



# Middle School Hangout

Keeping Teens Connected During COVID-19



"I love my group because they are my friends and sang happy birthday to me."

--Dani Valera Ruiz, Middle-schooler

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# Your Presenters

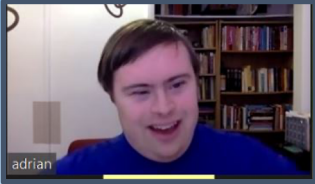
Brooke Levey

DSNMC Executive Director



Adrian Forsythe

DSNMC Middle School Hangout Leader



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# About DSNMC

**MISSION**

The mission of the Down Syndrome Network of Montgomery County is to empower and support individuals with Down syndrome, their families and the community through education, information, public awareness and advocacy.

**VISION**

The vision of the Down Syndrome Network of Montgomery County is to be a comprehensive resource on Down syndrome in the Washington, DC metro area. We envision a community where all people with Down syndrome can achieve their full potential, and where individuals with Down syndrome and their families are welcomed with fairness, enthusiasm and encouragement in the community.



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## About the Middle School Hangout

Why did we create this program?





The Hangout was born out of a desire to create a strong community group for our middle schoolers. Our goal for the Hangout is to create a safe place for our kids to unwind, have fun, and learn interactive skills that they can use everyday.

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## Middle School Hangout

### Program Development



- Self-advocate leader and mentor for younger DSNMC members
- Reached out to an already established middle school group
- Curriculum Design



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## Middle School Hangout

### Our Team



• Adrian, Hangout Leader	• Opal, Program Coordinator
• Scott, Tech Guru	• Brooke, DSNMC Executive Director
• Sara, Program Planning and Support	• Nic, Program Development and Evaluation

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## Middle School Hangout

### Program Development

As a leader I wanted to think outside the zoom square to keep the Hangout alive and fun during COVID Times!

Student focused, student led, and group supported activities became the building blocks for our group activities.



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## Middle School Hangout

### Program Overview



**Who:** Middle Schoolers

**What:** Middle School Hangout

**Where:** Zoom Meeting

**When:** Every Wednesday from 6-6:45pm

**Why:** A place for teens to hangout, build friendships, gain self-confidence and to stay connected during the pandemic.

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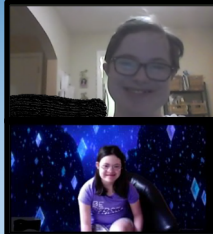
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## Middle School Hangout


### Hangout Details



**The Hangout takes place every Wednesday night from 6pm-6:45pm**

- Daily Check In: What was the best part of your day?
- Icebreaker game
- The main activity for the night
- Poll: How much did you enjoy the hangout tonight?
- Reminder of what we will be doing next week

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### Program Marketing



A monthly flyer is a great and efficient way to spread our schedules and to get the kids excited for all of our activities!



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### Program Marketing

We always make sure that the kids have a say in what is planned monthly!

Flyers are emailed at least a week before the next month has begun.



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### Middle School Hangout

Special Treats, visits and packages

- Seasonal & Holiday crafts and events are incorporated into our group!
- Every Birthday is celebrated to help strengthen and bond our online community!
- Santa visits our middle schoolers!!



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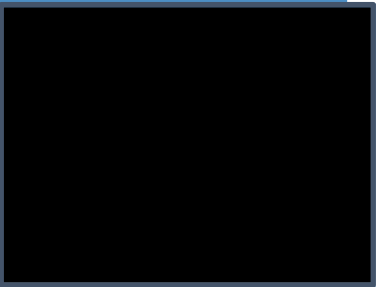
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# The Hangout In Action





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# Middle School Hangout

## Program Outcomes

As a result of the Middle School Program, students will be able to:

"I liked the games and playing with Adrian and friends. I want to do it again next year. And I really liked telling jokes in the hangouts."

--Helen Humpert, Middle-schooler



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- Speak confidently in a small group setting
- Advocate for themselves by sharing ideas, beliefs, needs and wants
- Practice leadership skills by leading an activity
- Make and maintain healthy friendships
- Stay connected during a pandemic

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# Testimonials


"This has been a great support for my son during the pandemic. Thanks to the group, my son had a good time with his friends and developed self-confidence and self-esteem. I love that this group is facilitated by Adrian, because my son can relate to him and look up to him as a role model."


--Javier Valera, Middle-school Parent and DSNMC Past Board President



"My daughter enjoyed the middle school program immensely. It was a good opportunity for her to connect with her peers and learn skills. The skills and connections will be very valuable as she moves into adulthood."

--Heather Sachs, Middle-school Parent and Past Board President





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### Conclusion

“The Hangout has been a wonderful platform to boost a strong community for the kids. It has done wonders for their social network and overall has provided them with a fun outlet to look forward to during COVID.”

--Adrian Forsythe, DSNMC Middle School Hangout Leader

If we can do it, you can do it! Let us know how YOUR Hangout takes off in your community!

Brooke Levey  
Forsythe  
DSNMC Executive Director  
Hangout Leader  
[brooke@dsnmc.org](mailto:brooke@dsnmc.org)

Adrian  
DSNMC

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