

2014 ANNUAL REPORT



educate. inspire. believe.



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LETTER

Debbie Morris | *Board President*



My daughter Sophia, born with Down syndrome, was five years old when I began to think ahead to her teenage years. I knew that I wanted her to know her community and to develop life-long friendships like any other child. A Google search brought me to the homepage of GiGi's Playhouse, a Chicago-based organization, and I knew then that I had found a place for Sophia to make the friends I so wanted for her (and where she could learn and have fun, too!). But first I had to figure out how to open a GiGi's Playhouse in NYC!

It's five years later and our Playhouse has now been open for three years. It's been an exciting journey and each year has been defined by its own set of accomplishments. 2014 was a watershed year for us: we secured an attractive lease for long-term space, added new Board members, expanded our programming and held our most successful fund-raising gala to date.

We accomplished all of this thanks to our dynamic Playhouse leadership, a committed Board of Directors, countless skilled and passionate volunteers, wonderful families in our community and the on-going financial support of generous individuals, corporations and foundations.

I sincerely thank all of our supporters, leaders, volunteers, friends and the Harlem community for embracing GiGi's Playhouse NYC. With your continued support, we will serve an ever-increasing number of families and people with Down syndrome with programs, lectures, social gatherings and lifelong friendships. I can't wait to see what's in store for Sophia and her friends!

Warm regards,

MISSION & VISION

OUR MISSION: is to increase positive awareness of Down syndrome through national campaigns, educational programs and by empowering individuals with Down syndrome, their families and the community.



OUR VISION: is to see a world where individuals with Down syndrome are accepted and embraced in their families, schools and communities.



NATIONAL NETWORK



Changing the way the world sees Down syndrome.
one child. one diagnosis. one community at a time.

The President and Founder of **GiGi's Playhouse** is Nancy Gianni. When Nancy gave birth to her daughter, Gigi, eleven years ago, she was inspired to create a place where children with Down syndrome and their families could come together free of charge for education, awareness and fun. Through Nancy's passion and commitment, there are now more than twenty GiGi's Playhouses across the country, with plans for many more. **GiGi's Playhouse** empowers individuals with Down syndrome to reach their greatest potential. From Nancy's inspiring vision, **GiGi's Playhouse NYC** opened its doors in 2012, thanks to the resources and hard work of our intrepid founders, Tracy Nixon and Debbie Morris and our Executive Director, Britt Sady. As the only **GiGi's Playhouse** in New York City, we have an important mission and a large community to serve. **GiGi's Playhouse, Inc.** and its subsidiaries, including **GiGi's Playhouse NYC**, carry a 501(c)(3) exemption.

OUR PROGRAMS

PROGRAMS FOR EARLY LEARNERS

hop, skip & jump | ages 2-7

Join this weekly educational dance party. Your child will have their moment in the spotlight, dance and learn a few letters along the way as everyone wiggles and jiggles to some of the hippest songs that kid's parents love.

sign language/music | ages 0-7

Children and parents gather in a circle to expand vocabulary comprehension and expression with sign language as the training wheels to speech. Drop-in program, friends and family welcome.

PROGRAMS FOR YOUNG ADULTS & ADULTS

gratitude committee | ages 20 and up

This core group of adult volunteers with Down syndrome meets weekly to hand-craft thank you cards for our amazing volunteer staff and other Playhouse projects. Please call the Playhouse if you'd like to join this group and contribute your artistic flare.

friday friends | ages 18 and up

Friday Friends is social club for adults with Down syndrome: a fun night out to facilitate social interactions between adults with Down syndrome, their peers and the community. The program provides a social outlet for participants to meet new friends, learn new skills and most of all, for this group to adults to have loads of fun.

PROGRAMS FOR CHILDREN & TEENS

adaptive ballet | ages 2 and up

Discover your inner ballerina while learning classical ballet steps and positions! Develop Ballet fundamentals: balance, coordination, and rhythm. Dancers develop strength and elegance while appreciating this classical art form. Ballet improves posture, body awareness, builds confidence, and grace. Drop-in program.

literacy pods | ages 3-8

Children learn to love literacy in this weekly small-group setting.

playhouse pals | ages 9-15

This social club uses theater games to teach social skills and builds intimate friendships for our t'weens. Parents get the opportunity to meet separately, on site for an adult social hour.

storytelling | all ages

Come exercise your imagination through crafts, music, dance, and acting! Each session will center on a different theme, and will explore interactive storytelling.

soccer practice | all ages

Practice soccer skills, build strength and agility, and spend time with friends.

karate | all ages

Adaptive Karate with instructors such as David Sheeger, of Shihan Martial Arts. Whatever your current level of fitness or experience with martial arts, karate training will build strength, speed, flexibility and stamina. Siblings welcome.

