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National Down's Syndrome Month, 1984

By the President of the United States of America

A Proclamation

In the past decade, the United States has entered a new era of hope for its developmentally disabled citizens. This new age of enlightened understanding recognizes that developmentally disabled persons have a great potential for achieving and overcoming handicaps. Down's syndrome, a condition once thought to be without hope of positive change, is one of the best symbols of this changing attitude.

Progress is evident on several fronts. Research has uncovered the genetic basis for the condition and points the way to its ultimate prevention. Advances in medical treatment can minimize defects associated with the condition and have extended the life-span of those who have it. School doors have been unlocked to Down's syndrome children, and special education classes within mainstream school programs have been developed. Vocational training in preparation for gainful employment and independent living has become available.

These advances have not occurred by chance. They are the result of the collective effort of concerned physicians, scientific investigators, teachers and other professionals, parent groups such as the National Down's Syndrome Congress, and government. But the task remains unfinished. Public awareness and acceptance of the capabilities of persons who have Down's syndrome can greatly facilitate their being welcomed in all communities.

The Congress, by Senate Joint Resolution 254, has designated October 1984 as "National Down's Syndrome Month" and has authorized and requested the President to issue a proclamation in observance of this month.

NOW, THEREFORE, I, RONALD REAGAN, President of the United States of America, do hereby proclaim October 1984 as National Down's Syndrome Month, and I urge all Americans to join me in encouraging renewed efforts on behalf of the health and well-being of individuals with Down's syndrome. I invite all concerned citizens, agencies, and organizations to unite during October in support of appropriate observances and activities that will assist individuals with Down's syndrome and their families to a fuller and more rewarding life.

IN WITNESS WHEREOF, I have hereunto set my hand this ninth day of October, in the year of our Lord nineteen hundred and eighty-four, and of the Independence of the United States of America the two hundred and ninth.

Ronald Reagan