



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

MARCH 2008

i have a voice

Set High Expectations... Celebrate... Touch Lives... Educate...

Inspire people to believe in the possibilities and joys of individuals with Down syndrome.

What a mission!! And we are able to achieve it through the Traveling Gallery that has been unveiled at last month's Gala. The goal is that this traveling gallery will be seen across the nation, spreading awareness and touching lives. To further our mission, we will be creating a book that celebrates and continues to build on the stories of these amazing people. This gallery will be displayed at high traffic venues including hospitals, country clubs, hotels, meeting places, trade shows and more! We have already been booked for the North Shore Art

Festival where over 25,000 people will see our beautiful kids!! The amazing photographs are so captivating and spread such amazing positive awareness!!

If you know of a venue to display this amazing Gallery or would like information on corporate sponsorship of the Gallery, please contact **847.885.7529**.

With your support we can give our children and adults with Down syndrome a voice in a world where they belong.



Thank you to renowned photographer Thomas Balsamo of Portraits by Thomas in Barrington, IL, for capturing the inner voice of these children through his intimate portraits.

Thank you to Steven Bagby, owner of Bagby and Company, an agency of Brand Expressionism, for his time, talent and for bringing profound life to this project.



THIS MONTH'S FEATURE



Literacy

With the new schedule for Literacy we have been able to take over 30 kids off the waiting list and enroll them in the program for the 1st time! All the kids that have been in the program are able to get materials from the Playhouse and continue to practice at home until they are able to re-enroll. Being a



home-based program allows parents to learn the program and be able to take the skills home and work with their child while new kids can be taken off the waiting list every 16 weeks. Our Literacy Satellite in Westmont is opening this month! If you live close to Westmont area, call the Playhouse to see how you can enroll in the Satellite program! **847.885.7529.**

Hop, Skip & Jump

The 3-5 year old group is an action packed group that incorporates so much learning into the fun filled 90 minute



class. Just look at the creative play taking place with the puppet

show. Or the gross motor strengthening with the scooters. Or even the musical talent development with our

youngest band members!! These pictures



speaking for themselves! Join us each month, the 2nd Saturday from Noon-1:30pm. It's a blast!!

Trikes Yikes!!

Join us 10am on Sat., March 15th to practice our cycling skills. This class is facilitated by a PT, with focus on pedaling, steering, and overall trike skills. Each child must bring their own bike/trike and the class is limited to 7, so sign up early. **847.885.7529.**



KidsKlub!

Kids Klub is the talk of the town these days! Led by our volunteer Occupational Therapist, Elyn Podolsky, this playgroup is full of exciting and fun games and activities. Come to the Playhouse the last Saturday of the month from 10-11:30am to join the fun!!



Open Play

Every Thursday from 12:30-2pm we get together and play! This

open event is for everyone and is a great way to meet other parents and kids! See you there!























Friday Friends!

Are you over 18? Then join us for a Dance Party on March 28th at 7pm!!! See you there and be ready to show off those moves!



HOFFMAN ESTATES CALENDAR

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
MARCH						1 Literacy 9-10am 
2	3	4 Literacy Noon-2pm Literacy 4-7pm 	5 Literacy 10am-2pm Literacy 6-9pm Special Interest 7pm 	6 Open Play 12:30-2pm Literacy 5-8pm 	7	8 Crawlers 9-9:45am 2 and Under 10-11:30am HS&J Noon-1:30pm 
9 Nuestros Angeles Hispanic Playgroup 11am-1pm 	10	11 Literacy Noon-2pm Literacy 4-7pm 	12 Literacy 10am-2pm Literacy 6-9pm 	13 Open Play 12:30-2pm Literacy 5-8pm 	14	15 Yikes Trikes 10am 
16	17	18 Literacy Noon-2pm Literacy 4-7pm 	19 Literacy 10am-2pm Literacy 6-9pm 	20 Open Play 12:30-2pm Literacy 5-8pm 	21	22 Easter Party 10am-Noon 
23 Polish Group 11am-1pm 	24 Board of Directors meeting 7pm	25 Literacy Noon-2pm Literacy 4-7pm 	26 Literacy 10am-2pm Literacy 6-9pm Literacy Nite 6:30pm 	27 Open Play 12:30-2pm Literacy 5-8pm 	28 Literacy 10am-2pm Friday Friends 7pm 	29 Literacy 9-10am Kids Klub 10-11:30am 
30	31 Communication Seminar (0-3yrs) 7pm RSVP required					

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.

