





**Loving a child with Down syndrome is contagious...
Help us spread the love!!!**

Now with two locations!

*GiGi's Playhouse
February 2006*

DS Awareness is going strong!!

GiGi's Playhouse was on the CBS Channel 2 news at 11:00 A.M. and on the cover of the Metro section of the Chicago Tribune this week!!! Please go to our website at www.gigisplayhouse.com to check out these stories! They are awesome and full of awareness! We were really pleased to see the affect we had on a neo-natologist they interviewed that had attended one of our hospital staff DS awareness presentations. Actually, the following is a quote from the article!



*"Dr. Radvindrath Reddy, a pediatrician and neonatologist, said medical school never taught him how to share with parents the diagnosis that their child had a disability. But Gianni and other mothers at the playhouse have helped fill that void, he said. Among other things, they visit hospitals to share their birth stories and experiences raising children with Downs syndrome. Their aim is to offer health care professionals the information they need to give parents a more positive take on a child's future. Last Week Reddy **congratulated** a couple on the birth of their son as he also told them the baby had Down syndrome. "I said everybody had their own potential to develop, and we don't know what he is going to achieve. Be happy and do the best you can." Reddy said."*

WOW! He really was listening!!

We are putting together a media contact list. If you would like your child to be involved in various awareness campaigns, please email gianni4567@aol.com or call the Playhouse and ask to be put on the media contact list. Include your child's name, age and your contact info. We usually do not get a lot of notice when a camera crew is coming so please give us your easiest contact info.

We would also like to hear your birth stories!! (How you were told the diagnosis of DS, positive/negative responses etc...) We will not release the stories without your permission. The more we can educate hospital staff the better off all the future parents of children with DS will be!!!

Kids learn social skills and have fun too!!

Coming Soon!!! GiGi's Playhouse will offer a 5 week facilitated play group called "FUTURE Friday Friends"

As our preschoolers mature and move on to elementary school there is more demand for them to be socially appropriate. We would like to provide a safe opportunity for them to create new lasting friendships, through facilitated interactive play, while promoting social skills. The hope is that these skill will assist them in developing relationships in their daily life.

We will offer 1 hour of structured interactive activities that promote positive socialization and constructive play. Each session will end with a pizza dinner in which social skills and table manners will be encouraged.

• Please call the Playhouse at 847-885-PLAY to reserve your spot.

5 week session 4:30 P.M. to 6:30 P.M. every other Friday
2/10,2/24,3/10,3/24,4/7

FIRST SESSION FOR AGES 6-8 ONLY

Space limited to 10 participants

GiGi's Playhouse Free "Learn to Read" Literacy Program

Here is a testimonial from one of the participants in our literacy program:

Lucas is really enjoying the reading program. We have been working on learning the words that you sent home with us. Lucas is now able to recognize these words in other books as well. Last month at speech therapy, Lucas found a book that was similar to one that you gave us and he started matching and reading it for the speech therapist. She was very surprised that he could read those words. It was a really great surprise! This week, Lucas is the Super Kid in his Kindergarten class. We made a book about Lucas using pictures and simple sentences such as "I am Lucas. I go to school. I like to swim and play at the beach." He read this book in front of the whole class! He was so proud of himself. At school, the class is learning to read color words - the teacher was very impressed that Lucas already knew them. We truly believe in this literacy program and want everyone to know how much success Lucas has had. Lucas just turned 6 in January and is attending a regular kindergarten class. Marta Miezal (Lucas' Mom)



Happy New Year!!

Congratulations to all of our raffle winners!!!!



St. Patrick's Day Parade

Save the Date!!!

March 18th

Elmhurst St. Patrick's Day Parade!

They are famous for this parade!

Please join us as we spread Down syndrome awareness through the streets of Elmhurst (and have fun doing it!!!)

Saturday, March 18th

11:00 A.M.

Please call to reserve your spot. Siblings and family members are welcome too.

Last year we won Best Float for the 4th of July parade in Hoffman Estates!! We plan on winning this time too!!

Anyone interested in helping with our float please call ASAP!!



A Special thanks to Jen and Jason Paganessi from DS Support (Plainfield area support group) for their **GENEROUS** donations to GiGi's Playhouse and GiGi's Playhouse too. Each Playhouse received \$7,000 from their October Buddy Walk! YOWZA! We promise to put it to good use!! Thanks Jen & Jason!!

TEAMS BABY!!

That's Right!!! The 3rd Annual 5k Fun/Run

1 Mile Walk is having teams this year!

Call your family and friends and

SAVE THE DATE!!

GiGi's Playhouse 3rd Annual Down Syndrome Awareness 5k Fun Run/1 mile walk

June 11, 2006 @ 9 AM at Busse Woods

This is going to be a party and a half!! Last year we had over 600 people so we had to move it!!

This is a great way to invite the community in and show them we are here, we are able, and we are PROUD!

If you are interested in being on the committee please call the Playhouse ASAP!!

More details in next months newsletter!

Calling all new parents!!

**LORA WHITE ANSWERS YOUR QUESTIONS!
WEDNESDAY MARCH 15, 2006 AT 7:00P.M.**

Lora White, M.A., CCC-SLP, is a pediatric Speech and Language Pathologist in private practice. She has spent the last thirty years working with children with disabilities and their families. Lora will be presenting information on developing successful strategies to facilitate oral motor/feeding development, as well as communication development in the young child with Down syndrome.

















