



Down Syndrome Awareness Centers

educate. inspire. achieve.

March 2011

Newsletter

www.gigisplayhouse.org
info@gigisplayhouse.org

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

Chicago Location
3948 N Lincoln Ave
Chicago, IL 60613
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
515.252.PLAY (7529)

Rockford Location
8801 N 2nd
Machesney Park, IL 61115
815-654-7529

Surprising the Speech Therapist

Rita, one of our amazing tutors, had a great story to share about her four year old granddaughter this morning. Hayden shocked her speech therapist when they pulled out our "In My House" book and Hayden read each word clearly and perfectly as she pointed to "I see a table. I see a chair." and read each word. Our Literacy Program changed the therapist's expectations, and Hayden's family is so proud of how smart she is and they continue to build into her education. Way to go, Hayden!



Communication Is Key!

That's why GiGi's works hard to promote the development of communication skills in the learner with Down syndrome. You can never start too early! Here are some proven success strategies to guiding communication skills in your young child.

Strategies to Enhance Language and Communication

Respond to a young child's communicative attempts.

No matter how young your child is, he/she is communicating with you! Respond to the communication and build on it!

Work to establish imitation skills; Wait for a response from a child.

Too often, we fill the space with our words and do not give the child the time he/she needs to vocalize, babble, sign, etc. He/she might decide he has no need to communication because mom and dad talk non stop to him — depriving the child of necessary practice and repetition that he/she needs to develop communication skills.

Look for more communication strategies at www.gigisplayhouse.org

I can Count!

Our Math program is up and running at 2 Playhouses! The custom made materials in this program are already being incorporated into the schools that our students attend – it's a great compliment to their classroom learning!

Look for more about our Math program in future newsletters!



Ole Mexico!

We are so excited to begin the process of opening our 1st International Playhouse in Mexico! Look for a Mexico GiGi's webpage and facebook page soon! Each of our Playhouses have a large Spanish-speaking population and our Nuestros Angeles (Our Angeles) group is one of our largest! If you are proficient in Spanish, have translating abilities, or can act as an advocate in the medical or school systems for our Spanish-speaking families in need, please contact your local Playhouse!



We recently had a visit from our friends in Nigeria who are interested in opening a GiGi's in their community! With your support to National Awareness, we are able to change perceptions world-wide!

GIGI's Playhouse News

Chicago

A New Year = a New Board. The Chicago Playhouse finalized its 10-person board, electing officers as well as point-people in charge of programming, facilities, volunteers, fund-raising, communications and outreach. The board consists of: **Aaron Baar** (president), **Kim Hanna** (vice president), **Sarah Koehn** (secretary), **Tom Hall** (treasurer), **Bob Foster** (facilities), **Nancy McDonald** (member communications), **Rhonda Schleis** (outreach), **Brent Plunkett** (fund raising), **Claire Buckley** (volunteers) and **Mike Brown** and **Sean Milligan**.

Among the first action items on the board's agenda will be to expand the Playhouse's programming and community outreach, as well as setting fundraising and other goals for the coming year. Anyone with interest or expertise in any of those areas is encouraged to contact the board at Chicago@gigisplayhouse.org.



Sioux City

Partners in crime!

That is what comes to mind when we think about the relationship of these 4 year olds. It seems like all the stories involve them in some sort of mischief. Even in those times their friendship means more to them than staying out of trouble. Yep, partners in crime that will stick together through thick and thin, that sums up Callahan & Danica!



Save the Date SIOUX CITY:

World Down syndrome Day CELEBRATION	5:30-7pm	Mon, March 21
SPRING TIME PARTY	10:30-Noon	Sat, April 2
LITERACY CELEBRATION	4-5:30pm	Sun, May 1

Chicagoland Speech Seminar

April 12, 2011

7:30pm at the

Hoffman Estates Playhouse

Together, we will learn strategies regarding...

- The primary concerns impacting the oral motor, feeding and communication development of the young child (birth to age 5) with Down syndrome.
- Specific language learning concerns and strategies to improve language development
- The importance of oral motor skill development as the foundation for good speech intelligibility
- Home based activities to promote communication, speech and language development

RSVP to info@gigisplayhouse.org

Hoffman Estates

Louise is 2!

