



ANNUAL REPORT
2023

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Letter from our Board Co-Presidents



2023 was an unparalleled year of growth and we achieved all that we had promised to our community.

Thanks to the generous donations from individual and corporate donors at our 2022 Annual Gala and numerous other fundraising events throughout the year, as well as grants from foundations and others, we were able to successfully launch our long-awaited Career Development Programs for our adult population.

In April, we hired an experienced Special Educator who worked tirelessly to learn and understand the established curriculum from our National Office, and by June we launched a 4-week pilot program with 4 participants. Afterwards, we took a 2 month break to run our popular summer programs, while our Special Educator continued to fine-tune and enhance the curriculum for our unique participants.

By September, our Career Development Programs, which were oversubscribed, were officially launched with 7 participants and a full 12-week semester. In addition to classroom-based instruction, we partnered with several corporations to provide our participants with real-world experience in corporate America.

This included Microsoft, Google, Avande, Accenture, Bullhorn and Nasdaq.

The semester culminated in mid-December with an official graduation, speeches by participants, and certificates of completion. The pride and joy in the room was tangible and there was not a dry eye at the Playhouse. This amazing program was the direct result of the generosity of our community, supporters and parents who all committed to making this dream a reality for our adult population. In fact, these remarkable efforts were recognized at our National Conference with the Generation G award for our “incredible work with adult empowerment and advocacy.”



Throughout this initiative, we did not lose focus on our younger population and also developed and enhanced numerous programs to meet the growing needs of the toddlers and young teens within our community. Destination Discovery engaged our participants in games and activities that support the development of fine and gross motor skills, social skills, and language and communication skills through peer-to-peer interaction in a casual and fun setting. We introduced additional Music, Dance and Puppetry programs and launched the new “Kids Club” program.

We continued to support parents throughout the year, with educational seminars on topics including guardianship, supported decision making, and money management, as well as with parent support groups.

As you can see from this annual report, through our social media, through our annual fashion show, through our monthly

participant blogs, our community has no limits, our participants exceed expectations, and our supporters want to see us succeed as much as our families do. We are reaching new heights with each passing year, with each new program, with each new family, with each new volunteer.

GiGi's NYC is governed by a Board of Directors, an Associate Board and a Youth Board and is managed by two amazing full-time staff. But in reality, it's your Playhouse, it's our Playhouse. We are all in this together, so let's continue to come together and keep reaching for the stars!

With much love,

Jane Providenti
Jane Providenti

Yamira Siu
Yamira Siu



Our Story

Overview

GiGi's Playhouse NYC is the only organization in New York City solely dedicated to the development of individuals with Down syndrome of all ages, from birth through adulthood, and at every phase of life. We provide therapeutic, educational, social, and creative arts programs and events year-round, at no cost to participants or their families.

GiGi's NYC serves over 1,000 people with Down syndrome and their families, representing almost 10% of the NYC Down syndrome population.

We empower our diverse participants to be included in the greater community, to be their whole selves as they truly belong, and to make the world a better place.

We offer a supportive and nurturing environment that enables those with Down syndrome, their families and even expecting parents, to connect and learn from one another to navigate the world they share.



GiGi's NYC is consistently at the forefront of innovation, as evidenced by our migration to a hybrid model. We design and deliver online programs to complement our face-to-face programs for our growing community, all while being completely funded by our generous donors.

Vision

Our vision is to see a world where individuals with Down syndrome have a voice, are accepted and embraced in their families, schools and communities, and to help improve the world and make it a better place to live, work and prosper.

Mission

Our mission is to improve the lives of all people with Down syndrome, from birth through adulthood, by providing them with the resources they need to apply to life's challenges and achieve. We accomplish our mission by providing innovative, life-changing programs, at no cost to our participants and their families. GiGi's NYC's programs and events empower people with Down syndrome to realize their fullest potential and build the skills necessary for success in school, work and their community. We openly recognize and celebrate their unique talents and achievements to honor their rightful place in the world, where they can contribute.

Founders' Principles

GiGi's NYC opened its doors in 2012, under the vision of our founders, Tracy Nixon and Debbie Morris. Their dream was to create a place where their daughters would be able to socialize, learn and make lifelong friendships. Over a decade later, we are still the only organization in New York City dedicated to serving the Down syndrome community by

regularly providing therapeutic, educational and recreational programs and events to participants and their families. GiGi's Playhouse NYC is realizing its vision and mission. We are changing the perception of Down syndrome in New York City and beyond by recognizing and celebrating the many achievements of our diverse community.



