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1069 West Golf Road  
Hoffman Estates, IL 60169

**Fox Valley 630.778.PLAY**

4024 Fox Valley Drive  
Aurora, IL 60504

**McHenry 815.385.PLAY**

1720 North Richmond Road  
McHenry, IL 60050

**Chicago 773.583.PLAY**

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Chicago, IL 60618

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[www.gigisplayhouse.org](http://www.gigisplayhouse.org)

## GiGi's News

December 2009

# GiGi's Playhouse 1st Annual Board Retreat a Huge Success!

## Attended by Board Members from as far away as New York!

What an incredible day! More than 50 Board members came together from every Playhouse location, including Sioux City, Iowa and our up and coming New York location! It was an amazing day full of networking, planning and inspiration. This all took place at the famous San Fillippo Estate in Barrington Hills. The Carousel Room was a great back drop for such an amazing day. We thank the San Fillippo family for allowing us to use this beautiful space.

Each location gave a presentation about their individual Playhouse. Fox Valley talked about how far they've come in 5 years, Hoffman presented on volunteer coordination and Educator Open Houses, McHenry talked about the importance of a facility, Chicago talked about the challenges and achievements of an urban location. Sioux City's presentation was about hospital/NICU inservice, celebration packets and outreach to new parents. The Executive board unveiled new marketing materials, new organizational

structures, goals for 2010, which include more academic programming, and our new Playhouse in a box, which is a kit to simplify opening a Playhouse, and so much more.

We had 3 speakers; Dr. Keck spoke on Advocacy in Healthcare, Dr. Kalogeropoulos, spoke on Advocacy in Education, and Representative Mark



Beaubien Jr. spoke on Advocacy in Government and the community. What a way to motivate us on every level of advocacy!

I remember when I went to the opening of the Sioux City, Iowa location, although it was 8 hours away I still felt that Playhouse feel, that hug, when I walked in the door. Though most of their Board members had never visited a Playhouse that feeling

came from knowing the mission of the Playhouse, networking with other Playhouses and the strong belief they have in their children.

Though we had so much going it was clear that we had one message. We believe in our children!! We believe in our ability to show the world the incredible potential that they have!! If people see individuals with Down syndrome succeeding and thriving in this world, than more opportunities will open for them! Housing, jobs, schooling etc....we are dedicated to helping our families and to providing the tools needed to assist them in reaching their goals.

You will see some changes in the next few months. We are still GiGi's Playhouse Down Syndrome Awareness Centers but we are adding more of an academic edge. The literacy program assists so many kids and we would like to add math and handwriting as part of our programming. We welcome any and ALL of your input!

Please email comments to [nancy@gigisplayhouse.org](mailto:nancy@gigisplayhouse.org).  
THANK YOU ALL!!!!

## i have a voice

### Back in Chicagoland!

The *i have a voice* exhibit is back in the Chicagoland area, and month by month, is changing the way people see Down syndrome!

**October:** St. Alexius Hospital

**November:** Des Plaines Library

**December:** The Garlands at Barrington

What an impact the Gallery had on one family during a recent visit to the St. Alexius Emergency Room.

*Our experience from the moment we walked through their doors was the best we have ever experienced! I knew a huge*

*part of our positive experience was due to the "i have a voice" exhibit in their main lobby. Katie and I have been to many hospitals and doctors, but the warmth and acceptance I felt that night was the first for me. Nurses stopped by our room just to say hi and Katie received so many compliments. One nursing assistant was practically in tears as he spoke to me about how wonderful the exhibit was and how beautiful our children really are. I left St. Alexius's emergency room that night feeling completely accepted and relieved. Thank you so much for helping to show*



*the world just how wonderful our children are!! As the "i have a voice" exhibit travels I have faith that more and more people we see children and adults with Down syndrome as having a difference, not as a syndrome. Thank you for all of your hard work and devotion!*

To host the Gallery in your area, please contact Lisa Schuh at [lschuh@bagbyco.com](mailto:lschuh@bagbyco.com) !

