

# LEDGER

CELEBRATING 103 YEARS

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## BA babe on Broadway

By BOB BETHELL

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When Lucy Kennon was learning to crawl earlier this year, parents Alana and Jason naturally took lots of pictures for the family album.

They had no clue at that time one of those snapshots would appear on a huge electronic sign in Times Square, New York on Sept. 17.

The photo of Lucy, who has Down syndrome, was selected from nearly 2,000 entries to appear in a video production kicking off October as National Down Syndrome Awareness Month.

The video - played twice on Times Square - illustrated children, teens and adults with Down syndrome working, playing, and learning with friends and family, according to Alana Kennon.

Locally, the Down Syndrome Association of Tulsa will hold its fourth annual Buddy Walk from 2 p.m. to 5 p.m. at Whiteside Park, 4009 S. Pittsburg St.

"What most people don't know is that 350,000 Americans have Down syndrome, Kennon explained. "That figure is just for the United States. It is the most common chromosomal abnormality.

"Even in the 1970s parents were encouraged by their doctors to institutionalize their children.

"Now, professionals and parents realize the potential of early childhood intervention through organizations like Sooner Start and Head Start. I have nothing but good things to say about those programs," said Kennon.

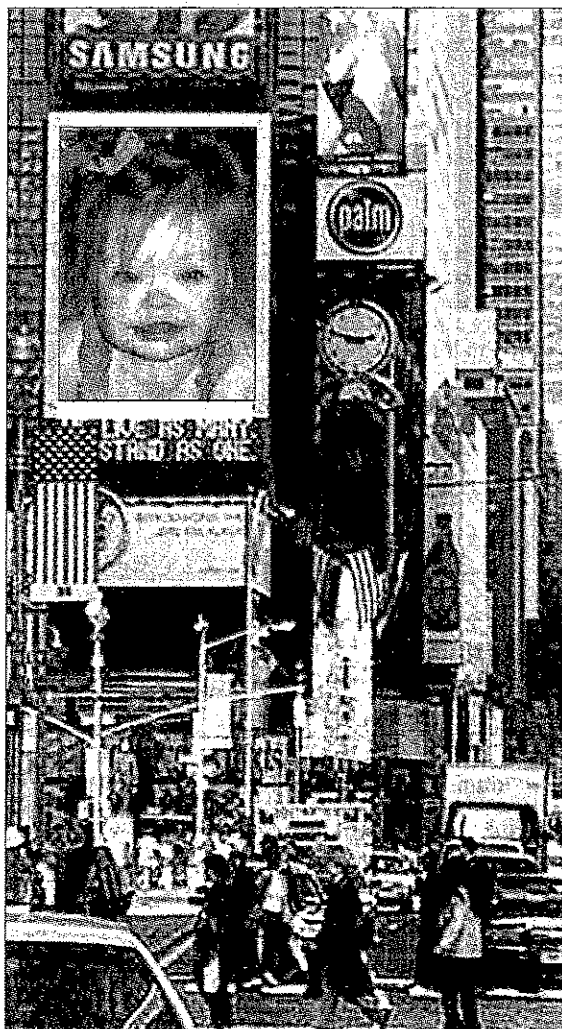
"You can stop so much of what you have to deal with later if you can get to kids from zero to three years of age. Think what youngsters learn during that time."

At the age of three, individuals with Down syndrome are educated publicly.

"All districts have three- and four-year old programs," she said.

Kennon, program coordinator for the Union Public Schools Multi-Purpose Activity Center, said the Union district

If Lucy can make it there,  
she can make it anywhere



JUDY COLLIS photo illustration

**BABE ON BROADWAY?** - Close enough. Tulsa toddler Lucy Kennon was featured in a major National Down Syndrome Society video that premiered in Times Square earlier this month.

## SCHOOLS

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"has 4-year-old programs at almost every elementary school."

October's Buddy Walk is about a mile, and people with Down syndrome invite "buddies" to walk with them.

Kennon said all money raised through sponsorships goes to support Down syndrome awareness by creating new parent packets, semi-monthly newsletters, conference scholarships, social functions and providing the public with up-to-date information and handouts.

"Ours are typical children," she said.

"They look more like their families than they do each other and they have individual personalities."

All people with Down syndrome experience cognitive delays, Kennon said, but the effect is usually mild to moderate and is not indicative of the many strengths and talents each individual possesses.