

*GiGi's Playhouse Nashville*  
welcomes you to the 9<sup>th</sup> annual

*i have a Voice*  
*Gala & Auction*

**Your belief. My voice.  
Achievement that changes the community.**

**Presented by:**



**Southall Meadows  
Saturday, May 8, 2021**





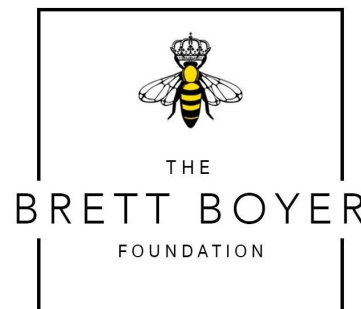
## THE BRETT BOYER STORY

Sadie Brett Boyer was born on July 8, 2016 to her loving parents, Ellen and Bo Boyer. It was discovered during pregnancy that Brett would be born with Down syndrome and with Congenital Heart Disease. After becoming sick in the fall of 2016, Brett went on to have her first heart surgery to treat AVSD (Atrioventricular Septal Defect). During surgery, doctors discovered that Brett's heart issues were more complicated than initially thought. She battled through another surgery and several setbacks for 100 days before gaining her angel wings in February 2017. The Brett Boyer Foundation was started a few months later with the mission of changing the outcome for other families.

The Boyer family faced the same fears that so many do when faced with the news that your baby will be born with challenges. What they didn't know was that having Down syndrome would be one of their favorite things about Brett. They consider themselves lucky to have been chosen for the special role of parenting a child with these unique abilities who can lead a long, fulfilling life. However, CHD is a condition that most often requires medical intervention for survival.

Our mission is to create the attention, funding, research and advancements that can save the lives of children and to improve the outcome for so many who live with effects of CHD for the entirety of their lives.

We will never stop working toward a different outcome for others with CHD. We will also spread awareness about the tough battles faced in this community as well as celebrating those with Down syndrome who have so much to offer to our world.



**The Brett Boyer Foundation is funding research for Congenital Heart Disease (CHD) while raising awareness and supporting the CHD and Down syndrome communities.**

CHD currently affects about 40,000 newborns in the United States each year. Of those births, 25% have a critical CHD, which generally requires surgery or other procedures in their first year of life. For those that survive, CHD is a lifelong battle for many as there is no cure.

### WHAT WE DO

- Fund research projects in multiple hospitals around the country
- Provide ongoing support for CHD patients, parents and providers
- Spread CHD awareness and education
- Partner with organizations such as GiGi's Playhouse to provide support and programs in the Down syndrome community



**Want to donate or learn more? Visit us at [www.thebrettboyerfoundation.org](http://www.thebrettboyerfoundation.org)**

## Welcome Guests,

We are so excited to welcome you to the ninth annual “I Have a Voice” Gala! We are truly honored you have chosen to spend your evening with us. Thank you!

GiGi’s Playhouse Nashville just completed its seventh full year, and what a year it has been! In the face of a global pandemic, we quickly revolutionized our service model, offering online programming for the first time and bringing the magic of GiGi’s into homes in over 36 countries. These benefits will stay with us even as many of our core programs have returned to physical locations.

During this challenging year, I’m reminded of why GiGi’s is so important. It is a place where whole families are celebrated and supported. At GiGi’s, we are welcomed as part of a larger community and we know our daughter Emmaline is encouraged to live her very best life. Having this support was so much more important this year for all our families.

GiGi’s Playhouse Nashville would not be possible without you. We are so grateful for the generosity of our sponsors, individual donors, attendees, and volunteers! We hope tonight will inspire you to join our GiGi’s family—to volunteer, to donate, and to spread the word. Join us in changing the way the world sees Down syndrome. “Your belief. Our voice. Achievement that changes the community.”

