

Down Syndrome Awareness Centers
www.gigisplayhouse.org

GIGI'S NEWS

Serving 2 locations

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

Hoffman Estates
1069 W Golf Rd • Hoffman Estates, IL 60169
847-885-PLAY • www.gigisplayhouse.org

Plainfield
10052 S. Bode Rd, Unit D • Plainfield, IL 60585
630-778-PLAY • www.gigisplayhousetoo.com

August 2007

Future Educators Visit Gigi's



What do 10 students, 2 teachers, 4 moms and 3 kids with Down syndrome make? A positive future for all individuals with Down syndrome! Elmhurst College takes very seriously the importance

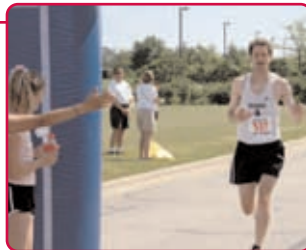
of interacting with families affected by special needs. That's why their Masters Program in Early Childhood offers a variety of opportunities for their students to experience. One of those opportunities was to come to Gigi's Playhouse for an evening of education and interaction. These students talked with parents of children with Down syndrome and were able to gain a better understanding of what these parents are looking for in an Early Intervention provider. "This experience was absolutely fantastic! Being able to hear what families go through starting with diagnosis all the way through to navigating the early intervention system, our students are better prepared to understand their role as future early childhood educators."



Thanks Elmhurst, for supporting our families and mission!

5K Winners!

Though the real winners of the 5K are too many to name (every child with Down syndrome who's future will be shaped by acceptance, the community who learned what a blessing our kids are, and all the families that experienced such overwhelming support), the winner of the actual race was Jim Dickerson! As a track coach, he certainly had an advantage over the rest of us but Jim's biggest motivation for running is his son, who has Down syndrome. Jim says it best in his own words, "I ran the 5K because the playhouse in Plainfield was one of the 1st places where we were able to meet a number of other families who were similar to ours after Charlie (2yrs.) was born with Down syndrome. This was a scary time, especially for my wife, and that sense of community was invaluable in helping us understand our



situation and discover all the support that is out there. Supporting Gigi's Playhouse is a no-brainer! I have been given a gift in running just like I have been given a gift with Charlie! When I put on my racing shoes (yes, I do actually have a separate set of shoes just for races) I feel the old competitive juices come back and I am able to fake my fitness pretty well. The last mile I mostly thought, "It is really hot," and "Wow, The Sears Center looks really far away," the same thoughts that most of the runners in the race were probably thinking. In short, running is a gift I do not take for granted, even though I haven't used it as much as I did in the past, and when I can represent myself as "Charlie's dad," it is great. I know Charlie will run the 5K someday too, and I can't wait to run it with him! *Congratulations Jim! We're proud of you!*



save the date

Whole Foods Market in Palatine & Gigi's Playhouse are Teaming Up!

On **September 27th**, Whole Foods Market in Palatine will give Gigi's 5% of their total proceeds

for the day! No slip or script needed—just shop on that Thursday to show your support. Tell your friends, neighbors, and co-workers. Whole Foods Market in Palatine is located at **1331 North Rand Road.** *Hope to see you there!*



HOPEMAN STATES LOCATION

Open Play

Join us every Thursday from 12:30-2pm for Open Play! Not only do the kids have a great time playing together but the parents have a great time networking! With the park right next door for the older kids to play at and a new ball pit at the Playhouse for the younger kids, everyone has a great time! *See you Thursday!*



Hop, Skip & Jumpers Had a Ball with Krysta

Our New Facilitator for the 3-5 Group

Krysta Jonker is a teacher's aide with early childhood District 54. The We painted with spaghetti, sang songs, and played games. This group meets every 2nd Saturday at 12pm.

Hope to see you there!!!!



