



www.gigisplayhouse.org

GIGI'S NEWS

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

Serving 2 Locations

JANUARY 2008

What started as the vision of one mom has become a mission for hundreds. When Nancy gave birth to GiGi 4 years ago, she was unsure of what the future would hold. Then she met other passionate moms and dads and together they created what is now GiGi's Playhouse. Though the name is her daughters, the Playhouse belongs to everyone touched by Down syndrome.

In these short 4 years, a second Playhouse has opened and there

What's Your Vision?



are future Playhouses in the making! We, at GiGi's Playhouse, are dedicated to ensuring that

our services are meeting the needs of the families we serve. That's why we want to hear from YOU! What is your vision for GiGi's Playhouse? More programs? Bigger facility? New classes? Workshops? Resources? We would love to hear your ideas on how to make GiGi's a better place for you and your family.

Email those ideas at:

info@gigisplayhouse.com.

Do you want to lead a group? Let us know! We'd love to have you! Remember, this is YOUR Playhouse!

Love the Playhouse? We Need Your Help!

The following committees are forming for 2008 and we have many opportunities for you to make a difference in the lives of our families...

Education Committee:

This committee includes our literacy program and educational programs we would like to implement in the future.

Program Committee:

This committee will organize all our monthly groups and special events.

Awareness Committee:

Reaches out to the education and medical fields as well as our local community.



Fundraising Committee:

This group raises funds through our major events i.e. Gala, 5k and other outlets to ensure the success of GiGi's.

Financial Committee:

Responsible for overseeing the overall budget of the Playhouse along with all events.

Can you spare your talent and time for a great cause...we are growing but we cannot continue to grow without your support!!!!

Call the playhouse at **847.885.7529** to let us know which location you would like to support.

GiGi's in the Windy City

The Chicago Playhouse is expected to open its doors this spring! We are so excited to have so many passionate people in the city helping with the Chicago Playhouse. We have a Board of Directors and there is always room for more people on GiGi's board, as volunteers, literacy tutors, program hosts...you name it! We are continuing to search for the perfect location! Want to be a part of our efforts? Email us at **chicago@gigisplayhouse.org**



I am reminded of the movie "It's a Wonderful Life." Every time a bell rings an angel gets it's wings. We should have a bell on the Playhouse entrance door — it has turned so many people into angels! Thanks GiGi's for giving us wings!

There's more on Horizon

Not only is Chicago opening but there is a Literacy Satellite scheduled to open in the spring as well. This will be located in Westmont, IL and will serve as a GiGi's Literacy center for kids with Down syndrome. This will take children off our waiting list as well as impact more kids in the western suburbs.

HOFFMAN STATES LOCATION

Featuring Our Multi-Cultural Groups



Nuestros Angeles, which means 'Our Angels', and the Polish group are our feature play-groups this month! These two

groups meet each month to have fun, network, and eat great food together!! Both groups are growing and welcome newcomers! The Nuestros Angeles meet the 2nd Sunday of the month from 11am-1pm. The Polish Group meets the 3rd Sunday from 11am-1pm. *Everyone is welcome!*

Kids Club

Look at how much fun we had this month!



We had a great turn out and had a great time! Join us next month on January 26th from 10am-11:30am! For kids 8-12yrs old.



Playgroups are for YOU!

We LOVE to have all different kinds of groups for our families. From the 2 and Under group all the way to our Friday Friends Group, we try to meet every age! Did you know that our awesome group facilitators are volunteers? They donate

their time and experience for you! And they LOVE it! We have lots of kids that want to be part of these groups, if you are not able to come please call and let us know so that we can call the next child on the list! *Thanks!!*



Smiling with Santa!

Our Christmas party was so much fun!! Just look at all these smiling faces! Santa came to give gifts and meet all of our wonderful children!



Open Play Open to All



Join us every Thursday from 12:30-2pm for a time of laid back fun and food!

