

Voice from the Founder of UFDC: Our New Decade, A New Chapter

From Supporter to Companion, Co-creating a Better Life

Feb 5th, 2026

Dear Friends,

I am Lena Ye, mother of Cao Ran. On March 21, 2011, a group of like-minded partners and I embarked on this journey of grassroots public welfare. At that time, we had no ability to register as an official organization, nor could we find a competent supervisory authority. Yet with light in our hearts, we found our way forward.

I once planned three decades:

- Our first decade would be dedicated to observing and understanding people with Down syndrome.
- The second decade would focus on advocacy and sharing the stories of the Down syndrome community.
- The third decade would be spent on building tangible institutions, addressing parents' deepest concern: "What will happen to my child when I am gone?"

Today, our commitment of "Meeting up for the First Decade" has been fully fulfilled. As we move forward into a new journey, we have officially registered a business entity: Up for Downs China (UFDC). Our goal is clear: to serve the Down syndrome community through a sustainable model, benefit the nation and its people, fulfill our mission, and support mutual success.

Growth and Transformation

As we grow and deepen our understanding—especially through personal spiritual practice—we have reached a pivotal turning point. Starting from March 21, 2026, we will no longer refer to the "three decades" framework. Instead, we will advance with two parallel missions:

- Up for Downs China: Pragmatically develops services and products for people with Down syndrome.
- Golden Lotus Dwelling: Maintains and operates a specific space for practicing meditation and internal growth.

Our renewed mission:

"Focusing on self-advocacy, connecting through international exchange, we gently and joyfully co-create a beautiful life together."

The most fundamental shift:

We have evolved from being supporters and lifters of people with Down syndrome, to their companions walking side by side.

Milestones

Looking back on our journey, we have left solid footsteps:

2012: Hosted mainland China's first Down syndrome-themed summer camp, pioneering in-person community exchange.

2018: Became an official member of the Asia Pacific Down Syndrome Alliance, stepping onto the international stage for the first time.

2023: Officially joined DSI (Down Syndrome International), deeply integrating into the global network.

2024: Became regular participants in the United Nations World Down Syndrome Day conferences, consistently speaking out on this international platform.

UFDC Decade: registered Up for Down China as a formal entity for contacts among institutions and entities.

2025: Supported Tang Yifeng to become DSI's first China Down Syndrome Ambassador.

2026: Supported Ying Yue to succeed as DSI's China Down Syndrome Ambassador (four-year term).

Shortlisted and ranked second globally in the bid to host the 2030 World Down Syndrome Congress.

A particularly meaningful milestone:

In 2025, two facilitators from DSI were invited to visit mainland China for the first time in its history, bringing workshops on self-advocacy. Right after this in-depth exchange, we launched an on-line study on the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities together with several people with Down syndrome. By learning together with them, we helped ourselves to evolve from "doing things for them" to "walking alongside with them".

Our New Mission

Bring the World Down Syndrome Congress to China, building an international exchange platform.

Sustainably support the vision of "building a happy land for people with Down Syndrome" (Dong Li Xia) and develop a long-term support system.

By promoting self-advocacy, we listen closely to the voices of people with Down syndrome, honor their independent choices, and empower them to be the heroes of their own lives.

International exchange allows us to root our work in Chinese practice while drawing on global wisdom.

The ultimate purpose of all the above effort is to co-create a beautiful life together, gently and joyfully.

Gratitude and Invitation

Great thanks to all who have walked with us over these fifteen years.

Special gratitude to our friends with Down syndrome: you are our teachers, helping us understand true dignity, resilience, and innocence.

The UFDC Decade is a new beginning. The establishment of Up for Downs China (UFDC) marks our entry into a new phase: continuing this meaningful journey with greater professionalism and sustainability.

Whether you are a person with Down syndrome, a parent, a professional, or a friend who cares about this community, you are welcome to join us.

Let us walk side by side, in an atmosphere of equality and respect, to build a more inclusive and better society.

UFDC accompanies you to co-create the future.

Sincerely yours,

Lena Ye