



Down Syndrome Awareness Centers

www.gigisplayhouse.org

GIGI'S NEWS

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

Hoffman Estates

Plainfield

McHenry

Chicago

Now Serving **3** Locations

JUNE 2008

GiGi's Playhouse McHenry IS NOW OFFICIALLY OPEN!!!

A bright and breezy Saturday afternoon led the way to a fantastically successful day for all of us! Where do we begin to share in the excitement?

Our Board of Directors and volunteers pulled together with so much enthusiasm to make this dream come true. We had a short ceremony that included a color guard flag presentation by Boy Scout troop 347 of Crystal Lake, with singing of America the Beautiful, by Chrissy Ancel's sister, Heather. This brought us all to tears as the revelation of our efforts had finally arrived. McHenry President Sue DuBois, shared a few words, GiGi's Playhouse Founder and GiGi's mom Nancy Gianni, shared even more great words and presented a plaque of distinction to the Board. Rick Egbert read the DS Creed to the crowd of at least 400-500 people, all shedding more tears. Then it became official with the cutting of the ribbon by our children. It was a

breath taking moment!

We had a very special guest join us for the afternoon, all the way from Lagos, Nigeria, Africa — Rose Mordi and her daughter Maria from the Down Syndrome Association of Nigeria. How awesome to have a guest from so far away! Carol "met" Rose through a friend on-line when she sent pleas for support to help one of her children who needed heart repairs. Rose was amazed by our group and spoke with Nancy about starting a GiGi's Playhouse in Africa! Carol presented Rose with a gift of one of our reading books to take home and use with the children in their DS association.

Our day would not be complete without thanking our founding sponsors. Their contributions of time, materials, labor, love, money, money, and more money were tremendous and generous to help in building the Playhouse.

We had a lot of fun — and generated

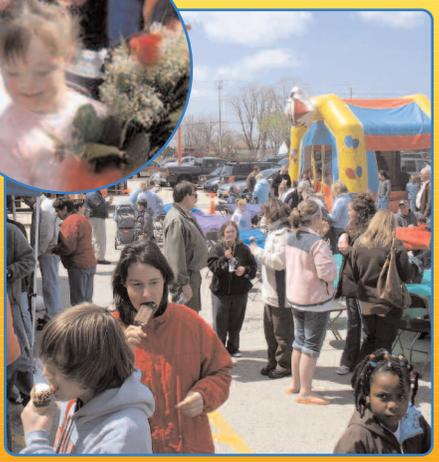
even more funds — with our raffle prize games, over 37 businesses in the community donated gifts to help and support the Playhouse.

Countless hours of help from a long list of volunteers (*we'd need all 8 pages of the newsletter to thank everyone*) is how we accomplished our goals. But most especially we extend a heartfelt **THANK YOU** to the efforts of Susan DuBois, Carol AnCel, Michele Gehrke, Rick Egbert, Amy Sachs, Scott Bradfield, Henry Krukowski, and Michelle Polizzi, a very special group of people who have joined together to be the Board of Directors for the newest GiGi's Playhouse!

Our Fourth Playhouse, Chicago will open soon!!!! **July 20th**

See page 7 for all the details.

What a Party!





Friday Friends

On April 25, our Friday Friends volunteers from Willow Creek had a great time at Gigi's Playhouse. The girls were absolutely wonderful! They were singing, dancing and interacting with their new friends at Gigi's Play-house. The girls did such a nice job interacting with everyone. See you on June 27th!!



Hop, Skip & Jumpers

The Hop, Skip and Jumpers had a great time playing freeze dance, planting flowers and hanging out with friends!! Join us the 2nd Saturday of the month!



Open Play **Open to All**

Open Play is open to all. Join us every Thursday from 12:30-2pm to celebrate our kids together! We have pizza and juice, music, toys and fun!



Playhouse Pals

Playhouse Pals has arrived at GiGi's. This group will meet quarterly and journey to new experiences each time! Parents must remain with child. Siblings are welcome. Please call the Playhouse for more information, call **847.885.7529**.



