



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

educate. inspire. achieve

**Des Moines**

**Newsletter**



## Therapeutic Play Center Is On Its Way

We will be seeing lots of changes at GiGi's Playhouse Des Moines this summer.

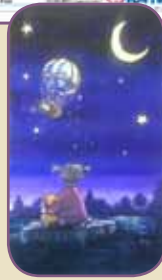
We are happy to announce that the new Therapeutic Play Center is coming to OUR Playhouse in late June!

Gretchen Baldwin had a 'grand idea' of bringing a Therapeutic Play Center to the Playhouse back in the Fall of 2011, after much research from her, talking with Specialists in Speech, Physical Therapy, and Physicians she talked with our Board of Directors who made the decision to tackle this project. We were graciously given our largest donation of over \$10,250 from 100+ Men on a Mission which started our fundraising campaign.

We have applied for grants in our area to help offset costs of this \$40,000 project and are keeping our fingers crossed that we will be awarded these funds. We will be hosting a Grand Opening of the Therapeutic Play Center in late June/early July, keep your eye on our Blog for more information!

If you would like to donate to the Therapeutic Play Center we have levels of Donation available:

- \$500-\$3,500 you will receive your name on our Donor Wall
- \$3,501-\$7,000 you will receive your name on our Logo Donor Wall
- \$7,001-\$10,000 you will receive your name in the Mural of the Therapeutic Play Center
- \$10,001 and Up you will receive your name on a sign within the Therapeutic Play Center



You can mail your donation to us at 10430 New York Ave Suite A in Urbandale, IA 50322 or go online to make a donation at: [www.gigisplayhouse.org/desmoines!](http://www.gigisplayhouse.org/desmoines!)



## New Parent Packets



After surveying families of what information they were given at the time of their child's birth and diagnosis of Down syndrome we found that most parents were given little to no information (some received Xerox copies from the internet, others were given some web links to check out and others were given no information at all). We thought about

what you should receive during the diagnosis and applied for a grant through Variety Club! Thankfully they answered our prayers and funding request to purchase books and to make a GiGi's Playhouse New Parent Guide Packet for over 200 new families in the Des Moines area. After a year of our employees and volunteers gathering information, double checking, inputting growth charts, needed information, photos, and family letters we have ACHIEVED our goal!

On Tuesday, May 15, we delivered the GiGi's Playhouse New Parent Packets to area Hospitals & Clinics! Thank You to the Variety Club for granting us the 2011 Grant to secure the materials to accomplish this for our families! Thank You to our Volunteers and Employees for countless hours of help. Thank You to the Hospitals and Clinics for giving this information to the families who need it.

The New Parent Packet WELCOMES each families new baby into the world with a great big CONGRATULATIONS, introduces them to GiGi's Playhouse, invites them to all of our free programming and events, along with information about Down syndrome from birth on up. We are very excited to see how these New Parent Packets positively affect the Des Moines Area Down syndrome Family Community.

What a wonderful way that we are spreading Down syndrome Awareness right from the start! We look forward to working with the Variety Club and area Physicians in the near future. We can't wait to hear from our New Families!



## Birdies for Charity

Birdies for Charity is a fundraising program designed to give participants an opportunity to contribute based on the number of "birdies" made by Champions Tour players during The Principal Charity Classic®. Every birdie made during the Principal Charity Classic means dollars for GiGi's Playhouse! Make a pledge and 100% of your donation will go directly to GiGi's Playhouse and has a chance of being matched at 25%.



**There are two ways to pledge:** A per-birdie amount for every birdie made by the Champions Tour players (minimum \$0.02/birdie) or a one-time flat donation (minimum \$10.00 donation) during the three-day Principal Charity Classic. Pledge Now: go to: [www.principalcharityclassic.com/birdies](http://www.principalcharityclassic.com/birdies) to register your pledge, make sure you choose GiGi's Playhouse as your charity of choice! The tournament is May 29-June 3 in West Des Moines!

## Board of Directors Spotlight



"My name is Anthony Lohse & I am happy to be a Board Member at GiGi's Playhouse. I was so excited & honored to be asked to be included with such an important organization that provides wonderful opportunities to children & parents. To give you a little background of whom I am & what drew me to GiGi's; I will start with my family because that is what is most important. I have a beautiful wife Heather, who I have been fortunate to be married to for 12 years. We have

three incredible girls, Quinn, Zoey, and Libby. It's probably my perspective through my career path though that is what I hope to bring to the table at GiGi's. I started as a special education teacher both at the elementary & middle school levels for 5 years. Since then I have worked as a principal in both a middle school & a high school in eastern Iowa. We moved back to central Iowa where I am currently the middle school principal & special education director at West Central Valley Schools. Students with & without disabilities are my passion. I hope to be able to give a lot to this organization because I know how valuable a resource and support GiGi's Playhouse is, to many families in Iowa. We are so blessed as a community to have GiGi's! Thank you for the opportunity to be a part of this organization."

## Math Program

Registration for the NEW Math Program Tutors is taking place now! If you are interested in becoming a Volunteer Math Tutor please email us at: [mathDSM@gigisplayhouse.org](mailto:mathDSM@gigisplayhouse.org). You can fill out the Registration Form online under Education and email it to us. Kate has been working non-stop with our Education Department to get this program to our Playhouse! We have purchased the materials needed & are being trained this summer, we will provide all the training for our tutors! We are very excited to start the Free Math Program for those with Down syndrome aged 3 & up! Keep checking online for Math Student Registration Materials and information!



