



# Alumni, Family & Friends

DFRC NEWSLETTER - 2009 EDITION



## *Two parents share their reflections on the DFRC Blue-Gold experience*

### FIVE YEARS AND COUNTING

By Linda Webb

When I was first asked to write an article for the *Alumni, Family & Friends Newsletter*, I was very excited. But what could I possibly say that hasn't already been said? While turning through the pages of our Blue-Gold scrapbook, I realized that my daughter, Ashley Webb, has been with the program for five years.

When Ashley was almost two years old, I began to notice she was not performing age-appropriate tasks. Although developments were still being made, it was clear that she was having difficulty meeting benchmarks. After multiple visits to specialists, a chromosomal abnormality was discovered. It was

during this time that we found the Delaware Foundation Reaching Citizens with Intellectual Disabilities (DFRC). They have become a saving grace for our family.

It is hard to believe this will be Ashley's fifth year as a buddy in the Blue-Gold Hand-in-Hand program. At eight years old, Ashley became a participant in this program in 2003. Upon signing her up, we had no expectations whatsoever. Little did we know what a wonderful impact this would have on our family on so many levels.

Through the Hand-in-Hand program, our family has found support and lifelong friends. Ashley has built social skills, has found comfort with her peers, and has made friendships that will last a lifetime.

*Continued — p. 3*

### ALL IN THE FAMILY

By Vicki Testa

As a high school senior in 1979, my husband, Ed Testa, was chosen as a Blue Player in the Blue-Gold Football game. His buddy's name was Bill. He also became friends with a young man named Mike Luternau who was one of Bill's friends from Mary Campbell Center. Ed will tell you that to this day, when the buddies run out on the field at the game, he still cries like it was yesterday. It was by far one of the most memorable experiences of his life.

For our family, the Blue-Gold journey began in 1990. At 5-yrs. old, my niece, Elena Tadlock, was given the opportunity to be a buddy in the Hand-in-Hand program. Elena has a rare non-hereditary disorder called Prader-Willi syndrome. It is caused by an abnormality on the 15<sup>th</sup> chromosome. Individuals with Prader-Willi characteristically have low muscle tone, short stature, low IQ, and a chronic feeling of hunger coupled

*Continued — p. 2*

**DFRC BLUE-GOLD ALL★STAR FOOTBALL GAME - Saturday, June 20**

**See p. 6-7 to sponsor a Buddy or Participant, be a Yearbook Patron or to order Game Tickets!**

*Testa Family - continued*

with a very slow metabolism. For Elena to be given this special opportunity meant a great deal to us all, but especially to Ed.

That first year, Elena was paired with an Ambassador named Stephanie from St. Elizabeth High School. Since then, with the exception of one year, her buddies have continued to be from St. Elizabeth. As the years went on and our sons attended St. E's for high school, the students who took part in the Blue-Gold game were kids we knew. It was so special for our sons to see Elena at events at school with their friends.

In 2007, our younger son Michael was called into Coach Hemphill's office and given the news that he had been chosen to play in the Blue-Gold All★Star Football game. Needless to say, there were celebrations in both the Testa and the Tadlock households. A few weeks after the participant orientation, the Hand-in-Hand paperwork came in the mail. Michael and Elena had made a pact to open their letters together. What we didn't know was that Mike had talked to the Hand-in-Hand coordinators at orientation and had requested Elena as his buddy. When they opened their

letters and Elena saw that she had been chosen as the Blue All★Star Buddy and her cousin Michael was her very own "Blue Football Player," she was thrilled! That was just the start of our celebrations. Our entire family took part. A banner was made, shirts were made, tickets and ads were sold, and a tailgate party was planned.

Seeing Michael and Elena together for the events was amazing. The DFRC staff made us all feel like family. The moment the "spark" occurred for me was when Michael's name was announced at the game. With thirty of our friends and relatives in the stands cheering, Michael — wearing his father's #75 game jersey — ran through the goal posts and onto the field. His own special All★Star buddy then ran onto the field with hugs for her own special Blue football player.

I would like to give a special thank you to the DFRC

organization and staff. Elena has had the opportunity to compete in Special Olympics, Hand-in-Hand, and Totally Awesome Kids along with other beneficiaries of the DFRC organization. As a recruited member of the Committee this year, I hope my family can come full circle and give back to an organization who means so much to so many.



