



## One child, one diagnosis, one community at a time—that's how we roll!

I honestly cannot explain how blessed I feel every time I turn the corner in our new National achievement center! The energy and excitement that our GiGi U students and Hugs and Mugs interns bring to this place is palpable! I cannot be crabby even if I want to be! People are constantly walking in our doors. Whether it is a pregnant mom, a new baby, a toddler needing help learning to walk, a child who needs tutoring, a teen in the fitness program or an adult who needs to work on career skills, GiGi's is there to support the individual and the family. We make a lifetime commitment to our families and they know it!

I can promise you that our kids are sent here for a purpose. They are here to teach and to love, to make this world a better place, and to show us that against all odds you still can still be all that you want to be. Learn from them. I am blessed to learn from their innocence every day and from their ability to forgive and look past what is hurtful and see joy in the little things which is why I will never stop fighting for them.

Thank you for helping us help them!

Love, Nancy and GiGi



## Math tutor with DS + young student = SUCCESS!

Farzin is really taking his role as a math tutor seriously! As a graduate of GiGi U and the GiGi's Playhouse Math Tutoring program, he understands what it takes to be an awesome tutor! This spring, Farzin began tutoring Joey, with the support of his mentor and former tutor, Tom. At the end of their first one-on-one session, it was immediately obvious that this new match was really going to be an incredible fit- it could not have gone better! Farzin showed true leadership and did an amazing job engaging Joey! Even Joey's mom said no one can command his attention the way Farzin does! **Way to go, Farzin!**

### our locations



### New GiGi's Playhouse openings across the country!

On top of our 16 current locations, we have 6-8 new locations opening this September and October!! They are busy seeking a location and working on buildouts in Cedar Rapids IA, Milwaukee WI, Madison WI, Indianapolis IN, El Paso TX, Westchester NY, Hillsborough NJ and Phoenix AZ. Whew! Check out our latest map (shown left)!

*The Career Skills class at GiGi U prepared me for an internship at Hugs + Mugs and how to find a job. We worked on interviewing and I learned a lot!*

~ Tim D, graduate from the second class of GiGi U





## 191 New Families visit GiGi's Playhouse locations this spring!

Every day, new families walk in the doors of GiGi's Playhouse locations across the country- some new families have just received a prenatal diagnosis, some are parents of a newborn and still others may have an older child or even adult child with Down syndrome and are visiting GiGi's for the first time.

This spring, **191 new families** made that first visit and have taken the first steps to **face the diagnosis** with the support of GiGi's Playhouse.

Most new parents can attest to the fear and anxiety that surrounds their first visit, but as soon as most parents walk through the door and feel the positivity, the fear and anxiety soon passes and are replaced with feelings of **support and a brighter outlook**. Here is one family's view on their first visit to GiGi's Playhouse New York as expectant parents attending the New Parents Group:

*"It was so wonderful to meet so many great parents and wonderful babies!! I had no idea about any of this ... so while a little overwhelming, we were glad to start getting all these terms in our heads. Also, so glad that there's a great network of parents to help us navigate. Overall I am feeling much better about things. Meeting people rather than getting lost in my head with worries was such a relief. I can't wait to get to know other families and introduce our little girl into this community. Thank you so much for encouraging us to attend."*

*-Anjeanette and John, expectant parents, GiGi's Playhouse-NYC*

## Jude reads his first book after just five Literacy tutoring sessions

Each day at Playhouses across North America, kids and adults with Down syndrome are learning to read in our free literacy program! This spring, 5 year old Jude from Nashville, joined a group of tutoring students nationwide who have found success in the GiGi's Playhouse Literacy Tutoring Program!



In the Literacy Tutoring Program, each student starts with their family book and learns to read the words and names of people who are most important to them! Our students experience immediate success, which motivates them to keep reading and to keep growing their literacy skills!

Jude read his family book, made especially for him by volunteers at GiGi's Playhouse Nashville, after just five tutoring sessions! Way to go, Jude!

Jude is just one example of how individuals with DS are growing and learning each day, with the support of GiGi's Playhouse! Through your generosity, we can continue to offer Literacy Tutoring and other free educational and therapeutic programs to the families of GiGi's Playhouse.

## Programs & Volunteers

*"The support we have received from GiGi's Playhouse has been amazing! GiGi's is the hug when you need it and the people who really understand what it's like (to have a child with Down syndrome). Talking with other parents and being able to ask*

*questions has been so helpful. I don't know where we would be without GiGi's Playhouse!"*  
-Molly Clyden, mom to Alyssa (2 years old), Bradley Playhouse





## Mark Your Calendar for the Celebration! GiGi's Fest 2014

Sunday, October 5th, 2014

**At the National Achievement Center in Hoffman Estates**

Watch the 2015 calendar kids strut their stuff down the red carpet! We'll have activities for the whole family: music, pony rides, bouncy houses, food and fun! Bring your family and friends to tour the National Achievement Center, GiGi University classrooms and Hugs & Mugs retail store! It's time to celebrate with our Chicagoland families, amazing volunteers, generous donors & members of the community! Let's party!!