OUR LECTURES & EVENTS

National “I Have a Voice” Gala | Annually

Every chapter of GiGi’s Playhouse International holds their biggest fundraiser – the annual ‘I have a voice’ gala. Guests enjoy dinner, dancing, silent and live auctions, and knowing that their generosity supports free programs for individuals with Down syndrome and their loved ones! Generous friends new and old help us raise the funds we need to support our growing community center, and corporate friends gain a better understanding of the challenges we live with and the profound joy our children bring.

World Down Syndrome Day Party | March

Dancing, crafts, food and fun! Our yearly celebration of World Down Syndrome Day brings together members of the New York City Down syndrome community for a day of pride and solidarity.

Dancing for Down Syndrome | May

Our grass-roots awareness and fundraising initiative, Dancing for Down Syndrome, asks families to tell their story of loving someone with Down syndrome and being a part of the Playhouse community, and to share that story with the wider community. This event is by and for the families that come to the Playhouse and benefit from our free classes, workshops, lectures, parties and events. The campaign ends with a dance party celebration of everyone’s efforts! This was a first-time event in 2014 and repeats annually.

Building Blocks for Success | November

We bring together experts for panel discussions on the building blocks for a happy, successful life for an individual with Down syndrome. These talks focus on what parents can do to give their child the greatest opportunities in their adult lives. Esteemed NYC experts volunteer to form the panels for these events.

Winter Celebration | December

Games, crafts, snacks, music, dancing, mascots, photo booth, and special guests make this yearly holiday party a fun event for the whole family.

Parent Support

grupo de familias de habla española

Nuestras familias se juntan para conversar sobre temas de interés en común sobre el Síndrome de Down, para aprender y crecer juntos en este camino. GiGi’s busca educar en comunidad a los padres e hijos que buscan transformar su vida y la sociedad que rodea a quienes más quieren.

Our families get together to talk about topics of interest to the Down syndrome community, to learn and grow together. GiGi’s seeks to educate and create a community of parents who want to transform their lives and the lives of their loved ones with Down syndrome.

under 2’s

Families enjoy support, friendship, mentorship and the advice of various experts in the field of special needs and infant care. Drop-in program, for new and expectant parents.

pre-natal diagnosis support

GiGi’s offers accurate and positive information about Down syndrome to families who have just received a pre-natal diagnosis.

“GiGi’s Playhouse NYC hosts several events and lectures throughout the year that support our mission and the community we serve.”

RESOURCES & SUPPORT

NEW YORK POST

GLAMOUR

NYMetroParents

LAURA INGRAHAM

YAI

New York
family

Down Syndrome Cognition Research™
Wmind
FOUNDATION

HUFFPOST EDUCATION

national down syndrome society
ndss.

i4C
Invest for children

“**GiGi's Playhouse NYC** partners with many organizations that support the Down syndrome community and help us spread our message of awareness.”

CORE VOLUNTEER TEAM

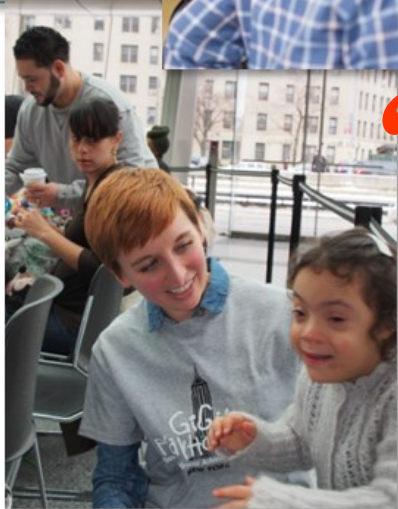
Volunteers are the backbone of the Playhouse. We rely on the dedication, talent, and expertise of a core group of volunteers who deliver our programs. We ask for a three-month commitment; the majority of our core program volunteers have served for over 2 years.



