

The Center provides individuals with Down syndrome, their families and the medical and educational professionals that serve them, with meaningful and interactive programs. By taking all of the resources and programs that the NDSC currently offers, and delivering them directly to rural, tribal and underserved populations across the country, we can truly make an impact on the lives of everyone who needs, and requests, this vital outreach.

Unfortunately, many families are unable to attend our annual Convention. Other families attend when it is close to their community, but when they return home they have no support around them. These individuals, families, caregivers and professionals are in great need of the information and expertise afforded those who live in larger metropolitan areas, or who have greater financial resources. By having NDSC travel to their communities, we not only provide these families with important and vital services, but also leave behind a community of people who can support one another.

Financially, each area is different. In California, we were able to work with the local Regional Centers to cover the per person costs, while in other areas attendees are able to pay nominal fees for the programs, or we seek local funding to help offset the costs. However, we do not want to turn down any community solely on their ability to pay. Currently, we are the only national organization that is embarking on this type of interactive program in underserved communities. All programs are offered in English and in Spanish.

Here is a list of initial offerings through the NDSC Center for Outreach & Education:

#### Rural/Tribal Outreach and Workshops

These are one or two-day conferences, driven in content by the requests of the community. The NDSC utilizes our international network, to assure that we are bringing the very best speakers, medical personnel and leaders for each topic, so that the Rural/Tribal community has a meaningful experience. Some of the topics include behavior, transition, technology, medical and dental issues, dietary/nutrition education, self-determination, education, employment, developmental issues, therapies, and school and community inclusion. Each attendee/family receives NDSC's **Family Care Toolkit** <https://www.ndsccenter.org/programs-resources/family-care-toolkit/>

The NDSC provided our first Rural Outreach Summit in Bakersfield, California, in the summer of 2018, where we served 125 people in both English and Spanish, including many migrant workers and their families. In November of 2018, we traveled to Michigan to provide our next Rural Outreach Summit. Although a new program, it has generated overwhelmingly positive reviews, and is gaining traction quickly. In addition the areas listed above, we have received requests for Rural Outreach Programs from Alabama, Alaska, Arizona, California (2<sup>nd</sup> program/location), Connecticut, Illinois, Iowa, Virginia, and, West Virginia. We will also be actively pursuing Tribal connections in 2019, seeking to serve their rural, and underserved communities across the country. We anticipate our current requests/locations doubling in the next 12 – 18 months.

## Educator Conference

In 2016, the NDSC presented its pilot Educator Conference at our Annual Convention in Orlando. This Conference provided educators with best practices, resources and other tools to effectively support their students with Down syndrome in the classroom. Since that time, more than 500 professionals have participated in this specialized training, and are currently utilizing the skills they have learned to support thousands of students with Down syndrome and other disabilities in school systems across the nation, and internationally. Last year in Dallas, Texas, our attendance for this program was over 200. In December of this year, we are taking it on the road, hosting an Educator Conference in Nashville, Tennessee.

Through this highly requested program, the NDSC will present one-day Educator Conferences across the country for teachers, para-professionals, administrators, educational diagnosticians and therapists who serve individuals with Down syndrome and other intellectual disabilities. The curriculum is appropriate for both general and special educators. The specialized training covers reading intervention, technology innovation and positive behavior strategies that promote meaningful inclusion in general education classrooms. Attendees will walk away with six continuing education unit hours, and dozens of hands-on activities that have proven results for Kindergarten through 8th grade classrooms.

Not only will our Center take this program out into urban communities and larger cities, we will also couple this program with Rural/Tribal Outreach in areas where we can provide conferences for both parents and educators.

## Urban Outreach and Workshops

Although health disparities within rural communities are great, we also want to be able to respond to underserved urban areas in which there exists both cultural, and socio-economic barriers. The NDSC wants to be ready to respond to requests within these areas of the country, and we also hope to work with church and other faith-based communities within urban areas by reaching out with our resources and services. In the future, we will be focusing on improving outreach to urban areas with a similar model to that of our Rural Outreach Program.



**“Nobody else is doing this type of work. Having this available for families brings a new level of support in the Down syndrome community, and in rural areas across the United States.”**

**~ California Rural Outreach Presenter**