# Literary Corner

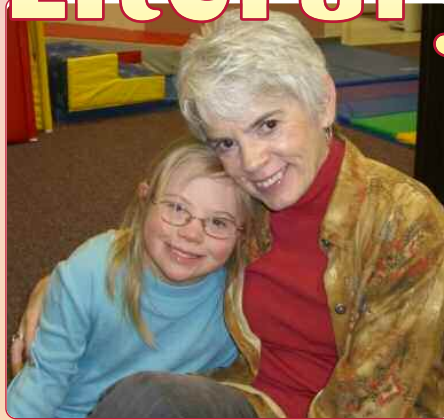
## Tutoring at GiGi's

Tutoring at GiGi's Playhouse in Chicago is an amazing experience. The twice a month sessions have made a tremendous difference in many well-deserving lives. Not only are children now able to grasp the foundation for literacy skills, but it also opens up a new world of communication for the child and their family. It is a great feeling, as a tutor, to meet a child who may be a non-reader and have them walk out of a session loving books and words.

GiGi's literacy program tutors children with Down syndrome of all ages from 3 years old to adulthood. Whether an individual is non-verbal or has been reading for years there is always room to grow with GiGi's Playhouse's Literacy Program.

Please contact Ashleigh at [literacydirector@gigisplayhouse.org](mailto:literacydirector@gigisplayhouse.org) for more information.

*Ashleigh Plauche, Literacy Director*



## One Hour Makes a Difference!

Can you spare one hour a week? Tutors are still needed for our Literacy program – you can make a huge difference in the life of a child by helping their reading and comprehension skills through our Literacy program. We have many kids on a waiting list! Training provided, email [literacydirector@gigisplayhouse.org](mailto:literacydirector@gigisplayhouse.org) to find out more.



## Successful Modifications for Students with Down Syndrome

On **January 14, 2010** at 7pm, Sharon Tate, Assistant Superintendent of Student Services for district #204, will host this class at the Fox Valley location. Parents and educators are welcome to attend. We encourage parents to invite their child's education team. CDPU's available.

Please RSVP to [foxvalley@gigisplayhouse.org](mailto:foxvalley@gigisplayhouse.org).

## A Bright Little Spark in Our Lives...

Our third child, a son, named Kohen Lee...came into the world with more of a bang than a spark...since we had no idea he would be



born with Down syndrome. The day he was born was a roller coaster of emotion, from happiness and joy came shock and disbelief when we learned there was a chance he may have Down syndrome. After spending 10 days in the NICU, he was able to come home and meet his older sister Karissa and

brother Kaeden, who loved him and nicknamed him "KoKo-Bean."

We knew this precious little boy was sent to us for a reason! We decided we wanted to be the best advocates that we could be for him, so we connected with a local support group and learned of GiGi's Playhouse. When Kohen was 1 year old, we took a trip to Hoffman Estates, IL and were totally inspired to open a place like GiGi's Playhouse in Sioux City, Iowa. It was such a positive environment we had wished we'd had in the first few weeks of Kohen's life! So, we began the process for opening a Playhouse in our area.

Kohen was diagnosed with Acute

Lymphocytic Leukemia and began immediate chemotherapy and intense treatment. Despite all of the pain and illness, he always had a smile for everyone! The nurses called him their bright little spark of the day! He is now 3½ yrs and just started to walk! He thinks he's pretty hot stuff doing the "chicken dance" as he walks! He uses sign language and is involved in the Literacy Program at GiGi's Playhouse in Sioux City...which finally became a reality! Every day we look at the progress Kohen has made and know we helped to open GiGi's Playhouse in Sioux City and hope we can continue to inspire and educate others!

## Programs & Activities

To view a full description of our programs, go to our website: [www.gigisplayhouse.org](http://www.gigisplayhouse.org)

**2 & Under Playgroup** ♦ Children play while their parents network with each other.

**Crawlers** ♦ Focuses on crawling, fine motor skills and social interaction with peers.

**Walkers** ♦ Focuses on post walking skills with peers to prepare children for school activities.

**Hop, Skip & Jumpers** ♦ Promote friendships, social skills, and interactive play through fun creative activities! (3-5 year olds)

**Playhouse Pals** ♦ Structured playgroup focus-

es on developing friendships and confidence all while having a great time! (6-8 year olds)

**Kids Club** ♦ Fast paced group incorporates social, communication and confidence-building skills and activities! (9-12 year olds)

