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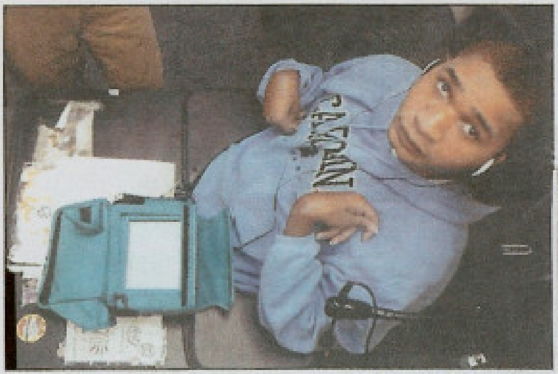

Frank Becerra Jr./The Journal News

David, a Mount Kisco resident, has a communications device on his wheelchair that gives him a menu of messages he can communicate, such as his name, age and favorite musicians. He received the wheelchair from a local clinic run by Ability Beyond Disability, a nonprofit group that provides services to people with disabilities. **Page 18**

There's a reason the sushi at Cross River's Haiku is so fresh: It comes from top New York City markets. **Page 19**

Pleasantville's Friends of the Performing Arts, including the costume crew, pulls together to stage "Grease!" **Page 20**

A historic Katonah building, part of the John Jay Homestead, gets its first paint job in 40 years. **Page 5**

Seeking a treatment for Down syndrome

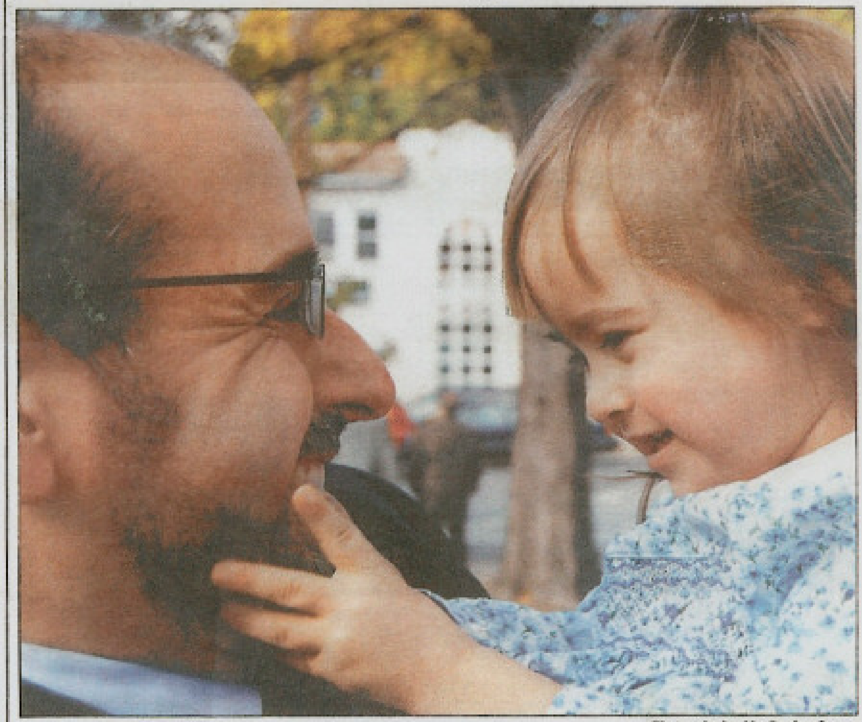

Photo submitted by Stephen Lazare

Stephen Lazare of Pleasantville, whose daughter Anna has Down syndrome, has devoted himself to helping find a treatment for the chromosomal condition. Lazare recently was elected to the board of directors of the Down Syndrome Research and Treatment Foundation. **Page 3**

Parents devoted to finding Down syndrome treatment

Swapna Venugopal Ramaswamy
The Journal News

Photos submitted by Stephen Lazare

Stephen Lazare, shown with his 3-year-old daughter, Anna, and wife, Mary, recently was appointed to the board of directors of the Down Syndrome Research and Treatment Foundation, a California-based nonprofit organization. The Lazares hope that treatment will enable Anna, who has Down syndrome, to work and drive a car. Last year, Lazare raised nearly $200,000 for the foundation.

