



GIGI'S PLAYHOUSE NASHVILLE

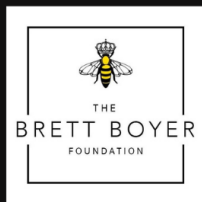
welcomes you to the 10th annual

*i* *Gala*  
*have a voice*

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

2 APRIL 2022 | 6PM  
SOUTHALL MEADOWS

PRESENTED BY





One of our favorite parts of our mission is celebrating the extraordinary, capable lives of our friends in the Down syndrome community.

*Thank you to Gi Gi's Playhouse for all you do!*



*Sadie Brett Boyer*

- Funding CHD research
- Creating awareness
- Providing family support
- Celebrating the Down syndrome community

[WWW.THEBRETTBOYERFOUNDATION.ORG](http://WWW.THEBRETTBOYERFOUNDATION.ORG)



### **The Brett Boyer Foundation**

was founded in 2017 by Ellen and Bo Boyer following the loss of their 7 month-old daughter, Sadie Brett Boyer, to complications from CHD. Brett was a gift to all who knew and loved her, and her legacy shines on as we continue our mission of changing outcomes for other families and celebrating her life.



*Welcome Guests,*

We are so excited to welcome you to the tenth 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 eighth full year, and what a year it has been! We have been so excited to get back to in-person programming. We are thrilled that we were able to launch our first semester of GiGiU, a three-day-a-week day program where five adults gained skills to find meaningful employment, continue their education, and foster independent living. We are committed to being "more than a playhouse" by providing programming that promotes education, independence, inclusion, and job skills.

As we celebrate with our gala tonight, 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 important these past few challenging years 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,

*Emily Whitson*

Volunteer Gala Chair



*Proud Supporter*  
**OF GIGI'S PLAYHOUSE NASHVILLE**





## *Gala Attendants*

At GiGi's Playhouse Nashville, we make a lifetime commitment to support individuals with Down syndrome of ALL ages and help them achieve their "Best of All." Our adult programs focus on vocational, communication, fitness, and social skills to increase confidence and independence. We are so pleased that a number of our teen and adult participants are joining us as Gala Attendants to help welcome you to the event tonight. Please take the time to mingle with them and learn their favorite things about GiGi's:

Ben Aguon	Taylor Krieg
Savannah Anderson	Tori McMahon
Clayton Huffman	Ryan Pittman
Destiny Weldon	

**Proud to support  
our friends at  
GiGi's Playhouse**



Dr. Elizabeth Bailes - Pediatrics  
1622 Westgate Circle, 1st Floor  
Brentwood, TN 37027  
629-255-2094



6:00

## *Schedule of Events*

SOUTHALL MEADOWS  
EVENT HALL AND PATIO

**Cocktail Reception and Silent Auction**

Silent auction will close at 8:00PM

7:15

SOUTHALL MEADOWS BARN

**Welcome Announcements**

Shane McCarrell, Emcee

**Playhouse Introduction**

Presented by Board President Daniel Cage  
and GiGi's Ambassador Taylor Krieg

**Dinner**

**Gloria & Cindy Knoch Volunteer Spirit  
Award; Community Partner Award**

Presented by Tutoring Coordinator Amy Hirt  
and GiGi's Ambassador Taylor Krieg

**Dessert**

**Live Auction**

**Video**

**Keynote: More Than A Playhouse**

Introduction by Executive Director Carter Abel  
Presented by GiGi's Ambassador Destiny  
Weldon and her mom, Denise Weldon

**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 Taylor Krieg and Destiny Weldon

**Check Out**

9:30



## Meet Our 2022 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.



### *Taylor Krieg*

Taylor is 33 years old and lives in Nashville, TN. Taylor loves coming to programs at GiGi's and is a regular attendee at Yoga, CrossFit, and EPIC (Empowerment, Participation, Independence, Community Involvement). In her free time, Taylor loves to read, dance, listen to music, watch movies and be outside. Taylor is a lover of all animals and has never met one she doesn't like! She also has a very strong relationship with her family and friends.

### *Destiny Weldon*

Destiny is 21 and lives in Nolensville, TN. When Destiny isn't attending programs at GiGi's, she likes to volunteer her time at her church with food distribution and helping set up the children's bible study rooms. She loves sports and dancing. She has been in a few fashion shows and her goal one day is to become a singer or performer on the stage! Destiny loves spending time with her mom, dad, brother, and sister.

Our Ambassadors are doing an amazing job representing GiGi's Playhouse Nashville this year. Thank you for celebrating with them!



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### *In-Kind Sponsors*

Alcohol: Lipman Brothers and R.S. Lipman Company

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Floral: LMA Designs

Photography: Tausha Dickinson; Scarlett Jager Photography

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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 United States. 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 8 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.



