



**GiGi's  
PLAYHOUSE**  
Down Syndrome Awareness Centers

educate. inspire. achieve

**Des Moines**

**Newsletter**



## The Learner with Down syndrome Seminar

On July 8, Shari Andress, a Volunteer from the National GiGi's Playhouse in Chicago & Literacy & Math Trainer came to our Playhouse to give a seminar and series of training programs. The first 60 minutes were spent discussing "The Learner with Down syndrome" with over 20 people in attendance. During this presentation Shari explained new ideas on how to teach peers about what our children can do and how much more alike they are to everyone in the classroom than different. She re-enforced ideas of how to help our kids learn at a rate that is comfortable and successful for them. Since our children are literal learners we need to practice transferring knowledge to their memories through different avenues. The more a person with Down syndrome sees a word or number in different texts and venues the better. Many people shared success stories of their children and students. The purpose of "The Learner with Down syndrome" is to remind us that we can "Expect Our Children to Learn"! We have copies of the presentation if you would like a copy please stop by the Playhouse!



your Learner with Down syndrome as our deadline is August 4th! You can download the Registration Form at: [www.gigisplayhouse.org/desmoines/education-at-des-moines](http://www.gigisplayhouse.org/desmoines/education-at-des-moines) and return email the forms to us at: [literacyDSM@gigisplayhouse.org](mailto:literacyDSM@gigisplayhouse.org)

After Literacy we phased into training for the new MATH PROGRAM that will begin this Fall at our Playhouse! The Math Program is full of manipulatives and outside the box thinking to engage learners of all ages with Down syndrome of Math Concepts. We are very excited to bring this program to our Playhouse!! Space is limited in the Math Program each Semester, you can register by going to [www.gigisplayhouse.org/desmoines/education-at-des-moines](http://www.gigisplayhouse.org/desmoines/education-at-des-moines), downloading the DSM Math materials New Families Form for registration and then emailing it back to us at: [mathDSM@gigisplayhouse.org](mailto:mathDSM@gigisplayhouse.org)! We will work on matching up Tutors and Learners based on availability of schedules.



In the afternoon, Shari retrained our Literacy Team including former, current and new Tutor Volunteers. This refresher course introduced us to some new ideas and reminded us of how important each step in the Literacy process is for our learners. We can't wait to put these

Both of these Educational Programs are FREE of charge to our families and are very hands on and regimented. Full support and help of the Family is required for each learner to succeed!

methods to use during our Fall Session. Don't forget to register

## National Visit & Awareness



Nancy, GiGi Gianni's Mom & founder of GiGi's Playhouse, will be making a visit to our Des Moines Playhouse on Saturday, September 8! You are invited to join Nancy & GiGi at the Des Moines Playhouse from 10-11:30am for the GRAND OPENING CELEBRATION of our new THERAPEUTIC PLAY CENTER! We will showcase all that the Therapeutic Play Center has to offer from many standpoints including; speech, physical & occupational therapies! You will see first hand how the kids enjoy this area that we had designed specifically for them to enjoy! We have long awaited the arrival of the Therapeutic Play Center at our Playhouse and now that it is here we are so excited to see our kids



faces when they enter the Playhouse for free programming.

In the evening we will host a THANK YOU APPRECIATION event for our volunteers, supporters, parents, and friends! We ask you to join us in the evening for a special event! Nancy will join us for an evening of celebrating Down syndrome Awareness and all of those that volunteer our time and talents for GiGi's Playhouse-Des Moines! We work very hard making sure that everything we do has a positive impact on Down syndrome in our community and we want to celebrate that! Check our website blog and emails for information about the event: [www.gigisplayhouse.org/desmoines](http://www.gigisplayhouse.org/desmoines)



# 15<sup>th</sup> Annual Central Iowa Buddy Walk & 5k

Plan on attending the 15th Annual Central Iowa Buddy Walk and 5k on Saturday, August 25 starting at 8am at Des Moines Area Community College in Ankeny! You can register your team at: [www.secure.ezeventsolutions.com/fr/upwithdown/2012buddywalk/](http://www.secure.ezeventsolutions.com/fr/upwithdown/2012buddywalk/)



## Registration Information

The Buddy Walk provides the entire community the opportunity to celebrate the lives of individuals with Down syndrome with their families. The days events promotes the acceptance of all people with Down syndrome! Making your team is the PERFECT way to honor your loved one!