“It’s so nice to be at a place where everyone is so loving and friendly. Everyone here cares for each other and helps build new friendships. It’s an amazing experience.”
- Lauren



“I’ve seen friendships grow and flourish, confidence blossom, and language skills multiply throughout this year or so here at the Playhouse.”
- Lili



“After a year of volunteering, I continue to support GiGi’s Playhouse because it is a warm and welcoming place for me to learn responsibility and care for others. The people here are all incredible, and I wouldn’t change this experience for the world.”
- Brandt



“GiGi’s Playhouse is a place of joy, empowerment, affirmation, and possibility. I came to GiGi’s to volunteer and I hope I can enrich the lives of all those who are lucky enough to have discovered the Playhouse!!!”
- Andy

BOARD, COMMITTEE & STAFF

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NYC BOARD MEMBERS

Deborah Morris, Board President
Jane Providenti, Vice President &
Governance Chair
Sharon Hart-Fanelli, Board Secretary
Rebecca Purnick, Board Treasurer
& Finance Chair
Tom J. Fogarty, Gala Chair
Jon Connolly, Development Chair
Lauren Fogarty
Gretchen Hayes
Gerald Sifert

NYC STAFF

Britt Sady, Executive Director
Nina Gonzalez, Office Manager

PROGRAM ADVISORY COMMITTEE MEMBERS

Jordana Mendelson
Bonnie Keilty
Kristen O'Brien
Emily Perl Kingsley
Megan Fucci
Cary Williams
Tobie Franklin
Liza Galler
Kathleen Feeley
Jane Providenti
Tracy Nixon
Hilda Chusid

GALA COMMITTEE

Tom J. Fogarty, Gala Chair
Frank Sawyer
Heather Trivedi
Jerry Sifert
JoAnn Fogarty
Rebecca Purnick

INTERNS & ADMINISTRATIVE VOLUNTEERS

Julia Klele
Heesun Kim
D'Andra Brown
Veronica Labarca

PROGRAM LEADERS

Lili Rusing, Literacy Tutor/Hop Skip & Jump
Kadijha Bagby, Literacy Tutor
Brandt Hersh, Literacy Tutor, events support
Gina Graves, Sign Language/Music Teacher
Andy Kleiman, Hop Skip & Jump, Playhouse Pals
David Sheeger, Karate Teacher
Madeline Day, Ballet Teacher
Lauren Costabile, Tap Teacher/Ballet Assistant
Hayden Wilson, Soccer Coach

PROGRAM ASSISTANTS

Anita Murtha
Ada Zhou
Noa Hankin
Jack Robins
Keshi Taryan-Kigel
Victoria Hinojosa
Denise Epstein
Eunice Daudu

LETTER

Britt Sady | *Executive Director*



Since opening our doors in February 2012, the Playhouse has worked tirelessly to build a community and learning center for Down syndrome in New York City. There was little sleep, but a profound sense of joy in making our dreams a reality.

I am so proud to report our many accomplishments in 2014:

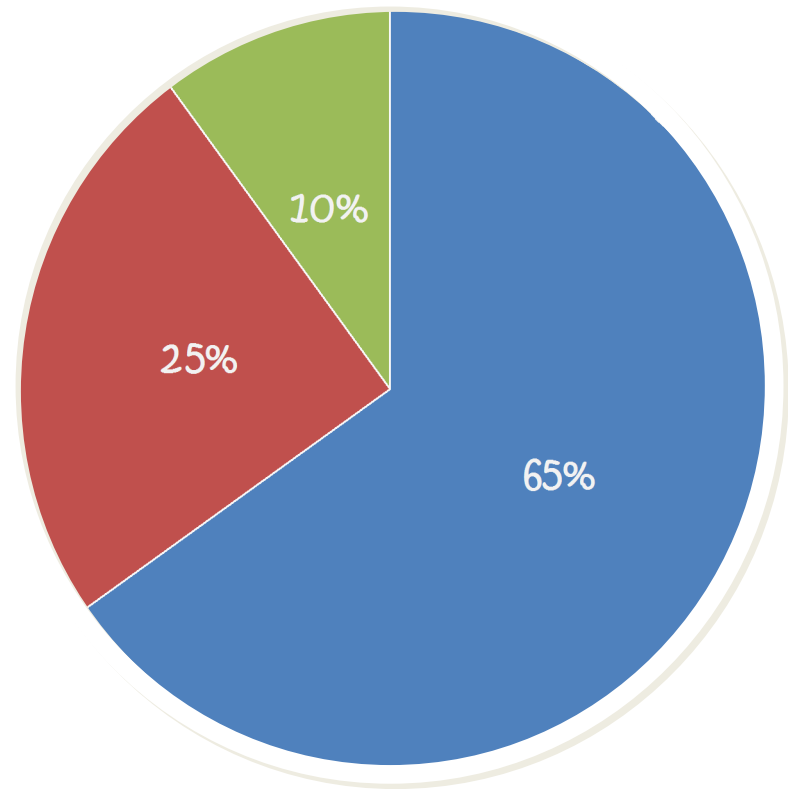
- GiGi's Playhouse NYC served over 1,500 participants! The Playhouse community participated in weekly classes in ballet, literacy, karate, soccer, storytelling, art and social skills. We also hosted lectures, workshops and discussions for parents and care-givers given by our network of developmental and educational experts who volunteer their time and skills so generously.
- Because of our social-skills programs, we saw children with limited social abilities become confident and popular in a community they can now call their own.
- Through our literacy programs, we saw children learn to love reading while parents gained confidence that their children could learn this vital life skill.
- Thanks to our lectures and workshops, we saw parents make more informed choices about their children's social, medical and educational well-being.
- And our accomplishments are being noticed. Glamour Magazine asked us to pay tribute to their Woman of the Year, Radio Disney did a feature program about the Playhouse, Heart-A-Cause made GiGi's their cause of the year during fashion week, and Sarah Lawrence College's Genetics Program made it mandatory for any genetics student to spend a day with us to learn what it is really like to have a child with Down syndrome.