FridayFriends

FridayFriends had their annual tailgating party, we had so much fun playing Baggo and shooting water balloons from our oversized slingshot. The Gustafson's helped out with cooking this year and John Costion makes the meanest burger in town!!! See you the 4th Friday of the month at 7pm!! *Call to RSVP!*

Time's Running Out



CAMP GIGI for kids 6-10

August 6-10th, 10-11:30am.

Call **847-885-PLAY**.

Don't miss out on all the fun.



Leaps and Bounds

Look at us practicing the dance to This Old Flag that we performed at the 5K.

We meet the 3rd Saturday from 10-11:30am.

Come and join us, our teacher is a PT and helps us make our muscles strong!



Walkers at the Beach

This month we had a beach party! We had a balloon toss, learned to throw Frisbees, walked on rafts and practiced jumping! Check out our rafts displayed at the playhouse; we made footprints in the sand! Stay tuned for monthly Walkers themes! The Walkers group meets the 2nd Saturday of the month from 9-9:45am. *RSVP required.*



HOFFMAN ESTATES CALENDAR AUGUST

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
			1 Literacy 10am-4pm Special Intentions 7pm 	2 Open Play 12:30-2pm Literacy 5-7pm 	3	4
5	6 Camp GiGi 10-11:30am Literacy 1-3pm 	7 Camp GiGi 10-11:30am Literacy 3-7pm 	8 Camp GiGi 10-11:30am Literacy 10am-4pm 	9 Camp GiGi 10-11:30am Open Play 12:30-2pm Literacy 5-7pm 	10 Camp GiGi 10-11:30am	11 Crawlers 9-9:45am 2&Under 10-11:30am Hop, Skip & Jumpers Noon-1:30pm
12 Nuestros Angeles 11am-2pm 	13 Literacy 1-3pm 	14 Literacy 3-7pm 	15 Literacy 10am-4pm 	16 Open Play 12:30-2pm Literacy 5-7pm 	17	18 Walkers 9-9:45am Leaps & Bounds 10-11:30am 
19	20 Literacy 1-3pm 	21 Literacy 3-7pm 	22 Literacy 10am-4pm 	23 Open Play 12:30-2pm Literacy 5-7pm 	24 Friday Friends 7pm	25
26 Polish Group 11am-2pm 	27 Literacy 1-3pm 	28 Literacy 3-7pm 	29 Literacy 10am-4pm Literacy Nite 6:30-8:30pm 	30 Open Play 12:30-2pm Literacy 5-7pm 	31	

Open Play: Every Thursday! Everyone is welcome! Stop by for pizza, pop and fun! We have volunteers to assist with the kids so the parents can hang out! It's awesome!

Literacy Program: GiGi's Playhouse provides FREE private tutoring to children with Down syndrome. Customized materials are provided for each individual student. The program also assists teachers and parents on how to tutor their children.

"Future" Friday Friends: Ages 6-8 only. Kids create lasting friendships through facilitated interactive play, while promoting good social skills. Each session ends with a pizza dinner in which social skills and table manners will be encouraged.

Friday Friends: Ages 18 and up only. Party with the gang! Equal numbers of peers with Down syndrome as without. Karaoke, dances, laser tag, bowling, prom, movie nights, friends and fun!

2 and under group: Families with kids 2 and under get together to play, and have fun while the parents network with each other!

Hop, Skip and Jumpers: For 3-5 year olds, this program will help

promote friendships, good social skills and interactive play through fun creative activities!

Hispanic Group: Spanish speaking families gather for food, fun, friendship and education.

Polish Play Group: Polish speaking families gather for an afternoon of fun and friendship.

Reserved: Playhouse may be reserved for private play groups, parties or support groups

GiGi's Crawlers: This group focuses on crawling skills as well as fine motor skills, social interaction with peers in a semi-structured environment. Children need to be crawling and are accompanied by a parent/adult.

GiGi's Walkers: This group focuses on post walking skills with peers to prepare children for school activities (balance beam, kicking, throwing, jumping, etc.) Children need to be walking and must be accompanied by a parent/adult.

