it would be difficult to chart the path forward. And now, with your help, we feel certain that we're headed for a bright future.