

GIGIFIT

ACCEPTANCE CHALLENGE

GIGIFIT ACCEPTANCE CHALLENGE FUNDRAISERS TOOLKIT



Hey there!

Thank you so much for wanting to help us create a more accepting world! By being a part of the GiGiFIT Acceptance Challenge, you are helping GiGi's Playhouse raise funds and awareness to help provide life-changing programs that prepare individuals with Down syndrome for the world!

Below is a toolkit for helping grow the impact of the GiGiFIT Acceptance Challenge. Included are helpful hints (from my own experiences!), key messaging, sample posts, graphics and more that you can use to assist with your fundraising efforts. Please share this far and wide with your followers, friends and family members. Please edit the suggested captions as you see fit - people love nothing more than supporting a cause with a unique, authentic story. Don't forget to use YOUR UNIQUE FUNDRAISING PAGE LINK when sharing your story. Then, be sure to tag us on Facebook, Instagram and LinkedIn for extra exposure!

The whole purpose of the GiGiFIT Acceptance Challenge is to bring awareness and exposure to as many people as possible! So, getting the word out about your fundraising efforts is essential to the success of this movement. Please let your GiGi's Playhouse location know if you have any questions/concerns or if you would like us to create any specific content geared directly to your followers.

Thank you so much for helping us change the way the world sees Down syndrome!

*Franco Gianni,
Proud Brother & Marketing and Development Strategist at
GiGi's Playhouse Inc.*



GETTING STARTED

Join the GiGiFIT Acceptance Challenge & Customize Your Fundraising Page

Use your fundraising page to your advantage! Be sure to personalize the message and set a profile photo. Of course, people support the GiGi's mission, but they are really supporting YOU. So, tell your story and let people know what they are really signing on to support!

- **Set a realistic goal.** Think about the types of people in your network and their abilities to commit. Are you trying to build a large team to attend the event or looking to hit the ground running with fundraising? **Here are some things to consider:**
 - If you are a parent wanting people to join your child's team, consider gearing your asks toward joining you as support at the event. The more people there to support, the merrier!
 - If you're an individual team member on someone else's team, introduce your network to the event! Not everyone who participates needs to be connected to Down syndrome, the purpose of the event is to create more understanding through exposure.
 - If you don't have a network that can give large amounts, consider asking more people for smaller amounts, or encourage them to join the movement and spread the word. Give them this toolkit!
- **Make a plan.** Who do you plan to ask and how do you plan to do it?
 - Social media may seem like an easy way to get people involved, but it is actually pretty difficult if not done correctly. People rarely give or join something without a direct ask.
 - Make a list of people you plan to ask along with an amount you think they may be willing to give.
 - For many, your immediate family members will be your largest donors (parents, spouses, siblings, aunts, uncles, etc.). These people often appreciate a phone call or personalized text with a specific ask. Make a list and stick to the plan!
 - On the other hand, someone like a coworker, friend, or extended family member may feel compelled to give because of the passion you conveyed in sharing your team! Be sure always to show appreciation regardless of the commitment or amount.
- **Ask early, ask often.** Don't wait! It's never too early to begin fundraising for an event. Many fundraisers think that they will annoy their networks with so many asks, but the opposite is true! Your network will see your commitment and feel even more compelled to give.
 - If your first social media post doesn't do so well, that's okay! Many people will see it and think, "Wow, that's a great cause - I'll give to that later," and then forget to do it. Make them remember by asking again and again.
 - Fundraising is like dating: A person can't say YES if you don't ask them!



GFAC MISSION STATEMENT

We, the people of the Down syndrome community, are challenging YOU to move for acceptance!!

The mission of the GiGiFIT Acceptance Challenge is to bring awareness and acceptance to every community that houses a GiGi's Playhouse and beyond. WE aim to project GiGi's Playhouse's mission of creating global acceptance for all to the masses through a fun-filled fitness event for the whole family.

Key Messaging:

The GiGiFIT Acceptance Challenge, a physical and social movement for acceptance

Ask: We, the people of the Down syndrome community, are challenging YOU to move for acceptance!!

Description: The GiGiFIT Acceptance Challenge is a peer-to-peer fitness event hosted by the Down syndrome community with the goal of creating universal acceptance of all people!