**Teen-Tastic** ♦ Pizza party of watching movies and playing games. (13-17 year olds)

**Friday Friends** ♦ Karaoke, dances, softball games — the fun never ends! (Adults 18 + over)

**Nuestros Angeles** ♦ Spanish speaking families gather for food, fun, friendship and education!

**Polish Group** ♦ Polish speaking families gather for food, fun, friendship and education!

**Open Play** ♦ Everyone welcome to this weekly gathering of networking and friendship building.

**Literacy** ♦ Free program teaches kids how to read. By appointment only — Call ahead!

**Daddy & Me** ♦ Dads, bring your kids and meet other fathers in your area!

**Reserve it!** ♦ Playhouses can be reserved for any function or other special needs group.



# SIoux CITY, IOWA

SUN	MON	TUE	WED	THUR	FRI	SAT						
<b>December</b>		1	Literacy 4-4:30pm 	2	3	4	5 Open Play 10:30-11:30am <b>Holiday Potluck Noon</b> ALL families with Santa					
		6	Open Play 5-6pm 	7	8	Literacy 4-4:30pm 	9	10	11	Open Play 10-11am Holiday Party all welcome 	12	Hanukkah begins
		13	Open Play 9-10am 	14	15	Literacy 4-4:30pm 	16	17	Teen Tastic 6:30-8pm 	18	19	
		20	Open Play 9-10am 	21	22	23	24	25	26	Christmas Day		
		27	28	Open Play 10-11am doughnuts & cocoa 	29	30	31	New Years Eve				

## 2010 Literacy Begins

2010 Literacy Begins the week of **Jan. 11, 2010**. If you'd like to have your child involved in being tutored on a weekly basis, call **712.226.PLAY** or email [siouxcity@gigisplayhouse.org](mailto:siouxcity@gigisplayhouse.org) to register your child and be a part of a wonderful program!

## Holiday Potluck with Santa Saturday, Dec. 5th at Noon

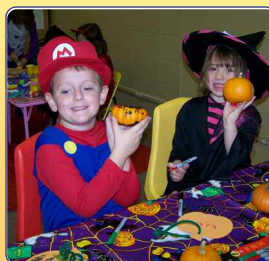


### Save the Date!

Friday, December 18th  
at 6pm  
**Teen-Tastic Holiday Party**

## Spooktacular Event!

The Playhouse Halloween Party was a fun filled, spooky event! The Playhouse was decorated with spiders and pumpkins! Children of all ages played games and made crafts!



## Great News Has Been Delivered...

We opened the mailbox following our Halloween party to find a nice afternoon surprise! GiGi's Playhouse Sioux City had been awarded a \$5,000.00 grant from the Ronald McDonald House Charities of Siouxland, Inc.! These funds will directly benefit our literacy program here in Sioux City, Iowa! Thank you to the Ronald McDonald House Charities of Siouxland, Inc. for your support and generosity! This program wouldn't be a success without community support... so, a big THANK YOU from the bottom of our hearts!

2010 Literacy Begins the week of **January 11, 2010**. If you'd like to have your child involved in being tutored on or email mailto: [siouxcity@gigisplayhouse.org](mailto:siouxcity@gigisplayhouse.org) to register your child and be a part of a wonderful program!



**SHARE.  
GIVE.  
HOPE.**



**Motivational Monday**  
Monday, January 25th  
at 6pm  
Northwest Iowa AEA

# HOFFMAN ESTATES

SUN	MON	TUE	WED	THUR	FRI	SAT		
<h1>December</h1>		Literacy 1:30-2:15pm <b>1</b> 	Literacy 8:30-9:15am <b>2</b> 11am-2:30pm 3-7:15pm Special Intentions Meeting 7-9pm	Open Play 12:30-2pm <b>3</b> Meeting 2-3pm Literacy 4:45-7:30pm <b>Wendys Night</b> Golf & Roselle Road	<b>4</b>	<b>5</b>		
		Literacy 5:15-6pm <b>6</b> 	Literacy 9:30am-2:30pm <b>7</b> Literacy 4:30-6pm 	Literacy 9:30am-2:30pm <b>8</b> Literacy 3-4:30pm 6:30-7:15pm 	Open Play 12:30-2pm <b>9</b> Literacy 3:30-7:30pm Private Event 7-10pm 	<b>10</b>	Breakfast with Santa! <b>11</b> 10am-Noon <b>12</b>	
		Literacy 5:15-6pm <b>13</b> 	Literacy 1:30-2:15pm <b>14</b> 	Literacy 8:30-9:15am <b>15</b> 11am-2:30pm 3-7:15pm 	Open Play 12:30-2pm <b>16</b> Literacy 4:45-7:30pm <b>Wendy's Night</b> 4-8pm Golf & Roselle Road	<b>17</b>	Friday Friends Holiday Party <b>18</b> 7pm Hoffman Estates Bowl	<b>19</b>
		Nuestros Angeles Hispanic Playgroup 11am-1pm <b>20</b> 	<b>21</b>	<b>22</b>	<b>23</b>	<b>24</b>	Kids Club 10-11:30am <b>25</b> 	<b>26</b>
		Polish Group 11am-1pm <b>27</b> RSVP to Krystyna at 847.962.4820 	<b>28</b>	<b>29</b>	<b>30</b>	New Years Party at Noon! <b>31</b> 11am-12:30pm		

