



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

educate. inspire. achieve

Des Moines

Newsletter



A Message from the National Office...

“I remember when I first came to the Playhouse 4 years ago with Somer and she learned to communicate for the first time in the GiGi’s literacy program. It was like her whole world opened up! She was able to connect her ability to sign with the responses of others! It was amazing – we were all in tears. Today, she excel’s in the literacy program – we can’t make books fast enough to keep up with her!”

This is just one of many testimonials we hear about the GiGi’s literacy program, which was created by Shari Andress, Developmental Therapist and mother of a child with Down syndrome. Like all of our programs, the Literacy program is success-based and incorporates proven methodologies from professionals in the field including Patricia Oelwein, Sue Buckley and more. Together with Nancy Gianni, founder and GiGi’s mom, Shari will be visiting each

of our Playhouses, presenting on various topics including:

- Down Syndrome Basics – what DS is and what it is not, how it affects siblings and other family members
- The Learner with Down syndrome – why teaching the way we learn best ensures success
- Literacy and Math tutoring



These on-site trainings will ensure that each Playhouse is delivering the GiGi’s programs with the highest integrity possible and will include video instruction, educational iPad apps, and hands-on demonstration. GiGi’s is committed to these educational programs and sees them as a catalyst for change in our communities!

Spring Fever got you ‘itching’ to hit the links?

Join us on Saturday, May 19 at Copper Creek Golf Course in Pleasant Hill for 18 Holes of Golf and Down syndrome Awareness! Register your team or register as an individual at: www.events.org/golfdesmoines! Your \$100 registration includes: 18 holes of golf, cart, ‘swag’ bag, loads of FUN, and a gift to GiGi’s Playhouse-Des Moines! We will have prizes for the best and worst teams-no need to have golfed before! We will have an 8am Shotgun start, Silent Auction, Prizes and of course...golf! If your business would like to Sponsor this event we have 2 ways to do so, contact Troy @ programdsm@gigisplayhouse.org to get involved! See you on the 19th!



GiGi's Dance Squad = FUN

Anyone who gets out on the dance floor & starts dancing are always smiling & having the time of their life. Why not combine the fun and joy the kids bring with the fun & joy dancing brings?!

This dance team will do exactly that! We are now offering GiGi's Dance Squad to all ages 3 and up! Brittany & Kate have teamed up to lead this group to learn choreographed dance moves



to the most popular songs on the radio! Classes are held the 2nd & 4th Sundays each month @ GiGi's from 1-2pm! Each session will go over the dance moves learned previously & add new steps. We are hoping to be able to have this group 'show their GiGi's moves' around town. We hope to see your GiGi's Dancer on the floor!



Board of Directors Spotlight



My name is Daniell Bargstadt & I am excited to be the President of GiGi's Playhouse-Des Moines! My husband, Mike and I have five fabulous children ranging from 6 -14 years old. I am a founding member of GiGi's Playhouse-Sioux City & served as

the President for 3 years before moving to Creston in June 2011. I worked closely with Megan as the Vice President from July 2011 until now to ensure a smooth transition into this position. I am certain we will continue our rapid growth reaching out to new families, businesses & organizations. I am committed to continuing our current free programs and the activities we host. I believe strongly in all of the new projects & programs the Board is working on for our Playhouse & that we will continue to be the BEST! We are exploring new ways to raise funds for our Playhouse to bring new free programming & classes to your family. We have several Down syndrome Awareness Projects in the works that will make a global difference. I look at the Playhouse as a place for my family & a place for your family therefore making it OUR PLAYHOUSE!



I invite you to join the Board of Directors & myself on Sat, May 5 from 9-11 am for a Meet & Greet! You will be able to meet some of our Board Members, see what we are working on and explore some new opportunities. If you ever need anything please contact me @ d.bargstadt@gigisplayhouse.org!

Volunteers are Loved

We love our Volunteers and we would love for you to become one! If you are looking to donate your time doing things around the Playhouse contact us at volunteerdsm@gigisplayhouse.org! We have many opportunities available! Stop in at the Playhouse to Volunteer on Wed, May 9th from 10am-1pm; we have lots of projects that need your help!

Welcome Johnna!

We are pleased to announce Johnna Davis as our new Site Coordinator! With Johnna at the front desk we are able to expand our office hours to M-F 9am-3pm! Johnna is a wife and mother of three boys and resides in Bondurant. Please help us welcome Johnna! You can reach her at desmoines@gigisplayhouse.org or by calling 515-252-7529!

"I am very excited to be a part of such a wonderful organization and am looking forward to meeting and getting to know all of the families!" -Johnna Davis.



CALENDAR

Check out our website at: www.gigisplayhouse/desmoines. Our Office Hours are Monday-Friday 9am-3pm!

