

# KAREN GAFFNEY FOUNDATION NEWS

Volume 1, Issue 1

JULY 2007

## A NEW SWIM CHALLENGE- ACROSS LAKE TAHOE

### Special points of interest:

- Karen will attempt to swim the 12-mile width of Lake Tahoe!
- Friends First summer events!
- Special thank you to our sponsors

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Karen Gaffney, an avid swimmer, known in her community for being the first person with Down syndrome to complete a relay swim across the English Channel, is taking on yet another swim challenge. In order to raise funds for the National Down Syndrome Congress, Karen will attempt to swim across Lake Tahoe!

Since her Channel Swim, Karen has kept up her string of "Firsts". She has completed seven swims across San Francisco Bay while preparing for and competing in the "Escape From Alcatraz" relay triathlons where she does the 1.5 mile swim from Alcatraz to the St. Francis Yacht Club. In addition, she completed a swim that the locals call "Round the Rock", where she did a round trip swim from Aquatic Park, out to Alcatraz Island, all the way around the Island, and then back to the Park. This was

about a  
4 mile

swim that Karen completed in 2 hours and 15 minutes!

Karen regularly swims 2 miles a day, and she will be stepping that up in preparation for her Tahoe swim. She will make the attempt in late September after spending a couple of weeks in the Tahoe area getting acclimated to the elevation. Karen says "I want to show others that people like me can accomplish anything they put their heart to!"

Karen is "putting her heart" to a worthwhile cause; raising funds for the National Down Syndrome

*Swimmers  
escaping from  
Alcatraz to San  
Francisco*



We took second place in our Relay Division of the "Escape From Alcatraz Triathlon" on Sunday June 3, 2007.

Karen and I, along with our third team

## FRIENDS FIRST FINISH SECOND!!

member, Kristi Kraft, formed an all women relay team and ran in the Open Division for all women relay teams. We ran under the Team name of Friends First, to help promote our Friends First clubs that we have started here in the Portland area. Our total relay time of 3 hours, 6 minutes and 2 seconds put us in second place for our division.

The race started when thousands of top athletes from around the world jumped into the frigid waters of the San Francisco Bay at 7AM Sunday morning, June 3, 2007 to begin the Escape from Alcatraz Triathlon. Karen Gaffney was one of them!

Congress. The announcement of her swim and fundraiser will take place at the annual meeting of the National Down Syndrome Congress on August 4, 2007. NDSC will have information on their website on how YOU can support Karen's efforts. [www.ndsccenter.org](http://www.ndsccenter.org) You may also contact Karen at the Karen Gaffney Foundation 503 973 5130 or [kgaffney@teleport.com](mailto:kgaffney@teleport.com)



The 1.5-mile swim from Alcatraz Island to the Marina Green in the 57-degree water ended adjacent to the St. Francis Yacht Club. Karen made that swim in 41 minutes, 21 seconds.

*(story continued on  
page 2)*





## UPCOMING FRIENDS FIRST EVENTS!

**"an inclusive high school art and culture program which aims to foster community between youth with and without disabilities"**

### Inclusive Arts

The Disability Art and Culture Project and The Karen Gaffney Foundation are excited to announce a new joint program for Portland Public School youth called, "Inclusive Arts Vibe" This new project, is an inclusive high school art and culture program which aims to foster community between youth with and without disabilities. This program includes the following activities:

#### *Friends First Disability Pride and Culture Club*

This is a monthly culture club where youth can explore inclusion and learn about each other through the arts. We will offer students opportunities to learn from artists with disabilities, disability films and disability

culture activities such as theatre games and art projects. Activities will focus on "disability cool" as we learn about disability pride and culture.

#### *Integrated Dance Workshops*

Students will have the opportunity to study integrated dance with a variety of teachers who have studied with nationally and internationally known companies such as Axis Dance Company, Candoco and Joint Forces Dance Company. Classes are designed to be inclusive for everybody.

#### *Socio-drama*

Through guided workshop exercises and discussion, students will have the opportunity to voice their experiences, thoughts and ideas about creating inclusive communities between people with and without disabilities. The students will write their own poetry or play and have the opportunity to perform it both at the Friends First Disability Pride and Culture Club and at the 2008 Disability Pride Art and Culture Festival.

For more information and details please contact Karen or Bri at (503) 973-5130 / [kgaffney@teleport.com](mailto:kgaffney@teleport.com)

This project is funded by a grant from VSA Arts



*Philip Summers helps Karen out of the San Francisco Bay at "Escape from Alcatraz" (above)*

*Swim Clinic Spring '07 Centennial High (below)*



### AUGUST IS EVERYDAY COURAGE

"Everyday Courage is all about youth exploring the challenges and the excitement that they encounter as teenagers. They'll be tackling issues that come up in friendships, and at school, just to name a few. So come prepared to "play around", and to have a very cool time!" Everyday Courage is scheduled for Friday, August 17th from 9am-3pm at Grant High School.