## Breakfast with Santa! Saturday, December 12th

All Playhouse families are invited to a Christmas Party from 10am-Noon! Programs won't be meeting that morning, we will all come together for our annual party! RSVP by email to [info@gigisplayhouse.com](mailto:info@gigisplayhouse.com) and let us know how many adults and kids are coming so Santa's elves know how much food to prepare! You can also sign up at the Playhouse.



## Thank You, Scouts!

Austin Murray and Boy Scout Troop 35 worked hard on the Playhouse storage area! GiGi had a big "thank you" hug for Austin when the work was done.



## Polish Group

Our Polish group meets on the fourth Sunday of each month from 11am-1pm. Join us on **December 27!** RSVP to Krystyna at **847.962.4820**.

## Friday Friends

Don't miss our holiday bowling party! Friday, **December 18!** We'll meet at Hoffman Estates Bowl (corner of Higgins and Roselle) at 7pm!



## Hop, Skip & Jumpers and Playhouse Pals

Saturday, January 9, 2010

We are having a PAJAMA JAM! YES! In the middle of the afternoon!

Wear your favorite pajamas and slippers and bring your night-time pal and favorite bed time story to cozy up for some classic night-time activities!

Bring a friend!

## Nuestros Angeles Hispanic Playgroup

Our meeting date for this month will be **Dec. 20th**. A speech therapist will be joining us **Jan. 10, 2010** from 11am-1pm.





SUN	MON	TUE	WED	THUR	FRI	SAT		
<h1>December</h1>		Literacy Program 5-5:30pm <b>1</b>	Literacy Program 4:30-6pm <b>2</b>	Literacy Program 4-5pm <b>3</b>	Teen-Tastic 7-9pm RSVP 630.778.PLAY <b>GiGi's Family Night</b> 6-8pm RSVP 630.778.PLAY <b>4</b>	Literacy 9:30-10:30am <b>5</b> 2 & Under 9:30-11am 3-4 yr old Playgroup 11am-Noon		
		Super Sib Workshop 1-3pm Ages: 5-10 RSVP 630.778.PLAY <b>6</b>	Tot Class 9:30-11am RSVP 630.778.PLAY <b>7</b> Literacy Program 12:30-1:30pm Literacy Program 4-5pm	Literacy 5-5:30pm <b>8</b> Special Olympics Young Athletes 5:45-6:30pm 6:30-7:15pm	Literacy Program 4:30-6pm <b>9</b>	Literacy 4-5pm <b>10</b> <b>Wendy's Fundraiser</b> 5-8pm	Literacy 9:30-10:30am <b>11</b> Walkers Group 9:30-10:30am Daddy & Me 3-4:30pm	
		<b>13</b>	Tot Class 9:30-11am RSVP 630.778.PLAY <b>14</b> Literacy Program 12:30-1:30pm Literacy Program 4-5pm	Literacy Program 5-5:30pm <b>15</b>	Literacy 4:30-6pm <b>16</b> Karate Kickers Ages 8-12: 5:15-5:45pm 13 and up: 6-6:30pm	Literacy 4-5pm <b>17</b> <b>Wendy's Fundraiser</b> 5-8pm	<b>Holiday Party</b> 6-8pm RSVP 630.844.1720 <b>18</b>	Literacy 9:30-10:30am <b>19</b> Hop, Skip & Jumpers 10:30am-Noon RSVP 630.335.4824 Playhouse Pals 2-4pm
		<b>20</b>	Literacy Program 12:30-1:30pm Literacy Program 4-5pm <b>21</b>	Literacy Program 5-5:30pm <b>22</b>	Literacy Program 4:30-6pm <b>23</b>	<b>24</b>	<b>25</b>	Literacy Program 9:30-10:30am <b>26</b>
		Nuestros Angeles Hispanic Playgroup 11am-1pm <b>27</b>	Literacy Program 12:30-1:30pm Literacy Program 4-5pm <b>28</b>	Literacy Program 5-5:30pm <b>29</b>	Literacy Program 4:30-6pm <b>30</b>	<b>31</b>		

