



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

educate. inspire. achieve

Newsletter



C-E-L-E-B-R-A-T-E



Help us welcome the Gianni Family back to GiGi's Playhouse-Des Moines on **Saturday, September 8!** Nancy & GiGi have been doing a "Tour de GiGi's Playhouses" this summer and are making the stop in Des Moines to help us celebrate our achievements & accomplishments throughout the Playhouse!

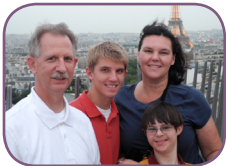
Your family is invited to attend the **Grand Opening Celebration** of the **new Therapeutic Play Center** from **10am-Noon!** The Therapeutic Play Center is a huge asset to our children in many areas including innovative & inventive play, speech, physical and occupational therapies! With the vision from Gretchen Baldwin and all the work our Board put into bringing this area to Des Moines; with the funds from 100+Men on a Mission and several other donations; the beautiful artwork by Cheryl Veenstra; the donation of many hours from volunteers to help tear down, install and place the Therapeutic Play Center into our Playhouse we say **THANK YOU** and it's time to CELEBRATE!



For the evening, we invite all adults to join us for a **FUN-draiser at Winestyles in Johnston** (8460 Birchwood Ct) which will include wine sampling, appetizers, conversation and Down syndrome Awareness from **6-9pm** for \$20.00 per person. Nancy will be on hand to talk to us about GiGi's Playhouse and upcoming Awareness efforts that we are involved with in a more intimate setting. All funds raised will go directly to GiGi's Playhouse for our Free Programming to continue. Checks and Credit Cards will be taken at the door for admittance. Invite your friends to CELEBRATE!



Our son, the teacher, by Nadine Kastner

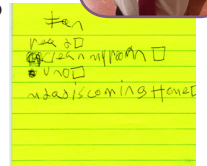


I think back to the day Ian was born and clearly remember so many of the details. His birth, the diagnosis by the doctor, the phone calls to family and friends. It's often said that parents go through a mourning period after a diagnosis of Down syndrome. I remember being scared, but not sad. I remember a mix of reaction from friends & family, and some were sad.

I remember my husband's unbelievable sense of humor given the circumstances. We didn't know if we were going to have a girl or a boy. If it was a boy, we had chosen Seth, and joked during the pregnancy that Seth Kastner would be a tough name for a kid with speech problems. I knew we were going to be just fine when Mike looked at me after the doctor told us and remarked, "I don't think the name Seth is going to work." (To this day, that still makes me smile.) I asked him to choose a name, and without hesitation, he said Ian Thomas Kastner. I remember after making the round of phone calls, this quiet & strong man also questioned, "Why can't people just congratulate us, we had a baby boy." I remember looking at him and telling him that we are teachers, and how we treat Ian is how others will treat him.

We've raised Ian without the label of Down syndrome. Not that we were shielding him or his brother (or us) from it, we just didn't want it to define him ... and it doesn't. And through the years, he

became the teacher. People who meet him are in awe of this boy's abilities. He's loving, perceptive, confident, funny, smart, active and athletic. He takes trumpet lessons every week and reads every day. He's such a hard worker. He makes to-do lists, because he has things to do! He LOVES music. When I asked him who his favorites singers are, here were his top picks — Seal, Beatles, Rolling Stones, k.d. Lang and John Hiatt. His brother Joe sees Ian as the life of our family, and says he can make a quiet room fill with laughter & excitement – and he does.



Not to say there haven't been challenges — there have been many. Our latest is puberty. Ian wants many things that a typical 13 year old wants, including; a girlfriend, to play video games beyond his age and to get his driving permit when he's 14. His pediatrician jokes that, "Ian doesn't realize he has Down syndrome, does he?" Yet, on some level, he knows. When we see a kid with Down syndrome, he'll say "He's like me." As Ian gets older, he has a greater understanding of himself and the world. Our job as parents is to give him information as he is ready and in ways he will understand. I guess we are all teachers.



one night. nine cities. two countries. your voice.
save the date!

The 3rd Annual

have **i** voice

International Gala
Saturday, February 23, 2013

GiGi's
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Down Syndrome Awareness Centers

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www.gigisplayhouse.org



Venues in:
Chicago
Sioux City
New York
Quad Cities
Des Moines
Twin Cities
Rockford
Atlanta
Queretaro, Mexico

Gala 2013 Update

Mark your calendars for Saturday, February 23 to attend the 3rd Annual International GiGi's Playhouse Gala in Des Moines! We are currently seeking committee members to help in areas such as Sponsorships, Auction Items & Volunteering. If you are interested in being on this FUN committee please email us at: d.bargstadt@gigisplayhouse.org! Our Gala Committee meetings will be held the 2nd Monday of each month beginning in October at 6pm! Keep checking our website for sponsorship & registration opportunities! Hope to see you at our first meeting on October 15 @ 6pm!

