

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

**Special Olympian Silver Medalist Out Putts Competition | GiGi's Playhouse Down Syndrome Awareness Centers**

**HOFFMAN ESTATES, IL – August 20, 2014** – Avid golf enthusiasts and individuals who care deeply about GiGi's Playhouse programs and mission teed up for charity on **Wednesday, August 13<sup>th</sup>**. The **GiGi's Playhouse National Achievement Center 1st Annual Golf Outing** took place last week **The Bridges of Poplar Creek Country Club** in Hoffman Estates.

A beautiful and sunny day began with registration and a putting contest with GiGi's very own Special Olympic Silver Medalist, Matthew Kaman. Matt successfully out-putted most of his competition and raised money for GiGi's Playhouse in the process.

At 10:00am Nancy, Paul and GiGi Gianni, surrounded by our Hugs + Mugs interns, thanked the golfers for making a difference in the lives of kids and adults with Down syndrome and then sent the golfers off with a shotgun start. The Hugs+Mugs interns visited with foursomes throughout the day and Matt was industrious offering some impromptu golf challenges. A special thank you to the women golfers who volunteered their time with various golfing competitions throughout the day to help raise money for GiGi's Playhouse. They are Jacki Berardi from Dayton, Nicole Feierberg from Lehigh University and Tina Berardi from Denison.

Perhaps the most inspiring moment of the day was the speech delivered during dinner. We were pleased to feature one of our current GiGi University students, Aubrey Soukup. Aubrey shared how much she has grown over the past few months and the confidence she has gained since starting GiGi U this summer. Aubrey, Matt and the other interns were oozing self-confidence all day long – and she communicated it beautifully.

"We were blessed by the generosity and support of our sponsors, volunteers, players, and spectators who help make this event a success, and to the entire GiGi's team who create a fun and meaningful experience for the golfers." says Paul Gianni, Chairman of GiGi's Playhouse Inc. "Proceeds from this event will provide important funding for GiGi's Playhouse."

A special thank you to our sponsors, including Hilton Chicago, Alexian Brothers Women & Children's Hospital, Comprehensive Marketing and Industrial Source Inc. All of our sponsors helped ensure that this event was a big success. GiGi's Playhouse celebrates the many achievements of individuals and their families, develops new programs to benefit our participants, and works tirelessly to change society's outdated perceptions about the amazing potential of individuals with Down syndrome.

To donate online or for additional information about the **GiGi's Playhouse** and other event sponsorship opportunities, please see [gigisplayhouse.org](http://gigisplayhouse.org) or contact Jayne Drew at [jdrew@gigisplayhouse.org](mailto:jdrew@gigisplayhouse.org).

**About GiGi's Playhouse:** *GiGi's Playhouse is a 501(c)(3) tax-exempt charitable organization founded in 2003. GiGi's Playhouse is a series of unique Achievement Centers serving children and adults with Down syndrome. Each Playhouse makes a lifetime commitment to participants and their families, and each location provides unique educational and therapeutic programs in a format that individuals with Down syndrome learn best. All programs aim to maximize acceptance and self-confidence, and intend to empower children and adults to achieve their greatest potential. All educational, therapeutic and career training programs are offered to families at no charge. GiGi's Playhouse currently has 16 Playhouses in the US and Mexico. Plans are in place to bring the total number of Playhouses to 30 by the end of 2015. Last year, over 16,000 participants benefited from Playhouse programs. GiGi's Playhouse has been featured on **NBC Nightly News** with Kate Snow and Tom Brokaw's "An American Story" Radio Show.*

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