Statistics indicate that there are over 11,000 individuals with Down syndrome in the New York City area. That's a lot of lives to touch and a lot more work to do!

2015 promises to be the most exciting year yet for GiGi's Playhouse NYC. I am so proud to serve as the Executive Director of this wonderful organization. Please stop in for a visit!

Warmly, 

FINANCIALS



2014 Total Expenses*:
\$241,000

- Programs
- Fundraising
- General & Administration

“90% of our annual expenditures go directly to programming and events that benefit our community and related fundraising.”

* Excerpted from our 2014 Form 990 and Audited Financial Statement.
Available upon request.



DONORS

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FOUNDER'S CIRCLE

Tracy Nixon

Gretchen Hayes

Tom & JoAnn Fogarty

Matthew & Lauren Fogarty

Andrew & Debbie Morris

Jean Sullivan & Richard Cane

Benno & Evelyn Ansbacher

Jonathan & Rosemary Ansbacher

Gaurang & Heather Trivedi

Mitch Rubin & Audra Zuckerman

Eric & Becky Fogarty

Invest for children

“We are grateful for our generous donors. **GiGi's Playhouse NYC** is entirely locally funded by individual and corporate donations and foundation support.”



\$20,000+

Invest for Children

\$15,000+

Andrew & Debbie Morris

Anonymous

\$10,000+

Benno & Evelyn Ansbacher

Jonathan & Rosemary Ansbacher

Eric & Becky Fogarty

Matthew & Lauren Fogarty

Tracy Nixon

\$5,000+

AIG

Kevin & Sarah Brakstad

Jean Sullivan & Richard Cane

Tom & JoAnn Fogarty

Oliver & Elissia Sigalow

\$2,500+

Michael Borello

Jeremy Bressler

Environmental Building Solutions, LLC

Jack & Aggie Green

Gretchen Hayes

Guardian Services Industries, LLC

David Mazzullo

Britt Sady

Michelle Smith

Dr. Heather Trivedi

\$1,000+

Josh & Laura Blau

Jennifer Patterson & Louis Craco II

William Craco

Robert DiLorenzo

\$1,000+ *continued*

Chad & Emily Dreas

Tim Driscoll

Michael Estock

Robert Maccarrone

Jessy Nahmias

NY Plumbing-Heating-Cooling Corp

Marya Propis

Steven & Laura Riggio

Lisa Weggeman

\$500+

Noreen Weiss Alder

Joshua Arden

Paul Ashton

Wendy White Baxter

Phoebe & Todd Boyer

Ruth Brickson

Cindy & Kenny Chau

Columbia University

Kirsten DeBear

Linda Drummy

Hakan Ergulec

Mark & Maggie Gaines

Susan Hayes

Kids for Kids Foundation

Marvel US Management, LLC

Silvia Morisaki

Anita Murtha

Srinivasan Nangavaram

Joseph Neto & Associates, Inc.

Perry Patterson, Jr.

