

GiGi's Playhouse Nashville

welcomes you to the

i have a voice
Gala & Auction

BLUE JEANS
& ball gowns

PRESENTED BY



APRIL 6, 2024 | 6 PM

COUNTRY MUSIC HALL OF FAME



Sadie Brett Boyer

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

WWW.THEBRETTBOYERFOUNDATION.ORG

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!*



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.

Thank you for joining us at the Country Music Hall of Fame as we celebrate GiGi's Playhouse Nashville and the Down syndrome community of Middle Tennessee!

For more than a decade we have been fulfilling a simple promise: that cost will never be a barrier to accessing the therapeutic and educational services our friends with Down syndrome need to thrive and grow into their full potential.

This mission is made possible because of generous individuals like you and we are deeply grateful for your kindness and support. Funds raised from tonight's gala are critical to ensuring GiGi's is able to provide vital services and life-changing programs for our community—programs that promote education, independence, and job skills. Programs that not just support my step-son, Sam, but welcome him as he is, celebrate his unique abilities, and encourage him to live his very best life.

So tonight, please know that you have had a tremendous impact on your friends with Down syndrome. You've helped create a place where whole families like mine are celebrated and supported through all stages of life. And we could not be more grateful.

Thank you!

Jenée Farrell

Volunteer Gala Chair



SCHEDULE OF EVENTS

6:00 COCKTAIL RECEPTION & SILENT AUCTION
With music by Amanda Baker Browning
Silent auction will close at 8:15 PM

7:15 WELCOME ANNOUNCEMENTS
Shane McCarrell, Emcee

PLAYHOUSE INTRODUCTION
Presented by Executive Director Denise Bayles and
GiGi's Ambassadors Andrew Donaldson and Tori McMahon

7:30 DINNER

ENTERTAINMENT: Aaron Tornquist

GLORIA & CINDY KNOCH VOLUNTEER SPIRIT AWARD
Presented by Founding Board Member and GiGi's Parent Kim
Coure and GiGi's Participant Clayton Huffman

ENTERTAINMENT: Maddox Rodriguez

LIVE AUCTION

KEYNOTE SPEECH

Introduced by GiGi Gianni; presented by Nancy Gianni,
Founder and Chief Belief Officer of GiGi's Playhouse Inc.

I HAVE A VOICE

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

ENTERTAINMENT: Liz Rose and Phil Barton

CLOSING REMARKS

Volunteer Gala Chair Jenée Farrell with GiGi's Ambassadors
Andrew Donaldson and Tori McMahon

9:30 CHECK OUT OPENS AND DANCING BEGINS

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Alcohol: Lipman Brothers

Floral: LMA Designs

Poster Photographer: Haley Birdsey Photography

Gala Photographers: Chasing Rainbows Creative,
Eric Wilson with AbleVoices, and SJK Photography

Portrait Experience: Tausha Dickinson

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Playhouse

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Thank you to our cocktail hour singer:

AMANDA BAKER BROWNING



Amanda was born and raised in Charleston, SC, and graduated from the University of South Carolina. After performing in a local band for a few years, she made the move to Los Angeles to pursue an acting career. She is most known for her roles as Jolene Crowell on General Hospital and Babe Chandler on All My Children. She has many other credits in TV, film, and commercials and currently teaches online acting classes for the company Work With Working Actors. She's also a part of The Bridge's worship team in Spring Hill, TN.

MEET OUR 2024 AMBASSADORS

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



ANDREW DONALDSON

Andrew, aged 30, has been an active member of GiGi's for a decade, engaging enthusiastically in programs like EPIC, Fantastic Friends, Yoga, and CrossFit. Beyond GiGi's, Andrew is also deeply involved in Special Olympics, showcasing his passion for sports, particularly basketball and powerlifting, which hold special places in his heart.

Professionally, Andrew has been part of the Nashville Predators team since 2017, where you can spot him at the SoBro entrance, joyfully distributing programs before every home game. Besides his career and sports interests, Andrew enjoys movies, art, and indulging in his favorite pastime of playing video games.

