



CdLS Foundation

Cornelia de Lange Syndrome Foundation, Inc.
Reaching Out, Providing Help, Giving Hope

CdLS Foundation adds new board members

Avon, CT (February 7, 2011) – The Cornelia de Lange Syndrome (CdLS) Foundation has added eight new members to its Board of Directors, class of 2013. They are:

- Michele Ackles of Delaware is retired from the Delaware Department of Transportation. She is a longtime awareness coordinator and serves on the Foundation's Public Affairs Committee. She is the mother of a young man with CdLS.
- Shelly Champion of Massachusetts is a special education teacher. She has been a regional coordinator since the 1990s and is the chair of the Educational Advisory Board. Shelly is the mother of an adult daughter with CdLS.
- Diane Lessa of Massachusetts works for EMC. Diane serves on the Adult Services Committee and is the mother of an adult daughter with CdLS.
- Thomas O'Brien of Illinois is a senior managing director of FGMK, Inc., a Chicago accounting firm. He is the grandfather of a young girl with CdLS.
- Mary Opitz of Texas is a retired from Electronic Data Systems. She and her family have served on the Dallas Conference Committee twice. She is the mother of an adult daughter with CdLS.
- Carlos Madrid, Esq. of Texas is a lawyer and served on the Dallas Conference Committee. He also presented information on legal issues at the conference. He is the brother of a young woman with CdLS.
- Fran Rissland of Georgia is a regional and awareness coordinator. She is a fitness instructor and worked in sales before the birth of her second child. She is the mother of a young boy with CdLS.
- Beth Smisloff of New York is a regional coordinator, member of the Family Services Committee and has run with Team CdLS for many years. She is currently working on having her Newfoundland trained as a therapy dog. She is the mother of a young man with CdLS.

About CdLS

CdLS is a genetic syndrome that occurs in about 1 in 10,000 births. An estimated 20,000 people in the U.S. have CdLS but remain undiagnosed and/or without support services. Although individuals with CdLS range from mildly to severely affected, most have similar physical characteristics: small size, hands and feet; thin eyebrows that meet in the middle; long eyelashes; upturned nose; and thin, downturned lips. Some individuals have limb differences, including missing fingers or arms, and partial joining of the toes. Common medical problems include gastroesophageal reflux, bowel obstruction, hearing loss, and congenital heart defects.

About the Foundation

Founded in 1981, the Cornelia de Lange Syndrome Foundation is a family support organization that exists to ensure early and accurate diagnosis of CdLS, promote research into the causes and manifestations of the syndrome, and help people with a diagnosis of CdLS make informed decisions throughout their lifetime. For more information, call 800-753-2357 or go to www.cdlsusa.org.

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