The Challenge: For you, your friends, and your family to move together in an effort to show your support and acceptance for the differences we ALL share.

The Mission: to bring awareness and acceptance to every community that houses a GiGi's Playhouse and beyond! We will work together to spread GiGi's Playhouse's mission of global acceptance for all through a fun-filled fitness event for the whole family!

Additional: The greatest fuel for intolerance is misunderstanding. The GiGiFIT acceptance challenge is not just a peer-to-peer fundraiser, it is an opportunity to learn and grow through exposure and understanding. This is the first and most crucial step in creating a truly accepting world! Hashtags: #MoveForAcceptance #AcceptanceChallenge #Acceptance #inclusion #GiGisPlayhouse

Where the money goes: All money raised will support GiGi's Playhouses' 100% free educational, therapeutic and social programming. GiGi's programs prepare individuals with Down syndrome for the world by instilling the confidence and life skills necessary to take on the world. But we can only do so much with programs, it is up to us to get the world ready for them!

MAPPING OUT YOUR ASKS

Let's Build Your Ask List! By only taking 10 minutes to sit and think through your network, you can create a fantastic starting point for growing your team! Write down five names for each category and see how fast this adds up:

Relatives:

Contacts Through Child's Associations:

Spouses Co-Workers or Connections:

Friends:

Social Group Contacts:

Coworkers:

People You Do Business With: (Dentist, doctor, hair stylist, gym, etc.)

Neighbors:

Friends of Friends or Looser Connections

With this list, you can now begin using the tools available below to target and capitalize on this list!

TEXT MESSAGE

Helpful hint: I have three words for you: SEND. THE. TEXT. It may be awkward to ask for money via text message, but I can say from personal experience that sending a text is by far the most effective way to get results. People feel inclined to AT LEAST respond to texts.

In 2023, I sent 25 text messages to friends of mine asking for a baseline ask (to join Team GiGi to show support). This is a low-level donation of signing up for \$30. 20 of those people answered immediately saying they would sign up (15 of those did without me pushing them). Three others responded that they could not give, and I followed with, "That's Okay! Could you at least send a meaningful ask to some people you know?" of which ten more people I did not know either joined or donated. Two did not answer - which could be for any number of reasons.

Overall, this means that over 60% of people contributed, which resulted in a huge success because several people donated \$50 or \$100 instead of the original \$30 ask!

Here is a suggested text (keep it short!):

Hi (NAME)! How's it going? I'm not sure if you heard, but I am participating in (Playhouse Location) GiGiFIT Acceptance Challenge event. The event is a physical and social movement for acceptance with a peer-to-peer fundraising campaign that goes toward funding free programs for (Kids or Adults) like (Loved ones name). It's an amazing event, and I was wondering if you would be interested in supporting my team by signing up or giving \$21 to support our efforts. I completely understand if you can't, of course! But if you're interested, here is the link to donate: YOUR UNIQUE TEAM PAGE LINK



EMAIL

Helpful hint: Sending an email can be super helpful in getting in with a variety of groups (local businesses, friends/family, work, sports teams, community groups, etc.). For this, I would suggest sending personalized emails. Craft your email to share your story and the importance of the event/fundraising campaign. People need to understand where the money is going and how it truly impacts you and the community.

Here is a suggested template email you can work from, feel free to make it your own! This features impressive information about the GiGi's influence.

Dear (INSERT NAME),

(ADD A PERSONAL HELLO) This year, I am participating in GiGi's Playhouse (location) (GiGiFIT Acceptance Challenge event title), taking place on have (enter day). I created my own team (or joined team) as I decided to participate in this physical and social movement for acceptance for a couple of reasons:

- My unbreakable support for (enter name and affiliation of loved one with DS)
- To help show our community that everyone should be accepted for who they are.
- To raise funds for GiGi's Playhouse's 100% free programs that are built to prepare people with Down syndrome for the world.
- To help spread the word and make a better world for all people!

In case you don't already know, GiGi's Playhouse is the only network of Down syndrome achievement centers that offer truly free programs for individuals of all ages. From prenatal diagnosis through adulthood, GiGi's makes a lifelong commitment to their families.