Save the Date!

June 3: Summer Programs Start

June: Dance-A-Thon

September 30: Golf Tournament

October: Down Syndrome Awareness Month and our 4th annual Whiskey Raffle



TORI MCMAHON

Victoria, affectionately known as Tori, is a 29-year-old who cherishes her family and extended relatives wholeheartedly. Among them is her twin brother, Brad, who trails her by just 11 minutes. Recently, Brad got engaged to Bailey, adding to Tori's excitement as she looks forward to welcoming another sister into the family.



A true fashion enthusiast, Tori adores dressing up in adorable outfits that reflect her style. Alongside her passion for fashion, she is involved in GiGi's programs, including Fantastic Friends, GiGi U, and Yoga. GiGi's holds a special place in Tori's heart as her favorite spot, where she expresses, "I get to hang out with my best friends and have a great time being together. All the volunteers are awesome!"

Our ambassadors are doing an amazing job representing GiGi's this year. Thank you for supporting them!



Hand in Hand Options, Inc.
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GiGi's Playhouse Nashville

<https://dioceseofnashville.com/hiho>



LKQ is proud to support GiGi's Playhouse Nashville for their 12th annual "I Have a Voice" Gala & Auction!

Visit us online at LKQCorp.com

LKQ
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GiGi's
Playhouse™
Down Syndrome Achievement Centers
educate. inspire. believe.

GALA ATTENDANTS

Andrew Donaldson, Clayton Huffman,
Taylor Krieg, Tori McMahon, Sam Nafzger,
Ryan Pittman, and Destiny Weldon

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 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!

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DOWN SYNDROME TODAY

In the United States, Down syndrome is the most common chromosomal difference according to the National Institutes of Health. Over 450,000 individuals with Down syndrome currently live in the United States; when you include affected parents and siblings, that's over 2 million people who are impacted by this diagnosis every single day. There's an urgent need to improve the lives of those with Down syndrome as well as those who are touched by it.

GiGi's PLAYHOUSE, INC.

GiGi's PLAYHOUSE NASHVILLE

GiGi's Playhouse is the ONLY network of Down Syndrome Achievement Centers nationwide and offers over 30 innovative programs that serve the unique needs of individuals with Down syndrome from birth through adulthood, all at zero cost to families. There are 59 existing GiGi's Playhouse locations in the U.S. and Mexico, and each playhouse operates independently and is locally concerned and enterprise minded. Across the network, the organization serves more than 30,000 individuals and delivers 220,000 in program participation hours.

GiGi's Playhouse Nashville joined the national network in November 2013. When we opened our doors, we wanted 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 100% FREE educational, therapeutic-based, and career development programs that are tailored to their learning style. We encourage participants to give their "Best of All" every day, and we always celebrate individual progressions and achievements. We are tremendously proud of how far we've come over the past ten years—and we've got even bigger dreams for our future.



KEYNOTE

GIGI GIANNI

GiGi was born in 2002 and has been changing the world ever since! She is the inspiration behind GiGi's Playhouse Down Syndrome Achievement Centers. GiGi travels the country as the face of our network of Playhouses, sharing her message of love, hope, and acceptance to all she meets. Aside from being GiGi's Playhouse ambassador, she is an active high-school graduate who works, exercises daily, takes voice, has a boyfriend, and enjoys doing all the other things that young adults do! GiGi has made many television appearances and interviews on the Today Show, NBC Nightly News, ABC, CBS, NBC, FOX, CNN, Telemundo, NHK World Japan, and all over the world! She has also been featured in Forbes, Crain's Chicago Business, Fra Noi Italian magazine, and hundreds of national and international publications. Her biggest public appearances have been singing the National Anthem at a Cubs game in front of 40,000 people in 2019 and 2022, and at a White Sox game in 2021. She memorized the lyrics quickly but worked for years on articulating the words and building up the muscles to project her voice. GiGi now uses that voice as the co-host of "A Little Something Extra," the first podcast co-hosted by a person with Down syndrome, helping guests and listeners discover their superpowers and sharing the message of global acceptance for all! Her favorite pastime is spending time with friends and family.



