



Down Syndrome Awareness Centers

educate. inspire. achieve.

September 2010

Newsletter

www.gigisplayhouse.org
info@gigisplayhouse.org

Hoffman Estates Location
1069 W. Golf Rd.
Hoffman Estates, IL 60169
847.885.PLAY (7529)

Fox Valley Location
4024 Fox Valley Center Dr.
Aurora, IL 60504
630.778.PLAY (7529)

McHenry Location
5404 W. Elm St. Suite A.
McHenry, IL 60050
815.385.PLAY (7529)

Rockford Location
8801 N 2nd
Machesney Park, IL 61115

NEW! Chicago Location
3948 N Lincoln Ave
Chicago, IL 60613
773.583.PLAY (7529)

Sioux City Location
1551 Indian Hills Drive,
Suite 7
Sioux City, Iowa 51104
712.226.PLAY (7529)

Des Moines Location
10430 New York Ave
Suite A
Urbandale, IA 50322
515.252.PLAY (7529)

A Night to Remember!

Be a part of something new and exciting! If you have ever been to a GiGi's event then you know about the high energy, the inspiration and the excitement that you feel the moment you arrive. We are taking it across the country! The GiGi's Playhouse Gala is going National! The fabulous *i have a voice* black tie event will now represent the 5 Chicagoland locations, PLUS Atlanta, New York, Sioux City and Des Moines are going to join us **live via satellite** from their events on the same evening! When we share our message, we will be speaking to venues all across the country!

The awareness and marketing opportunities are endless! Our sponsors will not only reach their local markets but markets across the country! Please email Nancy at ngianni@gigisplayhouse.org to find out how your company can help us out! (and how we can help them!) We still have committee spots available for this event and volunteers are always needed!

Be a part of this ground breaking event!!

have a voice
national event

Tutor Meet and Greet!

The Literacy program at each Playhouse is doing amazing things and much of that credit goes to our trained tutors! We have implemented a new Tutor Meet and Greet prior to the beginning of each Literacy session. It's a great opportunity for the tutors to meet the students and families and get to know each other. This allows the 1st session to focus on learning!



GiGiFest! It's our 7th Annual Birthday Celebration!

Can you believe GiGi's has been open for 7 years! And there are 7 Playhouses with 2 more on their way! **Join us on October 3rd from 12-3 at the Hoffman Estates location as we all celebrate together!** You don't want to miss the 2011 calendar models as they walk down the red carpet at the calendar unveiling!



Tutor Creation

Irene is one of our amazing Hoffman tutors, and she created a fun lesson for one of her active students! She started with one of our Literacy books, "I can... sing, dance, jump" and took it to a new level! Here is her story about her session this week:

This book was perfect because the sight words are verbs that can be performed in the Playhouse. I created stations with each sight word around the play area. I placed a "climb" flashcard in front of the ladder. Before my student could climb the ladder, she had to match the sight word with the picture.

Once she climbed the ladder, she found the "slide" flash card, and after she matched this flashcard, she would be rewarded with a ride down the slide!

These activities were great because it extended her attention span!

Next, we moved to the Literacy room where I set up the "I See Colors" book. Stations were set up with colors and I placed a matching ball at each one. She matched words with the colors of each ball, and then would shoot the ball into a bucket.

She loves music! We went back to the little stage in the Playhouse where flashcards said "dance" and "sing" and then we read a book. When reading the book she matched the words with pictures. After reading the book, we ended the session let the Barney CD play to celebrate.

What a great way to motivate students!



New York Here We Come!

If you are interested in helping with New York location, join their facebook page or email nyc@gigisplayhouse.org

FIELD DAY!

In early July at the annual reunion football games at McHenry High School, we had a Field Day, organized, planned and carried out by the Varsity football players from the school. Sixteen ball players planned the entire day. They came up with the activities (from an obstacle course to ball throwing races), brought in the necessary equipment and even made elaborate signs to identify the designated play areas. Each ball player paired up spontaneously with one of the kids from GiGi's as a "buddy" and guided them through the games. We never saw so much laughing, running and hugging, and I don't mean just from our little kids. A few times we caught some of the players looking in awe at the energy of our youngsters. Afterwards, each football player called down their partner from the bleachers, presented them with a ribbon and certificate and said something about the child. It was a spectacular day! We overheard a few of them ask when they could get together with "their" kid again! We started out to develop a new activity for our kids and ended up jump-starting a new tradition for the McHenry High School football team.

