



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

educate. inspire. achieve

# Newsletter



## A Message from the National Office...

### The Making of a Playhouse

Ever wonder how a Playhouse actually gets started? In New York, they are days away from opening their own Playhouse. It doesn't happen overnight, and in New York they are closing in on this milestone only after months and months of hard work, community organizing, raising of funds – and most importantly – finding the right location.

In New York they are on the brink of realizing their goal thanks to a lot of hard work on behalf of their Board of Directors and their Site Coordinator, Britt. The Board and Britt have been busy raising the necessary funds and getting the word out in their community, but faced the challenge of finding a location for their Playhouse that was in a New York City location with good visibility, relatively easy to get to, and affordable. If you know anything about New York, the visibility and accessibility of a location can be pretty easy

to find – it's the affordable part that can be the challenge.

However, we are so happy to announce that GiGi's New York is about to become a reality. New York has the distinction of becoming our 10th Playhouse to open and the first of 2012. Thank you to the Board of Directors of GiGi's Playhouse New York for their dedication and unwavering commitment to bringing the mission of GiGi's to their community.



### Congratulations to Cheer Gems!

At its most recent meet, the Cheer Gems, GiGi's Playhouse's own cheerleading squad, took home a beautiful trophy for their performance in front of a packed house at the Schaumburg Convention Center on January 29th. The weeks and weeks of practice paid off for the team as they put on a flawless performance to take home the trophy which is proudly displayed at the Playhouse.

**Congratulations to all the Gems!**  
*Thank you to the Barrington High School cheerleaders for being the best coaches ever!!*



## Communication Begins at Birth Seminar in March

On Tuesday, March 6th at 7pm, we will be hosting the Communication Begins at Birth seminar presented by Lora White. Lora has been a Pediatric Speech and Language Pathologist for over thirty years and works with a wide array of communication disorders and delays. Working with children with Down syndrome and their families have always been a passion of hers and make up a large portion of her caseload.



We are asking parents to bring their particular questions or concerns to be discussed during or after the presentation. Lora tries to keep the presentation informative but also allows parents to ask questions as she presents. This

has been very successful in previous presentations we've hosted and feel it has helped educate the parents to the needs of their young child.

The target audience for this seminar is parents of children birth to 3 years old. Please come out for an engaging and informative evening at the Hoffman Playhouse. RSVP to [hoffmanestates@gigisplayhouse.org](mailto:hoffmanestates@gigisplayhouse.org).

## ipads are Coming!



The Playhouse will soon be getting ipads in support of our Educational Programs in Literacy and in Math. These ipads will be available for tutors to use during their sessions with their students in conjunction with the material they will be going over that day.

There are literally hundreds of apps available that make learning fun, interactive and rewarding for kids. These apps can be for anything from phonics and the abc's to counting and basic math. The kids can even write on the ipad using their own finger or stylus! The key to the success of our Educational Programs is to find a way that engages each child in their own learning style and use that to fuel their passion for learning and growing.

Thank you to Incredible Technologies for their partnership and support that is allowing us to get the ipads.

## New Semester of Educational Programs Kicking Off

This week starts a new semester of Education Programs at the Hoffman Estates Playhouse. We are offering tutoring in both our Literacy Program and our Math Program. Almost 50 children will be receiving one-on-one tutoring support scheduled 6 days a week for the next 16 weeks at the Playhouse.



When you walk into the playhouse you are almost certain to see a tutor setting up materials in preparation for their student to arrive, a tutoring session in action or kids enjoying the Playhouse after their session is over.

Special thanks to all our amazing tutors for dedicating their time in support of all the kids. A HUGE thank you to Susan, the Hoffman Estates Literacy Coordinator, who volunteers her time week in and week out for hours at a time to ensure all of our Educational Programs run smoothly and successfully.

## CALENDAR

- 1 12:30pm, *Open Play*
- 6 7:00pm, *Speech seminar presented by Lora White*
- 8 12:30pm, *Open Play*
- 10 9:00am, *Crawlers*  
10:00am, *2 & Under*  
11:30am, *Hop, Skip & Jumpers and Playhouse Pals*
- 11 11:00am, *Spanish and Polish Family Group*
- 15 12:30pm, *Open Play*
- 22 12:30pm, *Open Play*
- 23 7:00pm, *Friday Friends*
- 24 10:30am, *Kids Club*



## Kids Club Expands

The Kids Club program at Hoffman Estates Playhouse is expanding its monthly program to include additional skill building for children that participate. The program is led by Ellyn Podolsky, an Occupational Therapist, who volunteers her time (along with her husband Gary) to engage the kids in activities that are both fun and aid development. Recently, Kids Club has sought out ideas to change its name to reflect the more skill building activities that Ellyn is bringing to the program. Keep a look out for the wonderful new things happening with this group. Thanks Ellyn and Gary!