The Playhouse can be reserved for any Down syndrome related event. When it is available it may also be used by other groups with special needs.

Everyone's welcome at Gigi's Playhouse

Due to the need for scheduling volunteers and acquiring supplies, reservations are greatly appreciated.

Call **847-885-PLAY**

or you can e-mail nancy@gigisplayhouse.org

Feel free to leave a message!

Check the website for constant updates and to see pictures of the activities
www.gigisplayhouse.org

GiGi's Playhouse is located 3 miles West of Woodfield Shopping Mall next to Schaumburg Toyota in the Hoffman Center at:
1069 W. Golf Road
Hoffman Estates, IL 60169
847-885-PLAY

PLANNED LOCATION

New Group for 1st-3rd Graders

We are excited to be starting a new group called Playhouse Pals. The group will be for children with Down syndrome entering 1st-3rd grade and will start up in August. The group will be run by Lori Reifsteck and Christina Kubycheck. Lori has a 7 year old son, Benjamin, who has Down syndrome and Chris has an almost 2 year old niece, Teagan, who has Down syndrome. The group is planning to meet once or twice a month on a Saturday afternoon. We will have an organized activity, as well as some time for free play so the kids and adults can get to know each other. Our first get together is tentatively set for August 18th from 3-5pm. *If you have any questions feel free to email Lori at prfstck@sbcglobal.net or call 630-375-1765.*



Introducing Our Newest Member He's 2 and Under

Joey Flaherty is our newest member of the 2 and Under Playgroup. Joey brought his parents, Renee and Joseph, out to the Playhouse on June 2. Joey was born in November. In addition to his parents, Joey had has older sister with him at the Playhouse! *Welcome, Flaherty Family, to the Playhouse!*



Fun Times at the Independence Day Celebration!



Open Play in June



Open Play returned in June and it was a huge success! We had a lot of families come out on June 13! The children had fun playing and the parents enjoyed the opportunity to socialize and network. Come out to our next Open Play on Thursday, August 23rd from 10am-Noon.



Our Independence Day Celebration on July 8th was a fun afternoon for all the families that made it out to celebrate with us. Our families enjoyed snacks and beverages, danced, played games, and socialized with one another.



And we took the opportunity to show our thanks to our troops overseas. We wrote letters to our troops to let them know how much we appreciate all that they do for us! All of the notes and letters were gathered up and sent to our overseas troops! *Thanks to all who made it out to celebrate with us!*














Thanks for a Great Golf Outing

Thank you to everyone who made our annual Golf Outing such a success! It was wonderful to see everyone pull together for the Golf Outing on July 30.



Thank you to all of our golfers, volunteers, sponsors and to everyone who donated items. *We could not have done it without you.*

PLAINFIELD CALENDAR AUGUST

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
			1	2	3 Teen-Tastic 7-9pm	4 2 & Under 9:30-11am Literacy Program 10-11:30am 3-4 yr old Playgroup 11am-Noon
5	6 Literacy Program 3-6 pm By appointment 	7 Literacy Program 3-6pm By appointment 	8	9	10	11 Daddy & Me 3-4:30pm Pre-Walkers 9-10am Walkers 10-11am RSVP to 630-423-4035
12	13 Literacy Program 3-6pm By appointment 	14 Literacy Program 3-6pm By appointment 	15	16	17 Signing Time 10-11am 	18 Literacy Program 10-11:30am Playhouse Pals 3-5pm
19	20 Literacy Program 3-6pm By appointment 	21 Literacy Program 3-6pm By appointment 	22	23 Open Play 10am-Noon	24	25 Pre-Crawlers 9-10am Crawlers 10-11am RSVP to 630-423-4035
26 Hispanic Group 11am-1pm 	27 Literacy Program 3-6pm By appointment 	28 Literacy Program 3-6pm By appointment 	29	30	31	

All Events are Free unless noted. *RSVP to 630-778-PLAY Bring a friend who doesn't have Down syndrome.