Wine Tasting Presenting the *i have a voice* Traveling Gallery!

The Traveling Gallery will be hosted by the Cherry Vale Mall, just outside of Rockford, from August 26th – Sept 23rd. Join us for the opening reception and wine tasting on Sunday, August 29th! We will be showcasing the Gallery and its' inspirational photos while welcoming GiGi's Playhouse to the Rockford Community! Be sure to invite your friends and family to enjoy this reception and support the Rockford Playhouse!

What: Wine Tasting

When: August 29th, 2010 from 6:30pm-8pm

Where: Cherry Vale Mall in Cherry Valley (off of I90, just outside of Rockford)

GiGi's Rockford signs lease!

Little Landon Wirtjes turned one-year-old on the date the lease was signed. Happy Birthday, Landon!



Sioux City, Iowa

Meet & Greet

Our first Meet & Greet on Aug. 2, 2010 was a huge hit! Our Literacy Tutors were able to meet with the families of the kids who were registered for the Fall Literacy Session while enjoying some snacks and socializing



with others! Plants were given as gifts to our volunteer tutors with special notes attached saying: "Thank you for helping our kids GROW!" We look forward to another great session of Literacy for our kiddos in Sioux City...September 7 to November 20, 2010! If you would like to register your child for literacy contact Jenni at: literacysc@gigisplayhouse.org.

New Family Welcome

Mon, Sept 13 @ 6pm! If you are new to Sioux City, new to Down syndrome, new to GiGi's Playhouse, have a new baby or an older child or adult with Down syndrome we invite you to GiGi's Playhouse for a Celebration like no other! The open arm welcome you endure at GiGi's Playhouse is full of excitement, attention, comfort, honesty, education, inspiration and achievement! Join us to learn more about the programs, support and friendships you will find at GiGi's Playhouse!



Leaps & Bounds will start in October with classes on Saturdays FREE from Contemporary Dance Studio! If interested in enrolling or more info please email siouxcity@gigisplayhouse.org!

Dakota Valley Dance Camp Fundraiser for GiGi's

Playhouse! Everyone (all ages and abilities) is invited to join members of the DV Dance & Cheer Team on October 3 from 1-3 for a Fundraising Dance Camp! Cost is \$20 per participant, campers will learn some new moves and a routine to be performed at a DV game that week & a fundraiser T-Shirt to wear at the performance. To register email events@gigisplayhouse.org or call 712-226-PLAY!



Des Moines



If Gregg Wing were asked he will tell you he is a very a "special" person. He is 42 years old and graduated from Ruby Van Meter School in Des Moines. Gregg has 13 years of Service with HyVee always in the Bakery Department. He has Mainstream Living as the agency provider and has lived in an apartment with the same roommate for 14 years. Gregg's interests are photography, sports, family gatherings, visiting fire stations, and Camp Sunnyside. He is a member of Faith Lutheran Church and loves the choir. His hobbies are sports, sports, and sports! He loves the Green Bay Packers and Iowa State University football and basket-

ball. He participates in Link Associates Sports and Special Olympics volleyball, soft ball, bowling and track and field.

When talking about GiGi's he states, "I love Bingo night; I see my friends and win prizes". I appreciate the popcorn and love the ice cream. "I like to sing at karaoke night". "I very much like that my roommate Tim can come too."



Ready, Set, Action!!!! Music Class

A 45 minute educational dance and music class. Lots of action and follow along songs. Kids from ages 3 and up will learn colors, days of the week, alphabet, prepositions while they dance and use various instruments.

Come join us for our first class on Saturday September 25 @ 11:00am!

Friday Friends

Friday Friends enjoyed playing bingo, singing karaoke, laughing, and making new friends. There will be two Friday Friends events in September. On the 10th, we will have another bingo night. On the 24th we will be hosting a movie night! We also have our first dance scheduled for October 1st!! It will be a "howling" good time!