Our Community

NEW FAMILIES: 71

TOTAL FAMILIES SERVED: 1,000+

TOTAL UNIQUE VOLUNTEERS: 372

VOLUNTEER HOURS: 5,241.99

AGES SERVED:

0-2 - 2.81%

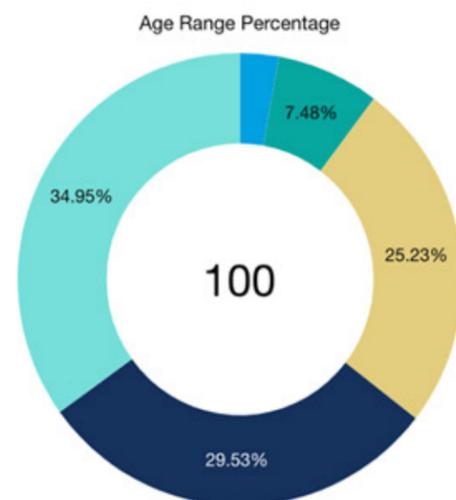
3-6 - 7.48%

7-12 - 25.23%

13-19 - 29.53%

20+ - 34.95%

Age Range Percentage



Letter from our Staff: Rosella Lofaro

2023 marked my third year working with GiGi's NYC, and with each year that passes, I grow more and more impressed with our community. Each year brings more excitement, new friendships, budding partnerships, and most of all – more achievements from our participants! There was no shortage of highlights this year, and I am proud to have been a witness to them all. Below is a glimpse of some of our greatest moments:

- Alivia, a radiant womenswear brand, launched its Fall, Spring, and Holiday collections in collaboration with GiGi's NYC participants, Stephanie, Denise, Adam, Charlotte and Brittany. Be sure to check out Alivia's website to see the creativity of our participants weaved into every design. Simply amazing!
- Self-Advocate and GiGi's NYC 2021 Ambassador, Malik, starred in a PSA about inclusivity AND served as the Grand Marshal of the National Down Syndrome Society NYC Buddy Walk. Impressive!
- We hosted a special edition of Destination Discovery with our 2022 Ambassador, Danielle, as our Program Leader. Danielle presented on the important topic of "Activism," followed by a group conversation and activity. Danielle is a student in our One-to-One Literacy Tutoring Program and created her presentation during her tutoring sessions. Danielle then approached us about presenting her work to our community - GO DANIELLE!
- We successfully launched the first of three programs in our Career Development Programs series, GiGi Prep. This program is for adults with Down syndrome aged 18+ who would like to continue on the career development path.
- Long-time participant and GiGi Prep student, Troy, independently recorded and edited a video about GiGi Prep. He also created the music and wrote the lyrics. You can watch the video on our website and YouTube page.
- We were honored with the Generation G award at our National Conference, bestowed to us for our "incredible work with adult empowerment and advocacy."

We are endlessly grateful for the support and generosity of our volunteers, community partners, families, and donors. You make it possible for us to continue fulfilling our mission of spreading acceptance and awareness for the Down syndrome community. You make it possible for us to show the world that inclusion matters. You make it possible for us to continue proving that Down syndrome ROCKS! Lastly, we are forever indebted to our participants for showing us how to live life to the fullest. Your kindness, genuineness, and integrity are reminders that the world isn't as bleak as it seems sometimes, and we salute you for always being a shining light!

Warmly,

R. Lofaro
Rosella Lofaro
Operations Manager



Letter from our Staff: MacKenzie Leger

I'm thankful for another year around the sun with GiGi's NYC! I have been at GiGi's NYC for about two years now and am still consistently blown away by the creativity, kindness, passion, and humor of our participants.

We had so many awesome programs and opportunities in 2023. I am very proud of our Film-Making participants who brainstormed, wrote, created props and costumes, and helped direct "film" and act in a short film! We had another great year of summer programs with trips to places like the NY Hall of Science, Museum of Illusions, SlooMoo Institute, Intrepid Museum and more! It is always a great time exploring our city with your loved ones! We also launched a Healthy Relationship Series, allowing us to meet the growing relational needs of a majority-adult participant base.