HOFMANN STATES CALENDAR

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
January		1 Happy New Year!	2 Literacy 10am-2pm Literacy 6-8pm Special Intentions 7-9pm	3 Open Play 12:30-2pm Literacy 5-7pm	4	5
6	7	8 Literacy Noon-3pm	9 Literacy 10am-2pm Literacy 6-8pm	10 Open Play 12:30-2pm Literacy 5-7pm	11	12 Crawlers 9-9:45am 2 & Under 10-11:30am Hop, Skip and Jumpers Noon-1:30pm
13 Nuestros Angeles 11am-1pm	14	15	16 Literacy 10am-2pm Literacy 6-8pm	17 Open Play 12:30-2pm Literacy 5-7pm	18	19
20	21	22 Literacy Noon-3pm	23 Literacy 10am-2pm Literacy 6-8pm	24 Open Play 12:30-2pm Literacy 5-7pm	25 Friday Friends 7-9pm	26 Kids Club 10-11:30am
27 Polish Group 11-1pm	28	29	30 Literacy 10am-2pm Literacy Nite 6:30-8:30pm	31 Open Play 12:30-2pm Literacy 5-7pm	Don't Forget: Literacy Nite on the 30th! Come help us make books!	

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.

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.

What a Busy Saturday!!!

Look at the programs we have on the 2nd Saturday of the month:

Crawlers...

Our crawlers are moving like you cannot believe! This group of pre-walkers are having so much fun maneuvering around the room and investigating all the neat toys at the Playhouse! We meet the 2nd Saturday of the month from 9-9:45am.

2 & Under

This group is open to everyone and is a huge hit!! Siblings welcome too! Join us the 2nd Saturday of every month from 10-11:30am.

Hop, Skip and Jumpers!!

This fast paced group is so much fun! With crafts, games and songs, we work on social skill development and meet new friends! Join us from 12-1:30pm on the 2nd Saturday!

Friday Friends

Join us on January 25th. There will be Popcorn and a Movie!! For anyone 18 and over!



PLAINFIELD LOCATION

Birthday Party

We hosted four wonderful families for the Playhouse birthday party on Sunday, November 11th. All of our birthday kids were little ones, 3 years of age and younger. They enjoyed the cupcakes and cookies, especially 1 year old Joey!!

We played the parachute game and did an obstacle course which was a big hit! Each child received a special gift to take home. The next party will be in February celebrating the December, January, and February birthdays.

A special thank you to volunteers Joan, Alex and Pam.



Come Sign with Us

2 & Under attendees, come out a half hour before the 2 & Under Playgroup and learn some sign language! The signing class will be from 9-9:30am, just prior to the 2 & Under group.



New Group Leaders Wanted

Would you like to see a new playgroup at the Playhouse for your child's age? Have you been thinking of hosting a new playgroup? If so, then contact the Playhouse today at **630.778.PLAY!**

Hispanic Group Halloween Party

The Hispanic Group had a spooktacularly good time at their Halloween Party!



Reading Tutors Needed

GiGi's Free Literacy Program is looking for additional tutors. This is a fantastic opportunity for teachers, student teachers, and therapists to get involved and work with our wonderful children! For more information, contact the Playhouse at **630.778.PLAY.**

Board Positions

We are growing and are in need of new board members. If you are interested, please call the Playhouse at **630.778.PLAY**

Board of Directors

Doug Collie, *President*
colliedoug@yahoo.com

Wendy Eurich
weurich@comcast.net

Brendan Conley
jbc@macleanpower.com

Tom Benco
tmbenco@yahoo.com

Genia Latka
geniaanddan@comcast.net

Michele Ptaszek
mdp1116@aol.com

Contact Information:

Beth Sullivan & Mike Apgar,
Co-Directors
apgarfamily@sbcglobal.net

High School Musical Party

GiGi's Playhouse Too will be the site of a High School Musical party on Saturday, January 12th from 5-7pm. There will be a showing of the movie *High School Musical*. Additionally, there will be pizza, music, dancing, arts and crafts! Come on out for a good time. Families and kids of all ages are invited out for this evening of fun! The event will be sponsored by the Simple Gifts Foundation. RSVP to Donna Swanson at **630.631.6948** or email **BFC3@sbcglobal.net**.

FridayFriends

We would like to bring Friday Friends to Plainfield! Friday Friends will meet one Friday a month and provide fun social interaction for adults 18 years and older. We will have dances, go bowling, have movie nights and other activities. We are looking for some FUN! If you're interested in participating or leading a group like this please email Genia Latka at **geniaanddan@comcast.net** or call **630.272.6598**.