Each year, GiGi's Playhouse's across the country generates \$25 million in donations, with 95% of those funds going on to directly fund the growth and improvement of people with Down syndrome. It is this

donation revenue that keeps every resource 100% free to anyone. Each year, the GiGi's network provides over 300,000 program hours at no cost to families. Along with their programming, GiGi's mission is to change the way the world views Down syndrome by spreading a global message of acceptance for all!

I could go on and on about the amazing things that GiGi's does in their 60+ locations and worldwide through their virtual platform. But instead, I'd like to share my story and why I care so much about this cause.

(Write your story. Be raw and moving. Don't tell a story that will depress your recipient, make it so they can see the value in being a part of this fundraising campaign. So, they understand that hope is there, we just need help!)

Thank you for your consideration - I genuinely appreciate it, and our families do, too.

Sincerely,

(INSERT NAME)

SOCIAL MEDIA

Facebook/Instagram/Tik Tok

Helpful Hint: Posting on social media seems like a super easy way to raise money and get support in peer-to-peer fundraising campaigns, but it's harder than you think. It's easy to avoid signing up or donating because; it's not as personal, there is no pressure to decline or it goes unseen. The key is to make it as personal as possible to tap into people's emotions. I can give you as many copy-and-paste prompts as I can, but none will be stronger than a passionate story told by you. So, instead, I'll prompt you with ideas for posts:

Post Ideas:

- Share your favorite photo or video of your loved one to get the audience engaged.
 - Then make your writeup about how strong your love is for this person and how the only thing you care about is seeing a world that embraces them for who they are
- Make a video or post about the need for acceptance and inclusion of those with DS or other disabilities. (i.e.)
 - Kids in school are commonly separated due to having a disability, leading to isolation, lack of exposure, idea that our kids are not the same.
 - Lack of opportunities after graduating from school. Careers are hard to come by because of stigmas formed, limitations with social security, lack of exposure .
 - Bullying and the use of harmful language are still happening when so many other minority groups are being supported and backed by society.
 - We need our community to have a voice
 - Personal experiences that have led to your commitment using the Acceptance Challenge as a platform to create more acceptance.
- Talking about your experiences with your loved one and the love and appreciation you have for them.
 - Giving your original perspective of Down syndrome vs what it is now
 - How your child or loved one has excelled in ways you didn't expect?
 - Your favorite story related to someone with DS
 - What Down syndrome has taught you about life
 - What is your dream for your child or loved one
 - The impact that having someone with DS can have on your life
 - What a more accepting world looks like to you
- Sharing a video or picture from the perspective of your loved one or friend
 - What is your name, and can you tell us a little about you?
 - What does Down syndrome mean to you?
 - What is your dream in life?
 - What does acceptance mean to you?
 - What is your favorite part about GiGi's Play-house?
 - What is your greatest strength?
 - What do you want everyone to know about you?



SOCIAL MEDIA

Social Media: MAKE SURE TO INCLUDE

When it comes to fundraising, no good story is effective without a clear and simple ask or call to action. Make sure to include an ask at the tail end of any post you make. Don't forget to include;

- A powerful image or video (Make sure it's good quality).
- A specific call to action (To donate, click here, Sign up for my team here, and share this post to help grow the team ...).
- Link to the donation page or registration page.
- Hashtags:
 - #Moveforacceptance
 - #AcceptanceChallenge
 - #GFAC

Pay Attention to How You Share Your Link

Facebook: Sharing a link on Facebook is as simple as copying and pasting the link to your fundraising page into the post.

Instagram: Instagram makes adding a link to your post a bit more complicated. If you add a link to your post writeup, it will not be clickable for your followers, meaning it won't be used. DO NOT assume they will copy and paste the link, because Instagram won't allow them to only select the link, it will copy the whole writeup.

Solutions:

- Add the link to your Instagram bio in your account settings.
 - end post with "Visit the link in my bio to donate or sign up!"
- Create a Linktree account at www.linktree.com Linktree is a website that allows you to have multiple links to click though. Then add your Linktree link to your Instagram bio.
- Instagram Stories allows you to add links. Post a story encouraging people to visit the link.



