

Because of you...

We Thrived



GiGi's
Playhouse™

Down Syndrome Achievement Centers
educate. inspire. believe.

Milwaukee, WI

Fiscal Year 2021 Annual Report

Because of you...

WE ARE A COMMUNITY where families and individuals with Down syndrome and all abilities can come together for acceptance and strive to reach their highest potential.

Our **MISSION** is to change the way the world views Down syndrome by offering FREE programming to individuals with Down syndrome and their families in a warm and welcoming family atmosphere.

Our **VISION** is to expand our footprint within the Milwaukee community to become a premier source for individuals and families with Down syndrome to get educational, life-skills and community support -- to provide a place where individuals with Down syndrome are accepted and embraced in their families, schools and communities.



"I remember my first visit to GiGi's Playhouse; I felt as if I entered a place that was welcoming, supportive, and safe." Kristen, Mother of Lilly

Dear Believers,

Every year we gather at national conference to collaborate with GiGi's Playhouses across the nation to share ideas and learn about new opportunities within our organization. The last day is a celebration of our accomplishments and recognition for all. Presidents from across the nation get up and state their word for the past year and their one word for the next year. Milwaukee's word for 2021 was 'nimble'. It was a great word choice as all definitely had to be nimble to navigate the ups and downs of the year. Because of you, our donors and believers, we not only survived but we thrived.



Over the past year we are pleased to have seen our community collaborations continue to grow. These connections with local universities and businesses allowed us to grow our programs and to bring more FREE programs to our participants. We could not have done this without the dedication of our many volunteers and the staff who help get these connections coordinated and implemented. We are committed to making sure there are no barriers for our families to access our services.

Acceptance is critical for our participants. They deserve to live in a generous, kind and accepting world and GiGi's Playhouse Milwaukee aims to show all of our families that they are welcome here. While our programs are designed to address the needs of individuals with Down syndrome we welcome all who would benefit. We love seeing our Playhouse and virtual screens filled with participants of all abilities, all ages and from all over Southeastern Wisconsin. We invite you all to take a peek at our 2021 Annual Review, check out our website at: <https://gigisplayhouse.org/milwaukee/>, stop by for a tour or sign up to volunteer. Together, we can help everyone achieve their Best of All.

Sincerely,

Susanne Griscom Pelikan, Board President

The national office utilizes a set of 9 Standards of Excellence to guide each independent Playhouse. GiGi's Playhouse Milwaukee is pleased to receive national recognition as a **STRONG** Playhouse in the areas of Programs, Marketing and Operations & Facility.

This awards Milwaukee a STRONG Playhouse classification!



2021 At-A-Glance

PURPOSEFUL PROGRAMS

NEARLY
3,900

academic, therapeutic
& social
programming hours

GIGI'S MILWAUKEE #22 OPENED

3/21/2015

6 years ago on
World Down
Syndrome Day

GIGI'S MILWAUKEE WELCOMED

50

NEW FAMILIES
(154 families
total this year)

GiGi's
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Milwaukee, WI

CELEBRATES COMMUNITY

Milwaukee = 208
Ozaukee = 56
Racine = 13
Sheboygan = 12
Washington = 21
Waukesha = 70

Families in local
counties

Across the
U.S. & in Mexico

55

Playhouses open
in 2021

120

unique
participants

joined our 27
different virtual &
in-person programs
last year (10 new)

119

VOLUNTEERS

donated
3,195

hours last year



Because of you...

We Thrived



Katelyn, Craig and Rayvaughn share some laughs at tutoring.



Participants enjoyed getting back into the playhouse this summer.



Everyone had a great time at baby goat yoga!



Noah battled Chad to win the Wisconsin State Arm Wrestlers Tournament in May.



Board members enjoyed supporting Mel's Charities at the Bag for Bucks Tournament.



We were so lucky to get hundreds of books from Barnes & Noble to share with families.



Family Fun Day was a hit! Families enjoyed swimming, games, a meal, and campfire time.

Attendees had fun competing in the stein hoist at the Brew Ha Ha!



Cookies with Santa was sweet! (Almost) everyone was smiling..



Because of you...

community connections

Many thanks to these local universities that help us facilitate and grow our programming!