Ramon & Imani Rosario

Valerie Rossi

Marilee & Richard Reilly

Shafer & Adrienne Saldana

Shula Samer

M Alice de Tiberge

CONTACT INFORMATION

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Location:

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New York, NY 10026

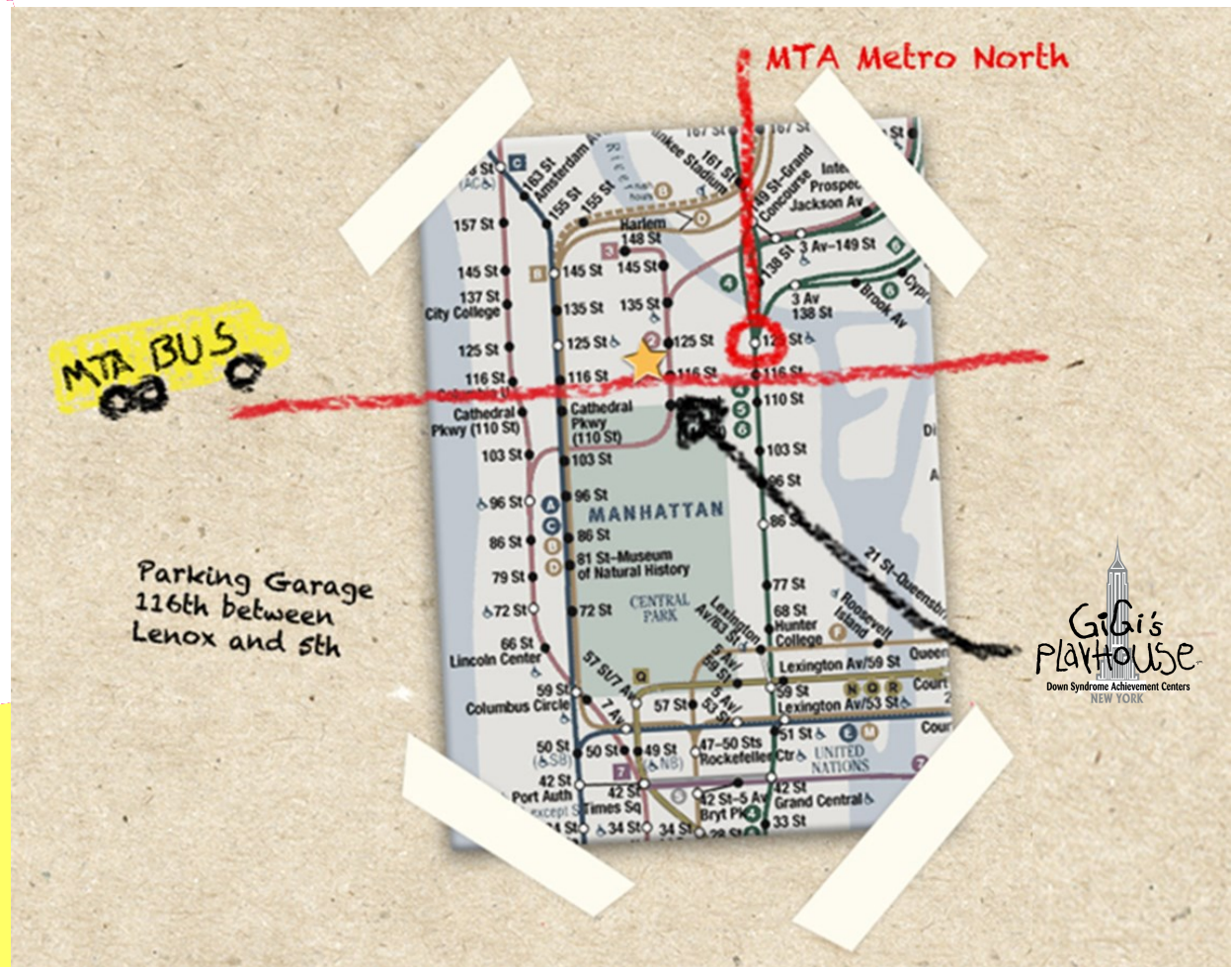
Mailing Address:

PO Box 925, New York, NY 10026

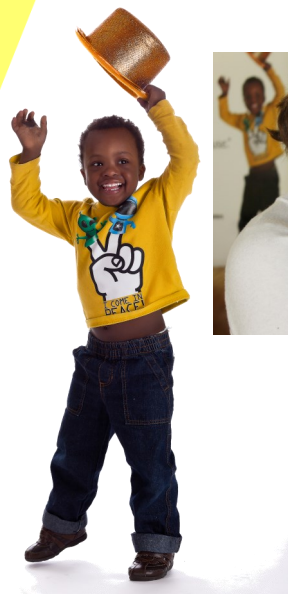
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gigisplayhouse.org/newyork



THANK YOU



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