*Elena Tadlock with Micheal Testa, her cousin  
and Hand-in-Hand buddy for the  
2007 DFRC Blue-Gold All★Star Football Game*

## DFRC BENEFICIARIES

**Each year, DFRC distributes proceeds from their fundraising events to programs that enrich the lives of Delawareans with intellectual disabilities. The funds are allocated by a committee of community volunteers and are used as grants and seed money to support programs throughout Delaware.**

### 2008 DFRC GRANT RECIPIENTS

Art Therapy Express Program, Inc.  
Bear Babe Ruth, Inc. - Miracle League  
Best Buddies Delaware  
John S. Charlton School: Caesar Rodney School District  
Collaborative Effort to Reinforce Transition Success, Inc.  
(C.E.R.T.S., Inc.)  
Community Integrated Services (CIS)  
Delaware CarePlan, Inc.  
Delaware Developmental Disabilities Council  
Delaware Hospice  
Delaware End of Life Coalition  
Delaware Theatre Company  
Down Syndrome Association of Delaware  
Easter Seals Delaware and Maryland's Eastern Shore  
Independent Resources, Inc.  
Kent County Community School: Capital School District  
Kent-Sussex Industries, Inc.

Lower Delaware Autism Foundation  
Mid-Del Chapter: The Arc of Delaware  
PAWS for People (Pet Assisted Visitation Volunteer  
Services, Inc.)  
Practice Without Pressure, Inc.  
Reel Expectations Foundation  
Richardson Park Learning Center: Red Clay School District  
Special Olympics Delaware  
The Arc of Delaware  
The CENTER for Therapeutic and Educational Riding, Inc.  
The Mary Campbell Center, Inc.  
Therapeutic Riding at Carousel  
Variety - The Children's Charity: Delaware Division  
VSA arts of Delaware (VSADE)

**Total grant monies distributed for 2008 by DFRC were  
\$264,695.00.**



# Save the Date

## SUNDAY, MAY 17

**DFRC Blue-Gold Hand-in-Hand  
Buddy Picnic / DSA Buddy Walk**  
U of D Field House Lawn  
Newark

## SUNDAY, MAY 31

**DFRC Blue-Gold Day at the Blue Rocks**  
Frawley Stadium, Wilmington  
Get ticket order form at  
<http://tinyurl.com/bgatocks>.

## THURSDAY, JUNE 4

**DFRC Blue-Gold All★Star  
Golf Classic – Sussex County**  
Kings Creek C.C., Rehoboth Beach

## MONDAY, JUNE 8

**DFRC Blue-Gold All★Star  
Golf Classic – Kent County**  
Maple Dale C.C., Dover

**DFRC Blue-Gold All★Star  
Golf Classic – New Castle County**  
Delaware National C.C., Wilmington

Visit [dfrcfoundation.org/golf](http://dfrcfoundation.org/golf) for all  
Golf Classic registration information.

## SATURDAY, JUNE 13

**DFRC Blue-Gold All★Star 5K Run/  
1-Mile Walk**  
Irish Eyes, Lewes - 7:30 am  
Visit [dfrcfoundation.org/run](http://dfrcfoundation.org/run) for  
registration information.

## WEDNESDAY, JUNE 17

**DFRC All★Star Football Scrimmages  
Open to the public – free admission!**

Gold Squad Scrimmage  
Milford High School, Milford - 5:30 pm

Blue Squad Scrimmage  
Tower Hill School, Wilmington - 5:30 pm

## SATURDAY, JUNE 20

**54th Annual DFRC Blue-Gold  
All★Star Football Game**  
U of D Stadium. Gates open 5 pm.  
Order tickets using the form on page 7.

## FALL 2009

**Holidazzle 2009**  
Visit [holidazzle.org](http://holidazzle.org) for information.

## SPRING 2010

**DFRC Sussex County Auction**  
Visit [dfrcfoundation.org/sussexauction](http://dfrcfoundation.org/sussexauction) for  
information.

## Webb Family - continued

Every year as March nears, we become so excited to see who will become our newest family member. Ashley has had so many great experiences by connecting with cheerleaders, football players, band members, and ambassadors. There are many events planned through the Hand-in-Hand program, and Ashley enjoys all of them. Her favorite and most memorable moment, however, is the day of the Blue-Gold All★Star Football Game where the buddies run out on the field. There isn't a dry eye in the entire stadium. The final score of the game is lost for us, yet we never forget that moment of joy where Ashley runs to meet her buddy.

In 2007, we were honored when Ashley was asked to be the Gold All★Star Buddy.