NANCY GIANNI

Nancy Gianni is the Chief Belief Officer and founder of GiGi's Playhouse Down Syndrome Achievement Centers, as well as an author and public speaker. When Gianni gave birth to her beautiful daughter, GiGi, in 2002, she received a Down syndrome diagnosis that she wasn't prepared for. Following her daughter's diagnosis, her fears, coupled with the negative reactions of medical professionals, made Nancy believe that her life, as she knew it, was changed forever. Only a few months later Gianni's entrepreneurial spirit kicked in and she created the first GiGi's Playhouse in 2003, launching the only network of Down Syndrome Achievement Centers in the world. GiGi's Playhouse is now a \$22M not-for-profit with over 60 brick-and-mortar locations and startups in the United States and Mexico, as well as virtually serving families in over 89 countries. GiGi's provides over 4,400 hours a week of FREE educational, therapeutic and career programming services to over 30,000 individuals and their families. With a demand to open 200 more locations worldwide using her replicable model, Gianni is tireless. As the dynamic force that is changing the disability world, Gianni's story has been featured on large scale media worldwide. Gianni, with over-the-top energy and drive, serves as both the visionary leader behind the organization's launch and dramatic growth; and perhaps in her most important role, being GiGi's mom. Gianni resides in South Barrington, Illinois, with her husband and GiGi.

2023 NASHVILLE HIGHLIGHTS

- Provided FREE services to 151 individuals with Down syndrome and 217 additional family members, who logged nearly 3,477 participation hours
- Provided 423 hours of math and literacy tutoring
- Hosted 167 volunteers who generously donated more than 2,853 service hours
- Held recording-setting gala and golf events that allowed us to invest even more into serving individuals with Down syndrome
- Focused on providing purposeful group programming which was highlighted in our end-of-semester Teen Tastic Talent Show
- Engaged new and current families in playhouse events by launching quarterly open houses, new family orientations, community events, and educational symposiums
- Recognized at GiGi's annual national conference for receiving five awards for our accomplishments in GiGi's Standards of Execution in Financial Health, Marketing, Operation and Facilities, HR and Volunteer Management, and Board Health and Strategy

Why Your Support Matters

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



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.

