



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

educate. inspire. achieve

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 has Sprung at the Hoffman Playhouse!!!

The kids had a ball out in the park for an egg hunt! It was a busy day!! It started with our crawlers group which is facilitated by physical therapist, Kathy Morgan, Developmental therapist, ----- and Sue Yaeger, gymnastics coach and OT assistant. On the Club GiGi side there was a revolving door of kids being tutored in both literacy and math. Next came the Spring Party! Games, crafts and the HUNT! It was such a great time. Great sibling and parent relationships were formed and the kids never stopped working! (OOPS don't tell them that, they thought they were just having fun!!)



To add to our fun on Saturday morning we also had a family in from Madison Wisconsin observing the Playhouse and participating in the programs in the hopes of opening a Playhouse in their area. Thank you to all of the families and therapists who showed them our Playhouse hospitality!



Extreme Makeover in the works!

A car crashed into the Hoffman Estates Playhouse on March 31st. A young man hit drive instead of reverse when leaving the parking lot. No one was hurt but the Playhouse received some damage. We have been working with Perkins and Will Architectural firm for months to redesign the Hoffman playhouse! Hoffman has been the inspiration for all of the Playhouses and has served us well for almost 9 years. Now it is time to do some updating and turn this location into the state of the art facility it should be! We are very excited to get this project started! If you are interested in helping serve on the strategic planning committee for this project or to serve on the board for the Hoffman Playhouse, email info@gigisplayhouse.org.

Thank you Incredible Technologies!

Their Holiday donation allowed us to buy 4 ipads!! We have one for each tutoring room where our tutors can choose from hundreds of educational aps to use with the students. iPads are a great tool to use to develop fine motor skills and our handwriting program and other OT programs will utilize them for this purpose. We also bought one extra one for parents so they can try out different apps during open play and other programming. We will be using the rest of their donation to get our technology (computers, audio for literacy etc.) up to speed as we remodel the Hoffman Playhouse.

We need your voice!

With the new Playhouse on its way we want to know what you are looking for! What programs would you like to see offered? We would love to build a programs committee for this location too! Please send in your program recommendations or your let us know if you are interested in helping on this committee. Please email heprograms@gigisplayhouse.org



Go Cubs Go!

The Chicago Cubs did it again! For the 4th year in row, GiGi's Playhouse became a recipient of a grant from Cubs Care, a fund of the McCormick Foundation. The beauty of this grant is first and foremost the funds for the literacy program but even more important is the belief they have in our children. They understand the importance of teaching children with Down syndrome the way they learn and the results that come from that. Thank you Ricketts family, McCormick Foundation and our Cubs! GiGi Gianni is giving a speech at their Ivy Ball at Navy Pier later this month!



Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
		1 Playhouse open 9a-4p, tutoring as scheduled	2 Playhouse open 9a-4p, tutoring as scheduled Special Intentions Support group 7-9p	3 Playhouse open 9a-4p, tutoring as scheduled Open Play 12:30-2:00p Join us for lunch, networking and fun!	4 Playhouse open 9a-4p, tutoring as scheduled	5
6 Playhouse reserved Private party	7 Playhouse open 9a-4p, tutoring as scheduled	8 Playhouse open 9a-4p, tutoring as scheduled	9 Playhouse open 9a-4p, tutoring as scheduled	10 Playhouse open 9a-4p, tutoring as scheduled Open Play 12:30-2:00p Join us for lunch, networking and fun!	11 Playhouse open 9a-4p, tutoring as scheduled	12 9-10a Crawlers 10-11:30a 2& Under 12-1:30p Hop, Skip & Jumpers
13 11a-1p - Spanish and Polish Family Group	14 Playhouse open 9a-4p, tutoring as scheduled	15 Playhouse open 9a-4p, tutoring as scheduled	16 Playhouse open 9a-4p, tutoring as scheduled	17 Playhouse open 9a-4p, tutoring as scheduled Open Play 12:30-2:00p Join us for lunch, networking and fun!	18 Playhouse open 9a-4p, tutoring as scheduled	19 Literacy training (as scheduled)
20	21 Playhouse open 9a-4p, tutoring as scheduled	22 Playhouse open 9a-4p, tutoring as scheduled	23 Playhouse open 9a-4p, tutoring as scheduled	24 Playhouse open 9a-4p, tutoring as scheduled Open Play 12:30-2:00p Join us for lunch, networking and fun!	25 Playhouse open 9a-4p, tutoring as scheduled Friday Friends Game night! 7p	26 10:30a-12:30p Kids Club
27	28 Playhouse open 9a-4p, tutoring as scheduled	29 Playhouse open 9a-4p, tutoring as scheduled	30 Playhouse open 9a-4p, tutoring as scheduled	31 Playhouse open 9a-4p, tutoring as scheduled Open Play 12:30-2:00p Join us for lunch, networking and fun!		



