



International Mosaic Down Syndrome Association
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**For Immediate Release: Franklin, TX
Down Syndrome 50 Years On**

On March 21st, World Down Syndrome Day will mark the 50th anniversary of the publication of Professor Jerome Lejeune's discovery of the extra copy of chromosome 21 which causes Down syndrome.

Also known as trisomy-21 because of the third copy of the 21st chromosome, Down syndrome was first described by the English doctor John Langdon Down in 1866. However, it was not until Professor Lejeune's publication in 1959 that the ultimate cause of Down syndrome was known.

Down syndrome occurs in 1-733 births. The incidence of births of children with Down syndrome increases with the age of the mother. However, due to higher fertility rates in younger women, 80 percent of children with Down syndrome are born to women under the age of 35.

Since that pioneering discovery fifty years ago, great strides have been made in research, education and advocacy for those with Down syndrome. Individuals are now living much longer, healthier lives and often grow to live independently, have careers and get married.

International Mosaic Down Syndrome Association (IMDSA) is celebrating this anniversary by holding its 3rd annual Genes Day in conjunction with World Down Syndrome Day. Participants throughout the community show their support by donating \$1 or more to wear their jeans in the workplace or school for this special day to signify the "*designer genes*" of Down syndrome. Because March 21st is on a weekend this year, this event will be held Friday, March 20th (March 19th for those in Australia).

"We are very excited to bring this event to our communities during this special year." says Kristy Colvin, president of International Mosaic Down Syndrome Association. "It is our hope that with this fun and uniquely educational event we will break the barriers and make extinct the stereotypes within our communities of those with mosaic Down syndrome and Down syndrome."

"Professor Lejeune provided inspiration to parents and professionals who met him, and drew strength and hope from his optimism and his simple and profound dedication to humanity. The Lejeune Institute in Paris continues to sponsor research in this area" said Mrs. Penny Robertson, President of Down Syndrome International.(DSI) "But while there is much to be proud of in western countries in the services provided for people and families with Down syndrome, there is still an enormous amount of work to be done in many countries".

"We work hard to advocate for all of our families and we realize that we have come a long way in these past 50 years. However, we have only broken the tip of the iceberg," Colvin agrees, "We still have a lot of work to do, not only in research, but also in educating the general public."

Down syndrome organizations throughout the world are paying tribute to the revolutionary work of Professor Lejeune and celebrating the tremendous advances in the care and social welfare of people with Down syndrome over the past fifty years. As DSI and IMDSA come together to help those with both Trisomy 21 Down syndrome and mosaic Down syndrome, these organizations are working to continue the pioneering efforts that Dr. John Langdon Down and Professor Jerome Lejeune began so many years ago.

For more information on International Mosaic Down Syndrome Association, please visit www.imdsa.org

For more information about Down Syndrome International, please visit www.ds-int.org

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About Down Syndrome International

Down Syndrome International (DSI) is a federation of international organizations and individuals committed to ensuring the quality of life and human rights for all people with Down syndrome.

DSI has the mandate to improve life for people with Down syndrome through increasing awareness of their abilities and talents. By providing information and researching best methods DSI works with many organizations to improve the standard of care worldwide.

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Down Syndrome International is a registered charity in England and Wales that relies almost entirely on voluntary donations.

About International Mosaic Down Syndrome Association

International Mosaic Down Syndrome Association (IMDSA) is designed to provide support, information and research to any family, individual or professional whose life has been affected by mosaic Down syndrome. IMDSA strives to increase awareness of mosaic Down syndrome throughout the globe through its various outreach and research programs.

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IMDSA is a nonprofit organization registered in the state of Texas in USA that relies solely on voluntary donations.