## Registration Fees:

Participant with Down syndrome	\$FREE (includes a t-shirt)
5k, Walk & t-shirt	\$25.00
Walk (11yrs & up)	\$10.00
Walk (10yrs & younger)	\$ 5.00
t-shirts	\$10.00 each

Funds generated from the Up with Down Buddy Walk are used to support local & national Down syndrome initiatives along with helping to support projects & programs at GiGi's Playhouse-Des Moines!



## How to Raise \$250 in 10 days!

- Day 1: Make your **PERSONAL** donation of \$25
- Day 2: Ask your **SIGNIFICANT OTHER** for a donation of \$15
- Day 3: Ask your **MOM OR DAD** for a donation of \$15
- Day 4: Ask a **FRIEND** for a donation of \$15
- Day 5: Ask your **BOSS** for a donation of \$25
- Day 6: Ask three **CO-WORKERS** for a donation of \$15
- Day 7: Ask your **SISTER** or **BROTHER** for a donation of \$15
- Day 8: Ask your **IN-LAWS** for a donation of \$15
- Day 9: Ask two **NEIGHBORS** for a donation of \$15
- Day 10: Ask a **BUSINESS OWNER** for a donation of \$50

## Volunteering at the Buddy Walk

You can help support the Walk by volunteering! Groups & Individuals of all ages are appreciated! We are in need of help in all areas from set-up to games & crafts, registration and clean-up! If you are able to volunteer a few hours please register at: [www.volunteermatch.org](http://www.volunteermatch.org) or email: [buddywalk@upwithdown.org](mailto:buddywalk@upwithdown.org)!



## Buddy Walk Day Activities

You will not want to miss any of the FUN and AWARENESS on Sat, Aug 25!

- 8am 5k Run
- 9am Activities & Walk Registration Open

This includes: crafts, merchandise sales, games, dancing with Wilder Side Band, awareness projects, silent auction!

- 10am Buddy Walk
- Lunch served after the Walk



## Thank You to our Silver Sponsors



## One Million Voices Gallery

Email [onemillionvoicesDSM@gigisplayhouse.org](mailto:onemillionvoicesDSM@gigisplayhouse.org) to book the One Million Voices Des Moines Down syndrome Awareness Galleries. There are 2 galleries available with approx. 100 sq ft of photography, inspiration & Down syndrome Awareness available to be set up at your business, event and expo. Please contact us to find out how you can book one or both of these traveling galleries!

## Education Tutor Trainers Needed

### LITERACY VOLUNTEERS

Tutor Trainer—train volunteer tutors to work 1 on 1 with each learner with Down syndrome, volunteers closely with other Literacy Volunteers.

Literacy Tutors —commit at least 45 minutes one day a week for 16 weeks to work one on one with an assigned learner with Down syndrome.

If you are interested in either of these positions please contact Anne Webber at [literacyDSM@gigisplayhouse.org](mailto:literacyDSM@gigisplayhouse.org) for more information.



### MATH VOLUNTEERS.

Tutor Trainer—train volunteer tutors to work 1 on 1 with each learner with Down syndrome, volunteers closely with other Math Volunteers.

Math Tutors —commit at least 45 minutes one day a week for 16 weeks to work one on one with an assigned learner with Down syndrome. We need

If you are interested in either of these positions please contact Kate Paulline at [mathDSM@gigisplayhouse.org](mailto:mathDSM@gigisplayhouse.org) for more information.