Open Play is New to Our Plainfield Location
Everyone's welcome to come out to the Playhouse on Thursday **August 23rd** for 2 hours of Open Play, starting at 10am!

2 & under playgroup: Families with children 2 and under get together and play while the parents network with each other. Siblings always welcome.

3-4 year old playgroup: Families with children ages 3-4 get together and play while the parents network with each other. Siblings always welcome.

Pre-crawlers/Crawlers: This group focuses on crawling skills as well as fine motor skills, social interaction with peers in a semi-structured environment. Pre-crawlers is for children who are just starting to crawl and the Crawlers is for children who are crawling on all fours. Children must be accompanied by a parent/adult.

Pre-walkers/Walkers: This group focuses on post walking skills with peers to prepare children for school activities (balance beam, kicking, throwing, jumping, etc.) The pre-walkers is for children who are just starting to walk independently and the Walkers group is for children who are walking independently. Children must be accompanied by a parent/adult.

Teen Tastic: This group meets from 7-9pm. We order pizza for dinner and have lots of fun watching movies and playing games with each other. 6th-12th grades.

Hispanic Group: Spanish speaking families gather for food, fun, friendship and education.

Signing Time Group: Learn sign language by signing along to the songs from the TV series. All ages are welcome.

Daddy and Me: Dads get out with the kids and get together with other dads. All ages.

Open Play: Open to everyone.

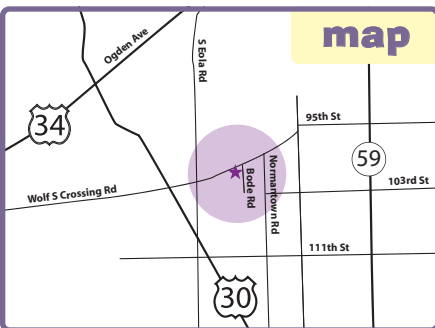
Playhouse Pals: For families with children in 1st-3rd grades.

Birthday Party: All ages.

New Time for Signs



Please join us on **Friday, August 17th** at 10am for some fun with learning sign language through songs. *All ages welcome.*



10052 S. Bode Road
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Plainfield, IL 60585
630-778-PLAY (7529)
fax 630-778-7519
gigisplayhousetoo.com

What a Party!

When her daughter turned 1 year old, Jackie knew that she didn't need 100 more toys! Instead she decided to throw a birthday party that would benefit an organization. Jackie sent out invitations asking her guests to give toys in lieu of gifts and they would all be donated to GiGi's Playhouse! We at GiGi's were honored with the gesture but we never imagined



nor expected the truckload of gifts that came in after the party!

Happy Birthday Sofia, and thank you for sharing your special day with all of the kids at GiGi's Playhouse!

Learn to Read

Our free literacy program is designed to teach children with Down syndrome how to read the way they learn best. This is called a 'home-based' program because the key is repetition and that takes place at home! Parents bring the child to Literacy and always sit in on the session with the



child and tutor. This ensures that the parent is familiar with the books and learning tools that the child is utilizing and allows for parent and tutor to work together to meet the needs of the child. Interesting in becoming a literacy tutor? *Call the playhouse for more information.*

Something for Everyone!

For the last few months, my husband and my dad drop our daughter, Diana, off at GiGi's Playhouse for Friday Friends. Diana loves Friday Friends and can't wait each month to go back. It has now become a tradition for them to drop her off and



have dinner across the parking lot at Babaluci's. Diana gets to hang out with her



friends at the Playhouse, my husband and my dad can catch up over good food and drink, and I get a night all to myself! Thanks, GiGi's!! Once again, you meet our family needs!!

Want to Make Your Summer Vacation Meaningful?

Volunteer at GiGi's! We are always looking for dedicated volunteers to help at GiGi's. There are many areas that we can use your help—administrative, newsletter, literacy, programming and much more! Call the playhouse for more info or go online and download a volunteer application at www.gigisplayhouse.org.



Calendar's at Half Price!



