

PRESS RELEASE



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IMAGE PROFESSORS FOUNDER WENDY BULAWA AGUDELO RECEIVES MEDIA HONORS

*Massachusetts Down Syndrome Congress Recognizes Local Columnist For Efforts to
Supplant Misperceptions Surrounding Special Needs*

NORTH ANDOVER, Mass. (April 21, 2009) -- At the recently held 25th **Massachusetts Down Syndrome Congress (MDSC) Annual Conference**, Wendy Bulawa Agudelo, who operates public relations consulting firm Image Professors, Inc., and serves as special needs liaison and columnist for *Parents & Kids (P&K) Magazine*, was awarded the prestigious 2009 MDSC Media Award.

The MDSC Media Award was established eight years ago to recognize with honor a person or company who exemplifies the MDSC mission to disseminate up-to-date information about Down syndrome. Past MDSC Media Award recipients include Irv Shappell, founder of Woodbine House Publishers, Cynthia Kidder of Band of Angels Press, K.C. Myers of the *Cape Cod Times*, Gene Lavanchy of FOX-25 Morning News, Amy Marcus of the *Wall Street Journal*, and Beverly Beckham, columnist for the *Boston Globe*.

Agudelo is mother to Abigail, a three-year-old girl with Down syndrome, and twin one-year-old boys. Since the arrival of Abigail, Agudelo has made concerted efforts in her print and online writing to educate readers about special needs—including Down syndrome. Through several of her columns and articles, she has helped to dispel myths about Down syndrome, while providing factual information to keep the Down syndrome movement progressing forward. Her canvas is *P&K Magazine*, a highly-progressive regional parenting publication that has confidently taken the lead at shining, without fear, a consistent spotlight on special needs and related elements.

As special needs liaison and columnist for *P&K*, Agudelo received top honors for her ongoing series of articles boldly focusing on controversy over the word 'retarded,' to a February 2009 cover story on Integrated Sports Programs for children with disabilities. She introduced 'Dual Diagnosis: Autism and Down syndrome,' while highlighting a local parent support group, Morning Travelers 2, founded by a local mother of a child diagnosed with the unique combination of autism and Down syndrome, and raised awareness of 'Prenatal Diagnosis' and preliminary steps including genetic testing which reproductive couples can take in planning and preparing for their future family.

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“Wendy has proven tremendous dedication to the Down syndrome cause and special needs in general by going to great lengths to research and uncover unique topics to introduce to her readers,” said Maureen Gallagher, executive director of the MDSC. “Her articles provide a factual and thoughtful perspective of a special needs world that not everyone understands, yet one of which we should be thoughtful and aware. We are very proud to honor Wendy with the 2009 Media Award.”

Down syndrome, which affects more than 5,000 individuals in the state of Massachusetts, is a genetic condition that knows no boundaries and appears within all nationalities, socio-economic classes, ethnic groups and races. Most people with Down syndrome have an extra chromosome present in all or some of their cells. This additional genetic material alters the course of development for more than six thousand babies born each year in the United States.

“*P&K* has given the special needs community a consistent voice, and through the magazine, it has been my goal to share personal stories as well as useful information to raise awareness and help modify stereotypical mindsets about special needs,” said Agudelo. “The MDSC has been a home to my entire family and its wonderful group of member families, have provided inspiration and ideas to help supplant historic stereotypes and provide a more realistic, comforting and successful view of life with special needs. It’s my job and honor to turn those ideas into stories everyone can appreciate.”

About MDSC

Established in 1983, the Massachusetts Down Syndrome Congress (MDSC) is a non-profit organization dedicated to education about and awareness of Down syndrome. MDSC was founded to provide information, resources and support for families, while advocating for the inclusion of individuals with Down syndrome into all aspects of the community. Additionally, the organization gathers and disseminates the most accurate and timely news relating to Down syndrome to educate the public, while actively and aggressively addressing social policy and legislatively-driven issues alongside state and local human service agencies. The MDSC Parent’s First Call program delivers much needed answers for couples who have received either a high risk result or confirmed Down syndrome diagnosis, and connects educated parents of children with Down syndrome, their knowledge and experiences, with those couples. More information about MDSC can be found at www.mdsc.org, or by calling **1-800-664-MDSC**.

About Image Professors, Inc.

Committed to the highest standard of excellence, Image Professors was founded in 1999 as a strategic public relations and communications consultancy. Based in metro Boston, the heartland of New England’s technology center, Image Professors’ client roster contains members from technology and consumer markets. The firm specializes innovative communications campaigns requiring a creative edge. More information can be found on the firm’s web site located at www.imageprofessors.com.

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