



GiGi's Playhouse™
Down Syndrome Awareness Centers

www.gigisplayhouse.org

GIGI'S NEWS

Loving a child with Down syndrome is contagious... Help us spread the love!

Hoffman Estates

Plainfield

McHenry

Chicago

Now Serving **4** Locations

NOVEMBER 2008

Calling All Siblings!

GiGi's Playhouse is holding a Siblings Contest! Winners will receive a prize and have an opportunity to read their speeches at various public venues, including the 2009 Gala with CBS News Anchor, Rob Johnson! Winner will also be featured on our new Siblings Video! Being a sibling of a brother or sister with Down syndrome can be a very unique experience and we want to hear from YOU! So we are having a contest where siblings can describe how their brother or sister with Down syndrome has touched their life!

When GiGi was born, her dad said "Imagine what better kids Franco and Bella are going to be because of GiGi!" And he was right; the compassion and sensitivity that they have is incredible! Here are their thoughts on how GiGi has touched their life. Read theirs and then send yours in!



Franco Gianni 6th grade — 11 years old

GiGi means everything to me. When I look at her I am always happy. Every time she smiles it makes me smile.

Since she is losing a tooth I know she is growing up and I can't help it. I am mad that she is growing up because I don't want that awesome little girl to get big. But every time I look at her face I will know she will always be my little sis.

I fear that when she grows up people will make fun of her for something that she isn't. They might think she is not smart or different and weak but I know she is the

opposite of all of those things.

She is one of the best things that ever happened to me and I hope people get to see her the way I do. According to all of my friends she is the most popular girl in Barrington and has more attitude than anyone I know. She also is the funniest person I know! She she dances, sings and copies me all the time! If she was not in our family

things would not be as fun as they are now in our house. I thank God everyday that I had a sister with Down syndrome and it didn't ruin my life; it made it better.

Bella 2nd grade — 8 years old

My sister GiGi has so many talents. Like gymnastics, because she is an awesome gymnast. She is a very active girl. She always has something on her mind. She does a lot of things I did when I was little. I am not afraid of Down syndrome because I know GiGi and she can do anything that we do. Sometimes we help her but she never gives up. She is supposed to have muscles that don't work like mine but she is really strong and she is my best friend.

Parents:

Encourage your children to submit their story to GiGi's Playhouse. We want to hear from them! The winner will be chosen in January and will read their story at the Gala on February 7th. You can mail your story to: 1069 West Golf Road, Hoffman Estates, IL 60169 or email to info@gigisplayhouse.com. Submit your story by December 8th.

We look forward to hearing from you!

What a Party!



Our 5 year anniversary party was a BLAST! We had 100s of people celebrating with us! Not even the rain could stop us from spreading awareness about Down syndrome! A special thanks to Mayor Bill McLeod for supporting us year after year and to Leonardo for energizing the crowd

with his great music! Our Friday Friends greeted each Calendar model as they walked the red carpet and Christine Maxwell shared with the crowd what GiGi's Playhouse means to her. Look inside for pictures of this great event and the sponsors who made it possible!

Save the Date

February 7, 2009
Spread the Love Gala

Reading Workshop Saturday, November 15th

Jerri Lynn will be presenting a **Reading Workshop** for parents of children with Down syndrome. She will be teaching parents how to facilitate reading beginning at birth, in fun practical ways.

If you would like to improve your child's reading ability, regardless of age, you don't miss this wonderful **FREE** opportunity. This workshop will be at the McHenry Playhouse. Please RSVP to **815.385.PLAY**.

GiGiFest 2008

OUR 5 YEAR ANNIVERSARY PARTY

Our Sponsors

Butera
 Assured Services
 Schaumburg Jaycee's
 Tommy's Red Hots
 Hot Breads
 Brown's Chicken
 McDonald's
 Dover Straits
 Infiniti
 Wendy's
 Ronald McDonald
 Starbucks
 Party Hoppers
 Perfect Valet
 Hoffman Estates Police Dept.
 Leonardo
 Goebberts
 Domino's Pizza
 Ken Ristich
 Home Run Inn Pizza
 Jewel