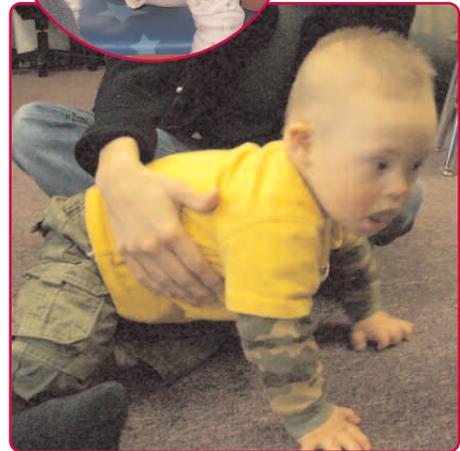
Kids Club!

We completed a spring project planting seeds in pots (among other fun activities). We've been having an excellent turnout! Hope you will join in the fun next time!



Crawlers!

We crawl together from 9-9:45am on the 2nd Saturday of the month. This group is facilitated by a PT who makes the obstacle courses so much fun that the kids don't even know they are getting stronger while they play!



2+ Under The Place 2 B!!

This fabulous group meets each month from 10-11:30am. We talk, play and enjoy our kids together. Bring the whole family!

Lots of Culture!

Nuestros Angeles and our Polish Group are great!! These multi-cultural playgroup are so much fun — and there's great food too!! Check the calendar on page 3 for times and dates.

HOFFMAN STATES CALENDAR

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY	
1 Literacy 4:30-6:30pm	2 Literacy 4-6pm	3 Literacy 4-6pm	4 Literacy 10am-2pm Literacy 6-8pm Special Intentions 7-9pm	5 Open Play 12:30-2pm Literacy 5-8pm	6 Literacy 10am-2pm	7 Literacy 9-10am	
8 5th Annual 5K Fun Run/Walk 9am	9 Literacy 4:30-6:30pm	10 Literacy 4-6pm	11 Literacy 10am-2pm Literacy 6-8pm	12 Open Play 12:30-2pm Literacy 5-8pm	13 Literacy 10am-2pm	14 Crawlers 9-9:45am 2 and Under 10-11:30am Hop, Skip + Jumpers Noon-1:30pm Flag Day	
15 Nuestros Angeles Hispanic Playgroup 11am-1pm Father's Day	16 Literacy 4:30-6:30pm	17 Literacy 4-6pm	18 Literacy 10am-2pm Literacy 6-8pm Special Needs Trust Seminar 7pm	19 Open Play 12:30-2pm Literacy 5-8pm	20 Literacy 10am-2pm 1st Day of Summer	21	
22 Literacy 4:30-6:30pm	23 Literacy 4-6pm	24 Literacy 4-6pm	25 Literacy 10am-2pm Literacy 6-8pm	26 Open Play 12:30-2pm Literacy 5-8pm	27 Literacy 10am-2pm Friday Friends 7-9pm	28 Kids Club 10-11:30am	
29 Polish Group 11am-1pm	30 Literacy 4:30-6:30pm	<h1>June</h1>					

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.

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.

Kids Club: This is our 9-12 yr old group, facilitated by an OT, that incorporates social, communication and confidence-building skills and activities! Join us every month!

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.

Back by Popular Demand

Special Needs Trust Seminar

presented by Brian Rubin!

RSVP Required, call **847.885.7529**

to reserve your spot.

Adults only.

June 18th

Get Your Running Shoes On

June 8th is our 5K Fun Run and Walk!



register at www.gigisplayhouse.org

PLAINFIELD LOCATION

2+ Under Playgroup

April's 2 and Under Playgroup met on one of the first truly beautiful Spring days of this year. While there was concern that there may be a lower turn out due to the fine weather, instead we got a wonderful sized group! Tom Benco showed up with the Bean Bag Toss boards and paint so that



all the children could take turns decorating them with their hand prints.

