



Down Syndrome Awareness Centers

educate. inspire. achieve.

July 2010

Newsletter

www.gigisplayhouse.org
info@gigisplayhouse.org

Hoffman Estates Location
1069 W. Golf Rd.
Hoffman Estates, IL 60169
847.885.PLAY (7529)

Chicago Location
3660 W. Irving Park Rd.
Chicago, IL 60618
773.583.PLAY (7529)

Fox Valley Location
4024 Fox Valley Center Dr.
Aurora, IL 60504
630.778.PLAY (7529)

Sioux City Location
1551 Indian Hills Drive,
Suite 7
Sioux City, Iowa 51104
712.226.PLAY (7529)

McHenry Location
5404 W. Elm St. Suite A.
McHenry, IL 60050
815.385.PLAY (7529)

Des Moines Location
10430 New York Ave
Suite A
Urbandale, IA 50322



ABC 7 & GiGi's Make a Difference!

As an intern for Karen Meyer at ABC 7, I had the rare opportunity to work under a great reporter and I was exposed to families, organizations and heroes in the special needs community. Little did I know that it was also training me how to live, love and learn.

When GiGi's first opened seven years ago, Karen Meyer felt like its' story had to be shared with others. I braced myself for a lot of sorrow and a downpour of tears from grieving and depressed parents of

children with Down syndrome. All the research I did before visiting the Playhouse did not prepare me for the overwhelming feeling I had when I walked in. I walked into a world of hope and happiness. When I met Nancy Gianni, the founder of GiGi's, and listened to her as Karen interviewed her I thought she was a princess in disguise! She sat tall and did not shed a tear. She spoke loving, encouraging words about her baby daughter GiGi and the dreams she had for her. I listened and thought to myself, 'Nancy didn't have a magic wand. She didn't have fairy dust to wipe out any seen or unforeseen challenges ahead, but she led with her heart and opened up GiGi's Playhouse when her daughter was only a year old.' Little did I know how just 6 years later, I would have to borrow that courage that Nancy had and apply it to my own life.

On August 20, 2009—the day we found out our daughter Jayda had Down syndrome. The anger and grief would've been overwhelming if it wasn't for believing in destiny. The people that crossed my path in the past were there for a purpose—a profound purpose. Therapist after therapist would tell me about how I should visit this place called "GiGi's Playhouse" so I could meet other families. I would smile and nod and share my intern story with them. I wasn't ready for GiGi's then, but Nancy's magical words came to me like whispers of encouragement. If I wanted to be a strong parent for both my girls I needed to lead with my heart as well. I started to dream and hope again. I now radiate with pride and joy for my Jayda!

5K Breaks Records!

Wow! That is the sentiment felt by everyone at this years 7th annual Down Syndrome Awareness 5K Run and 1 Mile Walk! The Luv-a-Bulls signed autographs and cheered both the walkers and runners on! The kids had a great time at the bounce houses and did a phenomenal job at the Dash for Down Syndrome! Most importantly, together, the 4 Chicagoland Playhouses, our sponsors, volunteers and the community spread possible and accurate awareness about Down syndrome! Thanks to Roseann Rustia, Sue DuBois and the entire 5K committee for their hard work! Look inside to see pictures of this incredible event! All funds raised at the 5K allow us to provide our therapeutic and educational programs at no cost to our families. It also allows us to pilot a math program at 3 of our locations this fall!



After a month of training, Megan finished her first 5K. See her story in next months newsletter!



Math Program Coming!

GiGi's is keyed up to announce the launch of our new Math Program! Designed to promote a positive experience of learning math and to develop the sound foundation of basic number understanding, this program will pilot in the Hoffman Estates, Fox Valley and Chicago locations this fall, and become available to all other Playhouses in January 2011.

GiGi's Math utilizes multi-sensory teaching, aligned with state standards for math, and is based on the research of professionals in the field.

Our program combines multiple approaches (including Touch Math and

Numicon) to target the strengths and challenges of the learner with Down syndrome, and is designed to include resource material and methodology which emphasize doing and seeing, speaking and listening, and reinforces math functions useful in both daily activities and academic accomplishment.

The result?

