



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE  
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**Montgomery County Council of Parent-Teacher Associations (MCCPTA) to Honor Members of Down Syndrome Network of Montgomery County (DSNMC) with Outstanding Parent Award**

Rockville, MD – Gena Mitchell, President of the DSNMC, and Heather Sachs, DSNMC Education Chair and Board Member, will receive the 2012-2013 Outstanding Parent award from the MCCPTA Special Education Committee at the 25<sup>th</sup> Annual Special Recognition Ceremony in Rockville, MD, May 13, 2013. The MCCPTA recognizes individuals who provide services and/or advocacy efforts that support families who have children receiving special education services in the Montgomery County Public School system. Gena and Heather will be recognized for their efforts in creating and organizing the *Techniques for Success: Strategies for Educating Students with Down Syndrome and Other Special Needs* annual conference.

The conference is co-sponsored by the Down Syndrome Network of Montgomery County and F.R.I.E.N.D.S. of Frederick County. Gena's vision and desire to provide a top-notch resource to the teachers who educate students with Down syndrome led to the creation of the first Techniques for Success conference in 2009, which had over 70 educators in attendance. Heather has chaired the TFS conference for the past 3 years, during which time attendance has dramatically expanded with over 330 educators from Montgomery County Public Schools, Frederick County Public Schools, and local private schools attending in November 2012.

Montgomery County Public School (MCPS) Associate Superintendent Chrisandra Richardson, a repeat attendee who gave opening remarks at the 2012 TFS conference, commented, "These two organizations provide a professional conference that actually rivals any conference I've ever attended in over 37 years in public education."

Gena Mitchell and Heather Sachs are proud parents of MCPS students with Down syndrome.

**About DSNMC**

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. To learn more about DSNMC, visit [www.dsnmc.org](http://www.dsnmc.org)

**About F.R.I.E.N.D.S**

F.R.I.E.N.D.S., or Family Resource, Information & Education Network for Down Syndrome is a 501(c)(3) non-profit group of parents re-formed in 1999 in Frederick County, Maryland. To learn more about F.R.I.E.N.D.S., visit <http://friendsoffredco.org/>

**About Techniques for Success**

The Techniques for Success (TFS) conference, co-sponsored by the Down Syndrome Network of Montgomery County (DSNMC) and F.R.I.E.N.D.S. of Frederick, provides practical tips and strategies for educating students with Down syndrome and those with other special needs. To learn more about TFS visit <http://www.techniquesforsuccess.org>

**About MCCPTA**

MCCPTA is an association of local PTAS in Montgomery County, chartered by Maryland PTA. MCCPTA assists local PTAs by exchanging and pooling information and experience, and by interfacing with Montgomery County Public Schools (MCPS). To learn more about MCCPTA, visit <http://www.mccpta.org/>

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