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Dear Keith,

Thank you for reaching out to the Down Syndrome Guild of Southeast Michigan regarding your upcoming project, ***Chromosomally Enhanced: What's Your Superpower?***, a documentary on life with Down syndrome. As the Executive Director, I have been involved with the DSGSEMI for over twenty years and the Guild was created thirty plus years ago by a small group of parents who share a common interest of wanting their children to have social opportunities. Thus PCDS, Parents of Children with Down syndrome was developed.

Since that time, the name was changed to Down Syndrome Guild of Southeast Michigan and we have built alliances with four national organizations: National Down Syndrome Society, National Down Syndrome Congress, Down Syndrome Affiliates in Action and Global Down Syndrome Foundation. New branding and logos were developed, and new programs and services were created. The DSG currently has a database of over 4,000 names of families, professionals, medical and educational groups as well as faith-based communities and sponsors. The DSG has two offices, one in Southfield and one in Royal Oak. Additionally, we are currently looking for new offices.

While many medical issues have improved for persons with Down syndrome, there is still a deficiency on the part of educational systems to raise the bar and accept that people with Down syndrome are now living longer, ages 55-60, living in our communities. Michigan is the only state where students stay in school until the age of 26 and receive a certificate of completion. Although that has not interfered with our employment efforts, it does delay acceptance of persons with Down syndrome to be independent like their peers. While Down syndrome is the most common disability, until recently, it was the least funded in the area of research.

This is an excellent opportunity to educate.

Respectfully,

Paulette E Duggins  
Executive Director

*Opening a world of opportunity for people with Down syndrome.*