This was a wonderful experience for Ashley, and she took this role very seriously. Of course, she relished in the attention she received, and a permanent smile was on her face for all of the picture-taking moments. We were (and are) so proud of her, and as her parents, we learned that she is more independent than we ever realized. This is a true testament to the success of this organization for my family and Ashley. It has truly helped my daughter and me.

Through the help of the DFRC, our community and schools have greater acceptance of those with different abilities. Our family is so thankful to this organization, and because of this, I have joined the Blue-Gold Committee. I hope that someday, you will also find time to join this wonderful family.



*Ashley Webb (center) with 2008 Gold Cheerleaders  
Jessica Lehr and Nicole Passwaters of Milford H.S.*

# Take Me Out to The Ball Game



**Join us on Sunday, May 31  
for DFRC Blue-Gold Day at the  
Blue Rocks!**

See our Buddies and  
Participants take active  
parts in the pre-game and

between-innings festivities. This afternoon of fun  
and frivolity is sure to be a good time and a great  
opportunity to spend time with your buddy —  
or to support DFRC. Call the DFRC office at  
(302) 454-2730 or go to <http://tinyurl.com/bgatocks>  
for a ticket order form. And buddies get in for FREE ...  
spread the word!

\* \$2.00 from every ticket purchased with the  
above-mentioned order form benefits DFRC.





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# Remember the spark, honor the legacy.

2009

In 1955, while watching a baseball game in Rockford Park, Bob Carpenter & Jim Williams were discussing ways to help Delaware's children with intellectual disabilities. According to a 1980 News Journal article, one asked, "Why not have a benefit football game?" That was the spark that ignited the game, and once having the idea there was no turning back. Hundreds of Delaware families joined in fanning the spark that started as a simple benefit football game to become the spectacular DFRC Blue-Gold Football Game of today.

Then in 1961, Bob Andrus, the Gold Head Coach from Dover High School, selected five of his players to play in the Blue-Gold Game scheduled for August. I was delighted to be selected because it was an opportunity to play another game of football before I joined the Navy.

Admittedly, I did not fully understand the purpose of the game until the kids arrived at one of our practices. It was then that we all began to understand that it was much more than just a football game. Playing with the children I met that day reinforced one of my grandparents' teachings — *you cannot tell a book by its cover*. Labels mean nothing. It is the character of the person, not the label, that truly matters.

It was on that day that I joined the DFRC family, a family with a purpose of raising awareness and funds to enrich the lives of Delaware citizens with intellectual disabilities. The years since have reinforced my conviction that our human differences are a part of our human existence, and that once we understand these differences, we do not need to be separated by them.

Now, so many years later, I have the privilege and honor to serve as Chairperson for this, our 54th game. As we prepare for the game on June 20th, I've asked all of our volunteers to remember the "spark" that brought them to the DFRC family. For many, like me, it was the experience as a participant that left them wanting more. Others have been drawn to DFRC because either they or a family member have benefited from many of the programs DFRC helps support. And let's not forget about the hundreds of volunteers who join us on game day out of a desire to be part of a Delaware tradition that has continued to bring joy to others for over 50 years.

I encourage all of our Alumni, Family, and Friends to remember their own DFRC "spark" and to share that memory with someone who is not as familiar with our cause. In doing so, you will be "honoring the legacy" created with that very first game in 1956!

- Pat Weaver



*Pat Weaver, 2009 Game Chair, a defensive lineman who represented Dover High School in the 1961 DFRC Blue-Gold All ★Star Game*





## BENEFICIARY SPOTLIGHT

*"I am a firm believer in serendipity - all the random pieces coming together in one wonderful moment, when suddenly you see what their purpose was all along."*

- David Levithan

### Homes For Life Foundation

In 1972, my husband Lanny and I were blessed with our second son, Robert. Due to a birth injury he was left with significant neurological problems including an intellectual disability. As he grew and developed we realized that having a child with a disability added another dimension to parenthood. Most parents assume that as their children reach adulthood they will become self-sufficient. If you talk to any parent of a child with a disability most will say that their greatest fear is the future. What will happen when I am no longer here? I realized quite early that a part of the solution was for Robert to live in a group home with his peers, have a job, and be an active member of his community. Recognizing this need, in 1989 I began fund-raising to build a group home for adults with intellectual and developmental disabilities.

*"Little did I know then that this would become my life's work. Because of the extraordinary generosity of this community, now 20 years later, I am completing my 25th group home."*

In 1980, serendipitously, my then next door neighbor invited me to become involved with a very special fundraiser called Holidazzle which raised money for DFRC. She knew that we had a child with an intellectual disability and thought I might be interested. Not only did I enjoy working on the committee but I met many wonderful women. Coe Murray, whose father was the founder of DFRC, and Mary Boyer were two of the original Holidazzle team.