## Second Annual Doubles Bag Toss Tournament Thank You!

Thank you to all who attended our 2nd Annual Doubles Bag Toss Tournament in September facility to host our event, has a grandson with Down syndrome. Shelly feels that we have all been given a gift, our children, and it takes very special people to help them grow up to be the best they can be. Volunteers from Fenton High School in Bensenville helped and cannot wait to come back to help again! Our first place winners learned about the tournament the day before and drove all the way from Sterling, Illinois! We taught many people about GiGi's Playhouse and Down syndrome while having fun with friends and family throughout the day! Thank you to everyone who helped make this day a success!



## Successful Modifications for Students with Down Syndrome

On January 14, 2010 at 7pm, Sharon Tate, Assistant Superintendent of Student Services for district #204, will host this class at the Fox Valley location. Parents and educators are welcome to attend. We encourage parents to invite their child's education team. CDPU's available. Please RSVP to [foxvalley@gigisplayhouse.org](mailto:foxvalley@gigisplayhouse.org).

## Tot Class Graduates!

Graduates Dominic and Joey both started the Tots Class program in April 2009 and graduated this fall! We are so impressed with all the progress these boys have made following instructions, learning class routines, and playing better with their classmates. For more information or to register your child (18-36 month old) in Tot Class (Monday from 9:30-11am), please call the Playhouse at **630.778.PLAY**



## 2nd Annual Tour de GiGi's Bike Ride a Success!!!

102 riders came out to show support for GiGi's and our families! We raised lots of awareness making the day a huge success. We would like to thank our sponsors for helping raise over \$4300!... Mr. & Mrs. Peter Meyer, Molex, Bicycles, and we want to thank those who gave in kind: Starbuck's, PepsiCo/Gatorade, Big Apple Bagel, Dominick's, & Jewel. Thank you to our many volunteers! Local Girl Scouts helped at the water stations with a smile on their face and in their hearts. Thank you to Fox Valley Kickers for donating the use of their facility. Everyone came together to make this event a fun and well organized event! Thank you!

# McHENRY

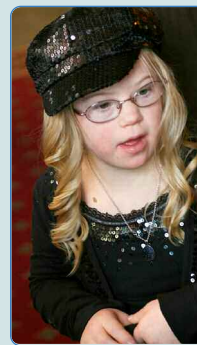
SUN	MON	TUE	WED	THUR	FRI	SAT			
<h2>December</h2>		<b>Open Play</b> 10am–Noon <i>join us for Pizza &amp; Friendship</i> 	<b>Literacy</b> 10:30–11:15am <b>Literacy</b> 4:30–6:30pm 	<b>Art Class</b> 4–5pm <i>9yrs &amp; older</i>	<b>Signing til' Dawn</b> 10am <i>Baby Signs</i> 	<b>5</b>			
		<b>Nuestros Angeles</b> Hispanic Playgroup 10am–Noon <b>GiGi's Cheer</b> 4:15pm <i>at Layton Athletics</i>	<b>7</b>	<b>Open Play</b> 10am–Noon <i>join us for Pizza &amp; Friendship</i> <b>Wendy's Nite</b> 5–8pm 	<b>Literacy</b> 10:30–11:15am <b>Literacy</b> 4:30–6:30pm 	<b>Options &amp; Advocacy</b> 10am <b>10</b>	<b>Signing til' Dawn</b> 10am <i>Baby Signs</i> <b>Teen-Tastics</b> 7pm 	<b>Crawlers</b> 10:15–11am 	<b>12</b>
		<b>GiGi's Cheer</b> 4:15pm <i>at Layton Athletics</i> <b>Holiday Party</b> 2–4pm <b>13</b>	<b>14</b>	<b>Open Play</b> 10am–Noon <i>Come join us for Pizza &amp; Friendship</i> 	<b>Literacy</b> 10:30–11:15am <b>Literacy</b> 4:30–6:30pm 	<b>Art Class</b> 4–5pm <i>9 years &amp; older</i>	<b>Signing til' Dawn</b> 10am <i>Baby Signs</i> <b>Friday Friends</b> <b>Holiday Get Together</b> 6pm <i>Raymonds Bowl</i>	<b>19</b>	
		<b>GiGi's Cheer</b> 4:15pm <i>at Layton Athletics</i>	<b>21</b>	<b>Open Play</b> 10am–Noon <i>Come join us for Pizza &amp; Friendship</i> 	<b>23</b>	<b>24</b>	<b>25</b>	<b>26</b>	
		<b>GiGi's Cheer</b> 4:15pm <i>at Layton Athletics</i>	<b>28</b>	<b>Open Play</b> 10am–Noon <i>Come join us for Pizza &amp; Friendship</i> 	<b>30</b>	<b>31</b>			