To our participants - I love each of you! You fill the Playhouse with joy, laughter, and even the occasional tear! You make each day exciting.

This year, I have been amazed by all that you have achieved! From jobs, graduations, fashion lines, presentations, etc - there is no limit to what you can accomplish. I am so proud of each of you and can't wait to see what 2024 holds. I am also thankful to the families who share their loved ones with us. Thank you for trusting us and supporting us!

To our volunteers- I am immensely thankful for you. We could not operate without the time, energy, love and support that you give to our Playhouse. I love getting to know each of you and seeing the bonds that you form with participants. Thank you for your patience, flexibility, and fun. We had such a great 2023 together!

Best,



MacKenzie Leger
Programs Coordinator



Letter from our Staff: Megan Moore

2023 was the year that GiGi's NYC welcomed me with open arms and hearts, and it's a year I'll never forget. Every time I'm asked about what I do for work, a huge smile comes across my face as I tell people about my job with pride. The kindness, sincerity, and loving spirit of the entire GiGi's NYC community is contagious!

Launching the Career Development Programs at GiGi's NYC has been a huge professional highlight for me, including the GiGi Prep Pilot, GiGi Prep & GiGi University. Technically, I'm their teacher, but I'll tell you one thing—I learn just as much, if not more, from the participants than they do from me. I have expanded my taste in music to include BTS, BLACKPINK, & Big Time Rush (don't worry, I was already a Justin Bieber fan) and am reminded daily of why representation, awareness and acceptance matter. Each day in class, I have the honor of being in the presence of aspiring bakers, paramedics, writers, music producers, fashion stylists, and photographers. With enthusiasm, positivity, and professionalism, the participants work toward achieving their dream careers every day, and I am honored to witness it first-hand. The sky is truly the limit.

I'm a firm believer in learning by doing, and experiences outside of the Playhouse have been a huge part of our education. Working closely with community partners, our students participated in mock-interviews with Bullhorn, Q&A panels with Microsoft, Nasdaq, Accenture and Avanade, and a site tour at Google. We worked on our budgeting, financial literacy, and list-making skills as we walked to the local grocery store and shopped for our weekly cooking session.

The appreciation I have for all the GiGi's NYC volunteers runs deep. These programs wouldn't exist without your time, love and energy! Thank you to the incredible families that I have the privilege of working with on a regular basis—your support is a key component of the success of the Career Development Programs, and most importantly, the success of your loved ones.

I can't wait to see what the future brings, and I have a feeling there will be loads of learning and laughter along the way!

Warmly,



Megan Moore
Special Educator of Adult Programs



GiGi's NYC Ambassador: Troy Providenti



GiGi's NYC is thrilled to introduce Troy as our 2024 Ambassador. He has been a dedicated member of the GiGi's NYC community since we opened our doors in 2012, consistently attending various programs and events. Troy recently graduated from our GiGi Prep Career Development Program and started his training as an employee of Café Joyeux. His other accomplishments include completing two years of college at Syracuse University's InclusiveU Program, where he also worked as the Assistant Manager of their basketball team. Read below to learn more about Troy:

What does being GiGi's NYC Ambassador mean to you?

Being the new GiGi's NYC Ambassador means that I will need to be a good role model to everyone at the Playhouse so that I can set an example and be a leader for others. It is an important role that I will do my best to make everyone proud of me and to make a difference for GiGi's NYC and help us grow and achieve.

What would you like to see from GiGi's NYC in the future? Do you have any ideas for new programs or special events?

In the future, I would like to create more programs with Ms. Megan (Special Educator of Adult Programs) so that more participants could learn and develop their career skills like I do. I would also like to add more dance classes like Unique Movers with Maggie and other volunteers because our community likes to dance and get exercise. I also want to make my own GiGi's NYC band with our community including musicians, singers, dancers and stage crew. Another one of my ideas is to make a 20-minute-long movie where participants at GiGi's NYC are the actors.

What do you want the GiGi's NYC community to know?

I want the GiGi's NYC community to know that we are a very social group of people who have Down syndrome. We are a family and are best friends who support and love each other. Everyone makes everyone else happy, and we smile and laugh all the time.



How do you enjoy spending your free time?

I do a lot of things in my free time but one thing I like the most is hanging out with my friends from GiGi's NYC and the volunteers and staff because we do fun things; we go out, we play games like bingo, and we go to movies together. I also love making songs for my band in which I write lyrics and play musical instruments including the guitar, drums and keyboard.

