



**GiGi's  
PLAYHOUSE**  
Down Syndrome Awareness Centers  
**Des Moines**

educate. inspire. achieve

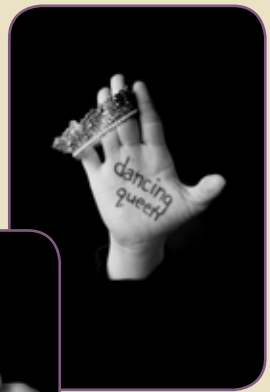
# Newsletter



## One Million Voices

We are now taking reservations for the Des Moines One Million Voices Gallery to come to your business, corporation, expo, or event! Starting this September we will have two portable Galleries available that are approx. 100 sq. feet each, with 20 life-size, breathtaking photographs of individuals with Down syndrome from the Des Moines GiGi's Playhouse. These Galleries will weave each person's unique journey into a collage of images and stories that will change how people view and perceive Down syndrome. The goal of the One Million Voices Gallery Campaign is to positively influence the perception of Down syndrome in over one million people throughout the country by 2015. It is another avenue for us to spread Down syndrome Awareness by sharing our 'voice' with others; it

is our goal to share those 'voices' with over one million people! Our children have a voice, but they need an advocate- our voices to speak up for them! Each gallery will be set up at your location to be displayed for up to 4 weeks. Together we will reach our goal of over one million voices! You can book one or both Galleries by emailing us at: [onemillionvoicesDSM@gigisplayhouse.org](mailto:onemillionvoicesDSM@gigisplayhouse.org).



**'One Million Voices' can turn ignorance into advocacy. 'One Million Voices' can turn fear into love!**

## My name is Mia Peterson. And I am a Self Advocate!

"I graduated from Webster City High School in 1973; classes

that I loved were Drama, which helped me learn to talk in front of other people and Home Ec. which helped me learn to cook. I met Essie Pederson at a conference in CA and she became my inspiration. Essie had a business called Capabilities Unlimited; she worked with young adults with Down syndrome to produce a newsletter for people with disabilities written by people with disabilities. I moved to Cincinnati to intern & later became co-editor. While in there I attended a few classes at Xavier University. I began my time in Cincinnati living with a family who had a small child with Down syndrome, I helped the family nanny-style while interning at Capabilities Unlimited. I then moved into a small apartment in the same house that was home to Capabilities Unlimited. Then I moved to my own apartment where I lived by myself for about 7 years.

I began a business called, Aiming High, & have traveled all over the country speaking to organizations about living on my own and my passion for self advocacy. I moved back to the Des Moines area & continue to travel and do public speaking with Aiming High. I also currently work at Dahl's; I like getting to know all the customers! I also work at the Riverfront YMCA as a fitness Attendant. I started volunteering with a teenager who has Down syndrome, which has grown into getting paid to work with her!

On most Friday nights you can find me at GiGi's Playhouse hanging out with my Friday Friends! I like karaoke, dancing and visiting with friends, parents & the hosts! I also like to attend events at GiGi's to meet friends & have fun!

I served on the Board of Directors for the National Down Syndrome Society for 9 years which helped me be more of a leader. I have served on The Governor's DD Council and People First of Iowa. I recently have served on Boards in the State

of Iowa for Self Advocacy. I volunteer with Up with Down



and GiGi's on the Buddy Walk. During the Christmas season I ring the bell for the Salvation Army. In 2002, I was a torch bearer for the Olympics carrying the torch across Iowa. I attended the 10 year Anniversary for the Persons with Disabilities Act presenting Senator Harkin with an award for his help in writing the Bill.

I get out in my community so people see me for my abilities & what I can do! Everyone has dreams and goals. Change only happens when we do it for ourselves. Mainly for me, I accept change. I am a Self Advocate! Are You?" -Mia & Carol Peterson

## The Learner with Down syndrome

We will be having a National GiGi's Playhouse Seminar about 'The Learner with Down syndrome' on Sunday, July 9. A one hour overview and information session will be at 11am. The speaker for this seminar will be, Shari. Shari is a Volunteer at the National Office and has been tutoring, training and involved in the Education Programs since the beginning. We will have a Literacy Tutor Training/Retraining Session at 12:30pm-this is a chance for new Tutors to see the Literacy Program in action and to learn new techniques being done to help our students excel! We will also host a Math Tutor Training Session at 3pm! If you are interested in becoming a Volunteer Tutor please email [literacyDSM@gigisplayhouse.org](mailto:literacyDSM@gigisplayhouse.org) or [mathDSM@gigisplayhouse.org](mailto:mathDSM@gigisplayhouse.org) and attend these sessions! RSVP required for Tutor Training!



