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Twin Cities Nonprofit Leader Earns Global Recognition for Down Syndrome Advocacy

*Jack's Basket Founder Receives Honors from National Down Syndrome Society,
Inc. Magazine, Hearts of Joy International and People Magazine*

Arden Hills, Minn., March 10, 2026 – In the month when World Down Syndrome Day is observed (March 21), Carissa Carroll, the founder and CEO of Arden Hills, Minn.-based, [Jack's Basket](#), will receive a series of accolades for her work advocating for children born with Down syndrome (DS) around the globe.

Carroll started the nonprofit 12 years ago following the birth of her own son, Jack, when news of his diagnosis was met with regret by hospital staff instead of celebration. Since then, Carroll and the organization have interacted with nearly 13,000 families in all 50 states and more than 60 countries to change the narrative surrounding Down syndrome – celebrating all children, regardless of their diagnosis.

That work, including healthcare provider education, gifting baskets with supportive materials for families, and hosting community-building events, is being recognized on a global level this month with a flurry of honors and recognition – propelling Jack's Basket into the national spotlight.

On March 10, *Inc.* magazine named Carroll to its [Female Founder's 500 List](#), an annual list honoring the most dynamic women business leaders in the U.S. The honor recognizes founders whose bold ideas, resilience, and execution are shaping the future of their industries. The list represents entrepreneurs who have demonstrated exceptional leadership and measurable progress over the past year.

On March 12, the [National Down Syndrome Society](#) will award Carroll its annual Betsy Goodwin Award winner, celebrating the positive impact she has made within the DS community. This is the organization's highest honor given in the name of its co-founder in 1978.

[Hearts of Joy International](#), a global nonprofit that provides life-saving heart surgery for children with Down syndrome around the world, announced that Carissa and her husband, Chris, will receive its annual Lejeune Service Award, honoring individuals who demonstrate strong dedication to serving and empowering the DS community and named after the French geneticist, Jerome Lejeune, who discovered that DS is caused by a third copy of the 21st chromosome.

Finally, *People* magazine, one of the country's most-read publications, published an in-depth [feature on Carroll](#) and the impact Jack's Basket is making, bringing significant awareness to the organization and the parent volunteers committed to its mission.

"I feel incredibly humbled to see this recognition, especially during a month that means so much to our community," said Carroll. "What began as a deeply personal response to my own son's diagnosis has grown because of the extraordinary parents, volunteers, medical professionals, donors, staff and advocates who have come alongside this mission."

Carroll added, "These honors don't belong to me, they belong to every person who has helped ensure that babies with Down syndrome are welcomed into the world with celebration, hope, and support. Together, we are changing the experience for families at one of the most vulnerable moments of their lives, and that is something truly worth celebrating."

About Jack's Basket

Started in 2014, the sole mission of Jack's Basket is to celebrate babies with Down syndrome. The nonprofit strives to ensure that every new and expectant parent is provided with resources and support within the Down syndrome community and equips medical providers with tools to discuss the diagnosis in an unbiased way, so having a baby with Down syndrome is celebrated like any other. Jack's Basket has delivered nearly 13,000 baskets in all 50 states and more than 60 countries around the world. More than 250 parent volunteers help to deliver baskets, and over 800 medical providers have requested baskets or resources.