Louise and her family celebrated her second birthday at the Playhouse! Her mom said, "We had a GREAT time and our family and friends fell in love instantly with the Playhouse and everything it offers. Thank you again for letting us have Louise's 2nd birthday party there!!" "We have had three birthday parties at the Playhouse in the past month! This is a great way to spread awareness, introduce friends and families to the Playhouse, and it is a great place to throw a party! Your Site Coordinator can check the Playhouse calendar if you re interested in holding your child s party at the Playhouse.

Fox Valley

Paving the Way for Preschool

"Eva is just so excited to see her Tot Class friends every Monday. Her confidence and ability to embrace transitions have greatly improved during her time in the group!" Christina Cortez, a Mom and Tot Class Helper, says.

The structure of the Tot Class really helps children in the 18-36 mo. age bracket prepare for preschool through providing transitional stations such as circle time, music time, snack time, sensory or activity time. Children are assisted by their parents who act as a 'guide' and key areas such as making choices, turn taking, identification and socialization are important aspects incorporated into the program.

For more information on how you can be a part of the Tot Class, please contact the Fox Valley Playhouse.



Save the dates: March 14 - Motivational Monday, Nutrition Series: Supplements
March 23 - NEW Class: Sign with Me

GIGI's Playhouse News

McHENRY

Look what's cooking at the McHenry Playhouse...Family Fun Night continues to be a good time for all! We invited families and friends to come out for a CHILI COOK-OFF. We had such a great turnout, so many different recipes, 8 in all! The Playhouse smelled scrumptious! Everyone sampled the chili and for those who did not enjoy chili, there was chicken soup. Everyone had the opportunity to cast their vote, after all the ballots were in we handed out prizes to the 1st, 2nd, and 3rd place winners! This gathering



has been such a fantastic addition to our Playhouse! Many thanks to everyone who participated, families, friends and volunteers! Please check the calendar for our next event.



DES MOINES

We have had a wonderful Yoga instructor, Michelle Soyer, volunteering her time at our playhouse since October. We have two classes a month: one for teens/adults and one for kids under 12 years old. Michelle is delightful and makes the yoga positions fun for the kids. She has been busy lately getting local yoga studios to donate mats for us to keep. Michelle says, "It is good for everyone to be able to take time to find their center especially when life gets confusing or our energies become out of balance. One great thing about yoga is it helps people feel good about themselves, about their bodies inside and out. When people feel good about themselves it shows on the outside and people around them benefit as well."



We really appreciate Michelle's time and her thoughtful volunteerism. She is really making a difference at our playhouse!



NEW YORK

GiGi's Playhouse NYC will be featured in the March issue of New York Family (<http://newyorkfamily.com/newyork/magazine>). Look for picture of our beautiful children!



Atlanta!

Live in the Atlanta area and what to get involved? Email atlanta@gigisplayhouse.org.

ROCKFORD

We are rocking in Rockford.

We have had open plays, Friday Friends and Teen Tastics. What fun everyone is having at GiGi's Rockford. The families are as excited as the kids, teens and adults. Many of our adult families were so excited to come to GiGi's, the families feel this is long overdue in the Rockford area.



We have had a full playhouse for every program. We played Wii, danced and everyone loved karaoke. Several of our local pizza parlor owners have been very generous with donating pizza for our events.

Our Literacy program will be starting soon!



Did you know?

That our Playhouses are run on the heart of volunteers? We can always use your help! Call your local Playhouse to see how you can get involved today!

RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED

Be sure to check out next month's newsletter to see how the Inaugural I have a voice Gala changed lives around the nation!



On the Move!

The Traveling Gallery is on the

move! It was recently featured at our National Gala in February and has a busy schedule for the rest of the spring! If you are interested in having it displayed in your area, contact ihavevoiceproject@gigisplayhouse.org.



Check out this Billboard that the Sioux City Playhouse had up! If you can help us spread awareness by getting GiGi's on a billboard in your area, contact your local Playhouse!

Chicagoland Region: On your mark, get set...GO!

The 5K is right around the corner! Can you believe it? This year it's at a new location – The Arboretum in South Barrington! What great awareness! June 12, 2011



Be sure to go to www.gigisplayhouse.org to see your local Playhouse calendar!

Want to read more inspirational stories? Each Playhouse has a blog and a facebook page with current stories!

