



Lou Giambalvo with his daughter Gianna, who has Down Syndrome.

# fore a cause

A LOCAL FATHER PLANS A FUTURE FOR HIS DAUGHTER.

## FOURTH ANNUAL TDSN GOLF TOURNAMENT

**When:** Saturday, October 3, 2009  
(Shotgun start at 9:30 am)

**Where:** The Golf Club at Chapel  
Ridge; Pittsboro, NC

**Cost:** \$110/player

**Fee includes:** Breakfast, range balls,  
cart, 18 holes, lunch (catered by  
Mimi's Café) and beverages.

**Local sponsors and donors:** Credit  
Suisse, Mimi's Café, Starbucks,  
Biscuitville and other local merchants.

**To register:** [triangledownsyndrome.org](http://triangledownsyndrome.org)

**To sponsor:** Call 919.244.5684, or email

[LouG@triangledownsyndrome.org](mailto:LouG@triangledownsyndrome.org).

*All proceeds go to the Triangle Down Syndrome  
Network for an independent living community.*

It's not easy to bring a bunch of golfers to tears.

Fourteen-year-old Gianna Giambalvo did just that last year when her dad Lou let her make the opening announcement at the annual Triangle Down Syndrome Network (TDSN) golf tournament, an event that's made \$50,000 for the non-profit since 2006.

"Last year we had a scripted thing she was going to say, and she crumpled it up and put it in her pocket and just started talking and she had a bunch of people in tears," says Giambalvo. "Everything she said made sense. It was awesome."

The TDSN golf tournament started as a simple neighborhood tourney. It originated in the Somerset subdivision off Hwy. 55 in Cary and eventually attracted players from The Reserve, Cary Park and other surrounding neighborhoods. After moving to Cary from Florida ten years ago, Giambalvo started playing in the tournament. A few years into it, he was planning the entire thing.

"It got to a point after running it for three years that I had seventy people going to the golf tournament, and I increased the player fee where I was able to buy a bunch of stuff —

ridiculous amounts of prizes," says Giambalvo.

"I saw that we had a lot of support and I said, 'Hey guys, what do you think about us turning this into a charity event?'"

The golfers thought it was a great idea, and Giambalvo asked for charity suggestions. When no one suggested anything, Giambalvo suggested the Triangle Down Syndrome Network. Because of his daughter Gianna, the organization was close to his heart and had offered him and his wife, Esther, a vast array of resources over the years.

"As Gianna got older, we started thinking about her future more," says Giambalvo. "My wife and I found across the country there are these communities or villages for people with special needs to live. We looked into it enough to know there are safe havens, and you can develop a community not only for them to live, but to grow and to really find their place in the community and contribute."

However, the Giambalvos could not find a community of this kind in Wake County. Lou Giambalvo approached TDSN about his idea, and the organization loved it. It, too, had wanted to explore starting a community for



Triangle Down Syndrome Network

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GOLF TOURNAMENT



Saturday, October 3rd



Are you a golfer?

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Donate to the tournament!



For more information and to register, please visit:

[www.TriangleDownSyndrome.org/golf](http://www.TriangleDownSyndrome.org/golf)

Down Syndrome adults patterned after other successful communities nationwide.

This year will be the fourth year the tournament (now dubbed the TDSN Golf Tournament) donates all proceeds to an independent living fund established at the Triangle Down Syndrome Network. "We are now in phase one, which is the concept and learning phase, where we're going around to all of these other villages in the country and learning how to get started. There's so much involved," says Giambalvo.

Although the research has just begun, that doesn't mean Giambalvo hasn't dreamed of what he envisions for Gianna, now a seventh grader at Davis Drive Middle School.

"I would like a place, for one, that she would have privacy and some independence," he says. "I would like to see her be able to walk out of her apartment and lock her door and go downstairs to the restaurant or the cafeteria...and see all of her friends that live around her – a safe place that has security. I'd like for her to have a place where she could work. She's extremely independent."

Every parent wants the best for his or her child's future and Lou Giambalvo is no different. Although putting together a golf tournament with 144 golfers is often overwhelming, Giambalvo is aiming even higher. "My aspiration is for this to be like the Jimmy V (Celebrity Golf Classic), with really big celebrities and on TV."

Gianna's future is worth it. "She's just the joy of our life," says Giambalvo. "She's made me a better person."

TEXT BY CHRISTA GALA

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