EDUCATOR OPEN HOUSE WEDNESDAY, SEPTEMBER 22, 7-9PM HOFFMAN PLAYHOUSE

Therapists and Educators:
Together as a team - parents, educators and therapists - we are the best advocates to surround a child and we can learn from each other!
Come to GiGi's Playhouse to learn about some of the ways a child with Down syndrome learns to read and hear about the educational and therapeutic programs we have to offer. We can support your efforts in your work with children with Down syndrome. Email with questions or to RSVP: hoffmanestates@gigisplayhouse.org

FAMILY FUN NIGHT Friday, October 1, 6:30-8:30pm

Polish Group

Join us on September 26 - RSVP to Krystyna at 847.962.4820.

Nuestros Angeles Hispanic Playgroup

Sunday, September 12, from 11:15am-1pm! Bring the whole family!

Pretzel Party!

Kids Club expressed an interest in learning some basic food handling and cooking skills, so Kim & Scott's Gourmet Pretzels brought a Pretzel Party to the Playhouse! The kids learned about the history of pretzels, washed their hands, donned an apron and hat and went to work! They worked with dough, shaping it into a pretzel, and "painted" and decorated their very own pretzel. Each student took their pretzel home with instructions on how to bake! Thank you so much, Kim & Scott's Pretzels!!



KIDS CLUB

August - we meet at the farm! RSVP to hoffmanestates@gigisplayhouse.org. We'll visit a barn, lots of animals and the garden!



FRIDAY FRIENDS

We will attend a football game on August 27 to cheer on our friends from the football team. RSVP to hoffmanestates@gigisplayhouse.org. September 24, get ready for Zumba at the Playhouse!

The Cookbook is here!

Get your copy of the best cookbook in town! \$10, proceeds go to the Playhouse! Purchase copies for your child's teachers and therapists and doctors, our cookbooks provide information about Down syndrome and GiGi's Playhouse...along with great recipes!

HSJ and PP TOGETHER!

Calling all kids 3-8 years old! Come to the Playhouse on September 11 from 12:30-1:30 and bring a friend from school!

Thank you, Olivia!

Olivia Niepsuj, a busy high school student, did an amazing job with fundraisers for the Playhouse! She managed a bake sale, a raffle and an event at Hot Wheels Roller Rink (who agreed to donate a percentage of their proceeds to the Playhouse as well) to raise money for GiGi's! The Playhouse received cases of juice boxes to use for programs as well as donations from these events!



McHenry's 3rd Annual Getting Down with Fashion

Fashion Show- Sunday Nov. 7th, 2010 at the Bull Valley Golf Club

We are getting ready to start planning the 3rd Annual Fashion Show. This is an awesome Fundraiser that is all about the Kids. If you would like to be on the Fashion Show Committee, have your child be a star in the fashion show, donate a raffle prize or just come out and enjoy a wonderful lunch and see all the GiGi's kids & Adults strut their stuff on the Runway please contact Jean at 815-385-7529 or mchenry@gigisplayhouse.org



HE'S A FIGHTER...On Easter this year Malachi (at the time 18 months old) stopped using his right arm and left leg. After visiting 3 different ER's we finally got the diagnosis...a major stroke! We sat in that ER wondering if he would ever walk, talk, or eat again, we cried and cried for our sweet baby boy. A few days later he was diagnosed with a very rare disease called Moyamoya (arteries in the brain are constricted, causing blocked blood flow). About a week after his stroke while in the hospital he pulled to stand in his crib, that's when we knew nothing was going to hold him back! Josh and I continued to challenge Malachi to do things that are not easy for him. He continues to have OT and PT twice a week. Malachi continues to work hard and we believe he will make a full recovery!



Chicago

We're Open!

The signs are up. The toys are in place, and the mural will be ready by the time you read this. GiGi's Chicago has officially opened its new location at 3948 N. Lincoln in Chicago (just south of the Lincoln/Damen/Irving Park intersection). With significant foot-traffic in the area, huge storefront windows give passers-by a glimpse inside to what GiGi's is all about. And huge window stickers (thanks Stickerdude) provide 24/7 awareness at one of the North Side's busiest intersections.