New Moms helping new moms!



We have had many new babies recently! The new moms who came to us just months ago are now helping other new moms with their diagnosis! Last week at Open Play we had a couple visiting us from Costa Rica. The mother was 7 months pregnant with a baby with Down syndrome. The new moms gathered around this family and their son and gave them support encouragement and most importantly HOPE. They still keep in touch via email and Facebook! Open play is every Thursday from 12:30-2:00 – join us!

Crawlers



Join us every second Saturday at 9 am for our Crawlers program!

This program is designed to strengthen developmental skills in children who are at any stage of crawling. This program is primarily a gross motor group but it also incorporates, fine motor skills, sensory awareness, social interactions and language skills. This group is facilitated by both a physical therapist and a developmental therapist.

2 and under Group follows the crawlers at 10:00! Come party with us! Meet new friends, network with other families, great sibling/peer interaction, food and fun!



Thank You Pars Ridge Community Women!

The PRJWC threw a Mardi Gras party at the Snuggery in Edison Park and raised \$10,000.00 to buy Hoffman Estates a new literacy room! Another step closer to our makeover!!! Thank you to the Kracik family and our star student, Jane Kracik, for introducing us to this incredible organization!! We are so blessed to have them in our Playhouse family.



Siblings are always welcome! These girls play dress up as their brother is working hard on his gross motor skills!



New database!

In preparation for our extreme makeover we are beefing up our infrastructure! Our comprehensive new database will allow us to have better correspondence with our constituents, it will track student progress in literacy and math, and it will track participation for volunteers, students, families and more. We are very excited to finally be going live with this project. PLEASE update your information if you have moved or something has changed.

The award winning Cheer Gems are starting up again! After a season full of great performances and awards the GiGi's Cheer Gems are ready to do it again! They had their kick off meeting and are starting practices soon! Want to join? Email info@gigisplayhouse.org.



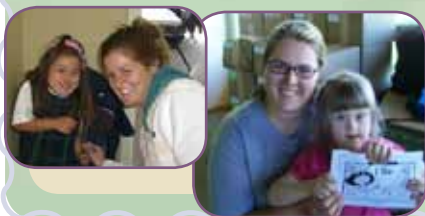
Friday Friends

The Friday Friends got all dressed up put on their dancin' shoes and celebrated GiGi's Prom. Our McHenry Friday Friends joined us and the DJ rocked all night!! This month they are jammin' with the band!!



Open Play every Thursday from 12:30-2

Come play and stay for lunch! This program incorporates social skills, peer mentoring, developmental play and positive beginnings for new families. It is a great place for families and siblings to network, make new friends, share stories and take a break while the volunteers help with the kids!



Thank you to all of our AMAZING volunteers! Tutors, program hosts, administrative, book makers and the list goes on! We couldn't do it without you!



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

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Traveling Gallery on the Move!

Email ihaveavoiceproject@gigisplayhouse.org to schedule it in your city!

RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED

Save the Date! GiGi's 5K Run & Walk

June 10th, Arboretum Shopping Center
100 W. Higgins Road (Corner of Rt. 72 & 59)
South Barrington, IL