PLAINFIELD CALENDAR

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
		1 Literacy Program 4:30-6pm By appointment Happy New Year! 	2 Literacy Program 4-5pm By appointment 	3 Literacy program 4-6:30pm By appointment 	4 Teen-Tastic 7-9pm 	5 2 & Under 9:30-11am Literacy Program 9:30-10am 11:15-11:45am By appointment 3-4 Year Old Playgroup 11am-Noon
		6	7	8 Literacy Program 3-6pm By appointment 	9 Literacy Program 4-5pm By appointment 	10 Literacy program 4-6:30pm By appointment
13	14	15 Literacy Program 4:30-6pm By appointment 	16 Literacy Program 4-5pm By appointment 	17 Literacy program 4-6:30pm By appointment 	18 Signing Time 10-11am 	19 Literacy Program 9:30-10am 11:15-11:45am By appointment Playhouse Pals 1-3pm
20	21	22 Literacy Program 4:30-6pm By appointment 	23 Literacy Program 4-5pm By appointment 	24 Literacy program 4-6:30pm By appointment 	25	26 Pre-Crawlers 9-10am Crawlers 10-11am RSVP to Judy 630.961.2430 Literacy Program 9:30-10am 11:15-11:45am By appointment
27 Hispanic Playgroup 11am-1pm 	28	29 Literacy Program 4:30-6pm By appointment 	30 Literacy Program 4-5pm By appointment 	31 Literacy program 4-6:30pm By appointment 		

All Events are Free unless noted. *RSVP to 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.

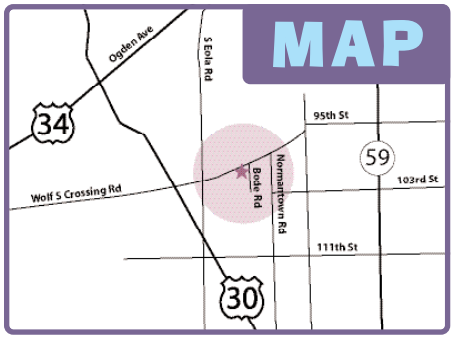
Signing Time Group
 Learn sign language by signing along to the songs from the TV series. All ages are welcome.

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.



10052 South Bode Road, Unit D
 Plainfield, Illinois 60585

phone **630.778.7529**
 fax **630.778.7519**

www.gigisplayhousetoo.com

The Literacy Program

What is the Literacy Program?

Children with Down syndrome can and do learn to read. Research shows that children with Down syndrome learn to read best using whole words rather than only using letters and sounds. Children with Down syndrome are often "visual" learners and are very successful when taught reading using a "whole word" approach. The Literacy Program at GiGi's provides tutoring sessions utilizing the methods primarily based on the teaching



at age 3 and teach through adulthood!

My child is not speaking yet, can he still join?

Of course! We have readers, signers, those that use assistive speaking devices and those that are writing their own books! All ages and all levels are welcome.

Can I drop my child off for his session?

No. This is a home-based program which means that the child is actually learning to read at home while he practices with you. An adult must accompany the child throughout the entire session and learn the methodology for the program. Books are provided to you at no charge so that you can practice at home.

How much does it cost?

This is a free program! The annual 5K raises funds for the Literacy program. The last Wednesday of each month is the Literacy Nite where parents can choose to help make books at the Playhouse to keep the materials stocked.

What are the benefits?

Developing reading skills can lead to improvements in speech and language development, auditory perceptual skills and working memory function. Children

with Down syndrome can begin to learn to read as young as preschool age and can continue to develop their reading skills into adult life. The program allows many of our students to get a 'head start' as well as maintain their reading skills.

Who are the tutors?

All of our tutors are trained by a Developmental Therapist and are committed to the education of your child. Many are current or retired educators, parents, or simply those that have a heart for teaching children with Down syndrome.

What is the schedule?

There are several options for participation in the Literacy Program. The 16 week sessions meet every other week for 45 minutes. The child can have individual tutoring or group tutoring. For those unable to commit to two times a month, consulting with a tutor is available as well.



How do I enroll my child in the Literacy Program?

Call the Playhouse to receive a registration form. Once that is submitted, your child will be placed on the list for the upcoming 16 week session. You must re-enroll for each 16 week session.



