

CELEBRATING



YEARS

of Hand-in-Hand

1974 to 2024



dfrc

delaware
foundation
reaching citizens
with intellectual disABILITIES

ALUMNI, FAMILY, & FRIENDS
DFRC ANNUAL NEWSLETTER 2024



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**ABOUT THE DFRC BLUE-GOLD
HAND-IN-HAND PROGRAM**

Established in 1974, the Hand-in-Hand Program was added as the centerpiece of the DFRC Blue-Gold All★Star Football Program to give high school students participating in the DFRC Blue-Gold

Game the opportunity to be matched with children and young adults with intellectual disABILITIES. The goal of this program is to bring greater awareness to participants about the community that benefits from the efforts of the DFRC Blue-Gold Game and other DFRC fundraising efforts. Each year, our Hand-in-Hand Buddies— children and young adults between the ages of 4 and 18 with intellectual disABILITIES— are matched with vetted high school students participating in the DFRC Blue-Gold All★Star Football Program. This is a free program offered by DFRC— Delaware Foundation Reaching Citizens with intellectual disABILITIES— as part of the DFRC Blue-Gold All★Star Football Game.

Many lifelong friendships and close family relationships have been created through the DFRC Blue-Gold Hand-in-Hand Program!

Leanne Evans, 2024 Honorary Game Chair,

is an alumna of the DFRC Blue-Gold Hand-in-Hand Program, was the Blue All★Star Buddy in 1992, and assists with the Hand-in-Hand Program Committee!

2024 DFRC Blue-Gold Executive Planning Team:

Merlyn Burns, Tony Glenn, Bill Grant, Mary Lenhoff, Jada Little, John McCarthy, Martha McDonough, Gary Mensinger, Sandy Valle, Fiona Walsh

GARRETT'S INCREDIBLE BLUE-GOLD MOMENT

There were plenty of touchdowns during the DFRC Blue-Gold All★Star Football training camp last summer, but one in particular stood out from the others. The crowd watching the Gold intersquad scrimmage went wild as Garrett Boyles made his way ninety-nine yards down the field, ball in hand, with a pack of football players running and cheering him on the whole way down. "It was such an incredible moment," Garrett's mom, Denise, said, thinking back on that day. "My heart exploded for Garrett because he was so proud of the opportunity, but then it also just grew that much bigger for the players and coaches and spectators there because they got to witness this incredible testimony of a program that has been built, that has been established, and that has and will continue to support our families." Garrett was matched with three football players from Smyrna High School— Evan, Stephan, and Brian— for last year's Hand-in-Hand Program. Over the course of

the DFRC Blue-Gold season, Garrett and "the boys" went to the park, spent time in the library, went out for ice cream, had Nerf sword fights, and even cheered each other on at various sporting events throughout the spring. In the months after the game, Garrett still made sure his mom continued to keep the boys up to date on his activities, sending pictures and planning get togethers when they could. They even spent time together over winter break! The Boyles family has been making meaningful memories and relationships through the DFRC Hand-in-Hand Program since he first started participating at age 4 in 2018.

"I thought, *what are things in our life they can be a part of?*" Denise said, reminiscing on the early days of the 2023 DFRC Blue-Gold program cycle. "I figured if we're doing something as a family, well... the boys are an extension of our family!"



Countless families like the Boyles have welcomed their DFRC Blue-Gold participants into their lives and families and experienced the impact of the DFRC Hand-in-Hand Program. In 2024, we are proud to celebrate the program's golden anniversary. Over the last 50 years, the DFRC Blue-Gold Hand-in-Hand Program has provided opportunities for education, growth, love, and respect for the goodness and ABILITIES of all people.



DFRC BLUE-GOLD ALL★STAR FOOTBALL GAME
FRIDAY, JUNE 21, 2024

GAME DAY TICKETS AVAILABLE NOW!
SCAN THE QR CODE FOR TICKETS. FOR ADDITIONAL
INFORMATION, VISIT WWW.DFRC.ORG OR
CONTACT OUR OFFICE AT (302) 454-2730.



2023 DFRC BENEFICIARIES

In 2023, DFRC distributed \$53,000 in grant funding to 12 Delaware nonprofit organizations to support programs and services that provide enrichment opportunities for citizens with intellectual disABILITIES. Since 1956, DFRC has distributed more than \$6.4 million throughout the state.

The Arc of Delaware
Statewide

Delaware Care Plan, Inc
Statewide

Forward Journey
New Castle, Kent County

Art Therapy Express Program, Inc.
Statewide

Delaware Theatre Company
Statewide

Kent-Sussex Industries
Statewide

Art Works For All
New Castle, Kent County

Down Syndrome Association of Delaware
Statewide

Southern Delaware Therapeutic Riding
Kent, Sussex

Embrace Delaware, Inc
Statewide

Waggies by Maggie & Friends
Statewide

Food Bank of Delaware
Statewide

dfrc
BLUE-GOLD
SPIRIT GEAR
AVAILABLE ONLINE!



