

# BEING CATE'S MOM

LISA TYRAN

The DSAA Buddy Walk was a couple weeks ago and it's hard to believe an event I knew nothing about five years ago means so much to me now. Had I seen the gathering on Marietta Square I likely would have said "aw, how cute". But now, thanks to my daughter Cate, I understand the Buddy Walk is more, it is about taking on challenges and winning.

In December 2005, hours after Cate was born, I was told a nurse suspected she had Down Syndrome. The first blood test gave the answer before it even reached the lab. During the test she went to the NICU for low oxygen and it was discovered she had a major heart defect common with DS. Cate beat her biggest challenge a short 4 month later when she came home from a successful open heart surgery after only 6 days in the hospital. In the years following she began therapies four times a week to overcome the challenges related to the low muscle tone associated with DS. She concentrates on mastering one major thing at a time and whether it is climbing stairs, feeding herself, or talking in sentences each milestone is met, just on Cate's schedule. She waited until 22 months to walk but jumps off the diving board and swims unassisted at four. She waited until three to really start talking, but by that time used so many signs to communicate I could hardly keep up. Her pure stubbornness helps her to overcome obstacles but thru it all I have never seen a child that says "Thank You" and "I love you" so often (and gives such generous kisses!). I am amazed by her drive, her sense of humor, and her intelligence every day.

Cate taught me that each person at the Buddy Walk is so much more than "cute". Those with Down Syndrome are courageous and triumphant because they fight serious health issues and win. They attend countless therapies to fight low muscle tone and overcome it. They fight the perceptions of their world and as shown by the 5,000 people at the Atlanta Buddy Walk, they are overcoming those too.



**CATE TYRAN IS  
PICTURED WITH  
HER DAD, RIC  
TYRAN, AT THE  
2010 ATLANTA  
BUDDY WALK.  
CATE IS FOUR  
YEARS OLD.**