A comprehensive and cohesive program in



With the success of our Literacy program, we are so excited to pilot our new Math program!

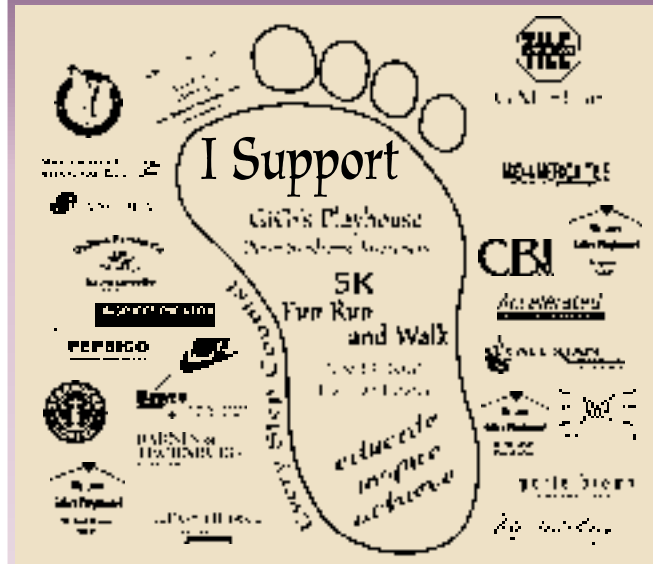
which children enjoy their experience with math and uncover the countless ways it is integrated into what they *already* know and use every day.

So, whether as a firm foundation, a continued development of math skills or an alternative to traditional math approaches, GiGi's Math is aimed at getting our kids energized about math, and using their unique strengths and talents to build confidence in their math abilities.

All ready, folks? Then let's get counting!

Registration dates and deadlines for the Math pilot will be available in next month's newsletter.

7th Annual 5K is an Event to Remember!



OPEN SWIM

hosted by Teen Tastic on Sat, July 10 @ 4-6pm @ Leeds Pool in Sioux City! Everyone is invited for this special event, the cost is \$2 per person! Tell them you are with GiGi's Playhouse; Bring the whole family for this FUN time!



Summer Office Hours
through August 15 will be every Friday from 8:30-10am!

Walk for Down Syndrome Awareness

will be held on Sat, Aug 28 at Chris Larsen Shelter! The 1 mile walk and festivities will provide Awareness within our community and funds to support our FREE programs at GiGi's Playhouse!

Register today at www.gigisplayhouse.org!



CAMP & GROUP LITERACY

Sessions are ongoing through the summer! You are invited to join us at these activities. Keep your skills of reading alive this summer!



Des Moines



Family 4th of July Ice Cream Social!

Please join us for our first annual Ice Cream Social at GiGi's, on July 3rd from 2-4pm! We will have outdoor games for kids to enjoy, including an obstacle course and a cake walk, and indoors we will have ice cream with all the fixin's!! This event is for the whole family, so please be sure to stop by!

Open Play!

We have several dates scheduled on the calendar for Open Play. There will be a morning session and also an evening session to help accommodate schedules. Please join us for a fun time for all the kids and adults also!

Karaoke Night for our Friday Friends!

Friday, July 9th, will be our first ever karaoke night at GiGi's, from 7-9pm!!! This event is for our teens and adults, ages 18 and older. Please feel free to bring a friend!! (Friend does not need an extra chromosome to join us!!!) And if you have a favorite song, bring it with you!! You will not want to miss out on this fun filled night!!!

Mom's Night Out!

Friday, July 16th, from 7-11pm, will be our next Mom's Night Out, at GiGi's!! Please bring an appetizer and drink to share. Vendors selling discontinued lia sophia jewelry, purses, Discovery Toys, and Tastefully Simple will be set up so that you can shop while you talk!! Come see why we've decided to make this a monthly event!!

Open and Going Strong!

The Des Moines Playhouse has been opened for a month now and has tons of families visiting daily! Look at these cool pics from the Opening!



AMAZING PROGRESS!

Kacy has made tremendous progress this semester in the Literacy program with her tutor Sue! Her dad said that her progress is just amazing, and he is so grateful for Sue's contributions! Sue encourages her students and provides creative options in our Literacy program so that her students succeed!! Kacy has progressed so much faster in her skill sets now that she is in Literacy – her rate of improvement is much faster than what she accomplished in school - her family is so excited!