Over the next nine years I stayed actively involved with the Holidazzle committee. When Coe and Mary heard of my plan to build a neighborhood group home they suggested that I submit a grant proposal to DFRC. In 1989 my request to DFRC for \$30,000 was approved. That initial contribution was the catalyst for a remarkable journey for our family. By the end of 1989, in addition to the DFRC Grant, I had raised \$65,000.

In February 1990 another serendipitous thing happened. I had the good fortune to meet our new neighbors, Julie and Charlie Cawley. Charlie, former Chairman and CEO of MBNA



Gale Flynn (above) gives a tour of a house funded by Homes for Life.

Robert Edelson (below, left) joins students from Tower Hill School as they learn more about resident life in the group home.



America Bank, overheard a conversation I was having about my efforts and invited me to meet with him at MBNA to discuss my project. To my amazement and delight Mr. Cawley not only offered to donate the remainder of the funding to complete the first group home, but also to hire the four young women who moved into that home four months later.

Little did I know then that this would become my life's work. Because of the extraordinary generosity of this community, now 20 years later, I am completing my 25th group home.

In 1994 Robert moved into his group home with three other young men and began working for MBNA, now Bank of America. The DFRC family has always been one of my greatest supporters.

Thirty-six years ago I was a frightened young mother wondering what the future would hold. Serendipity brought our family to our neighborhood. When I first started this fund-raising journey on behalf of adults with developmental and intellectual disabilities, I never imagined where it would take me or what wonderful people I would meet along the way. For me, life's great irony is learning that although we start out by simply wanting to care and provide for our own very special children, we discover that to do so we must embrace every child.

- Micki Edelson

# A

## s we celebrate 54 years of the DFRC Blue-Gold All★Star Football Game, here are 3 ways that you and your family can support the DFRC Blue-Gold Family:

(Please use the form on Page 7)



### 1 SPONSOR A BUDDY OR PARTICIPANT.

Each year there are more than 300 high school participants and more than 100 Hand-in-Hand Buddies that participate in the DFRC Blue-Gold All★Star Football Program. There is never a charge or a fee to participate in this program. **DFRC welcomes gifts from family, friends, and business partners to help offset the costs of uniforms and equipment for all of our participants.**

### 2 BE A BLUE-GOLD YEARBOOK PATRON.

Since the first game in 1956, thousands of individuals, businesses, and other organizations have assisted in our fundraising by becoming Blue-Gold Patrons. **Patron Gifts are welcomed at any time, however, only those received by May 18<sup>th</sup> will be listed in the 2009 Yearbook.**

### 3 PURCHASE TICKETS TO THE DFRC BLUE-GOLD ALL★STAR GAME ON JUNE 20<sup>th</sup>.

Alumni, family and friends (including businesses, civic groups, etc.) are welcome to celebrate with us on June 20<sup>th</sup> at the University of Delaware football stadium. There are Group Discount packages available and there is plenty of space in the parking areas around the stadium to tailgate before the game. Children's games begin at 4pm, pre-game introductions begin at 6pm, kickoff at 7pm, and fireworks will immediately follow the game. **For reserved seats, please call the DFRC office at 302-454-2730.**



## THANK YOU TO OUR 2008 ALUMNI, FAMILY & FRIENDS SUPPORTERS

who generously donated funds in support of our  
2008 DFRC Blue-Gold buddies and high school participants:

Alesi Family  
Dolores V. Alfano  
Steve & Tracey Aitken  
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**Thank you for supporting DFRC!**



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# 54<sup>th</sup> DFRC BLUE-GOLD ALL★STAR FOOTBALL GAME

Saturday, June 20 at 7 pm

University of Delaware Stadium  
in Newark

## Schedule of Events

Parking Opens - 3:00 pm  
Kids' Games - 4:00 pm  
Stadium Gates Open - 5:00 pm  
Game Kickoff - 7:00 pm  
Fireworks - following the game!



Remember the Spark, Honor the Legacy.



JOIN US IN SUPPORTING THE HUNDREDS OF HIGH SCHOOL  
STUDENTS, VOLUNTEERS, AND COMMUNITY MEMBERS  
WHO MAKE THIS GAME HAPPEN EVERY YEAR !

DFRC THANKS OUR 2009 BLUE-GOLD ALL★STAR FOOTBALL GAME SPONSORS