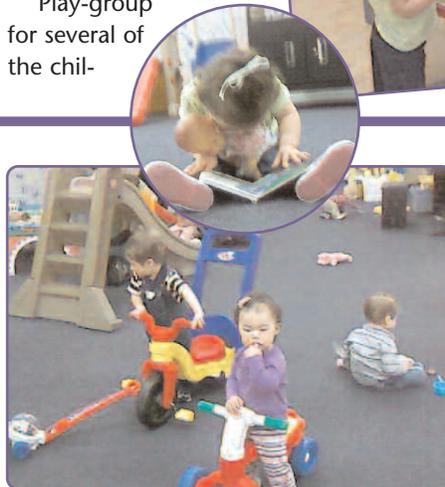
The final boards were raffled off after the tournament. It was the final visit to the 2 and Under

Play-group for several of the chil-



Open Play to All

Want a fun evening out where you can let the kids run around and play while you spend some time chatting with other adults? Then our Evening Open Play is for you! Come join us for pizza and conversation while the kids have fun doing crafts this month on Friday, June 27th from 6-8pm! Please RSVP to: glatka@gigisplayhouse.org. Hope to see you there!



Playhouse Pals

We had a lot of fun this past school year with our newly formed Playhouse Pals group for 1st-3rd graders. We averaged 4-9 children every third Saturday of the month. Some of the fun things we learned about was our emotions, good health and we even had a visit from a policeman and the fire department. We are taking a break for the summer but hope to start back up the third Saturday in September. If you have a 1st-3rd grader and don't receive Playhouse Pals email updates than contact Lori at prfstck@sbcglobal.net.

dren there, as we have more than a few late April/early May birthday boys and girls who have transitioned to the 3-4 Year old Playgroup now.



GiGi's is Looking to Move

Know any property owners in the vicinity who would be willing to work with GiGi's Playhouse Plainfield to find a new home? We are a growing community, and as such, would like to find a more spacious venue to entertain, assist and educate our wonderful population. We have over 100 families visiting the playhouse every month. These families are consumers too and they will buy coffee and sandwiches, get haircuts for their families, etc. In addition, we have events that draw attention to the retail area for the day and actually provide free advertising for the local businesses.

If you know of any possible locations, please call **630.778.PLAY**.



Volunteer Opportunities

There are always volunteer opportunities at GiGi's! We want to add some more groups and events in addition to our current groups, and to do that we need to raise enough money. The golf outing and the 5K will be our biggest fundraisers of the year and they are going to happen within a few months of each other.

If you or anyone you know can help with the following events, please

contact Wendy Eurich at weurich@gigisplayhouse.org.

5K — June 8th

Get your running and walking shoes on!!! It's not too late to sign up, sponsor, or volunteer for the event! Call **847.885.7529**!!



Golf Outing — July 31st

1:30pm at Tamarack Club—Naperville

We need a few volunteers to be on the planning committee and about 15 volunteers the day of. We will need people to get hole sponsors, find golfers, and get raffle items and auction prizes.



Charity Bike Ride

coming in September!

We will need volunteers the day of and 1-2 volunteers to help plan the event.



PLAINFIELD CALENDAR

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
1	2	3 Literacy Program 3-6pm By appointment 	4 Literacy Program 4-5pm By appointment 	5 Literacy Program 4-6:30pm By appointment 	6 Teen-Tastic 7-9pm 	2 & Under 9:30-11 am Literacy Program 9:30-10 am Literacy Program 11:15-11:45 am By appointment 3-4 Year Old Playgroup 11am-Noon 
8 5th Annual 5K Fun Run/Walk 9am 	9	10 Literacy Program 3-6pm By appointment 	11 Literacy Program 4-5pm By appointment 	12 Literacy Program 4-6:30pm By appointment 	13	Pre-Walkers 9-10am Walkers 10-11am RSVP 630.423.4035 Literacy Program 9:30-10am Literacy Program 11:15-11:45am By appointment Daddy & Me 3-4:30pm 
15 Father's Day 	16	17 Literacy Program 3-6pm By appointment 	18 Literacy Program 4-5pm By appointment 	19 Literacy Program 4-6:30pm By appointment 	20 First Day of Summer 	21 Literacy Program 9:30-10am Literacy Program 11:15-11:45am By appointment 
22	23	24 Literacy Program 3-6 pm By appointment 	25 Literacy Program 4-5pm By appointment 	26 Literacy Program 4-6:30pm By appointment 	27 Evening Open Play 6-8 pm 	28 Pre-Crawlers 9-10am Crawlers 10-11am RSVP 630.423.4035 Literacy Program 9:30-10am Literacy Program 11:15-11:45am By appointment 
29 Nuestros Angeles Hispanic Playgroup 11am-1pm 	30	<h1>June</h1>				

All Events are **Free**, unless noted. To RSVP, call **630.778.PLAY** Bring a friend who doesn't have Down syndrome.