## Therapeutic Play Center Art Work



The Board of Directors would like to give a HUGE THANK YOU to the artist, Cheryl Veenstra for donating her time in painting the walls surrounding the new Playtime area. Cheryl is from Pella, & for several weeks in

June she made the trip to GiGi's in an effort to make the play area an extra special space. With her choice of colors & subject matter she attempted to evoke an atmosphere of peaceful wonder & quiet joy. If you haven't already, PLEASE come to the Playhouse to see it in person!! It is stunning! When we asked Cheryl if she was willing to do this for GiGi's, she quietly but quickly agreed. After talking to her, we realized why. Cheryl mentioned she had a special person in her life born with Down syndrome whose name was Ravyn. Ravyn was a twin born to a member of Cheryl's family five years ago. Though she lived only four months she made a lasting impression on many, including Cheryl, by reminding them that every life has value & purpose. When you look at Cheryl's painting, see if you can find the happy little bird she painted in Ravyn's memory. How utterly amazing that a little girl with Down syndrome continues to inspire us to find our joy in simply being that person we were created to be!!



## CALENDAR

Check out our website at: [www.gigisplayhouse/desmoines](http://www.gigisplayhouse/desmoines).

- 3 Open Play, 10am  
Literacy Group, 1pm  
Friday Friends, 7pm
- 4 Fall Education Forms due  
[mathDSM@gigisplayhouse.org](mailto:mathDSM@gigisplayhouse.org)  
[literacyDSM@gigisplayhouse.org](mailto:literacyDSM@gigisplayhouse.org)  
Ready, Set, Action Class, 11am
- 6 Language Class, 4:30pm
- 10 Friday Friends, 7pm
- 11 New Parent, 9am  
Music Class, 10am
- 12 Dance Squad, 1pm
- 13 Help A Heart, 6:30pm
- 17 Open Play, 10am  
Friday Friends, 7pm
- 18 3-4 Yr Old Playgroup, 10am  
Story & Craft w/ Ms Jo, 11am
- 24 Friday Friends, 7pm
- 25 Nuestros Angeles, 9am  
Skill Builders, 9:30am
- 26 Dance Squad, 1pm
- 31 Open Play, 10am  
Friday Friends, 7pm



Visit our calendar online for up to date activities & times!

## Skill Builders Program

Join us the 4th Saturday of each month for SKILL BUILDERS as the Physical Therapy students from Des Moines University help teach our families of children ages 4 and under with Down syndrome new techniques to get their gross motor skills working! This



group of volunteers will work to show you what you can do at home to get your child moving!

## Music Class for All Ages

You won't want to miss the MUSIC CLASS that we have on the 2nd Saturday of each month at 10am! This class is offered to all ages and will get your family involved in moving, singing, dancing while having fun!



## Save the Date:

- Aug 25** Buddy Walk @ DMACC
- Sept 15** Grand Opening of Therapeutic Play Center, 10am
- Sept 15** Thank You Appreciation

RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED

## Group Literacy

The weekly Summer Group Literacy sessions were a huge success! We had between 7 and 15 kids participate each week in 4 or 5 small group activities. All the kids and siblings had a great time learning about a different topic ranging from colors to food to opposites!

*"I had such an amazing time with this summer literacy session. Not only did I get to be a "mom" and go through the centers with my son & some of his friends, but I also got to be a tutor and see how amazing, talented & smart all the kids are that participated. I also thought it was wonderful to have peers helping, encouraging and teaching their friends with Down syndrome. We truly have an incredible group of kids and I am so proud of each one of them!! I would also like to give a BIG THANKS to all the tutors who helped with this program & to all the parents and kids who participated. The program wouldn't have been a success without your dedication." - Gretchen Baldwin*



And, don't forget, our Fall 2012 Literacy Session begins September 9th. The deadline to get your application (and photos for new families) in is August 4th, so hurry and get them sent in! You can download an application online at <http://gigisplayhouse.org/desmoines/education-at-des-moines/>



If you need forms sent to you, please send an email to [literacydsm@gigisplayhouse.org](mailto:literacydsm@gigisplayhouse.org) or call the playhouse at 515-252-PLAY.