Spreading Hope Through Neighbors

Since our daughter Natalie was born I have come across many people who have not met a child with Down syndrome. It's funny how much she has to teach the world. The day after she was born was as difficult for us as any other family who has a child with a diagnosis of Down syndrome, but one thing my husband said plays over again and again in my mind. He said he was excited because "I want to show everyone how great she will be." He meant every word. We have always been so fortunate to have a supportive family. At that time, my mom mentioned I should check out GiGi's Playhouse and see what it's all



about. Since our first visit we have been actively playing the role of those we first met, being a friend who understands. One of our neighbors told us of the birth of their niece, who was diagnosed with Down syndrome, a little over a year ago. I was so excited to meet the family and let them know everything was going to be ok. The problem was they lived in Ohio. Well a couple weeks ago we got to meet Miley (20 mos). She, of course, is the cutest little girl! She loved to see all the kids play. She also



was interested in everything Natalie (3 1/2 yrs) was trying to communicate to her. This was the first time Laura (Miley's mom) had contact with another little one with Down syndrome. We shared our stories and marveled at what each of the kids could do. Laura was excited to see Natalie and we talked about how she is planning to go to a play group with other families who have children with Down syndrome. She was now excited to join her group back in Ohio. We plan to keep in touch and visit when she comes in town. It just made me realize how grateful we are for having a place to meet that friend who understands.

McHenry—

"Believe in a Wish"

We invite you to join us for the 1st Annual GiGi's Playhouse Holiday Fashion Show and Luncheon. On **Sun., November 16th**, over 200 guests will come together at D'Andrea Banquet & Conference Center to celebrate the love we have for individuals with Down syndrome and help to make our holiday wishes come true.

The fashion show will feature contemporary styles for children and parents from Coldwater Creek, Gymboree, Discover Clothing, WoobieWear, Amazing Gracie's Children's Shoppe and more. Attendees will enjoy a delicious luncheon to be coordinated with the show, along with the incredible opportunity for raffle prizes



from Learning Express, Dick's Sporting Goods, One of a Kind by Glenda, Discovery Toys and a growing list of wishes come true. The first 100 guests will receive a fabulous package from Opulence Salon and Spa. So be sure to purchase your tickets early!

Tickets are \$40 for adults and \$20 for children and can be purchased from the Playhouse direct or online at events.org. For more information on buying tickets or tables, donating to the raffle wish list, or sponsoring an ad in the program, contact sdubois@gigisplayhouse.org. D'Andrea Banquet and Conference Center is located at 4419 Northwest Highway in Crystal Lake.

Plainfield—

Evening Open Play



Our last weekend of the summer was spent with our friends at the park. Join us **Friday, Nov. 14th** from 6-8pm for pizza

and fun! It is a great time to give thanks for the special people we have in our lives. We will do that by creating a wreath of thanks. Please RSVP the number of adults and children attending to glatka@gigisplayhouse.org by Wednesday, November 12th.



Programs & Activities!

Look at all of our free educational programs and activities! Check your local Playhouse calendar to see times and dates.

- 2 & Under Playgroup** ♦ Families with children 2 and under get together and play while the parents network with each other. Siblings always welcome.
- Crawlers** ♦ This group focuses on crawling skills as well as fine motor skills, social interaction with peers in a semi-structured environment.
- Walkers** ♦ This group focuses on post walking skills with peers to prepare children for school activities (balance beam, kicking, throwing, jumping, etc.).
- Hop, Skip & Jumpers** ♦ This program helps promote friendships, social skills, and interactive play through fun creative activities! For preschool and kindergartners (3-5yr olds).
- Playhouse Pals** ♦ This structured playgroup focuses on developing friendships and confidence all while having a great time! 1st -3rd grades (6-8yr olds).
- Kids Club** ♦ This fast paced group incorporates social, communication and confidence-building skills and activities! 4th-8th grades (9-12 yr olds)
- Teen-Tastic** ♦ What a party! We order pizza for dinner and have lots of fun watching movies and playing games with each other. 9th-12th grades (13-17 yr olds).

