



Leadership Day 2015 – Letter of Welcome

NSDA leaders, welcome to San Francisco! Since 2005, the NSDA has hosted a Leadership Dinner and Day in conjunction with its national symposium. The intent is for our leaders to learn from, listen to, and encourage one another. You are here because of your commitment to our NSDA mission and we thank you for your service.

This is the NSDA's 11th annual leadership day. This is no minor feat when you consider that we are a small non-profit, patient-driven organization. The fact that we continue to invite our leaders to participate in these events points to the high value that the NSDA places on our support volunteers.

Like all previous Leadership Days, this year's program promises to be informative, interactive, and inspirational. For 2015, we have selected a theme acronym of: **GOLDEN: Growing Our Leadership Development Empowerment Network**. The NSDA support network is one that promotes leadership development and empowerment. Our acronym was selected as a follow-up to last year's silver acronym when we celebrated the 25th anniversary of the NSDA. Of course, we think of San Francisco with its internationally recognized symbol, the Golden Gate Bridge, and California as being the Golden State.

Some of you are with us today for the very first time. Some of you have been with us for every one of our eleven Leadership Days. Regardless of the tenure you have held within the NSDA organization, each of you is valued and appreciated. Because of the tireless efforts of people working together as a team, the support arm of the NSDA is alive and well. We are grateful for our progress and we look forward to making further strides in the future.

Various tiers of our NSDA support leadership network are represented here today. Among us for Leadership Day 2015 are ten Board Members, two Regional Representatives, a Special Projects Coordinator, a Bulletin Board Moderator, Support Group Leaders, Area Contact Persons, special Guests, and members of our staff.

The NSDA believes that it is our challenge and our duty to ensure that our 300+ volunteer leaders have the knowledge and support that they need to be educators, spokespeople, and support providers. The NSDA's goal is to equip its leaders with the most comprehensive and relevant information they need. View the leadership resources on our website, look at the documents in the Materials Packet, and listen to the topics being discussed here today. You will realize that we have the printed resources and the staff and volunteers which are needed to carry out our important work.

Remember that you are not alone. We are in this fight against SD together. Make your voice heard and find your place in service. The NSDA is here to help in any way that we can. We celebrate your essential activities which breathe life into our organization. You are our ambassadors and you carry our NSDA banner high. **NSDA: nothing stops determined advocates**. We need the NSDA and the NSDA needs us.

The NSDA has a caring environment in which everyone has a voice. We may not know why we were given an SD diagnosis. What we do know is that each of us has a tremendous opportunity to make a difference for the NSDA community. Let us be grateful to be on the SD journey together.