

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Cedar Rapids Resident to be Bright Light in Times Square
National Down Syndrome Awareness Video Features Sydney Von Lehmden

CEDAR RAPIDS, IA – Sydney Von Lehmden of Cedar Rapids, will appear in lights on New York’s Broadway on Sunday, September 26 as part of the National Down Syndrome Society’s video production to demonstrate that people with Down syndrome can be successfully included in community activities, education and employment. The photo of Sydney, who has Down syndrome, was selected from nearly 2,000 entries in the NDSS nationwide call for photos.

Approximately 200 photographs will appear in a video production to be shown on the larger-than-life NBC Astrovision, located in the heart of Times Square, in honor of October, National Down Syndrome Awareness Month. The video production, coordinated by NDSS, illustrates children, teens and adults with Down syndrome working, playing and learning with friends and family. Sydney, daughter of Terry and Kelly Von Lehmden, is five years old and has two sisters, Morgan and Ellie. Sydney loves to dance, sing and play with her dolls and go to school. Sydney and her family will take a trip to New York City to see the video play in Times Square.

The Times Square video production kicks off National Down Syndrome Awareness Month, which includes the 2004 Buddy Walk. This year, walks will be held in more than 200 cities across the country, including Cedar Rapids. The Arc of East Central Iowa Buddy Walk will be held October 9, 2004 at Lindale Mall. The purpose of the walk is to promote acceptance and raise awareness of issues important to individuals and families affected by Down syndrome, mental retardation, and other developmental disabilities and their families. Since 1995 this event has grown in local recognition, and more than 800 people from Cedar Rapids and surrounding communities are expected to participate.

The Arc of East Central Iowa has been serving the Eastern Iowa community by providing advocacy and services to people with disabilities and their families since 1953. The Arc delivers multiple high quality programs and services in eight Eastern Iowa counties, by improving the quality of life for individuals and families affected by Down syndrome and developmental disabilities.

Sydney and her family are members of The Arc and the Hawkeye Area Down Syndrome Association, whose goal is to provide resources and support to individuals, friends, families, and professionals in the Iowa City and Cedar Rapids area that are affected by Down syndrome. They hope that through their efforts, they can enhance the quality of life for all individuals with Down syndrome. For more information on HADSA, visit their website at www.hadsa.org.

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