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www.gigisplayhouse.org

November 2009

i have a voice ABC 7, Karen Meyer and St. Alexius Raise Awareness in a Big Way!

St. Alexius in Hoffman Estates is proudly hosting the "*i have a voice*" gallery in their main lobby for Down syndrome awareness month! Karen Meyer from ABC 7 filmed a story on the creation of the Gallery with Gallery designer Steven Bagby (*shown here with daughter Lisa Schuh and ABC 7's Karen Meyer*). The story will air on ABC 7 Thursday, November 12th at 11:30am!

The Gallery is moving to the Des Plaines library for the month of November! Join us there for a Gallery reception on **Saturday**, **Nov.14th**. More details about this free event will be on the website.

Thank you St. Alexius and ABC 7 for

"Mom, I'm a Big STAR!"

That is what cheerleader Mallory told her mom Susan after strutting her stuff



in a recent competition as a member of the GiGi's LXC cheer squad. GiGi's LXC is a groundbreaking squad made up of differently-abled children who participate and compete alongside typical squads. In between practices and competitions, the team dons their uniforms and spreads awareness, participating in area events, including parades and festivals, continuing the GiGi's tradition of shattering assumptions about what our kids can do. Cheerleading is a time-honored sport, seen as special by our community and

helping us celebrate Down syndrome awareness month and showing your patients, doctors and the community the tremendous voice that individuals with Down syndrome have!

our beautiful kids now have an opportunity to have their own team, their own uniforms and their own cheers and routines to perform! Mallory IS a star — Not only is she a cheer leader, but she is a ground breaker and an ambassador, sharing her spirit with her community alongside her team mates. We are building healthy bodies, strong friendships and, oh yeah, just a little bit of confidence! ;)

We would like to start this program at our other locations — if you are interested in having your child participate, please contact your local Playhouse in order for us to gauge interest.

GiGifest 2009! What a Party!

We celebrated the 6th anniversary of GiGi's Playhouse, Inc in style! Leonardo warmed up the crowd with his great music (and all the kids joined him on stage to offer him their help with singing, dancing and playing guitar), Mayor Bill McLeod welcomed everyone and thanked GiGi's for being such a great source of advocacy, awareness and education in the community, and all the GiGi's families came to enjoy all the fun activities! The best part was when our 2010 calendar models strutted their stuff down the red carpet! Look inside to see pictures from this great event and to see all the wonderful sponsors who



made the event possible. To order your calendar, go to www.gigisplayhouse.org!

Open House @ Hoffman

WOW! What an amazing turnout. The Hoffman Estates Playhouse hosted an Open House for therapists, teachers, and parents. Everyone was able to get an overview of what GiGi's Playhouse is all about. There were stations set up for everyone to take home articles, resources, materials/manipulatives, and literacy and programs information. We made schedules, behavior/incentive charts, and many other materials to use in the classroom. Teachers and therapists were also able to see how our literacy program works and why children walk away from our tutoring sessions reading! Some teachers now have plans to implement the literacy

books in their classroom! It was amazing to make a connection and open up the lines of communication between teachers, therapists, and the parents of children with Down syndrome. GiGi's



was able to learn from each of these educators to see what we can do to better equip students for the classroom as well as work together with the schools to ensure success!



Thank You to Our GiGiFest Sponsors!

Party Hoppers Ti Amo Home Run Inn/Addison Schaumburg Jaycees Domino's Pizza/Hoffman Estates Infiniti of Hoffman Estates Village of Hoffman Estates McDonald's & Ronald McDonald Waterfront Community Church Schaumburg High School football team Perfect Valet Parking Mayor Bill McLeod Dover Straits Party Time Productions Chuck Helfrick Leonardo Sue Yaeger Samantha Feigenbaum Arts and Crafts RKD Construction Supplies & Equipment Butera Management Starbucks/Barrington Road Tommy's Red Hots



Programs & Activities

To view a full description of our programs, go to our website: www.gigisplayhouse.org

2 & Under Playgroup \blacklozenge 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 \blacklozenge 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!