Polish Group

Our Polish group meets on the fourth Sunday of each month from 11am-1pm. Join us on July 25! RSVP to Krystyna at 847.962.4820.



Nuestros Angeles Hispanic Playgroup

Join us on Sunday, July 11, from 11am-1pm! Bring the whole family!



Wendy's Night – help the Playhouse!

No coupon necessary! Invite your friends and family and have dinner at the Wendy's and help the Playhouse! Corner of Golf & Roselle Roads, July 8 and 22, between 4-8pm. A percentage of the proceeds come back to the Playhouse!

FRIDAY FRIENDS

Thank you, Schaumburg Saxons! The football team joined us for Karaoke Night, and we had a blast together! Don't miss the softball game on July 23! RSVP to 847-885-7529!



Hoffman Estates 4th of July Parade

Join us in the parade! The Playhouse will have a float in the parade – RSVP to hoffmanestates@gigisplayhouse.org or sign up at the Playhouse! Help us spread awareness about Down syndrome to hundreds of people! Wear your Playhouse shirt! Saturday, July 3, 7:45am arrival time to line up for 9am parade.

The Cookbook is here!

Purchase your copy of the best cookbook in town! \$10, proceeds go to the Playhouse!

Hop, Skip & Jumpers and Playhouse Pals

July 10, HSJ 12:30-1:30, PP 2-3:30

Rebecca

Rebecca is our 5th and not in need of much, she can't imagine getting more books & toys & such. Her favorite place to go is a warm & friendly place its name is GiGi's Playhouse and they've just doubled their space. The programs offered bring lots of joy to all the girls and all the boys. So if you want to celebrate Rebecca's day with a gift feel free to donate a toy or book and give the playhouse a lift~



& began playing with some of them immediately, especially the dress ups! We took many of the books & toys home for Rebecca to explore and have been bringing them back to the playhouse as she is ready. What a fun way to celebrate Rebecca's birthday and help the playhouse all at once!

New Group starting!

Beginning June 16th the McHenry playhouse is starting a new group, S.M.I.L.E.

Second annual Hawgs & Hot Rods Krusin 4 the Kids!

Thanks to all of our volunteers, participants and sponsors (McHenry Road Pirates, Woodstock & McHenry Harley-Davidson, Monkey Joe's, Tony's Subs, Huntley Culvers and the Dari Ripple in Walworth Wisconsin) for making our event such a huge



(Social skills molded into life & language events) Facilitated by a speech pathologist and social worker. It will be geared towards teens and adults. The focus is on incorporating social pragmatics and social language within everyday life activities, learned through educational & fun ways. It will be held every other Wednesday through July from 4:30 to 5:15, then once a month during the school year.



success. The cloudy day didn't put a damper on the fun! Monkey Joe came to play with the kids, the riders enjoyed the scenic route they took to each stop and the band Always Frantic kept us dancing! We look forward to next year!

So many tutors, So many families!

To kick off the summer tutoring session, the Chicago Playhouse held an open house for the tutors to meet their families and vice versa. It was a great night! The tutors were able to meet their students to learn about what they like, how they learn best, and just hang out together! We took pictures for each Family Unit to be -created. The Family Unit is a custom-made book that includes photos of important people (and pets!) in each students life. The bonds that the tutor created with the kids and the entire family are a huge proponent to the success of this program. Interested in learning more about the literacy program? Call Courtney at 847-769-8795.



Join us on Wednesdays between 11:00am-1:30am for an Open Play Lunch with Nancy Gianni, GiGi's mom, and Courtney Phillips, academic director!

New Math Program being piloted here in the fall!



New Location for Summer Outreach for the Chicago Playhouse!