Don't Forget!

Literacy Nite
Wednesday, March 26th,
6:30-8:30pm.
Come help us make books!!!

RSVP Required!
Early Communication Seminar
 hosted by Lora White, SLP.
 Call 847.885.7529, to reserve your spot!

Easter Party
 set to roll on
March 22nd!
 Join us to decorate Eggs!

High School Musical Party

GiGi's Too was the site for fun, dancing and good food on January 12th! The Simple Gifts Foundation hosted a High School Musical Party for all kids and their families. Over 50 people came out for the

movie, a craft project and pizza. The kids had a blast as they sang and danced to, "We're All in This Together" and "Stick to the Status Quo"!



Evening Open Play

It's time to relax and have some fun! Come join us Friday, March 28th for pizza, playing and visiting. Everyone is welcome!

Crawlers Group Notice

Please note that the March Pre-Crawlers and Crawlers groups will meet on March 29. This is a one-month change from the usual fourth Saturday of the month.

Group Leaders Meeting

There will be a group leaders meeting on Tuesday, March 4 at 6:30pm. All group leaders, please mark your calendar for this meeting.

Thank You Central Community High School

The Central Community High School in Clifton, IL raised \$1,200 for GiGi's in their annual "PACK THE TRACK WALK!"

For the past 3 years the student council led by Ms. Carol Davidson has run this event. The students had a lot of responsibilities to make this event possible. They had to set up for the event, go to our local businesses for sponsorships, set up concessions, clean up and all kinds of behind the scenes happenings! The event is a walk at the high school track. Each

person that participates donates \$5 (or more!) and they get a t-shirt. There was a BEAUTIFUL, PURPLE balloon launch to start the event. There were also raffles, music, food, and fun as the students and community got together to raise money for Down Syndrome awareness. All the money raised goes to the Playhouse to help continue to spread awareness. The high school also had a bake sale this past summer which they also donated all their sales to the Playhouse.

Save the Date

Mark your calendars for **GiGi's First Annual Cornhole Tournament**. The date is **Sunday, May 18th** (with a rain date of **June 1st**). Come join the fun! Look for further details next month.

Playhouse Pals Musicians

Our December Playhouse Pals had fun with music thanks to Melinda Creasy from Music Together in Naperville. The kids had fun dancing, singing and playing different musical instruments to their favorite holiday tunes.



GiGi's Too Office Hours

GiGi's Playhouse Too would like to welcome new volunteer Ann Benco. Ann will be assisting with the day to day operations of the playhouse. Ann will be at the Playhouse Tuesdays and Thursdays from 11am to 2pm.

Ann is a Certified Operating Room Tech who currently works at Central DuPage Hospital. Ann enjoys working with children and was introduced to GiGi's by her niece Abby who is a regular GiGi's participant.

Please join us in welcoming and thanking Ann for her volunteer service.

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

PLAINFIELD CALENDAR

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
MARCH						1 2 & Under 9:30-11am Literacy Program 9:30-10am Literacy Program 11:15-11:45am 3-4 Year Old Playgroup 11am-  Noon
2	3	4 Literacy Program 3-6pm By appointment Group Leaders Meeting 6:30pm 	5 Literacy Program 4-5pm By appointment 	6 Literacy Program 4-6:30pm By appointment 	7 Teen-Tastic 7-9pm 	8 Pre-Walkers 9-10am Walkers 10-11am Literacy Program 9:30-10am 11:15-11:45am By appointment Daddy & Me 3-4:30pm
9	10	11 Literacy Program 4:30-6pm By appointment Literacy Program 3-6pm By appointment 	12 Literacy Program 4-5pm By appointment 	13 Literacy Program 4-6:30pm By appointment 	14	15 Literacy Program 9:30-10am Literacy Program 11:15-11:45am Playhouse Pals 1-3pm 
16	17	18 Literacy Program 3-6pm By appointment 	19 Literacy Program 4-5pm By appointment 	20 Literacy Program 4-6:30pm By appointment 	21	22 Literacy Program 9:30-10am Literacy Program 11:15-11:45am By appointment
23	24	25 Literacy Program 3-6pm By appointment 	26 Literacy Program 4-5pm By appointment 	27 Literacy program 4-6:30pm By appointment 	28 Evening Open Play 6-8pm 	29 Pre-Crawlers 9-10am Crawlers 10-11am Literacy Program 9:30-10am 11:15-11:45am By appointment
30 Nuestros Angeles Hispanic Playgroup 11am-1pm	31					