What does Down syndrome awareness and acceptance mean to you?

Down syndrome acceptance means to me that it doesn't matter who has Down syndrome or not, because everyone is important, special and should be respected.

What achievements are you most proud of?

I am very proud of myself because I am the new GiGi's NYC Ambassador for 2024. Also, I am very proud of myself for getting a job at Café Joyeux because this is my first job in New York City and GiGi's NYC helped me gain the skills needed to get hired. I am also very proud that I have learned to take the bus to GiGi's NYC by myself and take the subway to my job by myself.

What are some of your goals?

I have a lot of goals, but one of my biggest goals is to be more independent so that someday I can get my own apartment or house and I can live by myself or with my friends. Another goal is to keep learning how to travel on my own so I can be more independent.

GiGi's NYC congratulates Troy on this amazing accomplishment!



Recurring Programs



Best Buddies Friendship Programs

In partnership with Best Buddies, we re-launched their Friendship Program with The Dalton School and Columbia University. Through group meetings, participants form meaningful connections with their “buddies” and peers, gain self-confidence and self-esteem, and share interests, experiences and activities. Recommended for ages 14 and older.

Community Chorus

We re-launched our Community Chorus Program, where participants rehearsed motivational and empowering songs in preparation for their performance at our annual Gala. We even added in some choreography this year! Recommended for ages 13 and older.

Dance

This program introduces basic dance styles, techniques, and movements while improving gross motor skills, increasing mental and muscle memory and increasing cardiovascular conditioning, strength, flexibility and coordination. Recommended for ages 13 and older.

Family Speaker - TableTalk

This program provides a safe space where the GiGi's NYC community can share their experiences, exchange resources, network, build connections, and so much more. Guest speakers sometimes join the group to present on varying topics based on the needs of our community. Recommended for parents, caregivers, siblings, and friends who have a loved one with Down syndrome.

Fantastic Friends - Bowling Buddies

This community favorite program offers a social gathering for our participants that supports the development of motor skills and social skills in a casual and fun setting. Recommended for ages 18 and older.

Fantastic Friends - Night Out

In partnership with New York Cares, we offer an engaging social night for adults with Down syndrome. There is a different theme with varying activities each month, including karaoke, dance parties, friendsgiving and more! This program allows our participants the opportunity to hone their social skills and build friendships with their same-age peers. Recommended for ages 18 and older.

Friends, Fun & Fitness

Our friends get together for physical activity and a healthy snack! Recommended for ages 13 and older.

GiGi's Kitchen

Under the guidance of a program leader, participants prepare and cook healthy recipes. Participants are taught about kitchen safety, food preparation, health and wellness. The semester culminates with the participants' preparing and enjoying a three-course meal together. Recommended for ages 16 and older.



Gratitude Art Committee

Participants use their talent to create one-of-a-kind art for our supporters! They gain hands-on experience with multiple art media while expressing themselves, building confidence and socializing with peers. Société Générale features a permanent installation of Gratitude Art in their New York City office. Recommended for ages 18 and older.

Leaders in Communication

In partnership with the New York University Speech-Language-Hearing Clinic, our participants work with graduate school speech-language pathology clinicians in a dynamic series of sessions focused on social communication skills, interview skills, empowerment, and advocacy. Recommended for ages 13 and older.

LitLab

This program connects participants with tutors to engage in arts-inspired learning and to create presentations on various engaging topics. We focus on reading, public speaking, PowerPoint, and social skills, as we dive into fun research projects based on a mutual appreciation of music, art, dance, reading, cooking, and more. Recommended for ages 13 and older.

LMNOP

In partnership with the staff and students of Hunter College, School of Education, we offer Language Music N' Our Peeps (LMNOP), an interactive and engaging program designed to guide parents and young children through learning basic sign language and other forms of communication while using music and language-based activities. Recommended for ages pre-natal to 36 months.

One-to-One Literacy Tutoring

This program uses a methodology with documented success based on research by professionals in the field. Our goal is to foster a love for reading and provide an opportunity to develop and master skills. Trained tutors work at the level of each student, continually challenging and encouraging them to reach their highest potential. Recommended for ages 3 and older.