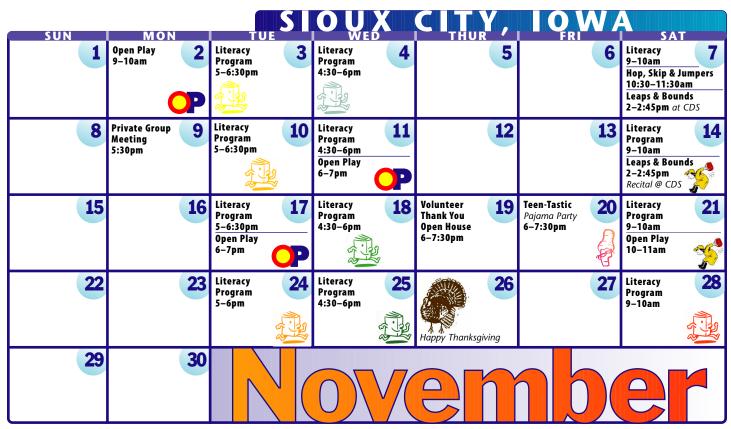
Polish Group Polish speaking families gather for food, fun, friendship and education!

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.



GiGi's Playhouse says "Thank You"

November is a time to be thankful for everything and everyone around us! At



Leaps & Bounds Perform Saturday, Nov. 14 at 2pm Come



watch the Leaps & Bounds group perform a mini recital at Contemporary Dance Studio! This group of individuals has

been busy practicing their routine for this exciting celebration! Info on Winter Session to come soon.

Save the Date! Friday, Dec. 18th @ 6pm Teen-Tastic Holiday Party GiGi's Playhouse Sioux City we are most thankful for the volunteers we



Literacy Registration Email GiGi's Playhouse Sioux City to register age 3 and up for the Winter



Pajama Party

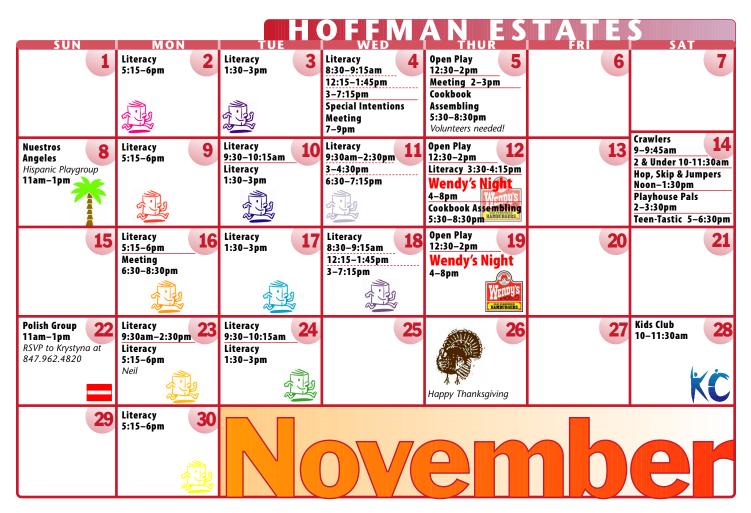
Teen Tastic will be holding a Pajama Party with crafts, games & snacks on **Friday, November 20th at 6pm**! Bring your friends & family! work with everyday! No matter how large or how small the job is, each of the persons that donate their time and talents are much appreciated and thanked! We often hear what a joy it is to help out at GiGi's Playhouse; the volunteers get just as much enjoyment as the families utilizing GiGi's Playhouse!

Please join us on **Thursday**, **Nov. 19th** for a Volunteer Thank You Open House from **6-7:30pm**!

Literacy Program beginning in January! We are also taking applications for Literacy Tutors!



Thankful For You With November upon us, take some time to read with your child about Thanksgiving. There are many terrific books about the holiday and family!





The team from Assurance joined our regular volunteers to make books for our Literacy program and help with other projects!

Kids Club

Kids Club had a great time making tie dyed shirts!! Be sure to join us in November for more fun activities!!



Help Create Our Hoffman Playhouse Cookbook!

Help us assemble our cookbooks on **Thursday, November 5 & 12**, at 5:30-8:30pm. Please RSVP to Sara by email **sara@gigisplayhouse.org**. Cookbooks go on sale **December 1**!

Hop, Skip & Jumpers and Playhouse Pals

Saddle up, little cowboys and cowgirls! We'll have a stompin' good time with a GiGi's Style Wild West Experience! Join us for country style games, crafts, and dancing. Wear a bandanna or a cowboy hat!

Friday Friends

We do not meet in November, so mark your calendar for **December 18**! We'll meet at Hoffman Estates Bowl (corner of Higgins and Roselle) for our holiday bowling party!

Polish Group

Our Polish group meets on the fourth Sunday of each month from 11am-1pm. Join us on **November 22**! RSVP to Krystyna at **847.962.4820**.



Thank you, Saxons!