- Friday Friends** ♦ Karaoke, dances, softball games — the fun never ends! Adults 18 + over.
- Nuestros Angeles** ♦ Spanish speaking families gather for food, fun, friendship and education!
- Polish Group** ♦ What a party! Many Polish speaking families attend this group each month to meet other families and have a great time together!
- Open Play** ♦ Come on over for pizza, pop and fun! Everyone is welcome to this weekly gathering of networking and friendship building.
- Literacy** ♦ Our free Literacy program teaches kids with Downs syndrome how to read the way that they learn best!! This is by appointment only — call your local Playhouse for more info.
- Daddy & Me** ♦ Dads, bring your kids and meet other fathers in your area! What a great time to hang out with your kids while meeting new people.
- Reserve it!** ♦ The Playhouse can be reserved for any Down syndrome function or other special needs group. Call your local Playhouse for more info.

*Children must always be accompanied by a parent/adult

SUN	MON	TUE	WED	THUR	FRI	SAT						
<h1>November</h1>						1						
2	3	Literacy 1:30-3pm 	4	Literacy 10am-2:15pm Literacy 3:30-5:15pm Special Intentions 7-9pm 	5	Open Play 12:30-2pm Literacy 5:30-7:45pm  	6	7	8	Crawlers 9-9:45am 2 & Under 10-11:30am Hop, Skip & Jumpers Noon-1:30pm Literacy 3:30-5:45pm 		
Nuestros Angeles Hispanic Playgroup 11am-1pm 	9	Phonics Training 7-9pm	10	Literacy 1:30-3pm 	11	Literacy 10am-2:15pm 	12	Open Play 12:30-2pm Literacy 5:30-7:45pm  	13	14	15	
16	Literacy 10am-2:15pm Board of Directors Meeting 7pm 	17	Literacy 1:30-3pm 	18	Literacy 3:30-5:15pm 	19	Open Play 12:30-2pm Wendy's Fundraiser 4-8pm Golf & Roselle Rd. Literacy 5:30-7:45pm 	20	21	22	Kids Club 10-11:30am Literacy 3:30-5:45pm  	
Polish Playgroup 11am-1pm 	23	Literacy 10am-2:15pm	24	Literacy 1:30-3pm 	25	26	27	28	29	30	29	30
							 Happy Thanksgiving					

Kids Club Nov. 22nd

Kids Club is an active group of 8-12 year old kids who meet once a month. Some of our recent activities included a beautiful morning in the park doing relay races, playing games and making bubble wands which made gigantic bubbles! This month we had a blast with a silly dance contest (creative movement), had a balloon toss, and did some fun "get to know you" activities by playing trivia games. We had fun decorating greeting cards and bookmarks for our friends and families. We are gearing up for our Nov. 22nd



Kids Club — we will be hosting "Kids Club Got Talent Show" where all the kids will showcase their talents (singing, dancing, storytelling, musical).

Kids Club is open to ALL kids who are 8-12 years old and we would love to invite some 8-12 year olds who do not have Down syndrome to join in our fun each month! Call **847.885.7529**!

In Memory Of...

A friend of GiGi's Playhouse, Luda Jackanin, passed away suddenly in August. Luda is survived by her husband and their three children. Luda's daughter Caroline, who is 8, has Down syndrome. Anyone interested in donating to help the family can donate at any Harris Bank location to: Benefit to Luda's Children, account 4803928525.

FridayFriends

December 19th is the Holiday Bowling party! We are not meeting in the month of November.

Educator Open House

Teachers from Early Childhood through High School, therapists and social workers all networked at our Educators Open House. Everyone gained an understanding of GiGi's Playhouse and our Literacy Program and had a chance to take resources back to their schools. The evening gave teachers from several districts a chance to net-



Thank You Kimberly Clark!

A team of 40 volunteers from Kimberly Clark offices all over the United States spent an afternoon helping with many projects at the Hoffman Playhouse! 1500 Newsletters were folded and labeled for mailing, information packets and Celebration packets for new families were created, storage units for our literacy program were assembled, literacy books were created — we are so grateful for the all of the work they did for the Playhouse!

work with teachers from other schools. "Schools learned that GiGi's is a resource for teachers as well as parents and how we can all partner together," said Sarah Hogan, Hoffman Estates BOD. Feedback about future topics to continue these relationships is welcome, call **847.885.7529** as we plan future Open House topics!