One-to-One Math Tutoring

Building math skills for individuals with Down syndrome increases independence at school, in the community, and in the work place. The aim of this program is to help promote a positive experience of learning mathematics with a sound foundation of basic number understanding. Recommended for ages 3 and older.

One-to-One Speech

In partnership with the New York University Speech-Language-Hearing Clinic, participants have the opportunity to receive screenings, evaluations, and intervention services in the areas of speech, language, hearing, voice, and stuttering on an individual basis. Recommended for all ages.

Yoga

Yoga gives our participants a practice and routine that integrates physical, mental, and emotional development. This program helps participants develop more personal awareness and learn specific strategies to maintain focus and manage their emotions and impulses. Recommended for ages 5 and older.



Summer Programs

Kids Club

This program encompasses a broad range of activities that facilitate sensory exploration, gross and motor development, and language skills, while leveraging parent and caregiver involvement at the Playhouse and within NYC. Recommended for ages 8 to 12.

Teen Tastic

This program allows our participants to explore their independence while learning life skills, developing social skills and relationships, and experiencing the culture and arts of New York City. Recommended for ages 13 to 17.

Fantastic Friends

Participants have the opportunity to continue developing meaningful life skills through shared experiences and various learning opportunities. Building friendships and reinforcing skills such as self-confidence, healthy lifestyles, money management, and more are all part of the curriculum. Recommended for ages 18 and older.



New Programs

Art Explosion - Puppetry

Under the guidance of classically trained, multi-disciplined puppeteer Daniel Patrick Fay, participants create their very own puppets, with the session culminating in a puppet show starring their unique puppet creations! Recommended for ages 18 and older.

Destination Discovery

Participants engage in games and activities that support the development of fine and gross motor skills, social skills, language and communication skills through peer to peer interaction in a casual and fun setting. Recommended for ages 13 and older.

Drama Troupe - Filmmaking

This program aims to teach skills in script writing, acting, directing, and set/costume design. It was the brainchild of our amazing participants, and GiGi's NYC was thrilled to bring it to life with them! Recommended for ages 18 and older.

GiGi Prep

This program is for adults with Down syndrome who would like to continue on the career development path. GiGi Prep places emphasis on building communication skills, money management, customer service skills, team building and wellness. Recommended for ages 18 and older.

Kids Club

This program supports the development of social skills and language through peer-to-peer interaction in a casual and fun setting. This program also supports gross motor skills, fine motor skills, and self-help skills through active games and various activities. Recommended for ages 8 to 12.



Music

This program allows our participants to tap into their inner rock star and let their voices shine while singing a variety of fun and empowering songs! Recommended for ages 13 and older.

Open Play

Promotes positive beginnings for new families, creates awareness opportunities for peers and friends while allowing families to network and support one another. Come ready for fun and a crazy good time! Recommended for ages 8 to 12.



Career Development Programs



Thanks to the incredible generosity of The RBC Foundation USA and our amazing donors, GiGi's NYC was able to launch our Career Development Programs. Parents and care givers expressed the dire need for these programs, as they are often faced with tough decisions regarding the best route for the future of their loved ones, as more than 50% of our participants were over the age of 18. Our ability to provide our community with the skills necessary to enter the workforce has been an absolute honor. We were so happy to see these programs come to life, and our participants wouldn't have had the opportunity to take their next steps toward independence without generous donations.

The Career Development Programs are comprised of three tiers: GiGi Prep, GiGi University, and GiGi Professional. These progressive learning programs are designed to help adults with Down syndrome to gain meaningful job-related skills and experience, with the goal of employment or volunteering within the community. The cost for one participant to complete all three semesters is \$10,000, which includes the expense of a special educator, classroom space, administrative support, as well as all the necessary supplies.

In the fall of 2023, we launched our very first semester of GiGi Prep with seven eager young adult students.

The GiGi Prep curriculum focuses on communication, math (money management/ financial literacy), goal setting, nutrition/ healthy eating, fitness, and team building. Within the curriculum, the students created vision boards, prepared new healthy recipes each week, and practiced formal communication skills. We openly discussed their career goals and dream jobs. Our GiGi Prep class was filled with aspiring bakers, party planners, paramedics, writers, fashion stylists, photographers, and music producers. Our students were motivated and inspired, and we were so happy to be able to learn from each of them week after week.