Our new summer location is 1 mile west of the other Playhouse, directly across from Independence Park! Tapestry Building 3824 W. Irving Park Rd. Chicago IL

A Charitable Donation

On May 27, the Knights of Columbus at Holy Angels Parish in Aurora invited GiGi's Playhouse to participate in a donation presentation. Genia Latka and her family attend mass at Holy Angels and accepted the donation on behalf of GiGi's Playhouse. "Everyone was very interested in what the Playhouse has to offer to our families. But they were also interested in seeing what Natalie was going to do next. She worked the crowd, saying "Hi" to each person and choosing to sit on a few laps! Many times that night I heard "Wow, she does so well" and I thought, "Yes, she does!" It's good to get out and teach our community about

our kids. I'm proud of Natalie. Thank you to the Knights for supporting our Playhouse and all the wonderful things their donation enables us to provide.



GiGi's Playhouse Fox Valley 5th Annual Golf Outing

Support GiGi's Playhouse Fox Valley at the 5th Annual Golf outing on July 22 at the beautiful Tamarack Golf Club in Naperville. Come golf with us or bring a four man scramble for a great day of golf, raffles, silent auction, prizes and to celebrate Down syndrome.

This phenomenal event benefits the lives of children with Down syndrome and their families in the Fox Valley region and beyond. Proceeds will benefit our free educational programs, including our Literacy program, which provides private and group tutoring to children with Down syndrome.

Sponsored by Ryder Charitable Foundation, we begin with a 12:00 p.m. lunch and check-in, followed by a 1:30 p.m. shotgun start. Cocktail reception and dinner provided immediately after golf. \$150 registration includes lunch, dinner and full round of golf, or join us for dinner and evening festivities for \$50.

Online registration is available at www.gigisplayhouse.org. For more information or to volunteer at this event, contact GiGi's Playhouse Fox Valley at 630-779-PLAY or foxvalley@gigisplayhouse.org.



Chicago

- 3 Open Play, 9am- 11am
- 5 Literacy Tutoring, 1:00-1:45
- 6 Literacy Tutoring, 3:00-3:45
- 7 Open Play with Courtney and Nancy, 11am-1pm
Literacy Tutoring, 1:00-1:45
- 8 Literacy Tutoring, 10:00-10:45
- 9 Literacy Tutoring, 10:00-10:45, 12:30-1:15
- 12 Literacy Tutoring, 6:00-6:45
- 13 Literacy Tutoring, 1:00-1:45
- 14 Open Play with Courtney and Nancy, 11am-1pm
Literacy Tutoring, 2:00-2:45
- 15 Literacy Tutoring, 5:00-5:45
- 16 Literacy Tutoring, 3:30-4:15
- 17 Kid's Club, 4pm- 530pm
- 19 Literacy Tutoring, 1:00-1:45
- 20 Literacy Tutoring, 3:00-3:45
- 21 Open Play with Courtney and Nancy, 11am-1pm
Literacy Tutoring, 1:00-1:45
- 22 Literacy Tutoring, 10:00-10:45
- 23 Literacy Tutoring, 10:00-10:45, 11:00-11:45, 12:30-1:15
- 24 Hop, Skip and Jumpers, 3pm-5pm
- 26 Literacy Tutoring, 6:00-6:45
- 27 Literacy Tutoring, 1:00-1:45
- 28 Open Play with Courtney and Nancy, 11am-1pm
Literacy Tutoring, 2:00-2:45
- 29 Literacy Tutoring, 5:00-5:45
- 30 Literacy Tutoring, 3:30-4:15

Fox Valley

- 3 2 & Under, 930-11am
- 5 Tot Class, 930-11am, RSVP 630.778. PLAY
- 7 Literacy, 645pm
- 8 Wendy's Fundraiser, 5-8pm
- 10 Literacy, 930am
Literacy, 10am
Walkers Group, 930-1030am
Daddy & Me, 3-430pm
- 12 Tot Class, 930-11am, RSVP 630.778. PLAY
- 14 Literacy, 10am
Literacy, 1030am
Literacy 645pm
- 17 Hop, Skip & Jumpers 1030am-12pm, RSVP 630.335.4824
Playhouse Pals 2-4pm
- 19 Tot Class, 930-11am, RSVP 630.778. PLAY
- 21 Literacy, 645pm
Karate Kickers, Ages 8-12: 5:15pm - 5:45pm, 13 and up: 6pm - 6:30pm, RSVP 815.436.3817
- 22 Golf Outing, Tamarack Golf Club, Naperville
- 24 Literacy, 930am
Literacy, 10am
- 25 Nuestros Angeles Hispanic Playgroup, 11am-1pm
- 26 Tot Class, 930-11am, RSVP 630.778. PLAY
- 28 Literacy, 10am
Literacy, 1030am
Literacy, 645pm
- 30 Family Night 6-8pm, RSVP 630.844.1720