## Buffalo Wild Wings Fundraiser



Join us ALL DAY on Wednesday, July 11 at BUFFALO WILD WINGS at Merle Hay for lunch & dinner! All you have to do is go to BWW, show your server this portion of the newsletter, place & pay for your order and GiGi's Des Moines will receive a portion of the proceeds. This is a great easy way for the whole family to support the Playhouse! Kids meals are on sale on Wednesdays so bring the entire family! You can stop by the Playhouse to pick-up copies of the tickets to hand out to your family, friends, neighbors & co-workers as well!

## Math + Volunteer = You

Are you interested in helping a student learn? Do you have 1 hour/ week to Volunteer? That 1 hour will make a huge impact on our students lives! We are seeking Volunteers to Tutor 1 on 1 with our Math Students. The Math program will start this fall however we are in need of Volunteer Tutors who can commit to 1 hour per week to work with a student to learn math concepts. We will train you, mentor you, and provide all the materials for each session. The GiGi's Math program needs you. To learn more fill out the Math Volunteer Tutor Form at: <http://gigisplayhouse.org/desmoines/education-at-des-moines> and email it to [mathDSM@gigisplayhouse.org](mailto:mathDSM@gigisplayhouse.org).

This program is designed to promote a positive experience of learning math and to develop a foundation of basic number understanding. Join us on Wed, July 25 from 6-7:30pm for an informational training session to make sure this is the right fit for you! RSVP to: [mathDSM@gigisplayhouse.org](mailto:mathDSM@gigisplayhouse.org)!



## CALENDAR

Check out our website at: [www.gigisplayhouse/desmoines](http://www.gigisplayhouse/desmoines). Our Summer Office Hours are Mon-Thur 12-3pm, Fridays 9-3pm

- 2 Language Group, 4:30-5:30pm
- 4 Happy Independence Day
- 5 3-4 Yr Old Playgroup, 6-7pm
- 6 Open Play w/ Gage the Therapy Dog, 10-11:30am  
Literacy Group, 1-2pm  
Friday Friends, 7-9pm
- 7 Ready, Set, Action, 11am-Noon  
Ice Cream Social, 1-3pm
- 8 The Learner with Down syndrome Seminar, 11am  
Literacy Training/Retraining, 12:30pm  
RSVP: [literacyDSM@gigisplayhouse.org](mailto:literacyDSM@gigisplayhouse.org)  
Math Training, 2:30pm  
RSVP: [mathDSM@gigisplayhouse.org](mailto:mathDSM@gigisplayhouse.org)
- 9 Help A Heart, 6:30-9pm
- 11 Buffalo Wild Wings Fundraiser, All Day
- 13 Open Play, 10-11am  
Literacy Group, 1-2pm  
Friday Friends, 7-9pm
- 14 New Parent Group, 9-10am  
Music Class, 11am-Noon
- 15 Circles Social Boundaries, 4-6pm
- 20 Open Play, 10-11am  
Literacy Group, 1-2pm  
Friday Friends, 7-9pm
- 21 Story & Craft w/ Ms Jo, 11am-Noon
- 22 Dance Squad, 1-2pm  
Circles Social Boundaries, 4-6pm
- 25 Math Tutor Information, 6-7:30pm
- 27 Literacy Group, 1-2pm  
Friday Friends, 7-9pm
- 28 2 & Under, 9-10am  
Nuestros Angeles, 9-10am  
Skill Builders, 9:30am
- 29 Circles Social Boundaries, 4-6pm



Visit our calendar online for up to date activities & times!

## Social Boundaries Program

We have room for up to 10 people ages 5 years and up with any disability for our CIRCLES Social Boundaries Summer Program! If you are interested in being a part of the Summer Session please email us at: [desmoines@gigisplayhouse.org](mailto:desmoines@gigisplayhouse.org)! Classes will be held on **July 15, 22 & 29 from 4-6pm**, you must attend all 3 sessions of the Program!



