



Dear Families:

Inclusion...awareness...acceptance...support. These are the values that guide us as we fight every day for individuals with Down syndrome to have a voice in their own healthcare, education, housing, and employment. As thrilled as we are with our progress, we cannot sit idly by while communities of color continue to face discrimination and inequality. For too long our families have suffered and endured pain. It is time for real change and we must lead by example. Change starts with us.

We are proud that the center meets the medical and educational support needs of our diverse community. But we recognize that there is much more work to do. We lack diversity on our board, staff, and membership. Recently, we have been unable to fully include our Spanish speaking families during virtual clinic appointments and support groups. We know our impact is not reaching Black communities. **We must do better.**

We are committed to becoming a more diverse, anti-racist organization by amplifying the voices of communities of color. Some of the steps we will take include:

- Actively engaging in ongoing listening, reflection, and engagement in learning exercises as a board and staff
- Building a committee dedicated to increasing diversity and monitoring our policies and programming to increase accountability
- Create an open call (attached to this email) to actively recruit board members from the Black and Hispanic community – you can support this initiative today by passing this form on to someone in your network that might be interested!
- Engage with community leaders and other disability organizations to address ongoing racial discrimination in the Lehigh Valley, Berks, and Poconos
- Providing resources to our membership for learning and support such as:
 - [Meet Ethan!](#)
 - [Shining on Down Black Teens & Young Adults with Down Syndrome Facebook Page](#)
 - [Parents of African American Children With Down Syndrome Facebook Group](#)
 - [Black Families Down Syndrome Network](#)

Change is necessary but never easy. We will make mistakes along the way. But inclusion is worth fighting for. We are here to listen and are committed to doing and being better.

We welcome your input and feedback. If you have ideas or would like to contribute to these goals, please contact us.

Sincerely,

The EPDSC Board of Directors

Kelly Nelson, President

Sandro Micocci, Secretary

Steve Neary, Treasurer

Larry Henry

Danielle Horn

Dr. Donald Levick, M.D. MBA

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