SOCIAL MEDIA

LinkedIn / Appealing to Businesses

Helpful Hint: LinkedIn is an amazing resource in that it can connect you with businesses and business-minded individuals. This is a huge asset in the world of fundraising. This can bring opportunities for corporate matching (a company gifting a matching donation amount), sponsorships, volunteers and intercompany fundraising efforts.

Like all social media platforms, your personal story is what will lead to the greatest success. Share why you are joining and fundraising for the GiGiFIT Acceptance Challenge. For your call to action, feel free to use this:

“The GiGiFIT Acceptance Challenge has been strategically crafted to serve as a corporate Diversity, Equity and Inclusion (DEI) initiative, providing businesses with the opportunity to collaborate with GiGi’s events nationwide. Your company can participate in various ways:

- Host your exclusive 3rd party event using GiGi’s streamlined model, designed to minimize organizational efforts while maximizing the impact of spreading acceptance.

- [Become a Sponsor of the GiGiFIT Acceptance Challenge](#), gaining recognition at 55+ events nationwide, showcasing your commitment to fostering a more accepting world.
- Enlist your organization as volunteers for events across the country, contributing to the promotion of acceptance within communities.
- Explore Corporate Matching to boost fundraising efforts by offering a matching gift opportunity, providing extra incentives for contributions.

Regardless of your chosen level of commitment, GiGi’s Playhouse aims to resonate with as many hearts as possible. Together, we can collaboratively create a world that is more accepting and inclusive for all!”

For more information on how to get your company or organization involved with the GiGiFIT Acceptance Challenge, please contact info@Gigisplayhouse.org or reach out to your local location”

[Visit this page to download sample graphics](#)



OTHER HELPFUL HINTS

Word of Mouth

What is the easiest way for someone to recognize your passion for something? By TALKING to them about it! Not through text, or email or with a social post...use your mouth! Talk about your fundraising team through any casual conversation you may have with someone:

- ****OMG its so great to see you, what have you been up to?***
 - "Ya know, the same ole just keeping busy, oh but I am actually participating in this fun event coming up with GiGi's Playhouse. Called the GiGiFIT Acceptance Challenge, you should join my team its so simple..."
- Utilize your daily conversations! Yes, it is awkward when asking a friend for money, but like I said before, asking them to join you at an event feels much different!
- There are lots of other people to spread it to through these conversations
 - Church groups
 - Local Sports teams
 - Friend group or social circle
 - Local Business
 - Local gyms
 - Your kid's school

Support Your Team!

Gratitude is EVERYTHING in peer-to-peer fundraising! Sure, people give back to good causes because it's the right thing to do, BUT many do it for the acknowledgment. Don't be so quick to judge, we can all admit it feels good to be recognized for doing the right thing. Make sure that regardless of the level of the gift or support, you are expressing gratitude:

- Every time a new person joins your team, welcome them with a text or a social post!
- Create a group message with your team members, and post updates every time something comes in!
 - "Glenn Coco secured \$200 in donations for Team Max this week, you go Glenn Coco!!"

People want to be a part of something bigger than themselves, so by giving positive feedback and appreciation, you will build a lot of camaraderie around your team!

MAKE THE ASK!!

I say this because I am the king of it, when an idea comes to you about a potential donation or level of support, make the ask!! THEN AND THERE. Don't procrastinate and say, "I'll ask when I see them," or "ehh I'll ask next week" ... Do it then and there! Send a text, give them a call or go out and make the ask, the worst thing they can say it no.

Now go out there and help us build up the GiGiFIT Acceptance Challenge so we can show the world that everyone should be accepted for who they are!

GiGi's Playhouse is a 501(c)(3) charitable entity that is 99% volunteer run. From prenatal diagnosis through career skills, GiGi's makes a lifetime commitment providing FREE programs to support and empower families while sending a global message of acceptance for all.



DID YOU KNOW?

GiGi's Playhouse is the ONLY international network of Down Syndrome Achievement Centers created to provide FREE life-changing therapeutic and educational programs for individuals with Down syndrome and their families.



DID YOU KNOW?

There are now 58+ GiGi's Playhouse locations across the US and Mexico and we now serve families worldwide with our Virtual Playhouse!!



gigisplayhouse.org
info@gigisplayhouse.org | 847-885-7529



Down Syndrome Achievement Centers
educate. inspire. believe.