The GiGi's 5k event was a huge success!!  
3,000 people came to celebrate Down syndrome  
"GiGi's style" at the Sears Center!!

## Upcoming events!

- GiGi's Golf Outing: Wednesday, August 13th at Bridges of Poplar Creek Country Club
- GiGi's Fest: Sunday, October 5th Come celebrate our 11th birthday and 1st anniversary!
- GiGi's "I Have a Voice" Gala : March 14, 2015 at Drury Lane in Oak Brook, IL

Please see [gigisplayhouse.org](http://gigisplayhouse.org) for details and contact Jayne Drew at [jdrew@gigisplayhouse.org](mailto:jdrew@gigisplayhouse.org) for Sponsorship Opportunities.

## Will you Believe?

#GiGisBelieves | GiGi's Monthly Giving Program

GiGi's Playhouse celebrates the achievements of our participants with Down syndrome every day. We believe we can change society's outdated perceptions of the amazing potential of individuals with Down syndrome. Become a GiGi's Believer and support our continued success and to help grow our mission. **We need believers like you.**

There are no Program Fees at GiGi's – Cost will never be a barrier to participation or achievement. But these programs do cost us and thus GiGi's Playhouse has an immediate, urgent and ongoing need for your support. Please don't let our program costs be a boundary to success!

Join our #GiGisBelieves Monthly Giving Program. **For less than a \$1 per day**, less than a third of the cost of a grande latte, you can make an impact. Your monthly gift to GiGi's can literally change lives – More will learn to read and write, more will gain self-confidence, more will improve their motor skills and social skills, and more program development for continued progress and achievement. The long-term outcomes of your monthly gift are courage, empowerment, and achievement. Please say "YES" - you are ready to make a difference through monthly giving.

**Need more incentive?** The first 25 online donors that pledge \$25 a month or more will receive a one-of-a-kind mug designed just for them by GiGi's Hugs and Mugs interns. Plus, everyone that pledges \$25 or more monthly during July and August entered into a drawing for 2 free tickets to the 2015 GiGi's Gala.

To become a **Believer**, please visit [gigisplayhouse.org](http://gigisplayhouse.org) and click on the I'm a believer button to donate or email Jayne Drew at [jdrew@gigisplayhouse.com](mailto:jdrew@gigisplayhouse.com). Everyone at GiGi's Playhouse thank you for your generosity.

**GiGi's Playhouse**  
Down Syndrome Achievement Center  
HOFFMAN ESTATES  
1<sup>st</sup> ANNUAL GOLF OUTING

Wednesday, August 13, 2014  
The Bridges of Poplar Creek Country Club

Cost: \$185/golfer or \$700/foursome  
(price includes: green fees, cart, bucket of range ball, box lunch and dinner)

Sponsorship opportunities available.  
Visit [www.gigisplayhouse.org](http://www.gigisplayhouse.org) for more information and to register!



Down Syndrome Achievement Centers  
2350 West Higgins Road  
Hoffman Estates, IL 60169

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#gigibelieves

2015 Calendar  
Coming Late Summer!

Our retail store, Hugs and Mugs has had a busy first quarter! They have made over 1600 mugs and served hundreds of customers! In fact 53% of their business is from parties! Yes, we know how to have a party! Birthdays, corporate or just because! To expand their career skill even more our interns have been busy in the commercial kitchens of our community partner American Baking company!



**HANDMADE • HEARTFELT • HOPE FILLED**

INTRODUCING the launch of our....

## V-21 Vitamin Cookie

Hugs and Mugs has partnered with American Baking Company to introduce the **V-21** Vitamin Cookie. Our newest creation is packed with 21 vitamins, minerals, antioxidants and most importantly, LOVE by our bakers with **T-21**. The reviews have all been great and the cookies are flying off the shelves! Stop by today or order on line. They are delicious and make great gifts!

Now that many are enjoying the **V-21**, our interns are headed back to the kitchen creating their next yummy treat. Their focus now is on creating the BEST Gluten Free Cookie. Yes, the **G-21** will be their next delicious creation. Stay tuned – It's coming soon.

This is what our mentor Christine enjoys most about working in the bakery – *“Our new friend Alex at the bakery is the greatest teacher. It is fun mixing, baking and counting the cookies and then packing them with my friends, Chris, Patrick and Nicole. We all worked as a team. We were all styling in our bakers coats and hats too”*



Good for one  
**FREE**  
V-21 Cookie

Bring this coupon in to our store and receive a FREE cookie.

2350 w. higgins road  
hoffman estates, il 60169