- 3 3-4yr old Play Group, 6-7pm
- 4 Friday Friends, 7-9pm
- 5 Meet & Greet, 9-11am
Ready, Set, Action Class, 11am-Noon
Circles Program Parent Orientation, 1-3pm (No children, please)
- 7 Language Group, 4:30-5:30pm
- 9 Volunteer Day, 10am-1pm
- 11 Open Play, 10-11am
Garage Sale benefitting GiGi's, 8am-4pm
@416 SW Hickory Glen in Grimes
Friday Friends, 7-9pm
- 12 New Parent Group, 9-10am
Garage Sale benefitting GiGi's, 8am-3pm
@416 SW Hickory Glen in Grimes
Music Class, 11am-Noon
2 & Under Skill Builders, 3-4pm
Teen Tastic, 7-9pm Art Night
- 13 GiGi's Dance Squad, 1-3pm
- 14 Help A Heart, 6:30-8pm
- 15 GiGi's Des Moines 2nd Anniversary, 6-7:30pm
- 18 Friday Friends, 7-9pm
- 19 Friends of GiGi's Golf Outing, 8am @ Copper Creek
Story & CraftTime w/ Miss Jo, 11am-Noon
- 25 Open Play, 10-11am
Friday Friends, 7-9pm
- 26 Nuestros Angeles, 9-10am
Yoga for All, 10-11am
- 27 GiGi's Dance Squad, 1-3pm



All of our Activities are Free & Open to all of our families! Check our Activity Calendar & Blog Online for up to the date information!

World Down syndrome Day Celebration!



Summer Group Literacy Program



For Ages: 3-10, Fridays, 1:00-2:00 pm, from June 15-August 3
2012 Literacy Session will be 8 weekly group lessons. Each week will be a different topic, such as shapes, sorting, opposites, etc. Each lesson will be made up of several small group activities, for instance a book, a craft, & game. We will need at least 5 kids confirmed to hold the lesson for each particular week.

Siblings ages 3-10 are welcome to come along & will be required to participate in the activities as well. As with all of our Literacy Programs, this is not a drop-off session & a parent/guardian must stay with their kids for the entire lesson.

In order to appropriately staff these weekly events we need to know if you are able to attend! Please send an email to literacydsm@gigisplayhouse.org and include the following information: Your Name, Contact Phone Number, Name and age of Child(ren) attending, Dates that you are able to attend. Spots are LIMITED, RSVP TODAY! **Spots are limited, RSVP MANDATORY!**

Letter of Appreciation

Ellen, I wanted to tell you how appreciative I am of you & all the work you have done for the Sight Word Program. It means so much to me that you have taken this time to encourage, teach & educate our kids!! I thought today was just beautiful!! I really think the students enjoyed it & felt very special! I also think they really liked the candy, balloons & gift bags. And, did you see how proud Kaitlin and Tyler were of their medals! I was seriously holding back the tears! I was inspired & touched. I hope that next time there are more cheers & proud kids with amazed parents! Thanks for a beautiful day! Gretchen



Buddy Walk

Lace Up Your Tennis Shoes & Meet Us at the Buddy Walk

Mark your calendar for Saturday, August 25th, for the 2012 Buddy Walk in Ankeny, IA! There will be lots of things for you, your family & friends to enjoy. At 8am we will have the 5k Run, at 10am the Walk will start with lunch to follow. Volunteers are needed! Email buddywalkdsm@gmail.com to learn what you can do to help! You can also register to Volunteer online at: www.volunteermatch.org



Cost for the events are:

- 5k Run & Walk Registration \$25/person (includes T-shirt)
 - Walk Registration \$10/adult, \$5/child
- All Registrations include Awareness, Lunch, Fun, Silent Auction, & Activities*
- T-shirts \$10 each
- (Registrants with Down syndrome will receive a FREE t-shirt)*

Meet Brittany!



"I am a graduate from ISU with a Bachelor of Science degree in Kinesiology. I enjoy the outdoors, being active, and going on walks with my husband & our 10 year old Golden Retriever. I have always had a passion for helping others and wanting to "Pay it Forward". With my degree in Kinesiology, I knew that I would fulfill my passion of helping others as I became a Health Fitness Specialist & educated others on the importance of living a healthy lifestyle. With my passion of helping others came a passion for working with individuals with Down syndrome. Whenever I see an individual with Down syndrome, I see laughter, love, and joy! When Megan asked if I'd be up for starting a dance team, I couldn't say no!! I am so excited to be part of such a wonderful organization and be able to dance with such amazing individuals.

THANK YOU



**Knights of Columbus-
IA State Council/
People with Intellectual
Disabilities Fund for
donating over \$1300
from Tootsie Roll Sales!**



**Memorial Fund of
Cathlyne Bosiljevac**

GiGi's Playhouse
1069 W. Golf Rd.
Hoffman Estates, IL 60169

nonprofit organization

u.s. postage

paid

schaumburg, il

permit no. 93

Save the Date:

May 15 - GiGi's Anniversary Party, 6-7:30pm

May 19 - Golf Outing @ Copper Creek

Aug 25 - Buddy Walk in Ankeny

RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED

GiGi's Playhouse-Des Moines is turning 2 years old!

On Sat, May 22, 2010, we opened our doors for the first time to a crowd of over 300 Family, Friends and Supporters! Three years later we have grown to over 600 Families, Volunteers & Supporters with more walking in the door every day! We are overwhelmingly appreciative of the generosity our Playhouse receives each day for the free programming and activities we offer! We would love to show you all the projects we have in the 'works' for year 2, meet our new Board Members, and discover the great new things we are bringing to Des Moines all while catching up with your GiGi's family!

Come help us CELEBRATE with Cake, Ice Cream & Cookies on Tue, May 15 from 6-7:30pm!