Sincerely,



Volunteer Gala Chair



6:00

## Schedule of Events

SOUTHALL MEADOWS  
EVENT HALL AND PATIO

**Cocktail Reception and Silent Auction**

Silent auction will close at 8:00PM

7:00

SOUTHALL MEADOWS BARN

**Welcome Announcements**

Shane McCarrell, Emcee

**Playhouse Introduction**

Presented by Board President Sean Farrell  
and GiGi’s Ambassador Caroline Walker

**Dinner**

**Community Achievement Award and  
Gloria & Cindy Knoch Volunteer Spirit  
Award**

Presented by Program Coordinator Carlie  
Long and GiGi’s Ambassador Ben Summers

**Live Auction**

Shane McCarrell

**Keynote: Dreaming Big**

Presented by Executive Director Carter Abel

**I Have a Voice**

An opportunity to make a gift to support the  
voices of our GiGi’s participants

**Closing Remarks**

Volunteer Gala Chair Emily Whitson with  
GiGi’s Ambassadors Ben Summers and  
Caroline Walker

**Music by The Banjocats  
and Check Out**

9:30



# Meet Our 2020 Ambassadors

The goal of GiGi's Ambassador Program is to help our ambassadors develop their public-speaking skills, confidence, and ability to advocate, while serving as our GiGi's spokespersons for the year.



## *Ben Summers*

Ben is 24 years old and lives in Brentwood, TN. He takes great delight in serving the members of the YMCA as a wellness floor attendant and a greeter. In his free time, Ben likes writing music, drumming, and playing basketball. He especially enjoys tandem biking with his dad. At GiGi's, he has participated in many programs: GiGi Prep, EPIC (Empowerment, Participation, Independence, and Community Involvement), Fantastic Friends, Yoga, and CrossFit.

## *Caroline Walker*

Caroline is 25 years old and lives in Brentwood, TN. She graduated from the Ideal Program at Lipscomb University with an emphasis in fashion. She is very involved with Friends Life, Young Life, Best Buddies TN, and Special Olympics swim team. In her spare time she enjoys hiking and listening to music. Caroline loves seeing her friends at GiGi's Playhouse. Her favorite things to do at GiGi's are participating in EPIC, Fantastic Friends, CrossFit, and karaoke nights.

**Our Ambassadors have done an amazing job representing GiGi's Playhouse Nashville over the past year. Thank you for celebrating with them!**



We make a living by what we get,  
We make a life by what we give!

Innova is delighted to support GiGi's Playhouse's mission of empowering the people to realize their best and follow their vision!



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# Down Syndrome Today

One in 691 live births results in a Down syndrome diagnosis. There are 450,000 individuals with Down syndrome living in the U.S. alone, and including affected parents and siblings, over 2 million people are impacted by this diagnosis every single day. Therefore, improving the lives of those WITH Down syndrome as well as those INFLUENCED by Down syndrome is truly an urgent need.

## GiGi's Playhouse Helps Families

GiGi's Playhouse is an international network of Down Syndrome Achievement Centers, with over 50+ brick and mortar locations across the United States and Mexico and 200+ inquiries to start new locations all over the world. Across our network, we provide FREE, life-changing therapeutic, educational, and career training programs for 30,000+ individuals of all ages.

## GiGi's Playhouse Nashville

GiGi's Playhouse Nashville opened its doors in November 2013. It is a physical place where people can connect, meet, and be accepted just as they are. We support individuals with Down syndrome and their families through free programming tailored to their learning style. We encourage participants to give their best effort, and we always celebrate individual progressions and achievements. We are tremendously proud of how far we've come in only 7 years... and we've got even bigger dreams for our future.





# Playhouse Programs

GiGi's Playhouse Nashville makes a lifelong commitment to families to provide free, purposeful programs that are designed to holistically empower those with Down syndrome to thrive and reach their "Best of All."

GiGi's offers dozens of therapeutic-based programs that support fine and gross motor skills, speech and language abilities, health and fitness, and other key areas of development.

GiGi's offers goal-oriented programs for teens and adults that focus on the development of confidence, real-world skills, health and wellness, and career skills.



GiGi's offers one-on-one tutoring in literacy and math to increase success in school, using best practices that address the unique learning needs of students with Down syndrome.

GiGi's breaks down barriers and changes the way the world sees Down syndrome by creating opportunities and fostering acceptance through our international network.