"Who wants to Read? I DO!"

of Patricia Oelwein, though we also incorporate Sue Buckley, PhD., and other professionals in the field of literacy for Down syndrome. Each book is tailored specifically to your child.

Who can join?

Anyone with Down syndrome! We start

Calling All Past, Present & Future Educators!

We are looking for more tutors to meet the needs of our families. Would you like to tutor children, teens or adults with Down syndrome? Training is provided and we work around your schedule. Not an educator? No problem! We provide training and resources. Call the Susan at the Playhouse for more info, **847.885.7529**.

More Than Tutoring...

“When I brought Lydia to the Literacy program for the first time, I was in tears. We received so much more than tutoring. The Playhouse is a wealth of information! I was introduced to other support groups, a new way of learning,

and people who cared about me and my family! And when I saw

Lydia read for the first time, I was in tears. It gave me a sense of strength — that I can do it, that I am not alone. Not even close to alone!



"SPREAD THE LOVE RAFFLE"

to benefit

GiGi's Playhouse Down Syndrome Awareness Centers



GiGi's PLAYHOUSE™
Down Syndrome Awareness Centers
www.gigisplayhouse.org

Grand Prize

Exquisite mink coat beautifully altered just for you by renowned designer Hana K!

Graciously donated by Susan and Prosper Maman (Valued at \$15,000)

2nd Prize

1 Week paradise

Vacation to Kauai, Hawaii!!

(Includes 7 day 6 night stay in a luxurious 2 BR waterfront condo!, valued at \$6,500)

3rd prize

Stunning Diamond Rado Watch!

Donated by Rahl Jewelers and the Biggers Auto Group (Valued at \$3,000)

4th Prize

\$1000.00 CASH!!

**\$25.00
PER TICKET OR
5 FOR \$100.00**

GiGi's Playhouses are not for profit Down Syndrome Awareness Centers.

With multiple locations we offer activities, resources, educational programs and support for individuals with Down syndrome, their families and the community. At GiGi's Playhouse we celebrate the lives and showcase the talent and potential of individuals with Down syndrome.

Drawing will be held February 9th at our "Spread the Love" Gala at Belvedere Banquets in Elk Grove. Winner need not be present.



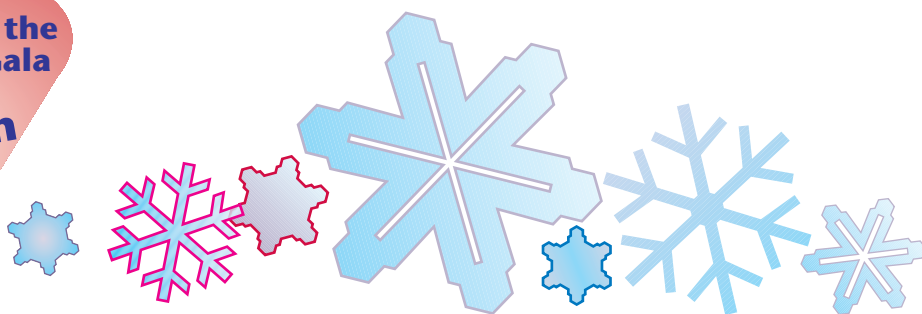
Loving a child with Down syndrome is contagious... Thank you for helping us spread the LOVE!!

Photo courtesy of Metamorphosis Studio



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Brrr....

It's cold out there! GiGi's Store has just what you need to warm up and warm the hearts of others! Check out our new fleece jackets! Go online to www.gigisplayhouse.org to see all the awesome products we have available! Jewelry, fleeces, shirts, note cards and of course our award winning 2008 calendar!! All of these items make great gifts and the best part is 100% of your tax deductible donation goes right back into Down syndrome awareness!!



Thank You to Whole Foods in Palatine for Supporting GiGi's

with the 5% donation day.



WHOLE FOODS MARKET
Palatine

Get Ready to Run!

We are already starting to get our 2008 5K committee together! If you would like to help with the event, call **847.885.7529**.



Way to Go, Eagle Scouts!

Thanks to Ben Sommor and his Eagle Scout group, GiGi's Playhouse storage room has been transformed! By building shelves and containers for all our seasonal materials, we now have easy access to everything! Thanks, Ben! You have made a difference!

