



Down Syndrome Achievement Centers
educate. inspire. believe.

Milwaukee, WI

Fiscal Year 2019 Annual Report

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



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Letter From the President

When I began my tenure as board president in May 2019, I never imagined first year would be filled with so many twists and turns. Fortunately, GiGi's Playhouse Milwaukee is lucky to be part of a national organization that provides support and guidance on a larger scale. 2019 was also a fabulous year of progress and we're blessed with great donors & advisers. We are even luckier to have a passionate and dedicated board who are just as committed to seeing our local Playhouse be a success as I am. Each board member has their own story to tell about why we share our time with GiGi's. I encourage everyone to take a moment to come and see our playhouse, meet our volunteers & participants, and listen to some great stories.

My reason for joining the board may seem obvious; I have a 13 year old with Down syndrome and I want to help make GiGi's successful for him and see him achieve his 'Best of All'. However, my story goes deeper than that. Being a part of GiGi's is a legacy that is handed down to me from generations of strong women. My grandmother gave birth to my Uncle Bill in the 1940's & made the courageous choice to raise him at home, against the advice of doctors and everyone around her. In perspective, the words 'Down Syndrome' weren't used until 1958 when the extra 21st chromosome was discovered. My grandmother was determined to foster a loving home and nurturing environment for Bill. This was before early intervention programs & many forms of formal therapy & education. She created a group of other like-minded mothers to create playgroups and 'therapies' of their own. Uncle Bill died the same year my son Jake was born in 2007 after living a great life. My mother shared stories about her brother & was so pleased to see how many advances had been made to offer Jake the best life possible. She never got to walk through the doors of our Playhouse as she passed away in 2012, but I think of her often as I bring Jake there. I imagine the happy tears she would shed as she saw the beautiful pictures of our kids out on the store front for all to see. She would've been thrilled to see Jake run to greet his buddies and participate in a cooking class, tutoring, or other program. The opportunity for Jake & his peers to experience acceptance, kindness, and generosity is truly a gift.

The mission at GiGi's Playhouse is to change the way the world views Down syndrome. We do that by offering our free programming in a welcoming and supportive atmosphere. The future for our kids is so much brighter than it was 70 years ago, like it was for my Uncle Bill. We still have a lot to do. Every day, I see our capable participants and they can give so much back to our community. Together, with your support, we can get there. We thank you for believing in our mission and our Playhouse and look forward to seeing you at the Playhouse soon!

With sincerest appreciation,

Susanne G Pelikan



Let's Talk Money



ASSETS	2019	2018
Total Bank Accounts	\$ 46,777	\$ 40,294
Due from Playhouses	128	(192)
Current Assets (Less Banking & Interco)		
Prepaid Expenses - Trade	2,917	500
Total Fixed Assets and Accumulated Depreciation	61,850	67,364
Total Assets	\$ 111,673	\$ 107,967
LIABILITIES AND NET ASSETS		
Due to Playhouses	\$6,473	\$5,598
Unearned Revenue Events	30	0
Total Current Liabilities (Less CC & Interco)	30	0
Total Net Assets-Equity	105,170	102,369
Total Liabilities and Net Assets	\$ 111,673	\$ 107,967