November

							<p>Literacy Program 8:30am-Noon 2 & Under 9:30-11am 3-4 Year Old Playgroup 11am-Noon</p> 
<p>2</p>	<p>Literacy Program 4:30-5:30pm</p> 	<p>Literacy Program 4-5:30pm</p> 	<p>Literacy Program 4:30-5pm Literacy Program 6:30-8:30pm</p> 	<p>Literacy Program 4:30-5pm</p> 	<p>7</p>	<p>Literacy Program 8:30-9:30am Daddy & Me 3-4:30pm</p>  	
<p>9</p>	<p>Literacy Program 4:30-5:30pm</p> 	<p>Literacy Program 4-5:30pm</p> 	<p>Literacy Program 4:30-5pm</p> 	<p>Literacy Program 4:30-5pm Wendy's Fundraiser in Plainfield 5-8pm</p> 	<p>Evening Open Play 6-8pm</p> 	<p>Literacy Program 8:30-9:30am Playhouse Pals 2-4pm</p> 	
<p>16</p>	<p>Literacy Program 4:30-5:30pm</p> 	<p>Literacy Program 4-5:30pm</p> 	<p>Literacy Program 4:30-5pm</p> 	<p>Literacy Program 4:30-5pm</p> 	<p>21</p>	<p>Literacy Program 8:30-9:30am Pre-Crawlers 9-10am Crawlers 10-11am RSVP 630.423.4035 Hop, Skip & Jumpers 10:30am-Noon RSVP 630.335.4824</p>	
<p>Nuestros Angeles Hispanic Group 11am-1pm</p> 	<p>Literacy Program 4:30-5:30pm</p> 	<p>Literacy Program 3-6pm</p> 	<p>Literacy Program 4:30-5pm</p> 	<p>27</p>  <p>Happy Thanksgiving</p>	<p>28</p>	<p>29</p>	
<p>30</p>	<p>Literacy Program 4:30-5:30pm</p> 	<p>Literacy Program 3-6pm</p> 	<p>Literacy Program 4:30-5pm</p> 	<p>27</p>  <p>Happy Thanksgiving</p>	<p>28</p>	<p>29</p>	

Nuestros Angeles Hispanic Play Group

My name is Monica Archbold and I am the group coordinator for the Nuestros Angeles group in Plainfield. I grew up in Peru, South America and moved to the United States in 1996.

When GiGi's in Plainfield opened we felt honored to be asked to be the leader of the Hispanic Playgroup in Plainfield. Because of our involvement as a NADS support family in the Aurora area we had several families who invited the opportunity to help establish the new playgroup. Our meetings are very informal and provide us a place to relax in a familiar atmosphere. While Spanish is the language we have in common, we come from different cultures from throughout the world. The main purpose of our group is to share our stories and listen to other's experiences with their therapists, doctors and their child's experience at school. We often find that someone in the group has experienced or knows someone that has experienced the same situations. They are then able to provide insights we have not considered before. Check your local calendar to see when the Nuestros Angeles meets!



Mi nombre es Monica Archbold y soy la coordinadora del grupo de juego de Hispanos en Plainfield. Crecí en Perú (america del sur) y me mudé a los EEUU en 1996.

Cuando Gigis en Plainfield fue abierto fue un honor ser nombrada la líder del grupo de juego de Hispanos en el area de Plainfield. Debido a nuestra participación como voluntaria en dar soporte a familias en Nads en el area de Aurora, teniamos varias familias que invitar a dar la oportunidad de ayudar a establecer el nuevo grupo de juego Hispano. Nuestras reuniones son muy informales y proporciona un lugar para relajarse en una atmósfera familiar.

Mientras español es el idioma que nosotros tenemos en común, y venimos de diferentes culturas latinas. El propósito principal del grupo es de compartir nuestras historias y escuchar a otras experiencias con sus terapeutas, doctores y las experiencias del niño en la escuela. Nosotros a menudo encontramos a alguien en el grupo que ha experimentado a sabe de alguien que ha pasado por una situación igual. Ellos son luego capaces de proveer penetraciones o soluciones que nosotros no hemos considerado antes.
























1st Annual Doubles Bag Toss Tournament

Thanks to all of our teams and volunteers who came out to support us! We had a beautiful day and a lot of fun!

You all helped raise \$1200! Rosati's helped us distribute pizzas and Chiro PV Solutions was available to give free spinal screenings. Our first place team was Rob Jordan and Kristin Didier, coming in at second place was Bill Cahill and Ron Citta, and at third place Mark and Julie Weissmann. The Wau-bonsee Valley Girls volleyball team also came out in support of GiGi's.