## Getting Down with Fashion!

### FASHION SHOW 2009

WHAT A GREAT DAY!! We want to thank all of the families, participants, sponsors and volunteers who made our 2nd annual fashion show a huge success! Over 180 people showed up to check out the models who looked fabulous in their outfits, which they chose themselves. They did not want to leave the spotlight! It is amazing to look back over the last year to see how the kids

have grown and to look towards the future! We have had so many positive comments. A new comer stated that the day was so beautiful and emotional she can't wait for next year! The committee is already planning for the 2010



show. Hope to see you there!

### A Special Thank You to Our Generous 2009 Sponsors:

Alder Companies  
 Tony's Subs  
 Bull Valley Golf Club  
 Midwest Endocrinology  
 DJ – DBL.D's Entertainment & Sound Solutions  
 Mandi Backhaus Photography  
 Gymboree – Algonquin Commons

Justice of Girls – Algonquin Commons  
 Maurice's – The Shops at Fox River, McHenry  
 Kohls –  
 Mister D's Balloon Twisting  
 Chas. Herdrich & Son, Inc.  
 Lewis Plumbing  
 Rusty's Carpet Service

Cunat  
 Aprillea Designs  
 It's Quite an Invite  
 David Podraza  
 The Sachs Family  
 Jewel Foods  
 AFK Martial Arts Academy  
 Toluca's Restaurant

## Friday Friends


We are having such a blast at FFF! We painted pumpkins and made rainbow 'nanners. We also made our own snacks and worked as group to make a big rainbow. We had to work as a team and

we did it! FFF does seasonal activities, and works on following directions, and sometimes our group leader sneaks in some educational activities too.



Please join us at Wendy's on Tues., Dec. 8th, 5-8pm. A portion of all proceeds go back to the Playhouse.

# CHICAGO

SUN	MON	TUE	WED	THUR	FRI	SAT		
<h1>December</h1>		Literacy 5:45-6:30pm <b>1</b> 	<b>2</b>	Open Play 11:30am-1pm Literacy 5-5:45pm <b>3</b> 	<b>4</b>	Literacy 9-10:30am <b>5</b> Open Play 11:15am-12:30pm Private Party 3-5pm Literacy 4:15-5:45pm		
		Nuestros Angeles Hispanic Group 11:15am-1:15pm <b>6</b>  	Literacy 5:30-6:45pm <b>7</b> 	<b>8</b>	<b>9</b>	Literacy 5-5:45pm <b>10</b> 	<b>11</b>	Playhouse Pals 11:15am-12:45pm <b>12</b> Private Party 3pm 
		Literacy 4-4:45pm <b>13</b> 	Literacy 5:30-6:45pm <b>14</b> 	Literacy 5:45-6:30pm <b>15</b> 	<b>16</b>	Open Play 11:30am-1pm Literacy 5-5:45pm <b>17</b> 	Movie Night 7pm <b>18</b> 	Literacy 9-10:30am <b>19</b> Open Play 11:15am-12:30pm Kids Club 4-5:30pm Literacy 4:15-5:45pm <b>KC</b>
		<b>20</b>	Literacy 5:30-6:45pm <b>21</b> 	<b>22</b>	<b>23</b>	Literacy 5-5:45pm <b>24</b> 	<b>25</b>	<b>26</b> Closed for Holidays
		Literacy 4-4:45pm <b>27</b> 	Literacy 5:30-6:45pm <b>28</b> 	Literacy 5:45-6:30pm <b>29</b> 	<b>30</b>	Literacy 5-5:45pm <b>31</b> 		

## Essay wins award!

Over the summer, Nick Baar participated in a project sponsored by his grandmother's employer, Holland & Hart. The Stern Family Project encouraged children related to the firm to write about a charity or nonprofit group that interests them. Having attended many playgroups and events at GiGi's Playhouse, Nick knew what he would write about. Nick's essay (*below*) earned \$200 for the Chicago Playhouse and a note from the Project organizers praising his thoughtfulness and compassion.