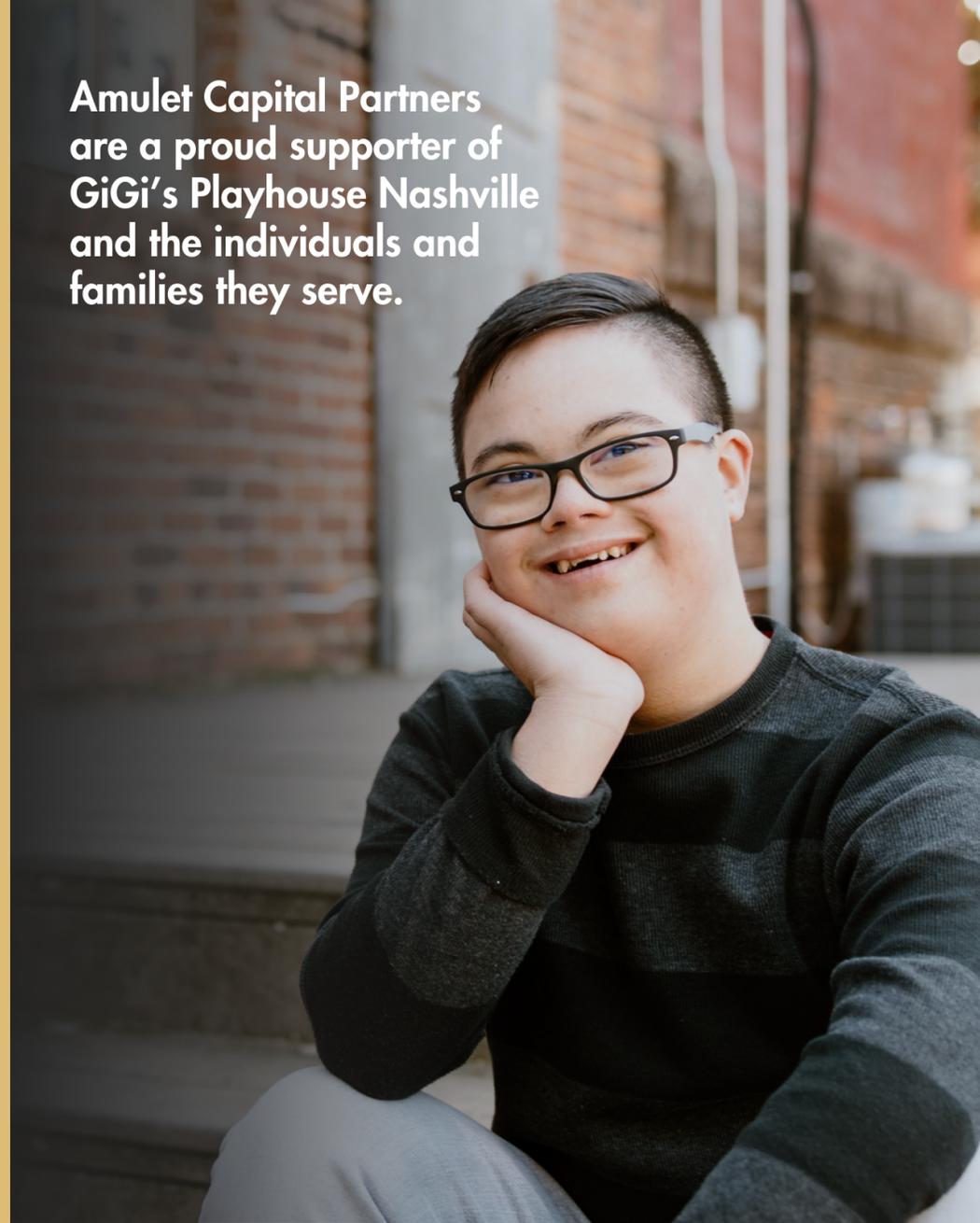


GiGi's offers goal-oriented programs for teens and adults that focus on the development of confidence, real-world skills, health and wellness, and career skills.

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.

Amulet Capital Partners are a proud supporter of GiGi's Playhouse Nashville and the individuals and families they serve.



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ENTERTAINMENT

MADDOX RODRIGUEZ

Maddox is 17 years old and will be graduating from Franklin Road Academy in May where he has been in the Heart to Heart program since 6th grade. He began songwriting in 2019 and has three published songs on iTunes and Spotify. Look for more songs in the future!



Maddox wants to thank GiGi's Playhouse for the opportunity to perform, his music therapist Kate Kelly who helps guide him, and Morgan Johnston, his "back up" singer/secret nanny who just landed her own songwriting adventure!



AARON TORNQUIST

Aaron Tornquist has been an Elvis Tribute Artist for decades. He is 45 and has worked for Brixx restaurant near his home in Franklin for 6 years. His message is "Doesn't matter who you are. Everyone can make a difference."



In loving memory of Boris Anisi, beloved father, and cherished “Maddie's Papa.”

Your legacy lives on through the pages of the stories you shared and the memories you created.

**Forever in our hearts.
Your spirit continues to inspire.**

The Anisi Family.

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: AMY HIRT

Having strong, consistent volunteers is imperative to the success of GiGi's. We are so thankful for Amy Hirt and her long-time dedication to both our overall programs and specifically our Literacy and Math tutoring programs.



Amy enjoying a previous gala with participants Sam and Tori.

Amy is a Nashville native, having grown up in the Green Hills area and moving to Franklin after she got married to raise her three children. She studied Special Education in Undergrad and Graduate School at the University of Tennessee, Knoxville and taught briefly in Nashville Public Schools before her children were born. After her children were in school, Amy spent twelve years as a Developmental Therapist in Williamson County. This is where she learned of GiGi's Playhouse, as she worked with several families who were founding members of GiGi's Playhouse Nashville.

