



Down Syndrome Awareness Centers

educate. inspire. achieve.

January 2011

Newsletter

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Hoffman Estates, IL 60169
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Fox Valley Location
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Aurora, IL 60504
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McHenry Location
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McHenry, IL 60050
815.385.PLAY (7529)

Rockford Location
8801 N 2nd
Machesney Park, IL 61115
815-654-7529

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

Sioux City Location
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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)



How 1 test changed my life!

As a child, Scott was a happy and rambunctious little guy. Always in a good mood and always making others laugh. Once Scott reached puberty though, his disposition began to change. He experienced mood swings, sleepiness, fatigue, tics, irritability, a lack of concentration, and would shut down frequently. In our quest to find a way to improve the quality of our child's life, we researched a variety of treatments. We tried dietary changes, vitamins, social activities, and many medications. I love my son immensely but even I found it challenging to be around Scott.

We knew we had to do something. We had Scott tested and learned he stopped breathing one time per minute – that's 60 times per hour! Scott was diagnosed as having VERY severe sleep apnea. He was prescribed a C-pap machine.

That was nine months ago and Scott is now doing FANTASTIC! We got our loveable son back. Scott's entire disposition has improved. He sleeps through the night and wakes up refreshed. His concentration, speech, and overall mood have improved to the point where his friends and teachers all have taken notice. He participates in the GiGi's Literacy Program and is able to concentrate so much better! Oh, and all those medications? Gone! Along with the tics!!

About 94% of all individuals with Down syndrome have Sleep Apnea (Science Daily, 2009). The lack of oxygen is what causes fatigue (on top of low tone), and even negative behaviors. It is possible to have sleep apnea and NOT snore or gasp in your sleep. If you are interested in getting a sleep study for your loved one with Down syndrome, please contact your doctor and discuss with them the prevalence of apnea in our population.



You don't want to miss this!

If you have seen our 30 second promo video, you know what we are talking about when we say celebration redefined. If you haven't, go to www.gigisplayhouse.org to see both of them! The i have a voice National Gala is next month and is in 5 cities in 4 states! You can register for your local Playhouse today! National Sponsorships still available!

This Gala will be in Sioux City, Des Moines, Atlanta, New York and Chicago on February 26th!!

Go to www.gigisplayhouse.org to register TODAY for your local Gala! They will be connected live so that we can share the excitement of the evening together!

Electronic invitations this year!
Email gala@gigisplayhouse.org to be on the list!

Celebration. Redefined.



GIGI's Playhouse News

Chicago

It all started with a visit. Kathryn Lavin, parent of a teenager with Down syndrome, came to the Playhouse in September just to see our new digs. Spying the stage in front of the mural of Chicago, an idea struck. Give kids around her daughter's age a chance to build their speech, language and self-confidence through a Drama Club!



Less than a month later, Chicago's Young Adult Drama Club was born. With the help of some theatrically oriented volunteers, every week a dedicated group of teens meets for an hour of dancing, singing and Shakespeare. It's great to see the kids interact and perform like the stars we already know they are. And the response from kids and parents has been overwhelmingly positive. The group will be starting another session this winter and we're looking into finding a stage where they can show off their talents for friends and family.

The best thing about the program is it was born from a parent suggestion. Got an idea for a program yourself? Shoot an email to your local Playhouse, and we'll work with you to put it together.

Hoffman

Last fall we learned that my granddaughter would be born with Down syndrome. A few days after our news, a friend of mine gave me a news article featuring the i have a voice travelling photo exhibit of children with Down syndrome sponsored by GiGi's Playhouse. A few days later I was driving down Golf Road looking for a store and turned into the wrong parking lot. But there it was: GiGi's Playhouse. I wasn't sure I should go in but gathered the courage to do so and was welcomed. I saw what a wonderful place it was. I knew I would like my granddaughter to be part of it! I am a first grade teacher and have been teaching for 20 years. I decided it would be a good place for me to learn as well and volunteered to be a literacy tutor. I love seeing the potential in all the kids and knowing that my granddaughter has so much potential!

Annabelle was born in March of 2010 and I am so glad she has a place like GiGi's to welcome her!

Sandy Porten,
Hoffman Estates Literacy Tutor Training Team



Matching Gifts!

Do you or anyone you know work for one of these companies? You can choose GiGi's as a matching gift recipient! It's like doubling your donation! Here are a few companies that have matching gift opportunities:

Abbott Laboratories
American Express
Avon Corporation
AT&T Foundation
Automatic Data Processing
Avon
Bank of America
Baxter
Best Buy Company
Boeing Company
BP
Charles Schwab
Chase Bank
CIGNA Corporation
Cisco Systems
Coca-Cola Company
Colgate-Palmolive
Commonwealth Edison
Costco
Fifth Third Bank
General Electric
GlaxoSmithKline
Harris Bank
Hewitt Associates
Home Depot
Honeywell International
Household International

Illinois Tool Works Foundation
Johnson & Johnson
JP Morgan Chase
Kraft Foods
Leo Burnett
McDonald's Corporation
McGraw-Hill, Inc
Merrill Lynch Companies
Microsoft Corporation
Mobil
Motorola
Neiman-Marcus Group
Nicor
Nokia
Northern Trust Company
Northrop Grumman
PepsiCo Company, Inc
Pfizer, Inc
Philip Morris Companies, Inc.
Pitney Bowes
Sara Lee Corporation
Schneider Electric/Square D
Starbucks Corporation
Unilever
W.W. Grainger, Inc.
William Wrigley Jr. Company
Zurich US Foundation.

