

## European Down Syndrome Association news

### CYPRUS Pan Cyprian Down Syndrome Association



**Founded:** 1991, as a Parents' Society

**President:** Michael Loucas

**Members:** 100 family members

**Finances:** Member fees and a few donations. State support.

#### Main goals

- The promotion of the interests of persons with Down syndrome and their families
- The inclusion of children with Down syndrome in mainstream education, where possible
- The inclusion of persons with Down syndrome into society.

#### Services

Some basic counselling.

We offer music, dance and drawing therapy as well as seminars with topics usually on special education or psychological support.

There is a library, and once a year we organise a family day.

#### Publications

A regular small bulletin, called Ω is published 2 or 3 times per year. There are no other information flyers, brochures etc.

#### Awareness campaign

There is not yet a regular DS awareness campaign, but plans to organise something on the occasion of the World Down Syndrome Day.

#### Projects and campaigns

Our main project in the next years will be to promote inclusion of persons with Down syndrome in society. The most successful project in the last years was the inclusion of children with Down syndrome in mainstream education.

#### General information

The three main problems in Cyprus for persons with Down syndrome are:

- What will happen to them after their parents' death?
- After School Occupation/Employment,
- Health services.

Things which should be urgently changed are:

- Secondary education must become more specific to the needs and capabilities of the children
- Occupation/employment opportunities for adults



#### Numbers

Only a few children with Down syndrome are born on Cyprus – less than ten every year. Fewer than 400 persons with Down syndrome live on Cyprus.

#### Situation of babies and toddlers

Services for babies and children are making progress.

#### Situation of school-age children

- More than 50% of children up to 6 are in mainstream kindergarten.
- More than 70% of children (6-12 years old) are in mainstream primary schools.
- Less than 50% of 12-18 year olds are in mainstream schools.
- The other children attend special schools.

#### Situation of adults

- Only a few adults work e.g., in supermarkets, bakeries or offices.
- Most adults live with their parents. There are only a few housing facilities in the community.
- We have only a few persons over 50 years with Down syndrome. They usually live in homes for old people.

#### AGM of the Association



*Michael Loucas, President of the Pan Cyprian Down Syndrome Association. He has a 12-year old daughter with Down syndrome.*