## Shellometh 'Bonnie' Scott!

On December 4th, 1972 my parents gave birth to an amazing baby girl (Me) on the beautiful island of Jamaica. I left Jamaica with my sister to live with our grandparents in Brooklyn in 1978. In 1992, I started my career at Chase Bank in Manhattan, NY. As a result of advancement opportunities, I relocated to Houston, TX & then moved to the sunshine state of Florida to manage MacDill Federal Credit Union. My husband Denis was born on the Caribbean island of Grenada & moved to Brooklyn, NY with his parents. We met during our high school years & built a long time bond. In 2007, I married the love of my life, my soul mate & best friend, Denis Scott. Denis works for John Deere as an Engineering Supervisor. We have lived in Ankeny for the past 2 years. We have a well-blended family including 4 gorgeous children; Anastasia 21, Amber-Simone 14, Maya 11, & our life changer, Aiden Levi Scott 1 yr old.



Aiden was diagnosed with Down syndrome in the womb. Regardless of the diagnosis, we knew that Aiden was a gift & a dream come true! In discussions with my OB-GYN about Down syndrome support groups she mentioned GiGi's Playhouse. We researched GiGi's & decided to visit for a tour. GiGi's Playhouse is a life changer! It's a place where my son can be "free" and see familiar faces, like his. It offers so much for Aiden, so many different activities. I am so excited about the Playhouse & wanted to get involved. I am my son's advocate and the Playhouse is a place where we can find support, understanding & build lasting relationships.



## Literacy Success

Tucker, age 8, started our Literacy Program this Spring & has really done a fabulous job! When he started in February, he was reading at a level A & knew about 50 sight words. In the past 4 months, he has jumped to reading at a level D & has mastered nearly all of his first 108 sight words! The last night of class he read a 32 page Level 2 "Lilo and Stitch" book to his Mom & Tutor. When his Mom asked what he liked about the program, Tucker said "Reading books & sight words-I love it!" He is already looking forward to continuing in the fall! When we asked Tuckers Tutor about his progress she said, "I am very proud of the way Tucker has grown as a reader! From beginning with a level A book in February to ending with a level D book in May, Tucker has accomplished more than I thought possible in such a short amount of time! I really enjoyed challenging him with these skills! I hope he had as much fun as I did & I am looking forward to continuing our success in the fall!" - Kelsey O'Mara



Students & Tutors Register for FALL Literacy NOW!! Go online to: [www.gigisplayhouse.org/desmoines/education-at-des-moines](http://www.gigisplayhouse.org/desmoines/education-at-des-moines), download the form & get them turned in by August 4th!

## Become a GiGi's Volunteer

We are always in need of volunteers to help at the Playhouse! We have lots of opportunities for Volunteering with Play, Therapeutic, and Educational Groups for all ages as well as helping with Administrative tasks and seasonal activities! If you are interested in becoming a GiGi's Volunteer please go to: [www.gigisplayhouse.org/desmoines/volunteer-at-des-moines](http://www.gigisplayhouse.org/desmoines/volunteer-at-des-moines), download the Volunteer Form and email it to: [volunteerDSM@gigisplayhouse.org](mailto:volunteerDSM@gigisplayhouse.org)! We can't wait to get you started Volunteering today!

"The heart of a volunteer is not measured in size, but by the depth of the commitment to make a difference in the lives of others." -Deann Hollis



## Thank You



Scheels & the Iowa Barnstormers. We had lots of FUN being a VIP at the game versus the Atlanta Rattlers! THANK YOU for being a SPONSOR and SUPPORTING Down syndrome Awareness!



Wal-Mart (Altoona, Des Moines, West Des Moines & Grimes). Thank You for supporting our Educational Programs through your local grants!



Amy Doerring Photography for being so talented in taking our models photos for our One Million Voices Campaign.



Elks Lodge of Pleasant Hill for Hosting the Red Solo Tournament Fundraiser

### Save the Date:

- July 6** Open Play w/ Gage, 10-11:30am
- July 7** Ice Cream Social, 1-3pm
- July 8** The Learner w/ Down Syndrome Seminar Series
- July 11** Buffalo Wild Wings Fundraiser, All Day
- August 25** Buddy Walk @ DMACC

RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED



## 2nd Annual Friends of GiGi's Golf Outing

Thank You to all of our Sponsors for donating items and funding to the Golf Outing on Sat, May 19! Thank You to all of our Friends & Families who came out to Golf at Copper Creek! We raised well over \$11,000 for Down syndrome Awareness and free Programs at GiGi's!

We look forward to seeing you all next year for the 3rd Annual Friends of GiGi's Golf Outing! Congratulations to our 1st Place Winning Team: Anderson & Friends!!!