We also participated in several meaningful experiences with new and existing community partners during GiGi Prep. We kicked off our experiences with a trip to the Microsoft offices in Times Square, where our participants sat on a panel with executives from Microsoft, Avanade, Accenture, and Nasdaq and asked and answered questions related to career readiness. Our participants gained invaluable experience—what an incredible way to start our semester!

Our next community event was held remotely with Bullhorn, a virtual recruitment company. Our students practiced their formal communication skills during a group discussion about careers, time management skills, and

interviewing, followed by individual mock-interviews with members of the Bullhorn team from all around the world. The unique experience left an impact on each of us!

In addition, our students participated in a virtual session with Board Certified Health Coach, Zoe DeGeorge. We prepared questions about healthy eating and nutrition to ask Zoe, and had a wonderful conversation about the different food groups, healthy snacks, protein sources, healthy food swaps, smoothies, and more! Our participants talked about our session with Zoe for weeks, and her knowledge will be with us for the duration of our programs and beyond.

To honor GivingTuesday, a global day of giving, GiGi's NYC collected toys, non-perishable food, and clothing donations for a public school in our Harlem neighborhood. We received an abundance of thoughtful donations and hand delivered them to the local school. The acts of collecting and delivering the donations opened a conversation about giving back to those in need. Thank you to all who contributed!

We wrapped up our community outings with a bang, as we visited the NYC Google offices! This trip helped open the eyes of our participants to different career opportunities (did you know that Google has their own baker

on staff?!) and office culture, as we toured the space and learned more about the ins and outs of Google. Our participants practiced their communication skills, while introducing themselves and conversing with a variety of Google employees!

As each semester of the Career Development Programs builds upon the last, we will continue to strengthen our GiGi Prep foundational skills.

Every single one of our incredible GiGi Prep students made progress toward their pre-vocational goals, self-confidence, and personal wellness objectives, with an average growth score of 88%. The students showed progress in coin identification, making and maintaining eye contact, professional body language, writing individualized weekly goals and time management skills!

The launch of the Career Development Programs in 2023 was a huge step for both GiGi's NYC and for the independence of our adult participants. As we look into the future of our programs with GiGi University and GiGi Professional on the horizon, we could not be more optimistic. To all our donors and community partners, old and new, thank you. The impact you have had on our participants, staff, volunteers, and programs has been crucial.

The world shines brighter with our participants in it and the sky is truly the limit!



Special Events

We held a **Mother's Day Tea Party** in celebration of Mother's Day!

We hosted a **Father's Day Celebration** with a cornhole tournament and crowned two lucky winners, who received gift cards for BILLY Footwear!

We held our 9th Annual **Dancing For Down Syndrome** event as part of the National GiGiFIT Acceptance Challenge—a MOVEMENT for acceptance. It was spearheaded by our Youth Board again, under the guidance of our Associate Board. The event was highly successful, raising over \$25K and counting!

We celebrated the life and legacy of **Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.** by engaging in conversation about Dr. King's historic and revolutionary contributions to Harlem and beyond, and how we can continue his legacy through the creation of vision boards.

We hosted a **Valentine's Day** themed party and designed our very own Valentine's Day cards.

We hosted a **Sports Clinic**, which was an afternoon of basketball and soccer drills and a whole lot of fun!

Unique Movers joined us again this year to teach dance and movement skills to our community. Their mission is to spread the love of dance to those with differing developmental, physical, or behavioral needs in a more relaxed and inclusive dance environment.

Coach Dave hosted us for a **Party Animals Dance Party**, encouraging our participants to come dressed as their favorite feathered or furry friend and dance their tail off!



Our 5th Annual **Fashion Show** was a huge success, our first full-scale in-person Fashion Show since 2019. As usual, our model participants were FIERCE on the runway - they served looks, they exuded confidence, and they proved, yet again, why inclusion matters. Our Fashion Show caught the attention of Cheryl Wills from NY1 News and was even featured in Harper's Bazaar. What an honor!



We hosted a special art event in honor of Down Syndrome Awareness Month with **ELTSUH**, a "modern prep x streetwear" fashion brand on a mission. Daniel, ELTSUH Founder and Creative Director, first partnered with us at our 5th Annual Fashion Show, where some of our participants rocked the runway in an ELTSUH design. With the guidance of Daniel, participants used their creativity to inspire a future collection of ELTSUH designs.

We had a spooktacular time at our annual **Halloween Party** with games, Halloween-themed snacks, music and more!