Des Moines

Love dogs? We do and we are very excited to introduce, Gage, our new therapy dog. He will be coming to GiGi's in Des Moines every month. So look for the dates on our activity calendar on the website. He is a beautiful Golden Retriever and his owners are John and Linda. Gage is a member of Paws & Effect, Delta Society and the Reading Education Assistance Dogs Program (R.E.A.D). His favorite hobbies are: playing with children, going for walks, treats, belly rubs, being brushed, truck rides and playing ball. Now he can add "going to GiGi's Playhouse" to his list of favorite things!



Have friends in Atlanta or New York?

They can email Atlanta@gigisplayhouse.org or nyc@gigisplayhouse.org to get involved!

GIGI's Playhouse News

Sioux City

Literacy Success

Thea blessed the Huser family on the 20th of August, 1998. Her family has been enthralled with this little character ever since. One of her favorite things to do is participate in the GiGi's Literacy Program. "Thea comes with a determined attitude each week. She loves to read through her "family book" first, which is our way of warming up-she has a special comment about each family member, which validates her unconditional love for each and every one of them. She has progressed through high frequency words, and has moved on to reading sentences. Through implementation of words Thea already recognizes, in comparison with new words, she is progressing nicely towards the goal of reading on her own. This will take time, but with practice, and determination, I have no doubts this goal will be met. Thea has the internal fortitude to come to the table ready to learn, and this makes the job of teaching her, just that much more fulfilling! Thea is a true joy!"

-Velvet Jeratowski



Rockford

2011 Brings Open Doors to Playhouse #7!

The Rockford Opening will be **Saturday, January 8th from 9:30 a.m. to 12:30 p.m.** at the center, 8801 N. Second St., Suite 2, Machesney Park, across from Machesney Park Mall. Doors will be open for children and adults, their families and our community to view the greatly anticipated newest GiGi's Playhouse. For more information about GiGi's Playhouse—Rockford or its grand opening, call 815-654-PLAY or email rockford@gigisplayhouse.org. Join us!

Fox Valley

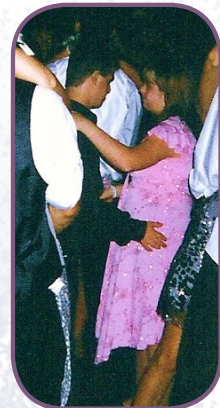
Math Program Starts!

There will be a training for tutors and a night of learning how to make the math manipulatives this month. Check the Hoffman and Fox Valley website for details!

We are still in need of tutors for this program! If you cannot help by volunteering your time, please consider donating some of the following supplies: white copy paper, white or colored cardstock, overhead pens, clean egg cartons, 4 x 6' enveloped with closures, index cards, clean and dried soup cans, plain white contact paper, shoe boxes, various board games, box of macaroni noodles, sheet protectors, and file folders. You can drop these off at your local playhouse. Please be sure to label them "Math Program".

A Night to Remember

Back in 2009 when the Sioux City doors opened, 2 teenagers brought their families to GiGi's Playhouse! Wide eyed with anticipation of literacy classes, dance lessons, teen groups and information; Casey White and Michaela Greve found FRIENDSHIP. The two made a quick connection and so did their families! Living over an hour apart from each other they eagerly await the next GiGi's Event making a full day of hanging out together. In September, Casey asked Michaela to join him at his school's homecoming. Michaela felt like a princess as Casey took her to dinner and they danced the evening away! Diane (Casey's Mom) commented, "Without GiGi's there are so many things that were hard, but with GiGi's we have made lifelong friends and learned so much from everyone. GiGi's is a blessing and we are thankful." GiGi's Playhouse-Sioux City is much more than an education and awareness center; it is where friendships and bonds are made for all families!



McHenry

On November 19th we had a visit from the Thanksgiving Turkey and his friends during our weekly Open Play! The Turkey came to pick up all the non perishable items we collected for our local food pantry. Thank you to all the GiGi's families who brought in items to donate. The kids had a good time taking pictures with the Turkey and showing him and his friends around the Playhouse. It was a wonderful opportunity for us to give back to the community!



You are invited!

To receive your invitation (all are electronic) to the National Gala, email gala@gigisplayhouse.org with your email address and those of your friends and family that want to receive an invitation as well! February 26, 2011!!



Raffle Tickets on Sale Now!



- Grand Prize** – 7 day Luxury Caribbean Cruise on the beautiful Allure ship! Airfare included!
- 2nd Prize** – 1 week vacation to Maui! Airfare for 2 included!
- 3rd Prize** – 18kt White Gold Tear Drop Diamond Necklace
- 4th Prize** – Judith Ripka Eclipse Earrings!

Only 1000 tickets will be sold – you chances of winning are incredible! Purchase tickets (\$100/ea) at your local Playhouse or online at www.gigisplayhouse.org. What a great way to support the Playhouses and get something fabulous in return!



Traveling Gallery is on the Move!

See it at the Woodridge Public Library in Woodridge, IL all throughout the month of January!
3 Plaza Drive, Woodridge IL 60517
See it in February at the Chicagoland Gala!

Be sure to go to www.gigisplayhouse.org to see your local Playhouse calendar!



Want to read more inspirational stories? Each Playhouse has a blog and a facebook page with current stories!