## Sponsors

### Presenting Sponsor

The Brett Boyer Foundation

### Silver Sponsors

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First National Bank of Middle Tennessee

Furst Group

Don and Amy Hirt

Dr. Molly Hood / Pediatric Associates of Franklin

### In-Kind Sponsors

Alcohol: Lipman Brothers and R.S. Lipman Company

Catering: Catering & Events by Suzette

Floral: LMA Designs

Photography: Eli Greiss / Focal Point; KJ Photography;

Lets Booth It; Shane K. McNeill Photography

## Thank You!



## Community Achievement Award: NorthField Church



This past year we have had the honor and privilege to partner with NorthField Church of Gallatin to open a satellite GiGi's Playhouse location in Sumner County, TN. It has been an amazing partnership, and we are especially thrilled to award NorthField Church our Community Achievement Award.

We were first introduced to NorthField Church by Lauren Springer, the mother of a young boy with Down syndrome, who wanted her son to benefit from the programs and community that GiGi's offers but whose family lived too far north of Nashville to regularly participate. After several introductory discussions, staff at GiGi's Playhouse Nashville worked with Tom Haddon (lead pastor), Bill Jacoby (executive director), and Haley Forrest (children's pastor) to officially kick off a slate of GiGi's programs at NorthField Church this spring.



We have been so grateful to get to know the staff and members of this church over the past year. Not only have they provided us with a location to expand our programs into Sumner County, but they have also provided us with volunteers, program supplies, new ideas, and more!



Thanks to our partnership with NorthField Church, we have served over 15 new participants this spring and gained 21 new volunteers. We can't wait to see our programs at Northfield grow and continue to provide educational and therapeutic programs for individuals with Down syndrome in Sumner County! And we look forward to using this model to expand our services to other areas of Middle Tennessee.





## Proud to support GiGi's Playhouse

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healthcare experience for  
seniors. Learn more at  
[naviHealth.com](https://naviHealth.com).



## *Gloria & Cindy Knoch Award*

The Gloria & Cindy Knoch Volunteer Spirit Award  
honors our founding benefactors,  
Gloria Knoch, her daughter Cindy,  
and the entire Knoch family.

Gloria Knoch raised eight children—one of whom was Cindy, born in 1953 with Down syndrome. In 1953, there were very few, if any, resources for children with Down syndrome. Doctors recommended that Gloria institutionalize Cindy. Instead, Gloria and her husband brought Cindy home and into their loving family. Despite the lack of resources for her child, Gloria was a pioneer and began a reading group for children with Down syndrome in her home. The family was not wealthy; despite that, Gloria managed to set aside money for Cindy's future. Sadly, Cindy passed away before Gloria. Upon Gloria's passing, her family wanted to do something that would honor their mother's courage and commitment to supporting and educating her daughter.

The family chose to honor their mother's legacy by giving to the newly opened GiGi's Playhouse Nashville. They recognized that our organization strives to help individuals with Down syndrome achieve to their fullest potential, which is everything that Gloria wanted for Cindy.

The Gloria & Cindy Knoch Volunteer Spirit Award embodies Gloria's giving spirit and her belief that her daughter Cindy could achieve great things if she was given access to the tools and encouragement she needed in order to be successful.

We are pleased to award it to the volunteer of the year for GiGi's Playhouse Nashville, whose giving spirit has greatly impacted our participants.



## Volunteer Spotlight



Vicky McKinney first came to GiGi's Playhouse as a mother of a child with Down syndrome, but for the past several years has also been using her training as a behavior support specialist to volunteer and enhance our programming. She has been an incredible resource, helping to provide training for our staff and volunteers across numerous programs and direct behavioral support for individual programs.

For instance, for the past few years, Vicky has helped Program Coordinator Carlie Long lead our volunteer orientations and train new volunteers. During these trainings she provides our volunteers with insight into working with individuals with Down syndrome. She explains why certain behaviors may occur and provides our volunteers with helpful, positive redirection and

reinforcement strategies. As needed, she has also attended numerous programs to model those positive behavioral reinforcements for volunteers to ensure our participants are getting the most out of our programs.