A special thank you goes out to Merlin Muffler in Aurora for their sponsorship! Overall it was a fun, friendly competition. Hope we see all of you again next year!



SUN	MON	TUE	WED	THUR	FRI	SAT						
<h1>November</h1>						1						
2	Literacy 4-6pm 	3	Open Play 10am-Noon Literacy 3:15-7pm  	4	Literacy 4-7pm 	5	Literacy 10-11am Literacy 1:30-2:30pm Wildtree Ladies Night Out RSVP 	6	7	Open Play 10:30-Noon 	8	
9	Literacy 4-6pm 	10	Open Play 10am-Noon Literacy 3:15-7pm Wendy's Fundraiser 5-8pm 	11	Literacy 4-7pm Sign 'til Dawn 5:30-6:30pm RSVP 	12	Literacy 10-11am Literacy 1:30-2:30pm Options & Advocacy Playgroup 10-11:30am 	13	Teen-Tastics 7pm 	14	Reading Workshop 1-3pm 	15
16	1st Annual Holiday Fashion Show & Luncheon	17	Literacy 4-6pm 	18	Open Play 10-11:30am Literacy 3:15-7pm 	19	Literacy 4-7pm 	20	Literacy 10-11am Literacy 1:30-2:30pm 	21	Hop, Skip & Jumpers 10-11:30am 	22
23	Daddy & Me 9-11am 	24	Literacy 4-6pm 	25	Open Play 10am-Noon Literacy 3:15-7pm  	26	Literacy 4-7pm 	27	 Happy Thanksgiving	28	29	30

Hop, Skip & Jumpers

Our Hop, Skip and Jumpers program is coordinated by volunteer and mom, Jennifer Hora. Our three to five year olds got to prepare for pre-school by cutting and pasting with a seasonal fruit project. We made paper cutouts of fruit and then got to enjoy the real thing. What a yummie playtime!



Friday Friends

The wild and wacky Friday Friends group is up to fun and mischief. They spent an evening tie-dying GiGi's t-shirts and hankees.



Open Play

Open Play has never been so much fun, and so delicious, since Chris Cronin joined the group. Chris's parents own four local Domino's Pizza stores and have graciously donated our playtime snack each week for Open Play. Chris enjoys "horsing around" at the Playhouse with his new friends. Remember, Open Play is for EVERYONE.... siblings, parents, grandparents and friends.



Ladies Night Out!

Nov. 6th

A Wildtree Cooking Party is planned for the McHenry Playhouse on **Thurs., November 6th**, at 7pm.

Let's face it, most of us do not cook from scratch anymore. To make life easier, Wildtree offers gourmet culinary blends, oils, dressings and sauces to easily prepare natural, nutritious, and delicious foods. Ladies (no kids please) join us for a fundraiser that will help you, your families and the Playhouse. 30% of the proceeds from the cooking party will be donated directly back to the McHenry Playhouse. Please RSVP to sdubois@gigisplayhouse.org or call Sadie at **815.385.7529**.




1st Annual Holiday Fashion Show and Luncheon

Nov. 16th

When: **Sun., Nov. 16, 2008**
Noon-4pm

Where: D'Andrea Banquets in Crystal Lake www.dandreaabanquets.com/
For more info, call **815.385.PLAY** or email sdubois@gigisplayhouse.org
Register online now at www.gigisplayhouse.org

CHICAGO

SUN	MON	TUE	WED	THUR	FRI	SAT
<h1>November</h1>						Open Play 10:15-11:30am 1 
Nuestros Angeles Hispanic Group 11:15am-1:15pm 2 	Literacy 1-7pm 3 	Literacy 4-7pm 4 	Literacy 11am-5:30pm 5 Open Play 5-6:30pm  	Open Play 11:30am-1pm 6 Literacy 3-7pm  	In-house Fundraiser 6:30-9pm 7	Playhouse Pals 11:15am-12:45pm 8
Daddy & Me 11:15am-1:15pm 9 	Literacy 1-7pm 10 	Literacy 4-7pm 11 	Literacy 11am-5:30pm 12 Open Play 5-6:30pm  	Literacy 3-7pm 13 Volunteer Night 6:30-8:30pm New Parent Packet Creation 	14	Open Play 10:15-11:30am 15 Kids Club Noon-1:30pm Private Party 3-5pm 
16	Literacy 1-7pm 17 	Literacy 4-7pm 18 	Literacy 11am-5:30pm 19 Open Play 5-6:30pm  	Open Play 11:30am-1pm 20 Literacy 3-7pm  	Friday Friends 7-9pm 21 	Crawlers 10-10:45am 22 2 and Under 11am-12:15pm Hop, Skip & Jumpers 12:30-2pm 
23	Literacy 1-7pm 24 	Literacy 4-7pm 25 	Literacy 11am-5:30pm 26 Open Play 5-6:30pm  	27  Thanksgiving	28	29
30			 			