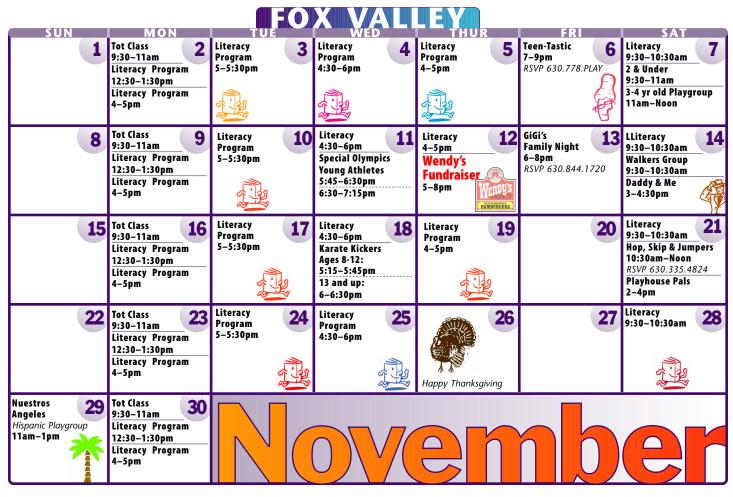
The Schaumburg High School football team dismantled the stage, put away tables and chairs and cleaned up ALL of the garbage at GiGiFest!

Saturday, Dec.12th Breakfast with Santa!

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**

or sign up at the Playhouse.





Thank You to VW Club

Thank you to Joe Hauge of the Harsh Winters VW Club in Joliet. Joe and his club hosted Bug-A-Palooza on August 23 at D'Arcy VW. There were games, dunk tank, food and lots of "bugs" VW that is! All proceeds went to GiGi's Playhouse-Fox Valley! When we thanked Joe for spending all of his time putting this VW show together and giving GiGi's playhouse all the proceeds, his response was "It's all because

GiGi's Family Night....

In September we welcomed FOUR new families to the Playhouse! One of the dads said he was so glad to be at the Playhouse, he wants to hear how other parents are helping their children to communicate, so he can help his own child. Just listening to all the conversations occurring during the night, of Manny; he touched my life." Manny is a young man with Down syndrome who Joe had met through the club. Joe was so touched by Manny that he decided to give back to an organization that supports people with Down syndrome and their families. We are so very fortunate for people like Joe who see the potential in our children, brothers, sisters, and friends who have Down syndrome.

it's obvious that the Playhouse serves many purposes, one of which is to celebrate the accomplishments of our children. If you'd like to come join GiGi's family night, we will be meeting on **Friday, November 27th**. If you have any questions or to rsvp please contact Genia at **glatka@gigisplayhouse.org**.

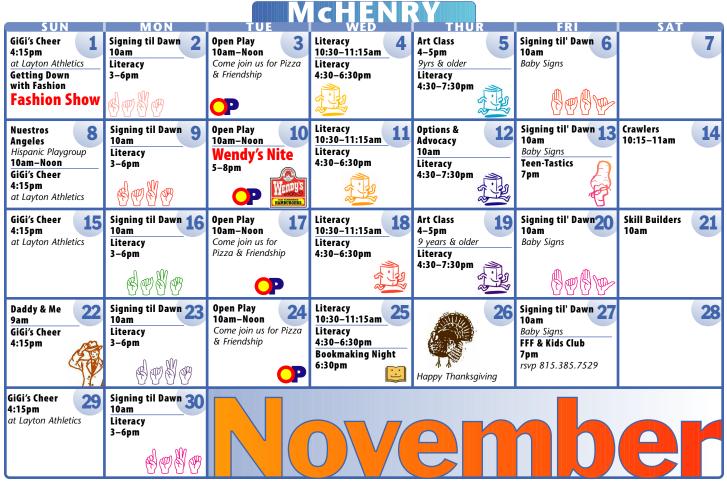
Mom's Night Out Thank You's!

Thank you to Anita Pottinger for hosting a Mom's Night Out/Pampered Chef fundraiser on August 6th. The moms enjoyed some "adult" conversation, food, and a free manicure from Menhdi Spa. And thank you to Patti Underwood for hosting a Mom's Night Out/Discovery Toys fundraiser!

Fun at the Kane County Cougars Game!



On August 30th, many friends and families of GiGi's Playhouse gathered to enjoy an afternoon of fun at the Kane County Cougars game! And the Cougars won in overtime.... Go Cougars!!



High School Speaker

Recently Chris Newlon, the volunteer coordinator, had the opportunity to speak to the McHenry West High School Key Club about Down syndrome and GiGi's Playhouse. She explained what Down syndrome is and

McHenry Welcomes Our Two New Families!