*"GiGi's Playhouse is a place where kids with Down syndrome learn reading, math and more. It was started*

*almost six years ago by a mother who had a daughter (GiGi) with Down syndrome and realized there was no place for families who had children with Down syndrome to play together. Now there are 5 GiGi's Playhouses in the Midwest, including one in Chicago where I live. My brother Colin has Down syndrome. Even though he has Down syndrome, he still can run, talk, play baseball and do other things that I can do. He just learns them slower. When Colin goes to GiGi's he sometimes plays with other kids. Other times he learns reading. Sometimes the whole family goes and we meet other people there. GiGi's Playhouse helps lots of people and is very fun."*

## Friend at the Pumpkin Patch

I recently went on a field trip with my son's class to a pumpkin patch. While I was waiting in line for the hay ride, one of the mothers asked me how old Dillon was. I responded that he was almost two, and because he appears younger than his 2 years, I said, "You know, he has Down syndrome." She replied, "I know he does. So does my friend at work". It was nice to hear a person with Down syndrome referred to as a "friend" – and it put a smile on my face.



## Second Annual Taste of GiGi's Playhouse

We had a "Rockin" Taste of GiGi's Playhouse on October 24th. The Taste offered a variety of foods from 9 restaurants around Chicago and gave everyone the chance to show off their singing talents while raising money for the Chicago Playhouse and awareness of Down syndrome.



## Holiday Party!

The Playhouse is hosting a Holiday Party Movie Night on **Dec. 18th** at 6pm. Santa will come at 7:30pm. Come by for food, fun and holiday cheer!





Down Syndrome Awareness Centers

**Hoffman Estates**  
1069 West Golf Road  
Hoffman Estates, IL 60169

NONPROFIT ORGANIZATION  
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SCHAUMBURG, IL  
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## HOLIDAY PARTIES !!

### SIoux CITY PLAYHOUSE

Dec. 5th  
Holiday Potluck at Noon

### HOFFMAN PLAYHOUSE

Dec. 12 ■ Breakfast with Santa  
10am-Noon, RSVP

Dec. 31 ■ New Years at Noon  
11am-12:30pm, RSVP

### MCHEMRY PLAYHOUSE

Dec. 13th  
Holiday Party, 2-4pm

### FOX VALLEY PLAYHOUSE

Dec. 18th  
Holiday Party, 6-8pm, RSVP

### CHICAGO PLAYHOUSE

Dec. 18th  
Movie Night at 6pm  
Santa arrives at 7:30pm

## Spread the Love Gala



Join CBS2 host Rob Johnson for an evening celebrating individuals with Down syndrome! A spectacular night of delectable dining, silent auctions and live entertainment! To register, go to [www.gigisplayhouse.org](http://www.gigisplayhouse.org).

For sponsorship information, auction donations, volunteer opportunities or more information call **847.885.7529**.

## i have a voice Christmas Tree

Check out the *i have a voice* Christmas tree at O'Hare Airport! You will find the display at Terminal 3 at the baggage claim area. What a beautiful way to spread awareness! Thanks, O'Hare Airport!



## Holiday Gifts!

The 2010 Calendar is a huge hit! Be sure to purchase yours today for your family, friends, therapists, and everyone! These great awareness pieces promote Down syndrome in a positive and accurate light. Be proud to give these out in your community

## Successful Modifications for Students with Down Syndrome

This class will be held on **Jan. 14th 2010** at 7pm. For more information about any event, please contact Annie at **630.778.PLAY** or email at [foxvalley@gigisplayhouse.org](mailto:foxvalley@gigisplayhouse.org).

## Celebration Packets Go Far!

GiGi's Playhouse provides Celebration Packets to parents of a new baby with Down syndrome to celebrate the birth of each child. This month, packets are going to new parents in Austria and Sweden.

## Club GiGi's Grand Opening January 22, 7pm

Hosted by Hoffman's Friday Friends, there will be dancing and karaoke in Club GiGi and an ice cream social in the Playhouse for the kids! Come and see our new literacy rooms, adult area and administrative offices!