We held our **2nd Annual Holiday Market** to close out the semester, which featured one-of-a-kind items created by our awesome participants.



We had a **Peter Pan & Wendy Watch Party** at our Playhouse, featuring Noah Mathew Matofsky, the first actor with Down syndrome to land a major role in a Disney film.

We hosted a **special edition of Destination Discovery** with our 2022 Ambassador, Danielle, as our Program Leader. Danielle presented on the very important topic of "Activism," which was followed by a group conversation and activity.



Wold Down Syndrome Day Celebrations

The **NY Islanders** hosted us at UBS Arena as their charity partner. Former GiGi's NYC Ambassador, Fatima, works at the concession stand and was thrilled to see our community members there for the game. Our participants, their family members and our volunteers sold raffle tickets to patrons, and raised a record amount! In addition, our Co-Founder Debbie Morris spoke about GiGi's NYC during intermission on the jumbotron. Our participants, Sophia and Malik, then waived the flag!

Kendra Scott partnered with us to offer 20% back on purchases in honor of World Down Syndrome Day!

Microsoft hosted several of our participants for a fireside chat where they discussed their achievements and future goals in front of a live audience.

Our participants went to see the movie "**Champions**," which features multiple actors with Down syndrome.

Our participants gathered at the plaza outside of the **TODAY show** to represent the Down syndrome community, along with Extra Lucky Moms.

Alivia announced its Spring 2023 collection in collaboration with GiGi's NYC participant, Stephanie. The launch was featured in an article published in WWD.

Community Education

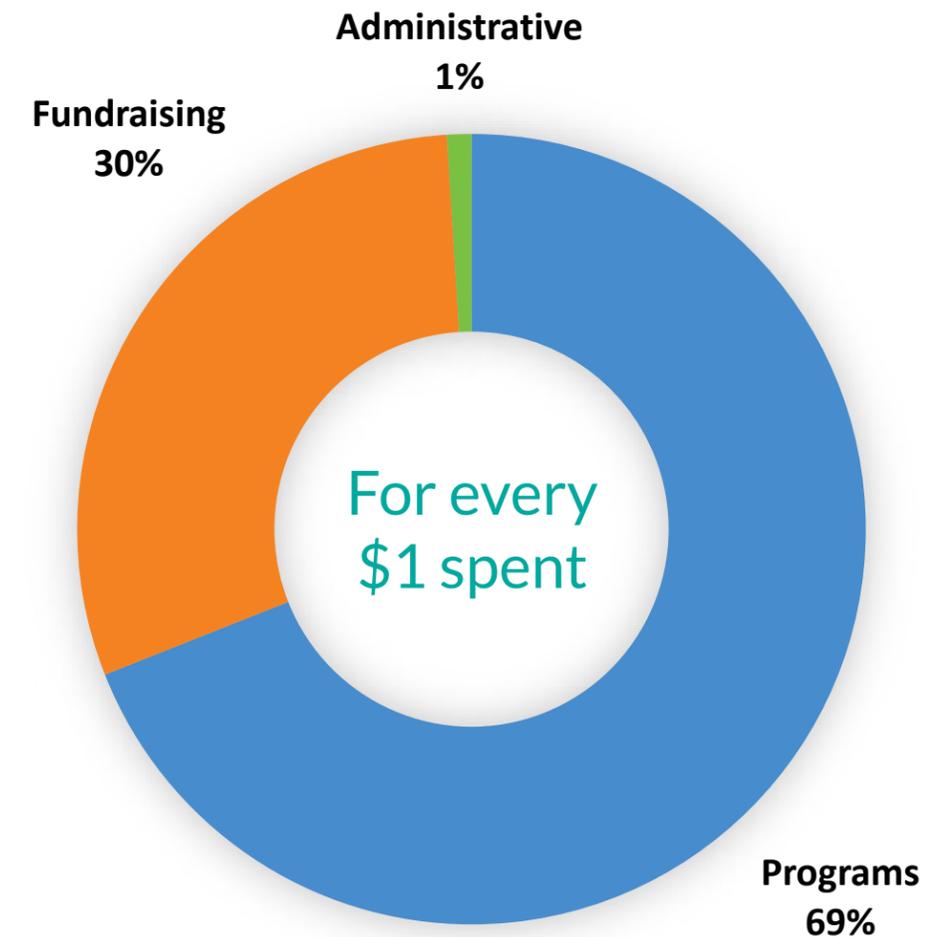
Alexa Arzano, third-year student at New York Law School, hosted our community for a presentation on **Guardianship and Supported Decision-Making**.

