

# Connecting the Network

2018 Many Hands Award Winner

Aaron Seitz

“I first met Aaron by phone, when he called to ask a few questions about Down syndrome. He was a graduate student in digital marketing, working on a thesis about how technology might enhance life for families who live with disability.

One call led to another and on Aaron’s fourth call a few months later, he explained that he had decided to create a model of an internet-based communications system, rather than just describing it for his thesis, as was his original plan. He offered the project, now entitled, “OurPart,” to DS ACT to use as we saw fit, at no cost and with no strings attached.

Over the next year, even after he graduating from the University of Connecticut, Aaron refined OurPart. It is now scheduled to go live in early November. Users in the Down syndrome community and those who support us will be able to use our website to search for events and activities of interest to them by location. Additional functions will allow DS ACT members to exchange information and resources easily and across support groups. Once OurPart has been tested by our members, we plan to offer it to other DS organizations around the country for their use.

The thing most striking to many of us who have worked with Aaron is his selflessness. He is not related to the Down syndrome community, except through this project. He did not need to create OurPart – writing about it alone would have fulfilled his academic requirements. He did not need to stay with the project beyond graduation and fine tune it to meet our organization’s needs, but he did. Please consider honoring Aaron’s outstanding character and the time and creativity he has contributed to our community with a DS ACT Many Hands Award.