Morgan Precour and Zeki AbuLughod are Mount Mary University Occupational Therapy students who not only led the new career development program GiGi Prep but were instrumental with GiGi Fit Adult and TeenTastic leaders. Morgan was happy to be helping participants with self-advocacy skills, independence & transitional skills, including job interviewing, budgeting and money management and goal setting. Zeki brought his many talents to the summer programs as well. He said, "GiGi's already does so much in the community and to be able to be part of bringing in this new program is truly an honor."

GiGi Prep/Teentastic



CARROLL
UNIVERSITY

Mount Mary
UNIVERSITY



Leaps and Bounds

Amina Grace Speech and Kids' Club



MARQUETTE
UNIVERSITY



CONCORDIA
UNIVERSITY
WISCONSIN

GiGiFit and Volunteers

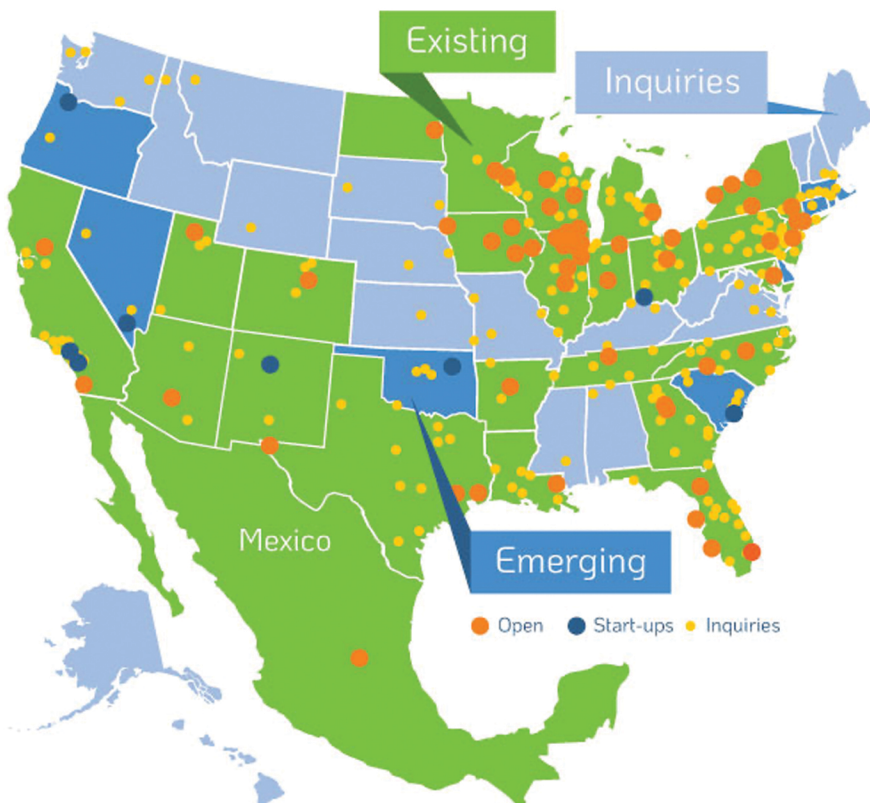


Tutoring

UNIVERSITY of WISCONSIN
MILWAUKEE

Because of you...

we're growing



Volunteer TODAY!

You can also help by joining our team of volunteers!

Tutors – Tutoring a child for one hour a week is one of the most rewarding ways to give back. We will help train and supply all the materials you need for success.

Program Leaders – help lead one of our fantastic programs!

Committee Members – event planning, program direction, donor relations and outreach

Because of you...

FREE programs

GiGi Fit

GiGiFIT programs combine physical therapy with a strong fitness focus and an ultimate goal of success and improved movement. GiGiFIT was created in collaboration with Physical Therapists to address the needs of individuals with Down syndrome including hypotonia, joint laxity and decreased balance. Milwaukee is pleased to offer this program to infants and toddlers, kids, teens and adults.



We love how welcoming GiGi's feels. [When] at GiGi's we feel like everyone has our backs and we're all in this together. I feel like Henry is truly accepted and people at GiGi's see Henry for the happy little guy he is. We're blessed to have found the GiGi's community. Everyone we have met has been nothing short of helpful, supportive, understanding and just overall beautiful human beings.

