



Serving children and adults with Down syndrome,
autism and other developmental disabilities

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ACDS Annual Gala to Honor

Dr. Brian Skotko and Actress Jamie Brewer

*“Up, Up and Away” Fundraiser Theme Reflects the Unlimited Possibilities
for Those with Down syndrome and Other Developmental Disabilities*

Long Island, NY, October 7, 2014 — ACDS, a nonprofit agency that provides lifelong resources to children and adults with Down syndrome, autism and other developmental disabilities, will hold their Annual Gala at the landmark Garden City Hotel on **Saturday, October 25, 2014**. The event will honor Dr. Brian Skotko and actress Jamie Brewer for their contributions in serving and advocating for those with Down syndrome.

The festivities will begin with a cocktail hour at 7:00 pm, followed by dinner, the awards presentation, and dancing. A live auction and silent auction will also be held. Carolina Leid of WABC Eyewitness News will emcee the event.

Dr. Skotko is a Board-certified medical geneticist and Co-Director of the Down Syndrome Program at Massachusetts General Hospital. Inspired by his sister Kristin who has Down syndrome, Dr. Skotko has dedicated his medical career to helping children with cognitive and developmental disabilities. He has conducted cutting-edge research related to Down syndrome and co-authored numerous books and articles on the subject. He also speaks to families, educators and healthcare professionals on a range of Down syndrome-related topics and has presented at conferences hosted by ACDS.

Dr. Skotko has appeared on national television and radio programs and has been featured in prominent publications including *The Wall Street Journal*, *The New York Times*, and *The Washington Post*. He is a member of the Professional Advisory Committee for the National Center for Prenatal and Postnatal Down Syndrome Resources and is on the Board of Directors of the Band of Angels Foundation, which seeks to advance an understanding of Down syndrome and autism.

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Ms. Brewer is a promising young actress with Down syndrome who has appeared on the television shows *Southland* and *American Horror Story*. She is also a staunch advocate for people like herself with Down syndrome and is involved with several organizations including the National Down Syndrome Congress, American Association of People with Disabilities, and Down Syndrome in the Arts and Media (DSiAM). While serving on the Texas ARC Governmental Affairs Committee, Ms. Brewer persuaded the state senate to pass a law abolishing use of the word “retarded” and substituting the term “intellectual developmental disability” in all state legislation.

“We are excited to acknowledge both our honorees at this year’s Gala,” says ACDS Executive Director Michael Smith. “Dr. Skotko is well-known and admired for his pioneering research and advocacy for individuals with Down syndrome. And Jamie is not only a fine actress but an inspiring role model to show what people with Down syndrome and other developmental disabilities can achieve.”

Last year’s Gala raised over \$250,000 for ACDS, a milestone the agency hopes to achieve with this year’s event as well. “The Gala helps us obtain the funds we need to continue providing our programs and services,” says Smith. “Equally important, the Gala shows the impact that trailblazers such as Dr. Skotko and Ms. Brewer can have in helping those with developmental disabilities reach their full potential. This is the idea behind the ‘Up, Up and Away’ theme of this year’s Gala. When you focus on the abilities, rather than the ‘disabilities,’ of those with Down syndrome, the possibilities really are endless.”

For more information on the Annual Gala, contact Laurie Schaefer, ACDS, at 516.933.4700 x 124.

ABOUT ACDS

Located in Plainview, NY, ACDS is dedicated to providing lifetime resources of exceptional quality, innovation and inclusion for individuals with Down syndrome, autism and other developmental disabilities and their families. ACDS currently serves over 1,000 children and adults with services that include Early Intervention and preschool special education programs; respite and recreation programs for children, teens and adults; adult Medicaid service coordination; and eight supervised group homes in Nassau County. ACDS has provided programs and services in Long Island since 1966. For more information, please visit www.acds.org or call 516-933-4700.

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