Mchenry

- EVERY TUESDAY** Open Play 10am – noon
~ come join us for Pizza & Friendship
- 1 Art Class, 4 pm
 - 5 Crystal Lake parade
 - 8 Options & advocacy, 10am
 - 9 Teen Tastics, 7pm games & snacks
 - 10 Crawlers, 10:15am join our Occupational Therapist for movement
 - 13 Polish reading group "Czytamy Po Polsku", 4-6pm must RSVP (847)978-0607 or (815)385-7529
Wendy's Night-McHenry 5-8pm
 - 15 Art Class, 4 pm
 - 14 Show Me A Sign, 6pm (basic signing class, all ages welcome)
 - 15 FINDS reading group, 6:30
Wendy's Night Crystal Lake, 5-8pm
 - 16 Kids Club, 6:30pm, bring a friend, games, snacks & more!
 - 17 Bring a friend to play, 2-4pm
 - 18 Fiesta Days parade
 - 20 Polish reading group "Czytamy Po Polsku", 4-6pm must RSVP (847)978-0607 or (815)385-7529
 - 21 Evening Open Play, 5-7pm come for fun & friendship
 - 22 FINDS reading group, 6:30
 - 23 Friday Friends, 7pm at the playhouse!
 - 25 Daddy & Me, 10am at the playhouse!
 - 27 Polish reading group "Czytamy Po Polsku", 4-6pm must RSVP (847)978-0607 or (815)385-7529
 - 28 Show Me A Sign, 6pm (basic signing class, all ages welcome)
Bookmaking – 6:30pm
 - 29 FINDS reading group, 6:30pm
Art Class, 4 pm

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
JULY						
4 Independence Day	5	6	7	8	9	10
11	12	13	14	15	16	17
18	19	20	21	22	23	24
25	26	27	28	29	30	31

Hoffman Estates

- Every Thursday:** Open Play 12:30-2pm
- 1 Literacy, 7pm
 - 3 Fourth of July Parade – sign up now!
 - 5 Meeting, 7pm
 - 6 Literacy, 9-10:30am, 3:30-4:15pm
 - 7 Literacy, 1:45-2:30pm, 4-5:30pm, 6-6:45pm, Meeting 6-8pm
 - 8 Literacy 4:30-5:15pm, Wendy's Night corner of Golf & Roselle Rd, 4-8pm
 - 10 Literacy, 9-9:45, Crawlers, 9-9:45
2 & Under, 10-11:30am
HSJ, 12:30-1:30
PP, 2-3:30pm
 - 11 Nuestros Angeles Hispanic Playgroup, 11am-1pm
 - 12 Literacy, 5:30-6:15pm
 - 13 Literacy, 9-10:30am, 3:30-4:15pm
 - 14 5:30-6:15pm
 - 15 Literacy, 11am-4pm, 7-7:45pm
 - 19 Meeting, 7pm
 - 20 Literacy, 9-10:30am, 3:30-4:15pm
 - 21 Literacy, 1:45-2:30pm, 4-5:30pm, 6-6:45pm
 - 22 Literacy, 11am-4pm, 4:30-5:15pm, Wendy's Night-corner of Golf & Roselle Rd, 4-8pm
 - 23 Friday Friends Softball Game, 7pm
 - 24 Literacy, 9-9:45am
Kids Club, 10-11:30am
 - 25 Polish Group, 11am-1pm, RSVP to Krystyna at 847.962.4820
 - 26 Literacy, 5:30pm, Meeting 7pm
 - 27 Literacy, 9-10:30am, 3:30-4:15pm
 - 28 Literacy, 5:30-6:15pm
 - 29 Literacy, 11am-4pm, 7-7:45pm

