

Because of you... 2021 WAS AMAZING!



Down Syndrome Achievement Centers
educate. inspire. believe.

Dear Friends,

THANK YOU! Because of you and donors like you, GiGi's Playhouse Cincinnati has a bright future that looks very promising to open in 2022.

Just as everything else was affected by the pandemic in 2020 and 2021, we also struggled in many ways. We officially launched our start up efforts with a Meet and Greet with Nancy and GiGi on March 4th of 2020. Just one week later everything was shut down. Starting a nonprofit during the pandemic was not easy. We had our own home-life completely disrupted and were balancing suddenly having to do it all. Our start up team at the time was made up of all parents of children with Down syndrome and some of us have more children with special needs as well. It was probably crazy not to stop then and give up. But at the same time, the need was bigger than ever.

We dug deep and persevered with circumstances that were extremely difficult for even the most established nonprofits. We had a support system that not only included our own friends and families, but also included an entire network. We were excited that the national network was able to provide virtual programs so quickly. While most schools and other organizations were still trying to figure it out, GiGi's Playhouse Inc. took action. They were one of the first to introduce virtual programs which became the norm several months into it. But what excited us the most is that our area would now be able to experience GiGi's Playhouse before we open! They would get to see the programs and get much-needed support and resources free, anytime and anywhere!

The national office continued to support the network with developing the first network-wide virtual fundraiser that was so needed at the time, Step to Accept. This fundraiser came at a time when the country was becoming more and more divided and Step to Accept was there to bring people together with one purpose, to accept others differences.

In March of 2021, we broke out in much-needed laughter for the 1st annual Brew HaHa! We were one of the first in-person events just after things opened up after the pandemic, which was taking a big leap of faith for our team. The Brew HaHa was a huge success and that raised over \$10,000 in about 5 minutes for our Fund-A-Need. Everyone enjoyed so many inspiring speakers and much-needed laughter. Our goal was to change the way the world views Down syndrome and our entertainment brought that message home with Rob Snow and the Improvaneers. We look forward to a bigger and better Brew HaHa on March 5, 2022.

The start up team has grown so much over the last few years. I am humbled, honored and proud to lead this amazing team as the newly elected president of the Cincinnati executive board. I am grateful for every volunteer and donor that has helped along the way. We are stronger than ever, and I am confident the greater Cincinnati community will see the GiGi's Playhouse Cincinnati Grand Opening in 2022, because of YOU!

"GiGi's isn't just a place, it is people, people like all of you who continue to believe in us and help us change the world." - Nancy Gianni

THANK YOU!

Amy Pennington
GiGi's Playhouse Cincinnati Start Up Team Lead



Because of you...

WE'RE GROWING



Cincinnati Start Up Team

We have voted in board members!

During the December, 2021 start up team meeting, we voted in executive board members, taking the first step to formalizing the local board. We continue to run as a start up team with over 20 members. These members are parents, grandparents, students and community members who are passionate, dedicated, and include different backgrounds to make up this dynamic team. The executive board members voted in are Amy Pennington, President; Christine Veotte, Vice President; Fredrick Brushaber, Treasurer, and Ann Poirier, Secretary.

By The Numbers

GiGi's Playhouse is a 99% volunteer run, donation-funded non-profit organization that takes pride on running itself like a business. General administration only counts for 5% of our functional expenses and our programs are FREE!

Like every business, the pandemic affected our bottom line. We didn't let that stop us: we used the adversity as a springboard to diversify our programs and our program delivery, pivoting to virtual program delivery within weeks of the global shutdown, reaching many previously underserved rural and urban communities in the US, and growing the GiGi's family to encompass individuals and communities in 77 countries.

GiGi's Playhouse Cincinnati is almost here!

Cincinnati is in the second phase moving into phase three.

Your start up team is working hard to locate and plan a build out for the future playhouse. We have made significant strides in fundraising after the Brew HaHa fundraising event and look forward to laughing for a cause with the 2nd Annual Brew HaHa on March 5, 2022! We have raised over \$85,000 of the \$250,000 needed to open. We partnered with local nonprofits and gained support from local donors like Mitsubishi Electric, Henny Penny, and Miami Valley Gaming. The goal is to complete the build out, training, hire a cite coordinator, and celebrate our Grand Opening in 2022!



View the 2021
GiGi's Playhouse Inc
Annual Report

"We have seen a tremendous improvement in our son. His movements and emotions have been greatly impacted by our interactions in the LMNOP program. We have also received resources which have allowed us to connect with other families with children with Down syndrome. It's a huge support knowing that there is an organization like GiGi's out there willing to help and care for families like us!"

- Maria M., GiGi's Parent