PLEASANTVILLE — Mary Lazare, a former prosecutor for the Westchester County District Attorney's Office, and her husband, Stephen, a partner at a Manhattan law firm, always had high professional expectations for their two adopted children.

"We wanted them to be lawyers or doctors, like most parents," said Mary Lazare, a Pleasantville resident for 12 years.

But three years ago, with a surprise pregnancy at the age of 43 and the subsequent birth of their daughter Anna, who has Down syndrome, their perspective changed.

"We hope our children become happy, independent and productive members of society and are around people who love them," she said.

While this might seem a moderate enough hope for Libby, 14, and Alex, 13, their two older kids, for 3-year-old Anna, it could be a challenge.

Most people with Down syndrome have a mild to moderate form of mental retardation and have speech and language difficulties.

But if Stephen Lazare, 47, has his way, Anna one day will have a career and drive her own car. The father has devoted himself to helping find a treatment for children born with the extra 21st chromosome that signals Down syndrome and interferes with normal development.

Lazare recently was elected to the board of directors of the Down Syndrome Research and Treatment Foundation, a California-based nonprofit organization that funds Down syndrome cognition research.

"Steve raised close to $200,000 last fall. It was one of our biggest fundraisers," said Na'eem Salaam, executive director of DSRTF, founded in 2004.

In October, the Lazares and a fellow parent founded NYC DSRTF "Romp for Research," an event in Manhattan that drew about 500 people from the the tri-state area.

"I wanted to get in at the ground floor of the organization and make a difference," said Lazare.

For the first few years after Anna's birth, the Lazares were involved with the National Down Syndrome Society.

But the Lazares said their focus was more on advocacy and education rather than research, which NDSS emphasizes. According to the society's Web site, since its establishment in 1983, it has provided nearly $3 million in research.

Many scientists have said they think that figure is woefully low to attract talented researchers focusing on Down syndrome.

On the Web

For more information on Down syndrome, go to:

Down Syndrome Research and Treatment Foundation: www.dsrtf.org

National Down Syndrome Society: www.ndss.org

Anna Lazare's Web site: www.annasamigos.com

"Just in the last year alone, we gave out $800,000 to Stanford University's Center for DS Research and Treatment," said Salaam, of DSRTF. "This year, we hope to make grants worth $2 million available by September."

Research may be able to reverse or ameliorate the effects of the extra chromosome, particularly the degree of cognitive impairment.

"Because the majority of individuals with Down syndrome fall into the mild to moderate range of cognitive impairment, an extra 10 IQ points would enable most persons with Down syndrome to function much more independently," said Dr. Michael Harpold, a biomedical scientist and chairman of the Scientific Advisory Board of DSRTF. "The ultimate goal is to provide increased opportunities for individuals with Down syndrome to lead independent lives."

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>
> Dr. Michael Harpold,
> Down Syndrome Research and Treatment Foundation

Anna has had some developmental delays; she doesn't jump or run and walks a little slower than other kids, her mother said.

"But she learned her alphabet before she turned 2 and can talk fluently in sign language," she said.

"Anna is also starting to read and has a great vocabulary," her father added.

But whether the progress will stay on track is a question "that only time will tell," Mary Lazare said.

Anna is the youngest of three Lazare children. She has a brother, Alex, 13, shown doing push-ups with her, and a sister, Libby, 14.

While there is clearly a cognition and behavioral dysfunction early on in people with Down syndrome, there is a definite increase in cognitive dysfunction by age 40, Harpold said.

"The recent sequencing of the human genome has opened up opportunities for Down syndrome research," Salaam said, "and we are confident that we will be able to develop a drug for its treatment."

And that would be music to any parent's ears.

"We would prefer that Anna did not have Down syndrome, a preference that Anna might someday share," Stephen Lazare said. "But, our lives are happier and more meaningful with Anna than they were or ever could be without her."

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