Sioux City

- 1 Literacy, 9-10am
Literacy, 5:30-6:30pm
- 2 Literacy, 9-10am
- 3 Literacy, 9:30-11am
- 4 Literacy, 4:30-5pm
- 7 Group Literacy, 5:45-6:30pm
- 8 Literacy, 9-10am
Literacy, 5:30-6:30pm
- 9 Literacy, 9-10am
- 10 Literacy, 9:30-11am
Signing Times, 10am
Open Play, 10:30-Noon
Teen Tastic hosts OPEN SWIM, 4-6pm @ Leeds Pool
- 11 Literacy, 4:30-5pm
- 14 CAMP Literacy, 9:30-11am
- 15 Literacy, 9-10am
Literacy, 5:30-6:30pm
- 16 Literacy, 9-10am
Family Fun Night Open Play, 6-7:30pm w/ PIZZA
- 17 Literacy, 9:30-11am
Hop, Skip & Jumpers, 11am-12:30
- 18 Literacy, 4:30-5pm
- 19 Open Play, 4:30-6:30pm
Walk Meeting, 5:30-7pm
- 21 Group Literacy, 5:45-6:30pm
- 22 Literacy, 9-10am
Literacy, 5:30-6:30pm
- 23 Literacy, 9-10am
- 24 Literacy, 9:30-11am
2 and Under, 11am-12:30
- 25 Literacy, 4:30-5pm
- 26 Open Play, 9:30-11am
- 28 Group Literacy, 9:30-10:15am
- 29 Literacy, 9-10am
Literacy, 5:30-6:30pm
- 30 Literacy, 9-10am
WINE STYLES FUNDRAISER, 5-8pm @ Wine Styles in Lakeport Commons
- 31 Literacy, 9:30-11am

Des Moines

- 1 Open Play, 10-11:30am
- 3 Family 4th of July Ice Cream Social!, 2-4pm
- 6 Open Play w/pizza, 5:30-7pm
- 9 Friday Friends Karaoke Night, 7-9pm
- 10 Music Around the World with Miss Ann, 11am-12pm
- 15 Open Play, 10-11:30am
- 16 Mom's Night Out, 7-11pm
- 17 Craft and Story Time with Miss Jo, 11am-12pm
- 20 Open Play w/pizza, 5:30-7pm
- 23 Friday Friends Bingo Night, 7-9pm
- 29 Open Play, 10-11:30am

Programs & Activities

- 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 focuses 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
1069 W. Golf Rd.
Hoffman Estates, IL 60169

nonprofit organization

u.s. postage

paid

schaumburg, il

permit no. 93



Fox Valley Annual Golf Outing:

July 22, 2010
Tamarack Golf Club in
Naperville

Spreading a National Voice!

The *i have a voice* Traveling Gallery is on the move! Check out these awesome locations! Want to bring it to your area? Email ihaveavoice@gigisplayhouse.org



JULY 15-20

NDSC Conference in Orlando, FL

JULY 26 - AUGUST 23

Eastwood and Southern Park Mall in Boardman, Ohio

AUGUST 26 - SEPT. 26

Cherry Valley Mall in Rockford, IL

OCTOBER 1-31

Lutheran General Hospital in Park Ridge, IL

JANUARY 1-31

Woodridge Public Library in Woodridge, IL

All over the Country!

In May, the Board of Directors from Atlanta came to visit the Hoffman Playhouse and get all the programming training, meet our awesome staff and volunteers and feel the Playhouse spirit! A few weeks later, the New York Board of Directors came to visit the Fox Valley, McHenry and Hoffman Playhouses so that they can get a feel for opening their own! The Rockford group took a tour of all 4 Playhouses in Illinois in preparation for opening their Playhouse in October! What a great group of people all these future Playhouses are! To connect with any of them, visit www.gigisplayhouse.org and click on the location of your choice!

Welcome to the Playhouse family!

Save the Date

July 22

Fox Valley Annual Golf Outing, Tamarack Golf Club in Naperville

August 28

Walk for Down syndrome Awareness, 9am-Noon — Sioux City, Chris Larsen Shelter

July 24

Chicago Disability Pride Parade—Chicago

Sept 18

Annual Bike Ride—Fox Valley

July 30

Wine Styles Fundraiser — Lakeport Commons, Sioux City, 5-8pm