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

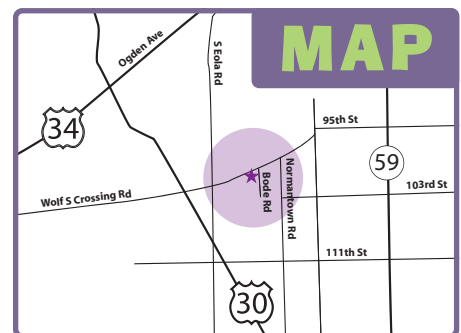
Open to everyone.

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



Save the Date

March 31, 7pm Communication Seminar

Your child's communication development starts at birth with a baby's first cry. Families with a young child with Down syndrome are often told that speech therapy will begin when the child begins to make sounds. This information frequently does not take into consideration that communication development, be it eye contact, body language/gestures, vocalizations and picture communication are important, early and vital communication tools for the young child. Families benefit from instruction on the many ways to facilitate and enhance this development during the day to day interaction with their child. This builds a strong foundation for speech and language development.

Lora White, M.A., CCC-SLP is a speech and language pathologist in private practice. She will share her knowledge and insight learned from over thirty years of working with children with Down syndrome. Lora will present information in regard to the child's communication development, oral motor/feeding development and the importance these areas play in a child's speech and language development, specifically, speech intelligibility. Parents will be presented with strategies to facilitate their child's communication development, develop a better understanding of oral motor and feeding skills and the impact this foundation has on a child's speech intelligibility. Parents in attendance will also have the opportunity to ask questions in regard to their child's communication and speech development.

Call the Hoffman Estates location,
847.885.7529 to RSVP!!

What a Party!

The Playhouse family of over 350 people gathered together for our 2nd annual Spread the Love Gala last month. We had so much fun dancing, eating and celebrating together and even more importantly we spread so much positive awareness about Down syndrome!! There was a wedding in the room next door to the Gala and lots of people came over to our registration table to learn more about us! We were able to share with them why we were all gathered together to celebrate the blessing



that is Down syndrome! Rob Johnson from CBS 2 news hosted the event and shared with us his own passion about Down syndrome and helping the world see these special individuals the way we do. Thank you to Roberta Costion and the whole Gala committee for their hard work and to all our sponsors for making the Gala such an amazing event!

Rob Johnson from CBS 2 News with our 1st Prize Raffle Winner, Beth Spenade!!

Thank You, Sponsors!!

Our 2008 Spread the Love Gala Sponsors! We couldn't do it without you!

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Sennheiser

The Wine Cellar

Tony & Tina's Wedding

2nd Annual Spread the Love Gala





Down Syndrome Awareness Centers
www.gigisplayhouse.org

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Save the Date
March 31st
7pm
Communication Seminar
look inside for details,
on page 6

Get Ready to Run!

Our 5K committee is up and RUNNING!! With every location (including McHenry and Chicago!!) participating in this event, it is going to be our biggest one ever! We need YOU!! You can join the committee, sponsor the event or be a volunteer at the event! Mark your calendars now for this amazing time of awareness and community. See you on **June 8th!!**

Call **847.885.7529** or your local Playhouse to get involved!!



Bigger & Better!!

GiGi's Playhouse is run on the miracles that take place everyday. The heart and soul is from parents, volunteers and of course, the kids and adults that are our inspiration! We are growing bigger and better with each new location and are thrilled to announce that the McHenry and the Chicago locations are opening this spring!!! Look for details in future newsletters of the GRAND OPENINGS coming soon!!

Email **mchenry@gigisplayhouse.org** or **Chicago@gigisplayhouse.org** for more info or to get involved at one of these amazing future locations!!

Easter Party!

Sat., March 22nd
10am-Noon

Join us for an egg hunt!