## CALENDAR

Check out our website at: [www.gigisplayhouse/desmoines](http://www.gigisplayhouse/desmoines). Our Office Hours are Monday-Friday 9am-3pm!

- 1 Friday Friends, 7-9pm
- 2 Ready, Set, Action, 11am-Noon
- 4 Language Group, 4:30-5:30pm
- 6 Volunteer Day, 10-2pm
- 7 3-4 Yr Old Playgroup, 6-7pm
- 8 Open Play, 10-11am  
Friday Friends, 7-9pm
- 9 New Parent Group, 9-11am  
Music Class, 11am-Noon
- 10 GiGi's Dance Group, 1-2pm
- 11 Help A Heart, 6:30-8pm
- 15 Group Literacy, 1-2pm *RSVP only*  
Friday Friends, 7-9pm
- 16 Story & Craft w/ Miss Jo, 11am-Noon
- 22 Open Play, 10-11am  
Group Literacy, 1-2pm *RSVP only*  
Friday Friends, 7-9pm
- 23 2 & Under Group, 9-10:30am  
Nuestros Angeles, 9-10am
- 24 GiGi's Dance Squad, 1-2pm
- 29 Group Literacy, 1-2pm *RSVP only*  
Friday Friends, 7-9pm



## Thank You

### St Francis Preschool & Church brought in donations from our Wish List!

They called a few months ago & told us they wanted to donate items to Our Playhouse, we sent them a list of items & they filled our cupboards & cabinets!



### Memorial Fund of Sue Stock

### The Friends of GiGi's Golf Outing was FABULOUS & FUN!!

We hope our over 20 teams enjoyed themselves! THANK YOU for helping raise over \$8000 with golf, silent auction items & tons of Down syndrome Awareness! Thank You to our Sponsors: Hydrite, Helena Industries, Christian Photo – DSM, Brothers Construction – Pleasant Hill, Geetings Inc. – Pella, The Hubbell Group – Des Moines



## Heartbeat of the Playhouse

The Board of Directors would like to give a HUGE THANK YOU to Norm Davis for volunteering his time to remove the wallpaper at GiGi's! When we asked Norm if he would remove the wallpaper, he was not only willing but was even excited to do it. We felt extremely lucky Norm was the person removing the wallpaper when he found water damage behind the paper & knew exactly what to do because of his training. Norm and his family, even stayed in the Des Moines area until the evening to meet with our landlord, as well as help move the furniture & toys out of the way. Since the damage is repaired Arsenio Vargas volunteered to help prep the walls so we can begin priming them! We are happy to say the Playhouse was able to reopen on May 6 and our muralist, Cheryl Veenstra, will begin working on our NEW Therapeutic Play Center Area which will open this summer!



If you are looking for ways to volunteer at GiGi's please email:

volunteerDSM@gigisplayhouse.org or fill out the form at: [www.gigisplayhouse.org/desmoines/volunteer-at-desmoines/](http://www.gigisplayhouse.org/desmoines/volunteer-at-desmoines/)



Stop by the Playhouse on June 6 from 10-2 pm to help out!

## Fall Literacy Program

We are now taking applications for Fall 2012 Literacy! The session will start September 9th and run through December 16th for 12 weeks of Literacy & Assessments. If you are interested in Registering for the Fall Program please download the forms from our website under Education and email it to: [literacyDSM@gigisplayhouse.org](mailto:literacyDSM@gigisplayhouse.org).

We are looking for Literacy Tutors to Volunteer; go online to our website under Education & fill out the form and send to: [literacyDSM@gigisplayhouse.org](mailto:literacyDSM@gigisplayhouse.org).



## Adding Technology for our Students

Earlier this Spring we made the purchase of two iPads for our Literacy & Math Programs through the Ronald McDonald House Charity Grant we received. The iPads are being filled with educational apps for all ages to help them with math, reading, phonics, building words, music & much more. All students will benefit from the verbal & educational applications which can be incorporated into their daily living. Our programs are set up to give those that use them the opportunity to gain independence and confidence. We are always looking for innovative ways for teaching and learning, if you would like to make a donation please call us.

## Save the Date:

**June 6** Volunteer Day, 10-2pm

**July 7** Ice Cream Social, 1-3pm

RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED



## Register Today

**Register TODAY to join us for the 15th Annual "2012 Up With Down Buddy Walk"**

@ Des Moines Area Community College in Ankeny on Saturday, August 25th! Register yourself, accept pledges and form your team at: <http://secure.ezevent-solutions.com/fr/upwithdown/2012buddywalk>!

The day will start at 8am with the 5k Run, Onsite Registration & Activities open at 9am with the Buddy Walk starting at 10am and lunch served after the walk (Thank You to Pork Producers of Iowa)! Music will be provided by The Wilder Side Band! Come enjoy a day of Down syndrome Awareness, games & crafts, family support, auction, dancing, singing, and FUN!

### Registration Fees:

Participant with Down syndrome	\$FREE (includes t-shirt)
5k, Walk & T-shirt	\$25.00
Walk Participant (11 & up)	\$10.00
Walk Participant (10 & younger)	\$5.00
t-shirts	\$10.00 each

Funds from the Buddy Walk are used to support Families and National Down syndrome initiatives along with helping support projects & programs at GiGi's Playhouse-Des Moines. To volunteer go to: [www.volunteermatch.org](http://www.volunteermatch.org)!