### SWIM/RUN CLINIC

#### **Introducing our coach...**

**Philip Summers** Philip is a certified USAT triathlon coach

as well as a youth development coach for the US Olympic Committee. He is also a multiple Ironman finisher, including the International Triathlon Championships in Kona, Hawaii. Philip was a relay member on the Friends First team at the Escape from Alcatraz Triathlon in 2006 where Karen was the swimmer.

*Our goal is to entice students into the world of swimming and running as a way to get regular exercise for students with disabilities.*

*(cover story continued)*

Next came a grueling 18-mile bike ride through the Presidio, out to Golden Gate Park and back to the Marina Green. Kristi Kraft nailed that ride for our team in 1 hour, 6 minutes and 19 seconds.

The final leg of the triathlon was a demanding 8 mile run that took athletes out under the Golden Gate Bridge to Baker Beach where they had to tackle a one of kind, 400 step sand ladder as they made the turn back to the finish line at Marina Green. Bri Maier took on that challenge and crossed the finish line in 1 hour, 11 minutes and 10 seconds to collect the medals for our team!

This is the second year we have formed a Friends First Team for the Escape From Alcatraz Triathlon to promote inclusion and to demonstrate that anyone- with or without a disability can compete!!!



*Karen and Kate at Everyday Courage '06*

## A HUGE thank you to our sponsors & supporters!

Northwest Regional Education Service District (NWRES D)

Shriners Hospital for Children

Tigard Tualatin School District

World Down Syndrome Conference

Montville School District

Greenville County Recreation District

South Carolina Recreation and Parks Association

Fiesta Educative Conference

Gulf Coast Down Syndrome Society

National Down Syndrome Coalition

Children of The Heart

Catlin Gabel School

United Cerebral Palsy

Corvallis School District

Pacific University

Willamette Valley DSA

Family Matters

Project Teams and Pride Industries

Portland State University

Central Illinois Down Syndrome Organization

Flower City Down Syndrome Network

PEO of Portland

Pierce County

Peak Parent Center

Tanasbourne Barnes&Noble

Lloyd Center Portland, OR

Jantzen Beach Barnes and Noble

Vancouver Barnes & Noble

Clackamas Town Center Barnes & Noble

## Oh the places we've been...

OHSU

Mt. Scott Learning Centers

OrFirst

Pierce County

O'Neill & Associates

Side by Side Kids

Opportunity Partners

National Down Syndrome Congress

Camas Washougal Rotary Club

Florida Recreation & Park Association, Inc

Luzerne County Down Syndrome Network

Insource

Down Syndrome Network of Northern Nevada



Down Syndrome Support Association of Southern Indiana

Down Syndrome Network of Montgomery County

*A special thank you to the organizations who supported us with grants to run our programs~*

*Dodd & Nancy Fischer*

*Anne Berni*

*Autzen Foundation*

## "Get Moving" program expands!

Karen and I held our first exercise class this past spring. It was a 6-week class that met 2 times per week at East Portland Community Center.

The students worked hard to accomplish their exercise goals throughout the class. They did this by going for group walks, working out on cardio machines, lifting weights, yoga, Pilates, and stretching. They also learned about the importance of eating healthy and were introduced to healthy snacks.

Portland Parks & Recreation recently received teen funding to offer this class again! Karen and I will be teaming up with Mt. Scott Community Center to offer a 7-week Get Moving class. The class will be held Wednesdays and Thursdays, July 11-August 23.

Tualatin Hills Parks and Recreation also found out about Get Moving!

We will be holding a 7-week class at the Elsie Stuhler Center October 2nd- November 13, Tuesdays at 6:45-8:15pm.

**If you are interested in registering for either of these classes, call:**

**Portland Parks and Recreation- Mt. Scott Community Center at 503-823-3183**

or

**Tualatin Hills Parks and Recreation at 503-439-9400 or online at [www.thprd.org/activities](http://www.thprd.org/activities)**





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**Making a Difference...Friend to Friend**  
*You can help by making a donation to  
the Karen Gaffney Foundation,  
a non-profit 501 c 3 organization.*

[www.karengaffneyfoundation.com](http://www.karengaffneyfoundation.com)

The Karen Gaffney Foundation is a non-profit organization that is dedicated to championing the journey to full inclusion in families, schools, communities and the workplace for people with Down Syndrome and other disabilities. Through a series of personal appearances, motivational speeches, video tapes and resource materials, Karen Gaffney, a young woman with Down Syndrome, works to...

Instill renewed hope for a full, productive and inclusive life in the hearts and minds of new parents of a child born with Down Syndrome or other developmental disabilities.

Motivate parents to new thinking and positive action so they will begin immediately building the potential of their child day by day.

Heighten awareness and raise expectations of students, counselors, educators, and those in the medical profession of the capabilities of children with Down Syndrome to learn, grow and contribute in an inclusive setting.



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TO: