press release

UAE Celebrates World Down Syndrome Day from 21st to 23rd of March

Dubai, UAE, 18 March, 2012: In celebration of the World Down Syndrome Day, all segments of the community will join hands with children and young people with Down Syndrome from across the UAE. The event will be held at The Dubai Mall with ZAJEL as the main sponsor and spans three days of fun and awareness raising activities starting with an opening ceremony on the 21st of March culminating on the 23rd of March with the World Down Syndrome Day Walkathon.

This is the seventh year that World Down Syndrome Day has been officially marked in the UAE and the first time in history the United Nations officially recognised the 21st of March as World Down Syndrome Day. The date, 3/21, is considered significant because Down syndrome occurs when an individual has three copies of the 21st chromosome.

The main purpose of the event is to raise awareness of this genetic disorder, and to show that there are many resources within the community that enable kids and families to deal with issues related to Down Syndrome and live happy and productive lives.

The activities include community awareness sessions and family fun activities such as face painting, balloon bending and joining together to make collaborative hand print artworks to serve as lasting momentos for 2012 World Down Syndrome Day.

The World Down Syndrome Day celebration was made possible by organizations, corporations, and individuals who champion the cause. Heading up the group for 2012, is ZAJEL who have extended their worldwide delivery business by delivering to the local community and becoming the event's Main Sponsor.

"ZAJEL recognises the commendable efforts exerted by individuals and families with Down Syndrome and is very proud to support this group who we hold dearly in our hearts. We at ZAJEL would also like to show our support to the organizations that serve the community and provide resources for people with special needs." said Ms Khawla Kabanji, CEO of ZAJEL.

"The World Down Syndrome Day celebration is the best way for the community to learn, understand, come together and demonstrate their unconditional support. This is the main reason why we wish to ensure this is the UAE's biggest and best World Down Syndrome Day yet," Ms. Kabanji added.

Venue sponsor echoed the same sentiments saying “The Dubai Mall always strives to offer activities that resonate with our visitors across all segments of the society. In the month of March, we celebrate World Down Syndrome Day, and Mother’s Day in addition to other activities recognizing local talents. These diverse activities make
The Dubai Mall an exceptional social and family destination,” said Mr. Nasser Rafi, Chief Executive Officer, Emaar Malls Group.

Media Sponsor, Dubai Media Inc. as well as Gold Sponsor, Premier Jeweller, Devji Aurum, all of whom regularly champion social causes, have again stepped up to the plate and generously supported this edition of the World Down Syndrome Day.

In addition, Event Partners Dubai Police, Jafza, Diversey, Frenzy Events, Weir Oil & Gas,

Department of Tourism & Commerce Marketing were instrumental in supporting this event.

"This year we are having three days of celebration to ensure that this historic World Down Syndrome Day is the best yet. We really hope everyone will enjoy the various activities in this event and get all the information they need about Down Syndrome and what we, at the UAEDSA, are doing to improve the quality of life for all people with Down Syndrome" said Mrs. Sonia Al Hashimi, Chairperson of the UAE Down Syndrome Association.

"The walkathon on the 23rd of March starts at the Grand Atrium of the Dubai Mall with the gathering at 4:00 PM of royalty, VIPs, the public and the various Down Syndrome groups who come from all over the UAE. Everybody recognizes that it is a special day and everyone is a celebrity. You see group photos, joking and smiles all over, it is really heart-warming and an emotional experience that no one should miss," Mrs. Al Hashimi concluded.

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