

# Woman's Day

live well every day

## Women Who Inspire Us

**Cynthia Kidder**  
**Kari Groesser**

Founder & chairperson: Band of Angels  
Rochester Hills, Michigan  
Nominated by Tina Ogilvy  
Helping Parents Realize the Potential  
of Their Down Syndrome Children

Fifteen years ago, when a woman gave birth to a baby with Down syndrome, she could expect a somber talk with her doctor about the limitations her newborn faced, and perhaps a few brochures.

Today, she will probably receive a Celebrate! welcome kit from a national outreach program called Band of Angels.

In it she'll find a "Beautiful Faces" calendar featuring adorable Down syndrome children and a DVD about what she can expect at different stages.

It's a big difference, and that's how Cynthia Kidder, who founded Band of Angels in 1994, and Kari Groesser like it. As mothers of children with Down syndrome, they are trying to reshape attitudes. "The stereotypes of people with Down syndrome are just so outdated and inaccurate," Cynthia says.

When her second son, Jordan, was born in 1989 with the condition, Cynthia and her husband were devastated. But as he grew, she was struck by the full life he was leading. Today, at 17, Jordan is mainstreamed in high school.

The nonprofit foundation offers a range of services and outreach programs. "We reach more than 2,000 new families per year," she says.

"We're all about opening people's eyes," adds Kari, the chairperson of the group's fundraising events. She chaired the Band of Angels black-tie ball in Detroit last year, which raised \$125,000 after expenses. "It's a thrill when someone sees one of our children and says, 'I just never knew...!' That happens a lot."

The organization awards scholarships for college and other post-secondary learning. It hosts bike camps and golf clinics. Now, they are working on creating job opportunities for young adults. Isn't that the dream of every parent?

Woman's Day applauds the love and creativity that makes Band of Angels as special as the children it serves.

To find out more, go to [bandofangels.com](http://bandofangels.com).