Our 2007 Calendars are now only \$5! These calendars are excellent awareness and beautiful to look at! As one mom puts it, "We look at these kids every day — they have become part of our family!" *Call the playhouse to purchase yours today!*

SAVE the DATE

Down Syndrome Development Council (DSDC) presents
9th Annual Down Syndrome Awareness "Buddy Walk"

Sunday, September 16, 2007

at **Lambs Farm in Libertyville**
RT #176 (Rockland Rd.) & I-94 Expressway
NOON-5PM Walk at 1:30PM



For more info or to volunteer for the event, please contact:
Debbie Pogose at **847-973-1622**
Email: beauvp@sbcglobal.net

Did You Know?

We now have an electronic version of this newsletter! If you would like to be on our electronic newsletter list, please email jenni@gigisplayhouse.org. You will receive a monthly email with a link that brings you to our newsletter page. You can print the calendar from there! Also, we are looking for sponsors for our monthly newsletter as well as volunteers to help with the monthly mailing. *Thank YOU!!*



SAVE the DATE

August 18th

The Playhouse is having their **1st Annual Pub Crawl** in Chicago. Registration orders are now available online. Fill it out and send it to the Hoffman Estate Playhouse, 1069 W. Golf Rd. The cost is \$50 per person. This includes unlimited drinks and a snazzy t-shirt. The following locations will be part of the crawl— John Barleycorn, Chi-Town Tap, Lilly's, Wise Fools and Glascott's. We will have amazing raffle prizes at each location, so get a babysitter (because you need to be 21 to attend) and plan on a fun-filled day!



I was brought to tears over the support that the crowd had for Down syndrome. I have never been to an event where so many people showed such love and support for Down syndrome!

—one mother's comment about the Dash for Down syndrome/5K

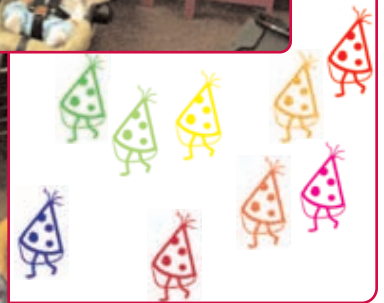
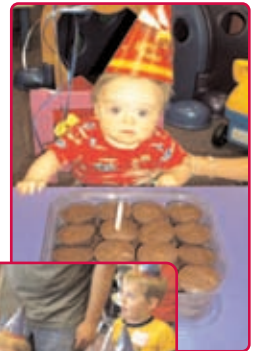


Thank You

We wish to thank Katie Renner & Jen Fergus and our whole 5K committee for doing such an amazing job. The literacy program benefited greatly from your hard work.

Party at the Playhouse!

We celebrate birthdays all the time at the playhouse! Want to reserve the playhouse for your own private party? Call **847-885-PLAY**.



Help Us Open Our Doors

The Chicago Playhouse is getting closer and closer to opening their doors. We are still looking for board members and volunteers to help out. If you are interested in volunteering or more information about becoming a board member, please call **773-616-6381** or email chicago@gigisplayhouse.org.



NDSC Conference

Look for us and our booth at the National Down Syndrome Convention (NDSC), August 3rd-5th in Kansas City, Missouri



A Big Thank You

Thank you Assured Services from Arlington Heights for cleaning our carpets! They look great!!

—from your friends at Gigi's Playhouse





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1069 W Golf Rd.
Hoffman Estates, IL 60169

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Still time to register for our
Golf Outing on July 30th!
Call **630-778-PLAY**.

GiGi Fest

save the date

Sunday, October 14, 2007
Noon-3pm

Join us for a fun filled family day of games, music and awareness. This day we thank the community and families for all their support throughout the year!!!!

Come out and enjoy the band, food and each other.

*Come and see the
2008 calendar
models walk down
the Red Carpet!*



I am moving here this fall and am so thankful to have a Playhouse of my own! I came to visit with my parents and we loved it! There are so many things to play with – I can't wait to come back! Look inside to see all the fun things happening at GiGi's!