When Amy decided to step away from Developmental Therapy, she knew just where she wanted to give some of her time. Amy began leading group programs of all ages and learning about the tutoring program. As staffing changes were being made at GiGi's Nashville, she was asked to join the team as a part time employee to support programs and run the tutoring program.

For over five years, Amy worked with the GiGi's National Office to strengthen and grow the tutoring program in Nashville. But even after retiring from her staff position, Amy couldn't leave her GiGi's family. Amy continues to volunteer by tutoring weekly and serving on the Education Excellence Committee as GiGi's is always looking to find ways to support our participants and give them the tools to be their best and reach their goals.



Amy's dedication has truly changed the world for her tutoring students. GiGi's is blessed to have her as a valuable volunteer. We are so pleased to award her the "Gloria and Cindy Knoch Volunteer Spirit Award" and thank her for all that she continues to do for our families.

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PHIL BARTON

Phil Barton is an Australian songwriter living in Nashville, TN. He had his first No. 1 with the Lee Brice smash, “A Woman Like You.” This song led to a Music Row Breakthrough Songwriter of the Year, and NSAI award for one of the coveted “Ten Songs I Wish I’d Written.”



Recently, Phil co-produced a children’s album called *Prayed For This Day* for Chrissy Metz’s new children’s book “When I Talk To God”. He is also a co-writer on all 11 tracks of this record. He has “I’ve Gotten Good” out with Universal Music Group’s recording artist Priscilla Block. Barton also landed the title track on recording Arista/Records artist Matt Stell’s *Better Than That* EP.

Along with his success in American Country Music, Phil has had multiple Top Ten singles in Canada with artists like Tim Hicks, Chad Brownlee, The Washboard Union, Jojo Mason, and Meghan Patrick. In Australia, he has also had cuts with Lee Kernaghan, Missy Lancaster, Busby Marou, Jai Waetford, The Wolfe Brothers, Reigan, and more.

In 2018 he signed a publishing deal with Liz Rose Music and Anthem Entertainment.

His songs have been recorded by Lee Brice, Rachel Wammack, Trea Landon, Brad Cox, Amy Shephard, Sara Evans, David Nail, Eli Young Band, Dustin Lynch, Morgan Evans, LOCASH, and many more.

LIZ ROSE

Liz Rose is a Songwriter Hall of Fame inductee, multiple GRAMMY Award-winning songwriter, founder of Liz Rose Music publishing company, and Texas Heritage Songwriter Hall Of Fame inductee. A frequent collaborator of Taylor Swift’s, Rose co-wrote 16 songs with Swift, including 2023 GRAMMY nominated Song of the Year, “All Too Well (10 minute version) (Taylor’s Version),” the No. 1 crossover hits “Teardrops on My Guitar,” “You Belong With Me,” “Tim McGraw,” and GRAMMY’S 2010 Best Country Song, “White Horse.”

In 2015, she won Song Of The Year at the CMA Awards and GRAMMY Best Country Song for the Little Big Town smash, “Girl Crush.” She has celebrated cuts with Carrie Underwood’s “Cry Pretty” and Kenny Chesney’s “Better Boat.”



She is a collaborator on Parker McCollum’s current radio single, “Burn It Down,” that was written with her Love Junkies (Lori McKenna & Hillary Lindsey) and Parker. Liz has also collaborated with Miranda Lambert landing 5 songs on her *Wildcard* album including single, “It All Comes Out In The Wash,” which was GRAMMY Nominated for Best Country Song in 2020. She has penned songs for many other artists including Tim McGraw, Dan + Shay, Parker McCollum, Vince Gill, Blake Shelton, Kenny Chesney, Chris Young, and more. She is a dedicated contributor to the songwriting community in Nashville, as a board member of NSAI, CMA, and NMPA.