From Danielle & Alan Gibson (Henry's parents)

Parents like Erin Anderson are grateful for the support -- "It's like having a community who is going to be there to help my kid," she said.



Amina Grace Speech Program

GiGi's Amina Grace One-on-One Speech and Language provides participants of all ages expanded opportunities to improve their speech and language skills. This program focuses on clarity of speech and enunciation, word order and comprehension which benefit self-confidence, school readiness and increased independence in social and life settings.

GiGi Prep

GiGi Prep has an emphasis on building communication skills, money management, customer service skills, team building, health and wellness over a session. This program is an application-based program with high expectations to motivate adults with Down syndrome.



"I began a new job at Karthaus and Sons. I get to work with plants and flowers. I find this job very peaceful and I like to see where the world began. I knew from the start I would love this job."

Excerpt from a speech given at last year's Brew Ha Ha by Katelyn Rekoske, member of first GiGi Prep held at the Milwaukee Playhouse

Because of you...

a lifetime of support



GiGi's Playhouses empower families and provide free therapeutic, educational, and career programs for children and families for all ages of development.

From prenatal diagnosis through career skills, families are never alone.



GiGi's By the Numbers

INCOME



GRANTS	\$134,735
DONATIONS	\$46,872
FUNDRAISERS	\$67,947
MISC.	\$898

PAYROLL	\$97,168
FACILITIES	\$44,704
PROGRAMMING/MARKETING/EVENTS	\$32,719
NATIONAL SUPPORT	\$41,369

EXPENSES



GenerationG is a worldwide movement that goes beyond Down syndrome and sends a global message of acceptance for all. We invite everyone to be kind, be generous, and be accepting.

You can help change the world by taking the pledge at:

iacceptyou.org

Thank you to our corporate sponsors!



MUNSON FENCE & PAVING

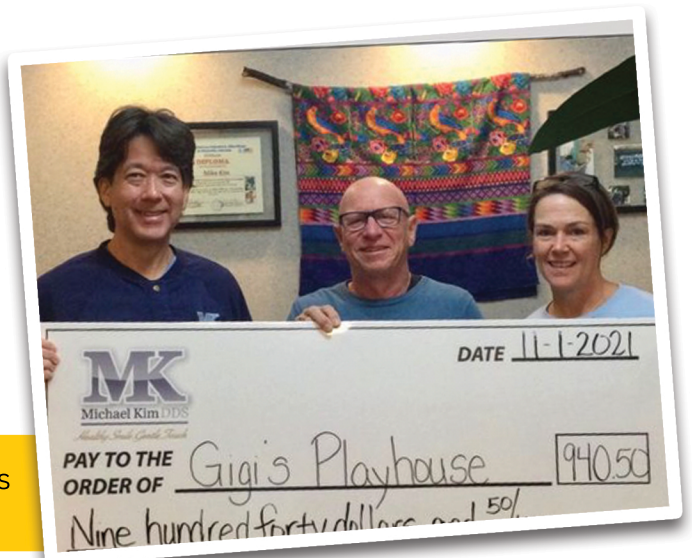


Brian & Rebeckah Wickert Foundation



Join us! Run and walk for ACCEPTANCE on May 1st at Lake Park.

Join us in October 2022 for our annual Brew Ha Ha!



Many thanks go out to Dr. Michael Kim, DDS for his annual Smiles For Life campaign contribution.

Because of you... possibilities

\$5,000 and above

ANON Charitable Trust
Bader Philanthropies, Inc.
*Fifth Generation, Inc.
*Harri Hoffmann Family Foundation, Inc.
Anthony & Ann Jasen
*Melitta S. and Joan M. Pick Charitable Trust
James & Susanne Pelikan
*James & Rikkina Pulliam
*Frank & Lucille Puncer Foundation
*Diane Schlitz Family
Stackner Family Foundation

\$1,000 and above

American Endowment Foundation
Nick Anson
Dan & Mary Aschenbrener
Brian & Rebekah Wickert Family Foundation
Elizabeth Elser Doolittle Charitable Trusts
Flowers for Dreams
Barry & Penny Goldman
Greater Milwaukee Association of Realtors Youth Foundation
*Green Bay Packers Foundation
*David R. Griscom
Dan Hurrle
Joel & Erin Anderson
Integrated Management and Accounting, LLC
Jasen Wealth Advisors