Donors

The Chicago Playhouse would like to thank our recent donors.

David and Vicki Van Alphen generously donated a computer, stereo equipment, storage shelves and many other much needed items. David has an art gallery in Chicago and has decided to close the doors so he can do what he truly loves to do; (besides his art) stay at home with his son Jack. Sharon Murphy, a generous Playhouse supporter, recently donated a bouncy house (so much fun), books and games. Sharon is excited about the new Chicago location and is one of our biggest fans! Thank you to Dave, Vicki, and Sharon. We need these items like you wouldn't believe!



"More!"

That is the word 2 year old Richard Jegen kept signing during his first tutoring session. Lisa Jegen, mom and Chicago board member, was eager to enroll Richard in the literacy program. After receiving positive feedback from other parents she knew this would be a great opportunity for Richard to get a head start on reading prior to beginning school this November. Richard's tutor Judy was wonderful. She knew that Richard loved animals so she focused the session around this topic. Richard was so engaged! Mom was thrilled when she saw Richard's reaction to the tutor. As it turns out, Richard isn't the only one asking for more! The literacy program is in high demand at the Chicago location. Currently, we have 6 volunteers tutoring 22 children per week and another 10 children on the waiting list. The Chicago Playhouse is looking for a dedicated and organized individual to serve as the literacy coordi-



nator. Please contact the Chicago Playhouse if you are interested in this opportunity.

save the date

On **Saturday, December 20th**, a Pastry Chef from the **Le Cordon Bleu Culinary School** will be conducting a Gingerbread House workshop at the Chicago Playhouse. This will be a hands-on event and EVERYONE will get to participate. We can't wait to see the beautiful creation!!! Call **773.583.PLAY** to RSVP.

Dec. 20th



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Hoffman Estates, IL 60169



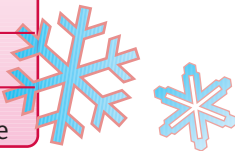
Save the Date!
Holiday Parties

Breakfast with Santa
Dec. 13th, 9:30-11:30am

New Year's Eve at Noon!
Dec. 31st, 11am-1pm

Please rsvp to:
info@gigisplayhouse.org.

These parties are held at:
Hoffman Estates Playhouse



It's Here!!

This calendar was designed to INSPIRE you the way our children INSPIRE us everyday! They show us the power of a smile, the selflessness of forgiveness and the beauty of pure love.



The coolest thing about this calendar is that it is interactive so children and adults can perform these simple daily actions to become better people.

To help track your success we have provided a box to place a check mark in each day that you make a difference in someone's life, whether it is a smile, a helping hand, a pat on the back or just a simple heart felt laugh! Imagine seeing 365 check marks for both you and your children at the end of the year!!

Go to **gigisplayhouse.org** to order yours today.
It makes a great holiday gift.

Tis the Season...

Have someone on your holiday list who is hard to buy for? How about a donation to GiGi's Playhouse in their honor? Please contact your local Playhouse.
Thanks for your support!!!

Hoffman Estates

1069 West Golf Road
Hoffman Estates, IL 60169
847.885.PLAY

Plainfield

10052 South Bode Road, Unit D
Plainfield, IL 60585
630.778.PLAY

McHenry

1720 North Richmond Road
McHenry, IL 60050
815.385.PLAY

Chicago

3660 West Irving Park Road
Chicago, IL 60618
773.583.PLAY

Locations



This month's newsletter is dedicated to Tammy Kaplin Newbury and Metro Exhibits for their time and talent devoted to the creation of the "i have a voice" Travelling Gallery. Thank You!! You are making a difference in this world!