Even in just a few short days, enthusiasm for the new location is through the roof. People are stopping in or calling nearly every day offering to volunteer and help out. Our neighbors down the street at Community Home Supply even offered a badly needed bathroom vanity and sink! (We need a few more items, like a refrigerator, flat-screen tv and some improvement work, too, if you're so inclined.)



Open play! Literacy! Math!

We're ready to get it going. The Windy City is back in the Playhouse! Email chicago@gigisplayhouse.org for more information.

Chicago Programming

Want to help make Chicago be the Playhouse you want it to be? Volunteer to host one of the many programs we offer for GiGi's. We're looking for hosts for all of our groups: 2 and Under; Hop, Skip and Jumpers; Crawlers, Walkers, Kids Club. Contact us at Chicago@gigisplayhouse.org.

Join Chicago's Facebook Group!

It's 2010, and the best way to know what's happening at the Chicago Playhouse is through our Facebook group. Search for "GiGi's Playhouse Chicago" on Facebook and join the group. It's the easiest and fastest way to know what's happening at our location.

Fox Valley

ABC Music & Me

On July 30, teachers from Kinder Care joined our Family Night group to share their ABC Music & Me program. This music program can help develop language skills while increasing mobility. The children had a lot of fun with the teachers blowing bubbles, singing, moving and playing multiple types of instruments. They will be returning to GiGi's playhouse Fox Valley on Friday September 24 during our Family Night group. If you are interested in joining us please rsvp to Genia Latka at glatka@gigisplayhouse.org.

What a Day!!

Thanks to the many golfers, sponsors, volunteers and supporters, the GiGi's 5th Annual Golf Outing at the beautiful Tamarack Golf Club in Naperville was a success!! It was wonderful to welcome both new and old friends who came together to support the Playhouse and spread positive awareness about Down syndrome!!

Event Sponsors: Ryder Charitable Foundations, Aileen S. Andrews Foundation, Plaza Square LLC, The Lepore Family, ServPro of Kendall County, Unlimited Fire Restoration of Aurora, Reynold Jeffrey, Goose Island, City Beverage of Arlington Heights, Gatorade/PepsiCo and Biggers Chevrolet provided our hole-in-one contest.

Hole Sponsors: AC Electric, AG Commercial LLC, American Inrepcos of Illinois, Inc., Apex Engineering Products Corporation, BP-The Vlasaty Family, Brandon Builders, Butera Center Management, Domo 77 Restaurant, Mr. Kerry Ewald, Helping Handwriting, Inc.- Lisa Benco, Homelink, Home Run Inn Pizza - Mark Carlson, Integrity Restoration, Inman & Fitzgibbons, Ltd., Mr. Brad Luecke, Mr. John Maples/PepsiCo, Chris Schultz/Merlin 200,000 Mile Shop of Aurora, NE Residential Development, Law Offices of Corti, Aleksy & Castaneda, Mrs. Teresa Patino, Steve Pearson and Chad Capista of ServePro of Kendall County, David Kaza of ServePro of Plainfield/Wheatland.



Chicago:

- 1 Open Play, 11 am–1 pm, Join us for lunch, networking and fun!
UIC Presentation, 5pm
- 8 Open Play, 11 am–1 pm, Join us for lunch, networking and fun!
- 11 Open Play, 11am–1 pm, Join us for lunch, networking and fun!
Literacy
- 15 Open Play, 11 am–1 pm, Join us for lunch, networking and fun!
Literacy
- 18 2 & Under (everyone welcome), 9-11am
Kids Club, 4pm
Literacy
- 22 Open Play, 11 am–1 pm, Join us for lunch, networking and fun!
- 23 Family Fun Night, 5-7p
Join us for a pizza party!
- 29 Open Play, 11 am–1 pm, Join us for lunch, networking and fun!