Kapco, Inc.
Kohler Co
Madison Investments
*Manpower Group
Marian Milwaukee
Mel's Charities
Milwaukee Bucks
MKE Yoga Social
Munson Paving and Fence, Inc.
My Choice Family Care Inc.
Norine Nazareth
North Shore Bank
Robert L. and Frances J. Zielsdorf Foundation
S.C. Johnson and Son, Inc.
Gino Salomone
The GE Foundation
*Randy and Chris VandenHouten
Jon & Sara Van Deurzen
Michael and Lynda Wachter
WI Arm Sports
WI Energies Foundation, Inc.
Willis Towers Watson Midwest, Inc.
*Woman's Club of Wisconsin Foundation

\$500 and above

Wendy England
Fund of the Jewish Community Foundation
Gigi's Bridal Shop
Amy M Groh
Illinois Tool Works Foundation

Michael Jensen
Charlie & Sarah Koehn
Network for Good
Nicolet High School
Olsen's Piggly Wiggly
Permobil Foundation
Pieper Electric, Inc
Smiles for Life Foundation
The David & Aimee Gibson Giving Back Fund
U.S. Venture Inc.
United Way of Greater Milwaukee

2021 In-Kind Donations

Anthony & Ann Jasen
Andare Sports
Benji's Deli
Betty Brinn Children's Museum
Shelley M. Boehm
Capitol Husting
Colectivo Coffee
Eggers Imprints
Erik's Bike Shop
Falafel Guys
Gathering Place
GoGo squeeZ
Green Bay Packers Foundation
William & Valerie Hess
Home Depot
Kettle Moraine Appliance & Sleep Center
Lake Geneva Ziplines & Adventures
Lands' End

Metro Market
Milwaukee Admirals
NORTHSTAR Printing & Graphics
Rockin' Jump Trampoline Park
Saz's Hospitality Group
Schlitz Audubon Nature Center
Schloemer Law Firm, S.C.
Scottfree Salon - Mequon
Silver Creek Pottery & Forge
SmashBoxx.TV
Target
The Dinner Detective
The Norbert
Tobin Jewelers
Trader Joe's
Twisted Willow
Jon & Sara Van Deurzen
Waggle Dance Flowers
Wait-a-While Playschool
Washburn Household
Washington House Inn
Chris Whittet
Mike & Andi Zimmerman

* indicates Believers who received a new or larger star in 2021 on our GiGi's Playhouse Milwaukee donor wall

Your belief in GiGi's Playhouse Milwaukee has helped us do great work this year. Thank you for continuing to support our mission of acceptance and for changing the lives of those we serve together.

The word legend is thrown around so much but Sidney Poitier was a legend. I waited until now to tell this story. In 1986, Katharine Hepburn was hosting a tribute to Spencer Tracy on Broadway. Robert Wagner, Jason Robards, Stanley Kramer were all there but I was most excited to see Sidney Poitier. I was working part time at UPS and the trip cost me \$2500 which I didn't have but I spent the money and it was a thrill. Vault ahead to last January. Over the years I had picked up 40 to 50 movie posters and lobby cards from Mr. Poitier's career. I contacted his office and sent them. I got this amazing card back from Mr. and Mrs. Poitier. I went to put the card back and there was something else in the envelope... a check for \$2500. I was stunned at that generosity. I sent the check back and then was told by Mrs. Poitier that I needed to accept the check to make her happy, even if I donated it to charity -- I did just that and in Mr. Poitier's name.

Written by Gino Salamone, Milwaukee Media Celebrity and Hollywood Insider



Because of you...

WE CAN GROW!



Susanne G. Pelikan
President



Barry Goldman
Vice President



Mike Wachter
Treasurer



Erin Anderson
Secretary



Ann Jasen
Board Member



Kristen Byers
Board Member

We need **YOU!** We are looking for board members to grow into the future. Join us!

YOU???
Board Member



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Milwaukee, WI

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Virtually Visit Us! <https://gigisplayhouse.org/milwaukee/>



Counties We Serve

8685 N. Port Washington Road
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Milwaukee, WI

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