

**No Money.
No Staff. No
Problem:**

**Ideas for Group
Advocacy Efforts**

National Down Syndrome Congress Convention

Speaker Spotlight



**DEBORAH TOMAI &
IAN ALFARO**

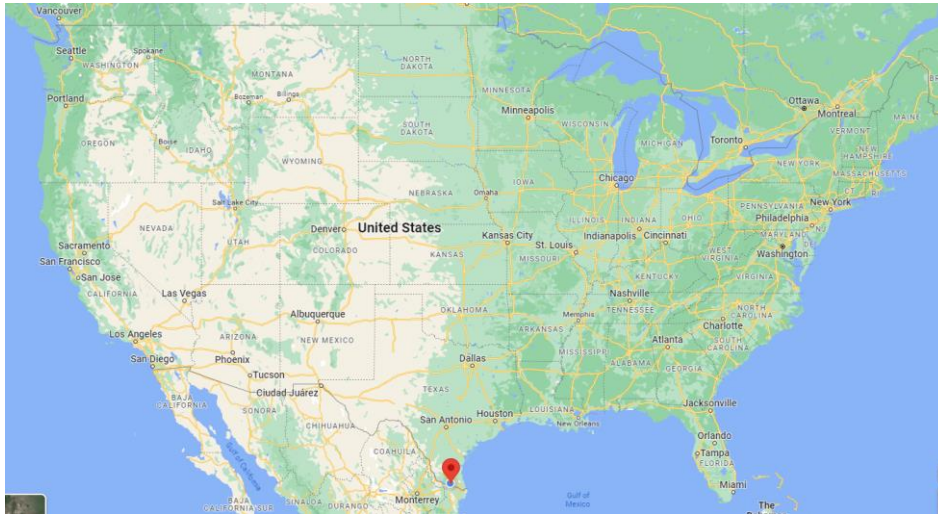


The graphic features two portraits of speakers. On the left is Deborah Tomai, a woman with short grey hair, glasses, and a pink top. On the right is Ian Alfaro, a young man with curly dark hair, glasses, and a blue t-shirt under a black jacket. The background is a light green with blue and yellow geometric shapes. A circular logo in the bottom right corner contains a lightbulb icon and the text 'Camp Advocacy Training Boot Camp'.

Introductions

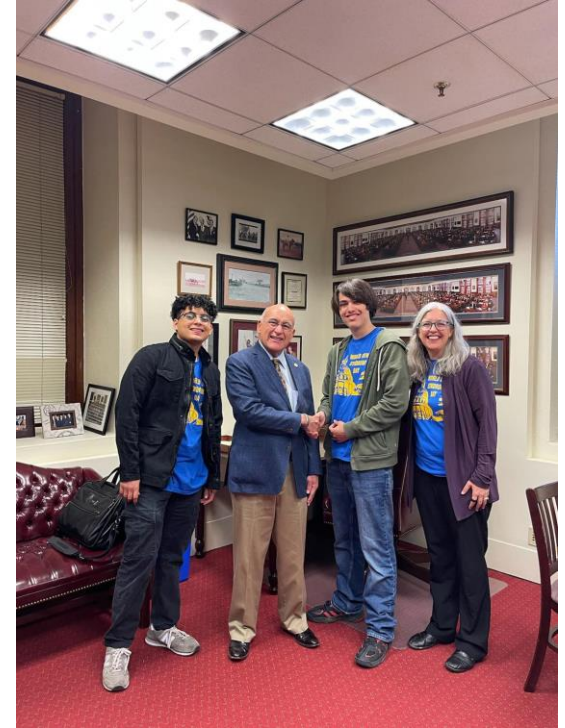
Deborah Tomai, Parent Advocate & President Rio Grande Valley Down Syndrome Association Board

Ian Alfaro, Sibling Advocate



Ian's Advocacy Journey

- Rio Grande Valley Down Syndrome Association
- World Down Syndrome Day at the Texas Capitol
- Sibling Advocacy



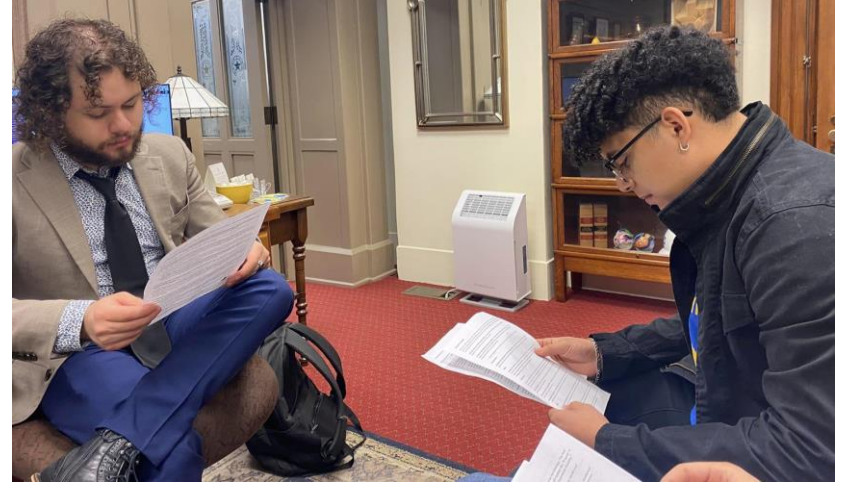
Tips for Advocacy

Educate yourself on issues.

Identify your story.

Remember that legislators and policymakers WANT to hear from self advocates and their families.

You don't have to know all the answers.



Deborah's Advocacy Journey

Rio Grande Valley Down Syndrome Association

Buddy Walk on Washington

Texas Partners in Policymaking

Texas Partners in Policymaking - RGV

Texas Down syndrome Advocacy Coalition

Down Syndrome Texas

Disability Advocates Coalition - RGV



DOWN SYNDROME
AWARENESS™
TEXAS



Growing A Movement

Educate yourself on issues.

Identify your story.

Find your people!

Raise awareness & education.

Develop partnerships and coalitions.



Congressman Vicente Gonzalez

September 25, 2018



Recently, I attended a legislative listening session at the McAllen Library with Easterseals Rio Grande Valley, The Arc, and the RGV Down Syndrome Association. We discussed issues affecting children and parents dealing with disabilities in the community and strategized ways to increase inclusion in Central and South Texas school systems.



**NATIONAL
DOWN SYNDROME
CONGRESS**

Starting a State Advocacy Day

Connect with advocates from around the state.

- Use DSAs and statewide disability organizations to promote.

Find a legislative partner.

- Proclamation?
- Build a relationship with a staffer.

Train advocates in advance about legislative priorities. (Zoom!)

Logistics: Reserve a room. Find a sponsor for lunch?

2023 WDSD at the Capitol



2019 WDSD at the Capitol



State Advocacy Day Challenges

Scheduling conflicts with other organizations, issues and votes.

Building consensus

- Disagreements about which bills or topics are most important.

Shaping the story.

- Press releases and follow up.

Suggestions for Small Groups

Look for FREE opportunities to raise awareness.

Access statewide resources.

Partner with other organizations and advocates.

What coalitions already exist? Examples: Community Health, Birth to 5

Invest a little money. Be strategic!

Join NDAC, sign up for Action Alerts, & take advantage of free training opportunities through NDSC

Legislative Listening Session Disability Issues Forum Parent Training