CALENDAR

Check out our website at: www.gigisplayhouse/desmoines!

- 1 Ready, Set, Action, 11am
- 3 Language Group, 4:30pm
- 7 Friday Friends, 7pm
- 8 CELEBRATE w/ GiGi Gianni, 10am-Noon
Grand Opening of the Therapeutic Play Center
CELEBRATE w/ Nancy Gianni, 6-9pm
FUN-draiser @ Winestyles in Johnston
- 10 Help A Heart, 6:30pm
- 13 Dance Squad, 6pm
- 14 Open Play, 10am
Friday Friends, 7pm
- 15 3-4 Yr Old Playgroup, 10am
Story & Craft w/ Ms Jo, 11am
- 21 Friday Friends, 7pm
- 22 Neustros Angeles, 9am
Skill Builders, 9:30am
- 27 GiGi's Dance Squad, 6pm
- 28 Open Play, 10am
Friday Friends, 7pm



To read more articles about upcoming events check out our online Blog & Facebook!

Therapeutic Play Center THANK YOU

Doug Ribek with S&D Floor Covering did an outstanding job of installing the safety foam & carpeting for the new play area!! His attention to detail & his desire to have this area be perfect for all the kids was very evident. He worked extra hours to guarantee that it would be completed by the day we needed the area ready. However, he did take a break-he gathered several friends & went to Buffalo Wild Wings to help support GiGi's! Doug also asked for some GiGi's t-shirts to help promote Down syndrome Awareness!! THANKS Doug, we appreciate your amazing work!



15th Annual Buddy Walk a SUCCESS



A HUGE thank you to everyone who participated in making this year's Buddy Walk a BIG hit! Planning began back in February & took countless hours of organizing. Without each & every one of you, it wouldn't have been a success.

Thank you for stepping up to help the families in our community. The smiles & memories have been priceless.

If you happen to visit one of the following businesses, please be sure to let them know how much we appreciate their involvement. They'd love to hear about our success!

Bang Bang Mongolian Grill

Blank Park Zoo

Brad Johnson Investments

Casey's General Stores

ChildServe

Chow's Gymnastics & Dance Institute

Classic Frozen Custard

The Conley Group

ENT Clinic of Iowa

Fridley Theatres

Grand Harbor Resort

Hy-Vee

The Iowa Barnstormers

ITA Group

Kansas City Sausage Company

L & C Medical Billing

National Pork Board

On The Border Mexican Grill & Cantina

Panera

Pine Ridge Farms

State Farm Insurance

Toad Valley Golf CourseVanderpool

Construction

West Des Moines Auto Body

Wilder Side Band



Story & Craft Time with Jo

Held the third Saturday each month at 11am. A fun experience with books, finger plays, flannel board stories, music, games & crafts covering the theme of the month. The theme can be anything from flowers to pirates. The program offers learning experiences plus the creation of a wonderful art project. There is a variety of activities so there should be an activity to interest everyone and all ages!



Open Play Fun

Open Play encourages children with Down syndrome & their families to strengthen friendships & pursue new ones in a leisurely setting. Children of all ages have the opportunity to play on our brand-new playhouse equipment every week! Once per month, Gage the therapy dog comes to GiGi's to visit. The kids are welcome to pet and play with Gage as they feel comfortable! Through Open Play, children learn to relate to others, share, and problem solve while having fun with their friends! Join us every other Friday at 10am for Open Play!



Save the Date:

- Sept 8** 10am-Noon Therapeutic Play Center Celebration
- Sept 8** 6-9pm Celebrate @ Win-estyles FUN-draiser
- Feb 23** Gala @ Marriott dntn

RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED



One Million Voices Gallery

The Des Moines i have a voice 'one million voices' gallery is almost done!!! We are expecting delivery in late September. There will be an unveiling ceremony held at Jordan Creek Mall, where it will be displayed the entire month of October for Down Syndrome Awareness Month!!! A big THANK YOU to Mercy Medical Center, Jordan Creek Mall, and Amy Doerring Photography for sponsoring this fabulous project! We cannot wait for the 'one million voices' gallery to start traveling around the state & neighboring states. Imagine the difference it will make.... changing out dated perceptions... showing the world how fabulous individuals with Down syndrome are!!!! We ARE making a difference, and we are proud to be a part of the movement! You can book the 'one million voices' galleries by emailing us at: onemillionvoicesDSM@gigisplayhouse.org!