Des Moines:

- 3 Open play, 10-11:30am
- 7 family fun night with pizza, 5:30-7:30pm
- 10 open play, 10-11:30am
Friday friends with bingo, 7-9 pm
- 11 2 and under playgroup, 9-10:30am
Music class, 11:00am
- 17 open play, 10-11:30am
Teentastic Karaoke Night, 7-9pm
*bring your own music
- 18 craft and story time with Ms Jo, 11am
- 21 open play, 10-11:30am
Friday friends movie night, 7-9pm
- 25 Ready, Set, Action, 11am
Mom's night out, 7-11pm

Sioux City:

- 1 Literacy Program, 5-6pm
- 3 Open Play, 9-10:30am
- 4 Literacy Program, 9:30-11:30am
- 6 Labor Day
Literacy Program, 4:50-5:30pm
- 8 Literacy Program, 5-6pm
- 10 Family Fun Night with Pizza, 6-7:30pm
- 11 Literacy Program, 9:30-11:30am
- 12 Grandparents Day
- 13 Literacy Program, 4:50-5:30pm
New Family Welcome, 6-7:30pm
- 14 Chick-fil-a Spirit Night, 5-8pm
- 15 Literacy Program, 5-6pm
- 18 Literacy Program, 9:30-11:30am
- 20 Literacy Program, 4:50-5:30pm
Open Play w/ Hop, Skip & Jumpers 6-7:30pm
- 22 Literacy Program, 5-6pm
- 23 First Day of Autumn
- 25 Literacy Program, 9:30-11:30am
- 27 Literacy Program, 4:50-5:30pm
- 29 Literacy Program, 5-6pm
- 30 Open Play, 6-7:30pm

Programs & Activities

Open Play – Promotes networking and socializing for families with children of all ages with Down syndrome

Crawlers Program – Helps facilitate and strengthen the skills in children who are at the developmental stage of crawling.

Walkers Program – Facilitates and strengthens the skills in children who are beginning to walk.

2 & Under Group – Promotes positive beginnings for families with an infant or toddler with Down syndrome, with a focus on ongoing support and networking for new and current families

3-4 Play Group – Promotes networking and socializing for families with children with Down syndrome ages 3-4,

Hop, Skip and Jumpers – Promotes friendships, social skills and interactive play through creative and educational activities for pre-school and kindergarten-aged children

Playhouse Pals – Promotes friendships, social skills and interactive play through structured and educational activities for children ages 6-8

Kid's Club – This face-paced program promotes friendships, social skills and communication through creative and educational activities for children ages 9-12

Teen-Tastic – This group promotes friendships, social interaction and communication through a variety of social activities, outings and games for teens aged 13-17

Friday Night Friends – This group promotes friendships, social interaction and communication through a variety

of social activities, outings for adults 18 and over

Daddy and Me – Promotes positive interactions and social networking between children with Down syndrome and their male role models

Family Night – This program promotes positive beginnings for new families with a focus on positive social interactions among peers and siblings

Hispanic Group (Nuestros Angeles) – Provides support, friendship, networking and socializing for Spanish-speaking families

Polish Group – Provides support, friendship, networking and socializing for Polish-speaking families

Literacy Program – This FREE program teaches and reinforces children and adults with Down syndrome reading, comprehension and phonics skills



Fox Valley:

- 1 Literacy, 6:45pm
- 4 Literacy, 9:30am
Literacy, 10am
2 & Under, 9:30-11am
- 6 Tot Class, 9:30-11am,
RSVP 630.778.PLAY
- 8 Literacy, 10am
Literacy, 10:30am
Literacy, 6:45pm
- 9 Wendy's Fundraiser, 5-8pm
- 11 Walkers Group, 9:30-10:30am
Daddy & Me, 3-4:30pm
- 13 Tot Class, 9:30-11am,
RSVP 630.778.PLAY
- 14 Special Olympic Young Athletes,
5:30pm
- 15 Karate Kickers, Ages 8-12: 5:15pm - 5:45pm, 13 and up: 6pm - 6:30pm,
RSVP 815.436.3817
Literacy, 6:45pm
- 18 Literacy, 9:30am
Literacy, 10am
Hop, Skip & Jumpers, 10:30am-noon,
RSVP 630.335.4824
Playhouse Pals, 2-4pm
- 20 Tot Class, 9:30-11am,
RSVP 630.778.PLAY
- 22 Literacy, 6:45pm
- 24 Family Night, 6-8pm, RSVP
630.844.1720
- 25 Literacy, 9:30am
Literacy, 10am
- 26 Nuestros Angeles, 11am-1pm
- 27 Tot Class, 9:30-11am,
RSVP 630.778.PLAY
- 29 Literacy, 10am
Literacy, 10:30am
Literacy, 6:45pm

