

October 1st 2003

Hello everyone. October has become my favorite month because it is Down Syndrome Awareness Month. For those of you that don't know me, I am a Science teacher at the Upper Grade, and this is my 16th year in the district. I have three boys named Flynn Will and Reed. As you can tell if you read just the names, my wife and I are optimists.

Flynn was born in 1995, and we found out after he was born that he was born with Down syndrome. To use a metaphor, we were on a plane to Paris and when we landed the pilot said, "Welcome to Amsterdam!" We were shocked! We were angry! We had all these plans for Paris. What went wrong???? We were on the right plane. We had been at the airport on time. How could this have happened? Well, it was not our fault. Something had gone wrong. Now what could we do? We did not know the right language. We had to figure out where to go and what to do. We had to ask for help. We had to change all our plans. What we did was choose to enjoy Amsterdam. It has been a great trip, and we have done fine.

Flynn threw us for a loop, but he is a great boy. He has many developmental delays, the largest being his speech, but he definitely lets his needs be known. Whether he is standing at the end of the hallway with his hands on his hips and scowling while saying emphatically "NO" when I tell him to get dressed on a Saturday morning, or getting me to spend some more time with him at bed time by saying "carr-ey" for scary so I ask him if something is scary in his room, he gets the message across. If I can't figure out his words then he resorts to "c-mon dad" so that he can show me what he wants.

So, October is Down Syndrome Awareness Month and I hope I can increase your awareness. Two links are listed below for lots more info. Thank you to people in the past that have told me they love to get this yearly update. It means a great deal to me to know you care.

<http://www.geocities.com/~upanddown/>
<http://www.nas.com/downsyn/>

Thanks again,

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