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.

Save the Date!

Golf Outing

Look at www.gigisplayhouse.org for details! Interested in sponsoring this amazing event?

July 31st

Email us:

golfouting@gigisplayhouse.org

10052 South Bode Road, Unit D
Plainfield, Illinois 60585

phone **630.778.7529**

fax **630.778.7519**



www.gigisplayhouse.org

new McHENRY CALENDAR

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
1 Nuestros Angeles <i>Hispanic Group</i> 11am-1pm 	2	3 Open Play 9:30-11:30am 	4	5	6	7 Hop, Skip & Jumpers 10-11:30am 
8 5th Annual 5K Fun Run/Walk 9am 	9	10 Open Play 9:30-11:30am 	11 2 + Under 10-11:30am 	12 Walkers 10am-Noon 	13 Teen-Tastic 7pm 	14 Open Play 10-11:30am <i>Flag Day</i>  
15 <i>Father's Day</i> 	16	17 Open Play 9am-Noon 	18	19	20 Kid's Club 6-8pm  <i>1st Day of Summer</i> 	21 Walkers 10-11:30am 
22 Daddy & Me 11am-1pm 	23	24 Open Play 9am-Noon 	25 2 + Under 10-11:30am 	26	27 Friday Friends (18+) 7pm 	28 Open Play 10-11:30am 
29	30					

Please plan to visit us in the near future for one of our programs!
 1720 N. Richmond Rd. McHenry, IL 60050 Fax **815.385.7538** Phone **815.385.PLAY**

Thank You to the Sponsors of the McHenry Playhouse!

Hayes Mechanical	Chicago	Best Buy	McHenry
Donald Adoski	Spring Grove	Kid's Creative Art	Downers Grove
Ewing Doherty	Bensenville	Kroeschell, Inc.	Arlington Heights
M. Dunn Construction	McHenry	Angel Lips Photography	Grayslake
Scott Nichols	Mt. Prospect	Cal & Michele Skinner	Crystal Lake
Rusty's Carpet Service	McHenry	Sticker Dude Designs	Lake Zurich
J.A. Frate	Crystal Lake	Capital Graphics	Arlington Heights
Corus America	Schaumburg	Mika Schindewolf	McHenry
Mayfair Carpet & Furniture	Crystal Lake	Jennifer Hora	McHenry
ICI Paint	Lake Zurich	Sue Nickol	Rolling Meadows
Ashley Carpet & Flooring	McHenry	Terry Brenner	Rolling Meadows
Tri-State Carpet & Decorating	McHenry	John & Romona Mooney	Chicago

An extremely special appreciation is extended to the **Helco Corporation** of Chicago, for donating our building for the next two years! **Heather Mooney** and family have stretched beyond our dreams and expectation in support of our mission to spread the LOVE!

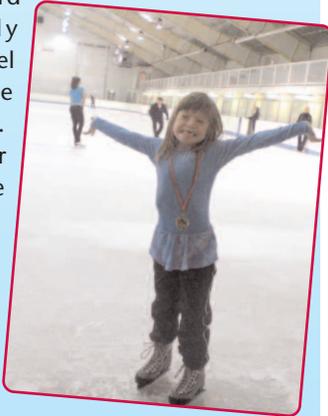


Gold Medalist in our Midst!!

Sarah Bak has been ice skating since she was 4 years old. This year, when she turned 8, she was eligible for Special Olympics so we hired a coach, created a team and the preparations began.

Skating to Rainbow Connection, Sarah competed in the Regional competition in January in Franklin Park and won first place in Level 1. In February, it was on to the State Winter Games held in Galena, Illinois. We arrived at the rink for the first day of competition and learned that Sarah would be the only skater in Level 1 under the age of 18.