Scan the QR Code or visit the DFRC website to check out our DFRC Blue-Gold merchandise www.dfrc.org/merchandise





THE KOSMALSKIS' FULL CIRCLE YEAR!

Amy Kosmalski represented Caravel Academy in the 1995 DFRC Blue-Gold All★Star Football Game as a Blue Cheerleader. At the time, she had no idea that the DFRC Hand-in-Hand Program would have such an intense impact on her life, not just for the duration of the program cycle, but for decades to come.

"I can't tell you much about my senior year of high school— but I remember my buddy, Jennifer," Amy Kosmalski recalled to the audience at the 2024 DFRC Blue-Gold Participant Orientation in January. "I remember her smile every single time I went to go pick her up, usually on Friday nights. I remember how excited she would be when we hung out together, even if we were just going to McDonald's."

"She lit up my entire senior year. She and this program changed my life profoundly, but it wasn't until years later that I truly got to experience what Hand-in-Hand is all about."

Amy's daughter, Kayla, was born with Down syndrome in 2006 and started participating in the DFRC Hand-in-Hand Program as a Buddy in 2010. For years, Kayla was matched with football players, band members, cheerleaders, and student ambassadors who were introduced to her as program participants and ended the DFRC Blue-Gold season as family members.

The Kosmalski family has built beautiful friendships with her DFRC Blue-Gold participants over the years, hosting sleepovers, taking prom pictures, going on ice cream and Starbucks runs, and so much more... They have created incredible memories all throughout the last 13 years.

"When Kayla was born, one of my biggest fears was 'will she have friends?'" Amy said.

"DFRC has brought some of the most beautiful

humans into her life— into all of our lives— and we are forever grateful."

This year, her former Hand-in-Hand matches will have the chance to cheer Kayla on from the stands as she has done for them. Kayla was selected to represent Middletown High School as a Gold Cheerleader in the 2024 DFRC Blue-Gold All★Star Football Game! In addition to being a member of the Gold cheer squad, Kayla will now flip from *being a Buddy to having one!* She is overjoyed to be able to continue to spread the love and friendship of the Hand-in-Hand Program from the other side of the program in her senior year like so many have done for her.



Do YOU have a Hand-in-Hand story you'd like to share?

Send your story and any pictures to us to feature on our website and social media pages to celebrate the 50th anniversary of the Hand-in-Hand Program!

MARK YOUR CALENDARS FOR UPCOMING DFRC EVENTS!

Monday, June 3, 2024

**DFRC Blue-Gold New Castle
County Golf Classic**

White Clay Creek Country Club - Wilmington

Friday, September 27, 2024

**DFRC Blue-Gold Southern
Delaware Golf Classic**

Maple Dale Country Club - Dover

*Contact the DFRC office for golfer
registration and sponsorship information*

Fall 2024

DFRC Blue-Gold Bash

Event information coming soon!

Keep an eye on the DFRC website and
social media accounts for event updates!

   [@dfrcbluegold](https://twitter.com/dfrcbluegold)

DFRC BLUE-GOLD ALL★STAR FOOTBALL GAME

Friday, June 21, 2024

University of Delaware Stadium - Newark, DE

Tickets available online!

\$12 - Bleacher Seating

\$17 - Premium Chair Back Seats

\$23 - Cushioned Club Seats



Scan the QR code to purchase tickets or visit
<https://bluehens.eventue.net/events/BCC-DFRC>

**HOME - BLUE
AWAY - GOLD**

3:00 P.M.

PARKING OPENS

6:00 P.M.

OPENING CEREMONIES

5:00 P.M.

STADIUM GATES OPEN

7:00 P.M.

KICKOFF!

For additional information, please contact the
DFRC office at (302) 454-2730 or info@dfrc.org

To receive email updates about all DFRC
events, please visit dfrc.org and click
Join Our Email List!

The 2024 DFRC Alumni, Family & Friends Newsletter is
brought to you through the kindness and generosity of the

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The DFRC Family is deeply grateful for their continued support!

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MAKE AN IMPACT THAT LASTS A LIFETIME!



CELEBRATING
50
YEARS
of Hand-in-Hand

DFRC has touched hearts and enriched the lives of Delawareans since 1956. Key to our success has been the DFRC Blue-Gold All★Star Football Game and the Hand-in-Hand Program, which is celebrating its **50TH ANNIVERSARY** in 2024.

Your gift of support to DFRC helps create opportunities like the Hand-in-Hand Program, as well as other programs and community services that maximize the potential, independence, and enjoyment of life for Delawareans with intellectual disABILITIES.

Scan the QR code or visit the DFRC website www.dfrc.org and click the DONATE button to make your gift today!

