

People with Down Syndrome get a voice

Down syndrome is a chromosomal disorder caused by an error in cell division that results in an extra 21st chromosome. The condition leads to impairments in both cognitive ability and physical growth that range from mild to moderate developmental disabilities.

One in 630 children born in Namibia has Down Syndrome, and with a population of 2.2million citizens there should be an estimated 3,400 people with this chromosomal disorder. However, according to Eline van der Linden, a founding member of the Down Syndrome Association of Namibia, due to the lack of information, advocacy and medical care only 35% of these children will live beyond the age of two. Considering these statistics there are currently about 1000 people with Down Syndrome in the country.

The Down Syndrome Association of Namibia which was launched recently aims at reaching

out to the government, private sector and the general public to change perceptions about people with Down Syndrome. The association strives to facilitate parent to parent support, to start the dialogue with health professionals, institutions and government about early medical intervention and relevant therapies for children with the disorder amongst many others.

She said, the Namibian society is not open to people with developmental challenges and the Association hopes to turn this around in a positive manner because people with Down Syn-

drome have equal rights to health and educational services as people who do not have the condition. The founding members of the Association are all parents or close family friends of people with the condition. At present there is no support for people with Down Syndrome hence the founding of the Association.

The Down Syndrome Association of Namibia wants to see people with the disorder living a meaningful and happy life, engaged and fully included in society. Dr van der Linden also said, in a more open society with acceptance of people with challenges, includ-

ing people with Down Syndrome, they will easily be able to create and find their own space in society so that they can make their own contribution to social and economic life to their best ability.

“Through inclusion during early childhood development, school education, vocational skills training and inclusion in society as a whole, persons with Down Syndrome will be much better equipped for adulthood. With health and educational personnel throughout Namibia better informed and exposed to the specific needs of people with Down Syndrome, service provision to persons with Down Syndrome is likely to improve,” she said.



(From left to right), retired former deputy Prime Minister Dr Libertina Amathila, Devin Vries who has Down Syndrome and deputy minister of Education, David Namwandi at the launch of the Down Syndrome Association of Namibia.

win big

husbandry and breeding. At the 2012 Agra weaner auctions a total of about 12,000 calves were sold at an average price of N\$4240 per animal. Although the demand for weaners by feedlots was lower and the prices were under pressure, weaners achieved prices as high as N\$30,33/kg at one of the