We, as her parents, were so nervous, but not Sarah. After the first day of competition, she was placed into Level 1, Division 2. She then had a second day of competition and it was time for the medal ceremony. Sarah won the gold medal!! It was a moment of pride and joy incomparable to anything we've yet experienced. Most importantly, she had an absolutely fantastic time both competing and socializing at the dance with the other athletes! She is already looking forward to next year.



Recently, as we were preparing for Sarah's annual IEP, I looked back at my parent report from 3 years ago when she had her last reevaluation. At that time, we had set a personal mission statement as our role in her lives and had set our dreams for her. One of our dreams at that time, when Sarah was just 5 years old and entering kindergarten,

was that she win a gold medal in Special Olympic figure skating. This year, that dream came true! So, you just never know... dream big.



GRAND OPENING!

GIGI'S PLAYHOUSE — CHICAGO!!

Sunday, July 20th, Noon-3pm

Join us at the newest Playhouse • 3660 W. Irving Park Rd.

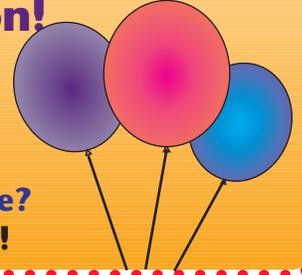
Chicago's Grand Opening!!!
We're Coming to Chicago! Come to our Grand Opening Celebration!

Join us at:

**3660 W. Irving Park Road
Chicago, IL 60618**

Want to help, donate, or learn more?

Email: Chicago@gigisplayhouse.org



Thanks Heineken

Wow, what a day! I was invited to the new Heineken office in Downers Grove because they chose the Playhouse as their charity for the year! They gave me a check for \$5000 for the Playhouse! It was a great day — we are so

proud to be chosen by this great company!! Thanks to Ken Stout and my friends at Heineken!! — Love, GiGi



Travelling Gallery Launch is Amazing

The Gallery launch at the Loyola University Museum of Art was incredible. With the 'i have a voice' video and the GiGi's Playhouse video playing on the wall, 26 portraits gracing the walls, the crowd was mesmerized. It was an amazing night as people were able to see the beauty and depth of individuals with Down syndrome and hear their voice. Watch for the 'i have a voice' book coming soon! Visit www.gigisplayhouse.org and click on 'i have a voice' to see the portraits, learn details about the Gallery, and see how you can help!



Taste of GiGi's Chicago!

Mark your calendars for the first annual "Taste of GiGi's Playhouse", a night of food, fun and music to raise awareness for the Chicago location. The event, which will feature food from more than a dozen Chicago restaurants, is set for Saturday, **August 16th**, at the Logan Square Auditorium, 2539 N. Kedzie.

Register prior to July 16, and you could win a fantastic prize. Watch your mailboxes for more info.



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Hoffman Estates, IL 60169

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SAVE THE DATE

JUNE 8, 2008

5th Annual 5K FunRun & Walk!!

Register now at: www.gigisplayhouse.org
or call **847.885.7529**

5336 Prairie Stone Pkwy, Hoffman Estates

Race Starts 9am!

now
3 Locations
Hoffman Estates
Plainfield • McHenry

Golf Outing!

FORE!! The date has been set!! Get your buddies together and register for the 2008 Golf Outing! This Golf Outing is a huge party that spreads awareness about Down syndrome, has prizes, and is a great time for everyone!!

Email golfouting@gigisplayhouse.org for more info or call **630.778.PLAY!!**

WHEN:

**Thursday July 31st
at 1:30pm**

WHERE:

**Tamarack Club
in Naperville**



SAVE THE DATE

5th Annual 5K!

This is going to be a great event! We had over 1,700 people last year and are so excited to bring even more awareness to our community this year! To register, go to:

www.gigisplayhouse.org

**June
8th**



Locations

Hoffman Estates

1069 West Golf Road
Hoffman Estates, IL 60169
847.885.PLAY

Plainfield

10052 South Bode Road, Unit D
Plainfield, IL 60585
630.778.PLAY

McHenry

1720 North Richmond Road
McHenry, IL 60050
815.385.PLAY

Chicago

Coming Next Month!!!!!!!!!!!!