More specifically, Vicky has been integral to the continued success of our music program. As a regular program volunteer, she has helped our program leaders from the Belmont music therapy program navigate behaviors so that our music programs run smoothly and participants are able to receive the most value from the therapeutic and educational components of the program.



Not only has Vicky made a huge impact on GiGi's Playhouse Nashville but she has also helped other playhouses across our entire network. This past year, she was asked to present her insights on promoting positive behaviors at our national GiGi's Playhouse Conference, with more than 50 playhouses in attendance. We are so proud and lucky to have such amazing volunteers like Vicky.



# Why Your Support Matters

Your donations to GiGi's Playhouse ensure that cost will never be a barrier for families to access life-changing educational, therapeutic, and career development programs for our friends with Down syndrome. Thank you for making a difference!



## 2020 Highlights

- Provided FREE services to 128 individuals with Down syndrome and over 409 additional family members, who logged 2,907 participation hours
- Converted all of our programming to a virtual format within 2 weeks of closing our physical doors due to COVID. Some of our online content was distributed throughout the GiGi's network, reaching tens of thousands of people from more than 50 countries!
- Added 6 new programs, resulting in a 23-program rotation throughout the year
- Provided 518 hours of math and literacy tutoring
- Hosted 147 volunteers who generously donated more than 1,861 service hours
- Organized online parent education programs serving hundreds of families nationwide
- Celebrated our seventh anniversary in Nashville



## *- Board of Managers -*

Olivia Bane	Megan Heim
Valerie Bayham	Gerd Peters
Daniel Cage	Tiffany Wenzler
Sean Farrell	Emily Whitson
Kevin Heath	Courtney Wright

## *- Playhouse Staff -*

Carter Abel, Executive Director  
Emma Fleet, Operations Coordinator  
Amy Hirt, Program Assistant  
Carlie Long, Program Coordinator

## *- Gala Committee -*

Carter Abel	Megan Heim
Olivia Bane	Amy Hirt
Valerie & Chris Bayham	Cynthia Matlock
Dana Bythewood	Gerd Peters
Kim Coure	Shannon Quigley
Kristen Davis	Tiffany Wenzler
Jenée & Sean Farrell	Emily Whitson
Emma Fleet	Courtney Wright

## *- Young Professional Board -*

Maureen Frazier	Colbie Taylor
Jordan Jamieson	Shannon Quigley
Jenny Matern	Brooke Walker
Emily Pless	Liz Zipperer

Please join us in thanking  
our Bronze Sponsors:





# A Very Special Thank You

We want to extend our gratitude to our awesome adult participants and their families for helping to create the beautiful floral centerpieces for tonight's event and which were generously donated by LMA Designs. Tonight's floral centerpieces are available to guests to take home for a \$20 (large vases) or \$10 (small) donation through OneCause.



We would also like to extend a very special thank you to the following people for their support:

*Our Staff and Volunteers*  
for making this night possible.

*All of the Individuals and Businesses* that donated items  
for our silent and live auctions.

*All of our Sponsors and Donors* for providing the funds  
necessary to allow us to continue to offer free programming  
for our families.

*Thank you*  
for believing in us!



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*Join us...*

- **June 5:** GiGiFIT Acceptance Challenge
- **August TBD:** Row for a Reason
- **August 30th:** Golf Tournament
- **October:** Down Syndrome Awareness & Celebration Month



**Achieve**  
**Believe**  
**Celebrate**

**GiGi's**  
Playhouse™  
Down Syndrome Achievement Centers  
educate. inspire. believe.  
Nashville, TN





Down Syndrome Achievement Centers  
educate. inspire. believe.

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Nashville, TN

*Our Mission and Purpose:*

To change the way the world views Down syndrome and  
to send a global message of acceptance for all.

*Our Vision:*

To see a world where individuals with Down syndrome  
are accepted and embraced in their families,  
schools, and communities.

*Our Niche:*

We change lives through the consistent delivery of free  
educational, therapeutic-based, and career development  
programs for individuals with Down syndrome,  
their families, and the community.

*Our Promise:*

A lifetime commitment to families.

*Thank you for joining us tonight!*

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(615) 370-1500

[www.gigisplayhouse.org/nashville](http://www.gigisplayhouse.org/nashville)