Ricky Arroyo is 23 and loves baseball, swimming, gardening, singing and praying. He is very excited to be start-

ing in Literacy for the fall session & being a part of our Fashion Show. His



Fashion Show with Friday Friends

Our Friday Friends had fun while they helped to paint all the table decorations for The Fashion Show. how many people with Down syndrome can still learn the same things they do, but usually through a different method. One of our moms from Open Play, Erin, brought her 14 month old son, Malachi, to the talk. The kids felt comfortable asking questions to both

dream is to become a lawyer. Ali Munoz is an adorable 14 month boy.

in all of the programs at GiGi's.

GiGi's Family.

New Programs

He was born in Orange, CA. but is now

living in Crystal Lake. His family is very

much looking forward to get involved

The both met for the first time at our

Tuesday Open play and hit it off right

away. GiGi's McHenry welcomes them

both and there loving families into our

We are so excited to be bringing the

Crawlers group and Hop, Skip & Jumpers

back to the Playhouse! Both programs

Call the Playhouse for more info!

will be facilitated by a licensed therapist.

Erin and Chris. The students stated that they "just didn't know about DS" and how wonderful it is that GiGi's is here in McHenry. 49 of them signed up to get more information about GiGi's and attend our upcoming New Volunteer Orientation!

Art!!

We will also began an Art aroup in October for ages 9 to adult This group meets every other Thursdav from 4-5pm. Kathy Smith a retired Art Teacher has some wonderful thinas planned so come show off





your artistic talents.



Motivational Mondays

We had a great Motivational Monday presentation on Special Needs Planning featuring Shirley Griffin, Financial Advisor & Matthew Quick, JD. They went through how to set up a special needs trust, what options of trusts are available and available means of funding them. We also had representative from Social Security walk us through quallifications for SSI and SSDI.

Shirley and Matthew provide complimentary informational workshops for

The Power of a Paintbrush!

Thanks to David Van Alphen, the Chicago Playhouse was blessed by artists from across the US and Canada! Each artist put their used paint brush up for auction and people could bid on them throughout the month. The auction brought in more than \$5000 and part of those proceeds will be donated to the Chicago Playhouse! David's inspiration is his son Jack who has Down syndrome and attends programs at the Playhouse. Check out Jack's website at www.ranchojack.com!

rotofugi Thanks to each artist and the gallery for hosting the auction

parents and other caregivers of disabled individuals. The workshop, "Special Needs Planning: Taking the Uncertainty out of the Future", is geared toward answering guestions related to lifetime care planning for individuals with disabilities. The presentation covers the basic components of estate planning and the process of determining the level of future need through financial planning.

Please contact the Chicago Playhouse at chicago@gigisplayhouse.org if

you are interested in obtaining more information.



Movie Night...

The Chicago Playhouse had its first monthly Movie Night on September 25. We had a great time hanging out and having pizza and popcorn, watching Monsters, Inc. and enjoying each

others company! The Chicago Playhouse is hosting it's third monthly Movie Night on November

20th at 7pm.

Come on by for fun food and entertainment!



David and





Hoffman Estates 1069 W. Golf Road Hoffman Estates, IL 60169

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Join us on **November 1st** at Bull Valley Golf Club for fashion, fun and a wonderful brunch! Register online at **www.gigisplayhouse.org**.



Happy Thanksgiving From GiGi's Playhouse!

GiGi's is thankful for YOU and your support of the Playhouse this season. We know that you are the reason we are here, our inspiration and also our supporters. Thank you!



Holiday Parties Galore!

Be sure to check your local Playhouse page to see when their holiday

parties are! You might even get to meet Santa at some of them!!

Gala!

The 4th Annual Gala will be quickly upon us after this holiday season! Be sure to save the date, **February 6th 2010**! Look for our raffle tickets coming soon! If you would like to help with the Gala, contact **Ibak@gigisplayhouse.org**!



Long Distance Student

How far do you drive to reach the Playhouse? The student who travels the longest distance for our Literacy program is Phoenix! His family was part of the Hoffman Playhouse a couple of years, but they moved to Norway. They spent a month visiting friends and family in the US and made several trips to the Playhouse. During one of his visits, he and his mom met one of our tutors, Sue. Sue pulled out Literacy materials and Phoenix did an amazing job with matching and with comprehension! He will receive materials and guidance from the tutors at the Hoffman Playhouse, and we will mail materials to Norway!

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** to find out more.

Holiday Gifts!

The 2010 calendar is a huge hit! Be sure to purchase yours today for your therapists, friends, family and anyone

else you know! These great awareness pieces promote Down syndrome in a positive and accurate light. Be proud to give



these out in your community! Order yours today from www.gigisplayhouse.org.