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A photograph of a person in a white lab coat holding a smartphone. A blue circular graphic with white dots is overlaid on the image. The background is a solid blue color.

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Ludi is proud to partner with GiGi's  
Playhouse & the 2022 "I Have a Voice" Gala

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## 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!



## 2021 Highlights

- Provided FREE services to 145 individuals with Down syndrome and 285 additional family members, who logged nearly 3,300 participation hours—a 13% increase from 2020
- Contributed virtual programs and resources to the network-wide GiGi's At Home platform, reaching tens of thousands of people from 82 different countries!
- Provided 602 hours of math and literacy tutoring
- Hosted 186 volunteers who generously donated more than 2,600 service hours
- Organized regular parent and community education programs with more than 100 participants annually
- Celebrated our eighth anniversary of supporting families across Middle Tennessee



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Nashville, TN



## *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: Kaitlyn Russell*



Kaitlyn Russell first started volunteering with GiGi's Nashville back in 2016. By day Kaitlyn works as a legal assistant with Baker Donelson but at GiGi's she is a CrossFit leader extraordinaire. She is always looking for ways to help our GiGi's athletes improve while leading our CrossFit program twice a month.

After COVID hit in 2020, GiGi's Nashville quickly moved to virtual programming. Kaitlyn single handedly organized the CrossFit volunteers to create and implement weekly recorded video workouts so that the participants would still be able to work out at home. This allowed them to stay active and learn how to use items in their home for daily workouts as well.

For many years, Kaitlyn and our CrossFit volunteers have organized the Row-For-A-Reason fundraiser. Kaitlyn helps train GiGi athletes for the event and organizes teams to help raise funds for GiGi's Playhouse Nashville. She has also volunteered at events such as our Trunk-Or-Treat and GiGiFit Acceptance Challenge.



Fellow volunteer and friend, Cody Edwards says of Kaitlyn: "She is one of the most generous people I know and is always thinking of how to put others before herself. She loves GiGi's and makes it a priority in her life, and it shows because the love that is returned from all of the GiGi's athletes!"

Kaitlyn's heart for our participants is contagious and she truly wants each participant to achieve their "best of all". Her commitment to GiGi's Nashville and her positive can-do attitude are a blessing to the staff and we are so grateful for her dedication to GiGi's Nashville!





## *Community Partner Award: Belmont University*



One of the ways that GiGi's keeps our programs free for families is through the time and talents of hundreds of volunteers who support our work each year. Local teachers, therapists, students, and community members of all backgrounds regularly invest in the GiGi's mission through program leadership, tutoring, administrative support, event planning, and more, and it makes everything we do possible.

When it comes to this vital task of volunteer recruitment and support, one community partner has gone above and beyond for many years now: Belmont University.

With service learning as one of the pillars of its educational model and student experience, Belmont has continually connected countless students to the GiGi's mission. Every spring, Capstone students from the Doctoral Program in Occupational Therapy spend 40 hours a week leading core GiGi's programs such as GiGi Prep and GiGi University, while also providing invaluable back-end support to other initiatives. In the spring and fall, students from the Music Therapy Program serve GiGi's participants of all ages through the



always-popular Music in Motion class. And students from many different degree programs regularly provide support to our programs after learning about GiGi's through Belmont's "Get Connected" platform.

In past years, Belmont fashion design students at the O'More College of Architecture & Design have teamed up with GiGi's participants as models in their spring fashion show—offering our participants the unique experience of walking the runway while training Belmont students to focus on inclusive design. News of this partnership went viral, spreading the GiGi's mission of empowerment and acceptance across the globe!



We are so grateful to our friends at Belmont for their ongoing support of the GiGi's mission, as well as all the Belmont students who regularly invest in the lives of our participants and families. Thank you!



*- Board of Managers -*

Olivia Bane	Kevin Heath
Chandler Barron	Gerd Peters
Valerie Bayham	Sharon Sabol
Daniel Cage	Tiffany Wenzler
Sean Farrell	Emily Whitson
Courtney Wright	

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

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Jim Anisi	Amy Hirt
Carter Abel	Carlie Long
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Valerie & Chris Bayham	Gerd Peters
Dana Bythewood	Shannon Quigley
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Andrea Donaldson	Emily & Brad Whitson
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## *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 for 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:

*The Weldon Family* for sharing their story with us.

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!*



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## *Join us...*

- **June 4:** GiGiFIT Acceptance Challenge
- **August 29th:** Golf Tournament
- **October:** Down Syndrome Awareness & Celebration Month



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

**GiGi's**  
Playhouse™

Down Syndrome Achievement Centers  
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Nashville, TN

*Our Mission & 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!*

GiGi's Playhouse Nashville  
1724 Carothers Pkwy #400  
Brentwood, TN 37027  
(615) 370-1500  
[www.gigisplayhouse.org/nashville](http://www.gigisplayhouse.org/nashville)