The presentation will be geared for parents who have a child birth to age three. Lora will be happy to address specific questions and concerns in regard to the development of the young child with Down syndrome. She will also provide an overview of the basic knowledge a parent needs to make sure their child's oral motor, feeding and communication needs are being addressed. Please feel free to come with specific questions in regard to your child.

Everyone is welcome at GiGi's Playhouse! Due to the need for scheduling volunteers and acquiring supplies, *reservations are greatly appreciated* for all playhouse activities. Call the Playhouse to make a reservation for all events at (847) 885-PLAY, e-mail gianni4567@aol.com or sloenneke@gigisplayhouse.com. Feel free to leave a message - see you soon!! Check the website for constant updates and to see pictures of the activities www.gigisplayhouse.com!



FEBRUARY



SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
GiGi's Playhouse is located 3 miles West of Woodfield Shopping Mall next to Schaumburg Toyota in the Brandess Center. 1069 W. Golf Road. Hoffman Estates, IL.60194 847-885-PLAY www.gigisplayhouse.com GiGi's Playhouse Too is located in Plainfield IL. For their activities go to www.gigisplayhousetoo.com or call 630-778-PLAY			1 Special Intentions Support Group 7:00	2 Open Play 12:30 - 2:00 	3	4 February B-Day Party 10:00 - 12:00 Valentine's Day Card Making 1:00-3:00 
5 Open Cheerleading Practice 12:00 - 1:00 	6 Literacy Program 9:00 - 3:00 	7 Literacy Program 9:00 - 12:00 & 3:30 - 6:30 	8	9 Open Play 12:30 - 2:00 	10 "FUTURE" Friday Friends 4:30-6:30 (Ages 6-8) Reserved 7-10	11 2 & Under Play Group 10:00 - 11:00 
12 Hispanic Open Play 11:00 - 1:00 	13 Literacy Program 9:00 - 3:00 Committee Meeting 7:00 	14 Literacy Program 9:00 - 12:00 & 3:30 - 6:30 	15	16 Open Play 12:30 - 2:00 Are You Ready for Preschool? CFC Transition Meeting 7:00-9:00	17	18 Private Party 5:00-9:00
19	20 Literacy Program 9:00 - 3:00 Scrapbooking Night 7:00 	21 Literacy Program 9:00 - 12:00 & 3:30 - 6:30	22 Reserved for Private Play 10:00 - 12:00	23 Open Play 12:30 - 2:00 	24 "FUTURE" Friday Friends 4:30-6:30 (Ages 6-8) Friday Friends Sock Hop 7:00 - 9:00 (Ages 18 & Up) 	25 Ups for Downs Lunch with the Kids 11:00 - 1:00 
26 Polish Play Group 1:00 - 3:00 	27 Literacy Program 9:00 - 3:00 	28 Literacy Program 9:00 - 12:00 & 3:30 - 6:30 Ups for Downs Meeting 7:30	Reserved for Support group 7:00	★ RSVP Greatly Appreciated (847)885-PLAY *** Friends & Family are always welcome at the Playhouse and there is No Charge for GiGi's Playhouse Events.		



GiGi's Playhouse
1069 West Golf Road
Hoffman Estates, IL 60194
Phone: 847-885-PLAY
Fax: 847-885-4901

E-mail: Gianni4567@aol.com
www.gigisplayhouse.com

GiGi's Playhouse too
Plainfield, IL 630-778-PLAY

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Our Hoffman Estates location is 3 miles west of Woodfield in the Brandess Center next to Schaumburg Toyota

Visitors



This family came all the way from Florida to attend the New Years at Noon Party! We also had visitors from Nevada too!! We hope to see them and a lot of our other out of town-ers at the 5k in June!!

Playhouse News!

Valentines Day Card Making Party!!
Saturday, February 4th from 1:00-3:00
The cards are awesome! We are even making extras to send to the Veterans Hospital. Please RSVP so we have enough supplies and treats on hand!!
All ages welcome!!



The Thursday open play group is going back to every Thursday from 12:30-2:00. We even have volunteers to help with the kids!!



Meet Beth Walsh. She participates in both Friday Friends and the literacy program at the Playhouse. This summer she is off to the Nationals for swimming in the Special Olympics!

Give me a "G"!!
The GiGi's Playhouse cheerleaders have restructured and want you on their team!! Practices will be the 1st Sunday of the month from 12-1. You **must** RSVP to attend. We would like to break the teams down into age groups. Please contact the Playhouse with your child's name, age and uniform size.

TWIN TIME!!!
Calling all moms of multiples! This new group is at GiGi's Playhouse Too in Plainfield on the third Monday of the month from 10-

Remember GiGi's Playhouse is your Playhouse too! If you would like to host a Down syndrome related event, call to book your time!

The Polish Play Group meets the 4th Sunday of the month from 1-3. The Hispanic group meets the 2nd Sunday of the month from 11-1. Come join them for fun and family networking!

SAVE THE DATE!!! SUNDAY June 11th 9 AM for our 3rd Annual 5k Fun Run 1 Mile walk!!!

Address label

Don't forget to join us for Valentines Day Card Making on February 4th from 1-3!! All ages welcome!! Bring a friend!

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GiGi's Playhouse
1069 West Golf Road
Hoffman Estates, IL 60194
www.gigisplayhouse.com