We presented a two-part virtual workshop on **Money Management** with guest speaker Wallace Jabbaar, Independent Representative. Wallace has been educating individuals and families since 1998 on how to become debt free, financially independent and properly protected.

We partnered with Montana Bass, Sex Education Provider and Consultant, for a six-part **Healthy Relationships Series** for participants 18+. They learned about boundaries, anatomy and physiology, managing sexual feelings, consent, dating how-tos, and more.



Financial Overview



2023 Annual Gala



On Thursday, October 19th, 268 guests joined us at the Edison Ballroom for GiGi's NYC 2023 Annual Gala. We celebrated the many achievements of our community, and officially welcomed THE NEXT DECADE as we create opportunities, achieve success and inspire all.

CBS2 News Anchor Chris Wragge hosted the event with style and flair. His passion for our mission and quick wit kept our guests engaged. Honorees Ruth Erickson, GiGi's NYC Board Member Emeritus and retired Marsh executive, and Brian Lichtenstein, President of Gradiant Services, shared their personal stories and committed to continue their exemplary work on behalf of those with Down syndrome. We are very fortunate to have Ruth, Brian, and Chris in our corner.

Board Co-Presidents Jane Providenti and Yamira Siu shared plans to meet the urgent needs of our young adults in the next decade. GiGi's NYC participants made significant progress in the Career Development Programs launched in early 2023 and prepared to move into the next phase with all its challenges and rewards.

Co-Founders Tracy Nixon and Debbie Morris presented our Volunteer Champion awards, and remembered the members of our community we lost this year with a touching memorial. Volunteers and family members are the lifeline of GiGi's NYC and deserve our deepest gratitude and to be remembered.

Special guest, New York State Senator Cordell Cleare, addressed the audience with her enthusiasm for our mission and achievements. She presented the event honorees with official proclamations to recognize their service to GiGi's NYC and the community. Senator Cleare is a member of the Senate Disabilities Committee and will be exploring opportunities to support our mission.

GiGi's NYC Community Chorus always steals the show at the Gala, and this year was no exception. Their three musical performances had guests singing along and enjoying our very talented participants.

Auctioneer LJ Ganser kept the live auction moving and the audience bidding on fabulous trips and unique items. Newly elected GiGi's NYC Ambassador Troy Providenti along with Megan Moore, Special Educator of Adult Programs, joined LJ on stage and introduced the Fund A Need with details about GiGi's NYC Career Development Programs. The audience responded immediately with generous donations for our critical programs.

Thank you to everyone who supported GiGi's NYC 2023 Annual Gala. Your generosity keeps our programs going strong so that people with Down syndrome can achieve more than ever thought possible.

Thank you,

Patricia Donini

Patricia Donini
Gala Chair



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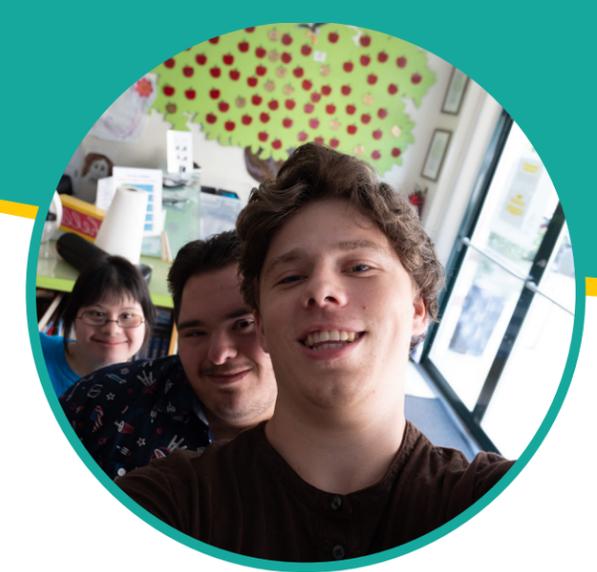


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Check out our wish list here:
gigisplayhouse.org/newyork/wish-list
Contact us at
nyc@gigisplayhouse.org





We would like to extend our gratitude to Camilynne Photography for capturing several images featured throughout this Annual Report.



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