- Board of Managers -

Jim Anisi	Gerd Peters
Valerie Bayham	Sharon Sabol
Daniel Cage	Melissa Wenger
Richard Coure	Tiffany Wenzler
Chet Danto	Emily Whitson
Katie Ingram	Courtney Wright

- Playhouse Staff -

Denise Bayles, Executive Director
Emily Allison, Development & Operations Assistant
Tracie Michaelson, Tutoring & Volunteer Coordinator
Emily Sheridan, Programs Coordinator
Emma Fleet, Operations Assistant

- Auction & Gala Committee -

Emily Allison	Jenée & Sean Farrell	Sharon Sabol
Jim & Tracey Anisi	Emma Fleet	Chloe Samter
Valerie & Chris Bayham	Katie Ingram	Emily Sheridan
Denise Bayles	Jenna Luna	Melissa Wenger
Daniel Cage	Tracie Michelson	Tiffany Wenzler
Richard & Kim Coure	Tara Mullaney	Emily & Brad Whitson
Chet Danto	Gerd Peters	Courtney Wright

- Executive Advisory Council -

Tracey Anisi, Lisa Bellin & Evelio Rodriguez,
Ellen & Bo Boyer, Kim Coure,
Rachel & Nicholas Howald, Lori & Jason Stacy



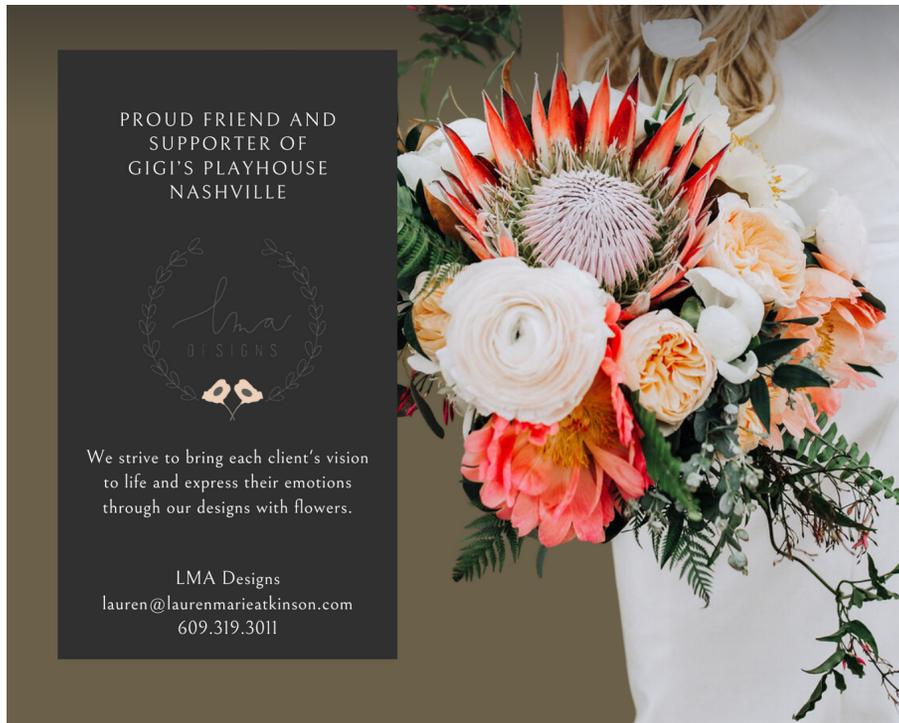
Tracey and Jim Anisi
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With Gratitude....

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, 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.



Some Very Special Thank Yous

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

- **Amanda Baker Browning** for her vocal stylings.
- **Shane McCarrell** for emceeding tonight's gala.
- **Nancy and GiGi Gianni** for sharing their family's story.
- **Aaron Tornquist** and **Maddox Rodriguez** for their talented performances.
- **Liz Rose** and **Phil Barton** for sharing their incredible voices and lyrics.
- 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 programing for our families.

Thank you for joining us tonight!



Down Syndrome Achievement Centers
educate. inspire. believe.

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.

GiGi's Playhouse Nashville
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(615) 370-1500

www.gigisplayhouse.org/nashville