Statement of Financial Position

For Calendar Years 2018 & 2019

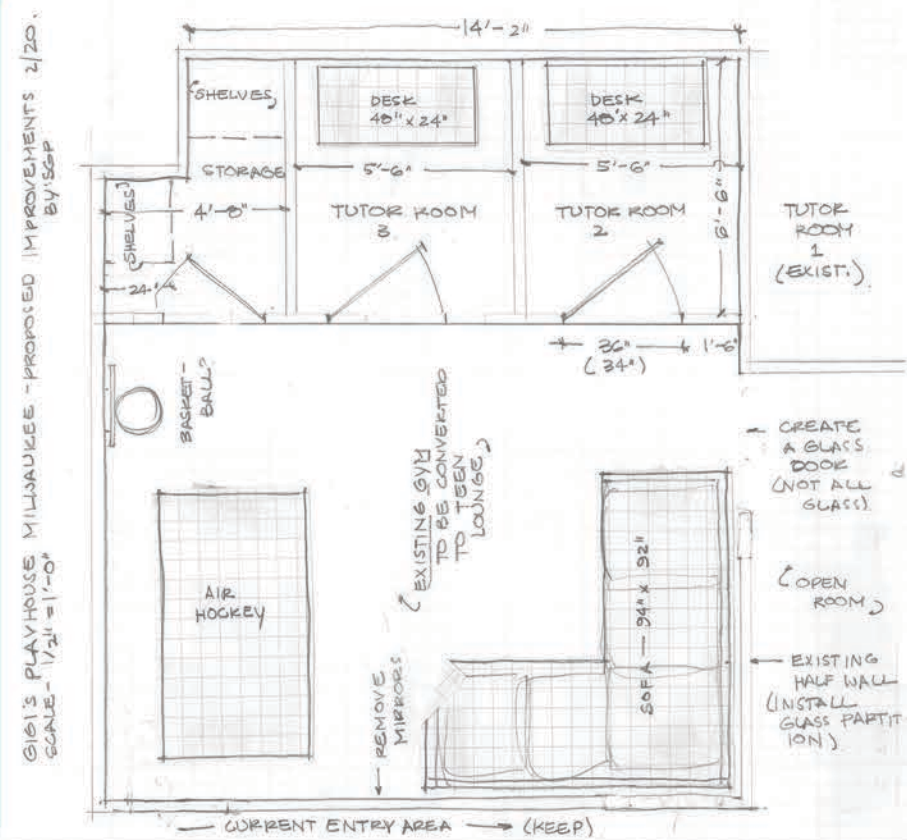
Statement of Activities

For Calendar Years 2018 & 2019

Total Support & Revenue	2019	2018
Contributions	\$ 85,204	\$ 55,863
Grants	13,000	12,000
Special Events Income	59,076	49,840
Miscellaneous Fundraisers	749	438
Miscellaneous Income	20	275
Dividends & Interest	25	0
In-Kind Donations	20,195	16,158
Net Assets Released from Restriction	0	0
Total Support & Revenue	178,269	134,574
Total Non-Donated Expenses	154,871	148,127
Total In-Kind Expenses		
Value In-Kind	2,256	5,917
Value In-Kind - Special Events	17,939	10,342
Total Costs	175,469	164,431
Increase (Decrease) in Net Assets	2,801	(29,856)
Net Assets at Beginning of Period	102,369	133,253
Net Assets at End of Period	\$ 105,170	\$ 102,369

What's Next?

GiGi's Playhouse Milwaukee serves participants of all ages and we want our Playhouse to appeal to all. We plan to remodel our existing space to include a fun, hip, new hang-out space for our more mature participants. GiGi's Lounge will include a comfy couch, TV and games for teens and up. This vision includes more tutoring space for our popular 1:1 programming and office space for our growing staff.



Making our programming accessible to all remains one of our goals. To achieve this we are laying plans to take our programs to the underserved part of our community. Signature programs like 1:1 tutoring and LMNOP can travel! We want to collaborate with our neighbors and community leaders to offer small pop-up programs in off-site locations. Volunteers are needed to help us facilitate these goals.

VOLUNTEERS are key to helping us bring our wonderful programs to our participants. It takes a passionate group of board members, advisors, program leaders and tutors to make the magic happen. Please consider joining us; the rewards are evident with the smiles, hugs and progress you will witness from our wonderful participants.



Thank you to our 2019
Brew Ha Ha Supporters!



YOU'RE INVITED!
NOVEMBER 14TH, 7PM ONLINE
BREW HA HA 2020
THE VIRTUAL EVENT OF THE SEASON
ENTERTAINMENT, BEER, PARTY
BOXES, AND MORE!



The Stars of GiGi's Playhouse Milwaukee

Our new donor wall recognizes our stars that have donated over \$5,000 in support of our Playhouse. These donors helped to open our doors in 2015 and continue to believe! Thanks to ALL of our amazing donors for everything you have given to our Playhouse and believing in us for the past 5 years.

Diamond Stars

- Anonymous Fund of the Jewish Community Foundation
- Bader Philanthropies, Inc.

Brilliant Stars

- Frieda and William Hunt Memorial Trust
- Kohl's Hometown Giving Program

Radiant Stars

- Anonymous Donors
- Hamilton Roddis Foundation
- Johnson Controls Inc.
- Melitta S. and Joan M. Pick Charitable Trust
- The Burke Family
- The Hewes Family
- The Kulka Family
- Xerox Corporation

Shining Stars

- Amsted Industries Inc
- ANON Charitable Trust
- Ayco Charitable Foundation
- Brewers Community Foundation
- Field's Auto Group
- Global Down Syndrome Foundation
- Gruber Law Office
- Harri Hoffmann Family Foundation Inc.
- Nonprofit Management Fund
- Smiles for Life Foundation
- The Anson Family
- The Flaherty Family
- The Francois-Neubauer Family
- The Jasen Family
- The Katz Family
- The Kocab Family
- The Pelikan Family
- The Price Family
- The Seaman Family
- The Skalnik Family
- The VandenHouten Family
- The Waldkirch Family
- The Weitz Family
- The Zimmerman Family
- Yabuki Family Foundation

Are you
our next
STAR?



Donor wall graciously painted by Tami Zwicke and a special thanks to Quality Rubber Stamp Co. for producing the letters and stars for our donor wall!

Best of All

Programs at GiGi's Playhouse are FREE and are designed to support the unique needs of participants with Down syndrome, of all ages, and all abilities.

Art Explosion (all ages)

Individuals with Down syndrome and their friends will engage in activities that allow artists to express themselves, build confidence, and socialize with peers. Multiple art mediums will be used in this hands-on program.

Open Play (all ages)

This specialty program is designed to increase positive social interactions among peers and siblings. Open play promotes a positive setting for parents to share experiences and learn from each other during this networking time, for new and current families.