McHenry:

- 1 SMILE (Social & Life Skills group),
4:15pm
- 2 Art Class, 4 pm
- 16 Art Class, 4 pm
- 30 Art Class, 4 pm
- 8 Show Me A Sign, 6pm (basic signing
class, all ages welcome)
- 22 Show Me A Sign, 6pm (basic signing
class, all ages welcome)
- 8 Evening Open Play, 5-7pm come for fun
& friendship
- 9 Options & advocacy, 10am
- 10 Teen Tastics, 7pm games & snacks
- 11 Crawlers, 10:15am join our Occupa-
tional Therapist for movement
- 14 Wendy's Night-McHenry, 5-8pm
- 17 Kids Club, 6:30pm, bring a friend,
games, snacks & more!
- 20 Wendy's Night Crystal Lake, 5-8pm (Rt.
14 & Main St.)
Fall Literacy begins!
- 24 Friday Friends, 7pm at the playhouse!
- 29 Bookmaking, 6:30pm, come help the
Literacy program

Daddy & Me (quarterly only, look for October date)

EVERYTUESDAY Open Play, 10am – noon ~
come join us for Pizza & Friendship

Hoffman Estates:

- Every Thursday:** Open Play – 12:30 – 2pm
- 1 Special Intentions, 7-9pm
 - 11 Crawlers, 9-9:45
2 & Under 10-11:30am
HSJ & PP 12:30-1:30pm,
 - 12 Nuestros Angeles Hispanic Playgroup
11:15am-1pm
 - 22 Educator Open House, 7-9pm
 - 24 Friday Friends –ZUMBA NIGHT!,
7-8:30pm
 - 25 Kids Club, 10-11:30am
 - 26 Polish Group, 11am – 1pm, RSVP to
Krystyna 847-962-4820

Literacy:

- Monday, 5:30-6:45pm
- Tues, 9-10:30am
- Wednesday, 1:45-2:30pm, 4-5:30pm,
6-6:45pm
- Thursday, 1:30-3pm, 4:30-5:15pm,
6-7:30pm
- Saturday, 2-2:45pm

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
September			1	2	3	4
5	6	7	8	9	10	11
12	13	14	15	16	17	18
19	20	21	22	23	24	25
26	27	28	29	30		

GiGi's Playhouse
1069 W. Golf Rd.
Hoffman Estates, IL 60169

nonprofit organization

u.s. postage

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schaumburg, il

permit no. 93



2011 Calendar

Order yours today! This award winning awareness pieces is a great gift to schools, hospitals, friends and family.

Go to
www.gigisplayhouse.org
to order.

3rd Annual Tour de GiGi's Charity Bicycle Ride

Tour de GiGi's is just around the corner on **Saturday, September 18th** starting at Fox Valley Kickers in Oswego. Enjoy scenic routes through the countryside of Plainfield and Oswego with 21 mile, 42 mile and New Metric Century (63 mile) rides. Prizes, raffles and exhilarating rides await you!

For more details or to register online go to our website at www.gigisplayhouse.org and click on the Tour de GiGi's link. Only \$30 per person! Volunteers needed! Contact Wendy at weurich@gigisplayhouse.org or call 630-778-PLAY for more details.



Going Around the Nation!

The Traveling Gallery has been all over the nation! It was in Florida for July and then spent a month in Ohio! All the local TV networks as well as six radio stations in Ohio have reported on it over the past few weeks! See it this month in Rockford! Look inside for details.

GiGiFEST!

GiGiFest for Everyone!
Sunday, October 3 - Hoffman Playhouse



8th Annual Chicagoland Buddy Walk

Oct 10, 2010 • 1-5 PM
Cantigny • Wheaton, IL
www.chicagolandbuddywalk.org

Save the Date

August 28

Walk for Down syndrome Awareness,
9am-Noon — Sioux City

Buddy Walk Des Moines, IL

Aug 29

Wine Tasting — Rockford, IL

Sept 18

Annual Bike Ride—
Fox Valley

October 3

GiGiFest — Hoffman Playhouse

October 10

Chicagoland Buddy Walk —
Cantigny, Weaton, IL

November 7

3rd Annual Fashion
Show, McHenry