LMNOP (ages 0-3)

This signature program is an interactive and engaging program designed to guide parents and young children through learning basic sign language and other forms of communication using music and language-based activities.

Crawlers and Walkers (ages 0-5)

Supports the development of gross and fine motor skills through hands-on activities and games. Social skills and language development will also be addressed, with a focus on following directions and interacting with peers.

Talk It Up with Marquette (ages 2-12)

This speech-language program is designed to support children with communication difficulties. Therapies may address difficulties with speech production, comprehension, vocabulary, grammar, social communication, etc. Led by students from the Department of Speech Pathology and Audiology at Marquette University, under the direct supervision of faculty that is a licensed speech-language pathologist.

Literacy and Math Tutoring (ages 3+)

Our FREE 1:1 Literacy and 1:1 Math programs are specifically designed for individuals with Down syndrome. Trained volunteers teach along purposeful progressions that build confidence and mastery. Families are provided with practical activities to continue learning at home.

Leaps and Bounds (ages 3-5)

This program promotes social, emotional, large and small muscle group development. Children will participate in fun and engaging activities that require movement and interaction with their environment.

Kids Club (ages 9-12)

Develops social skills and language through peer to peer interaction in a casual and fun setting. This program also supports gross motor skills through active games, as well as fine motor skills and self-help skills.

Teen Tastic (ages 13-18)

Focuses on building social skills with friends by participating in team-based activities. Skill development promotes understanding compromise, turn-taking and problem-solving abilities.

TEAM (ages 18+)

TEAM (Teaching, Exercise, Activity, and Movement) promotes a healthy lifestyle, peer interactions and independence. This program is divided into nutritional guidance, meal prep, exercise, and a meal which is prepared at each program.

GiGiFIT (ages 18+)

Balance Fitness 4170 N. Port Washington Road
GiGiFIT focuses on improving areas of fitness through activities in strength, endurance, joint stability, balance, movement, control and more. GiGiFIT promotes wellness through nutrition, pushing through barriers and building self-confidence.

The GiGi's community has helped us feel not so alone and scared in our journey. It has been a huge emotional support to our family and has given us many great opportunities -- not only for Cameron but for our whole family. To be honest, it's one of my favorite places to take Cameron and we're looking forward to making many more years of memories at GiGi's Playhouse. Thank you and we are so very grateful to be a part of something so extraordinary and beautiful; we are blessed to have GiGi's Playhouse.

Molly Cruz (Mom of Cameron, age 2)



GiGi's Playhouse Milwaukee is a community treasure. I volunteer because I wish there had been Playhouses during the many years I taught in a suburban community. What an amazing social and skill-set place -- in person, in the community, and virtually during the pandemic -- for infants, toddlers, children, teens, young adults and adults with Down syndrome or other individual differences! First time families enter and are embraced with love, given information, welcomed to participate, experience, question, share knowledge, and develop informal short & long term goals for their children, themselves, and their families. True friendships blossom: in the Playhouse, at homes, in the community.

Helen Lambron (Volunteer)

Hi, my name is Chad and I am 21 years old. GiGi's Playhouse helps people with Down syndrome, like me. I go to TEAM, summer Book Club and Fantastic Friends. GiGi's is important to me because I want to have fun and make new friends. I love to cook at TEAM and dance at Fantastic Friends. I am excited that I have GiGi's Playhouse in Milwaukee. I want to have more programs in Milwaukee. Thanks celebrating people with Down syndrome. WE ARE AWESOME!

Chad VandenHouten (Participant)



There is still so much more to do. Without more actions to create lasting acceptance, opportunities for present and future generations will falter. Our kids never get to take a break from their diagnosis. Therefore, we will not stop fighting for them.



GiGi's Playhouse Milwaukee is a place for families. It is a place for community. It is a place where individuals with Down syndrome can come for acceptance and strive to reach their highest achievements. For example, many self-advocates become models of good citizenship by giving back and volunteering their time at GiGi's Playhouse.

It is thanks to these and many other incredible volunteers, a myriad of individual donors, as well as a handful of generous corporate donations that ALL of the programs and services at GiGi's Playhouse are provided for FREE to families -- nothing should hold families back from inspiration!

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

- 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.

educate

Expand our program offerings to more locations throughout the Milwaukee community including our underserved population.

inspire

Reach out to new communities to develop more collaborations and partnerships with schools, businesses and advocacy groups.

believe

Engage our believers to develop a more meaningful relationship with our mission and the Milwaukee Playhouse.



by the numbers

- + 5 Years Old (Opened in 2015)
- +15 Consistent programs offered monthly
- + 370 Individuals with Down syndrome
- + 365 Families supported
- + 54 New families
- + 4,066 Families and contacts in outreach
- + 4,220+ FREE Program hours annually
- + 3,220+ Volunteer hours annually
- + 99% Volunteer-run
- + 49+ Locations in the US & Mexico



= a world filled with acceptance & belief!

