

2024

Annual Report

GIGI'S PLAYHOUSE NYC

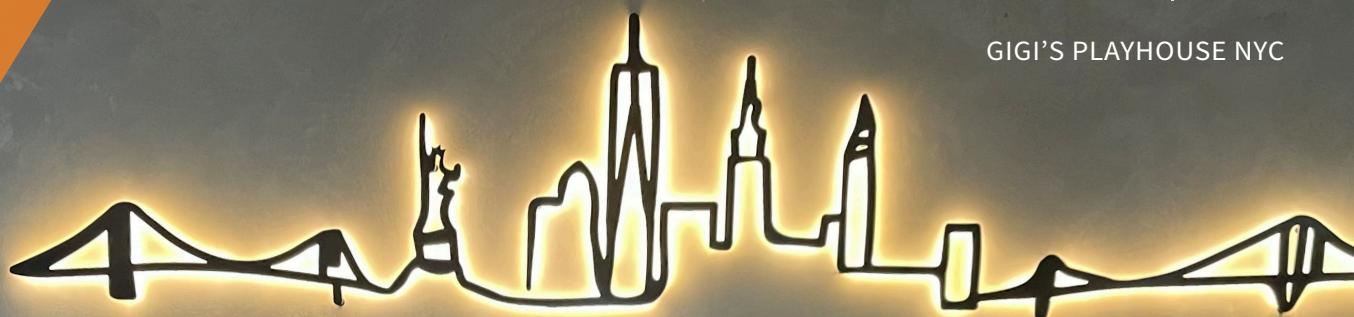




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Letter From Our Board Presidents

Dear GiGi's NYC Community,

We are thrilled to share that 2024 was a year of growth for GiGi's NYC. We expanded our program offerings, strengthened and grew our Young Professional and Youth Boards, and broadened our community partnerships and corporate relationships across New York City. Our community continues to grow and accomplish each and every day as a result of our life-changing programs and partnerships.

We provided classroom-based employment training to our young adults in collaboration with Best Buddies. We offered a three semester Career Development Program and graduated a cohort of seven incredible individuals who completed GiGi Prep, GiGi U, and GiGi Professional. We hosted pertinent seminars with specialists in education, medicine, therapy, and advocacy. Along the way, we expanded our partnerships with Royal Bank of Canada, BlackRock, AIG, Google, Mastercard, Microsoft, and more, many of which hosted our participants for exciting career days throughout the year.

Our 6th Annual Fashion Show amazed and inspired our audience and was even featured on PIX11 News! We danced for Down syndrome at our 10th Annual GiGiFIT Acceptance Challenge and hosted our inaugural Broadway Cabaret with impressive performances. Our 3rd Annual Holiday Market showcased the creative talents of our participants and featured handmade scented candles, tie-dye clothing, ornaments, and much more.

This year was also a time of giving back. Our Community Chorus sang holiday classics to assisted living facilities in our community, spreading smiles and holiday cheer. We also donated clothing, toys, and essential goods to local public schools.

Our achievements and impact were so tangible, we are compelled to create new initiatives and programming to meet the evolving needs of our participants and families. We cannot do it alone!

The GiGi's NYC Executive Team found a new home to support our families and growing population. We have made the exciting decision to cross town, while continuing to call Harlem our home. We are pleased to share that we are in the process of relocating from West Harlem to East Harlem. Our new home will be at 1834 Third Avenue, where we will more than double our footprint, offer new programs and opportunities to our participants and families, and allow for future expansion with an adjacent space. We kicked off our "Philanthropy with Purpose" Capital Campaign in early 2025 and ask you to join us for this fantastic journey that is now upon us.

GiGi's NYC is excited to continue to offer our community the friendships, confidence, life-skills, and support that they deserve so that our participants reach their full potential throughout all stages of their lives. Thank you from the bottom of our hearts to all members of our community who helped make 2024 another year to remember. We look ahead to 2025 with great optimism and excitement as we prepare to reach new heights.

Warmest Regards,

Jane Providenti Yamira Siu

Jane Providenti and Yamira Siu
Co-Presidents
GiGi's NYC Board of Directors



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 of approximately 11,000.

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, and are accepted and embraced in their families, schools and communities, 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.

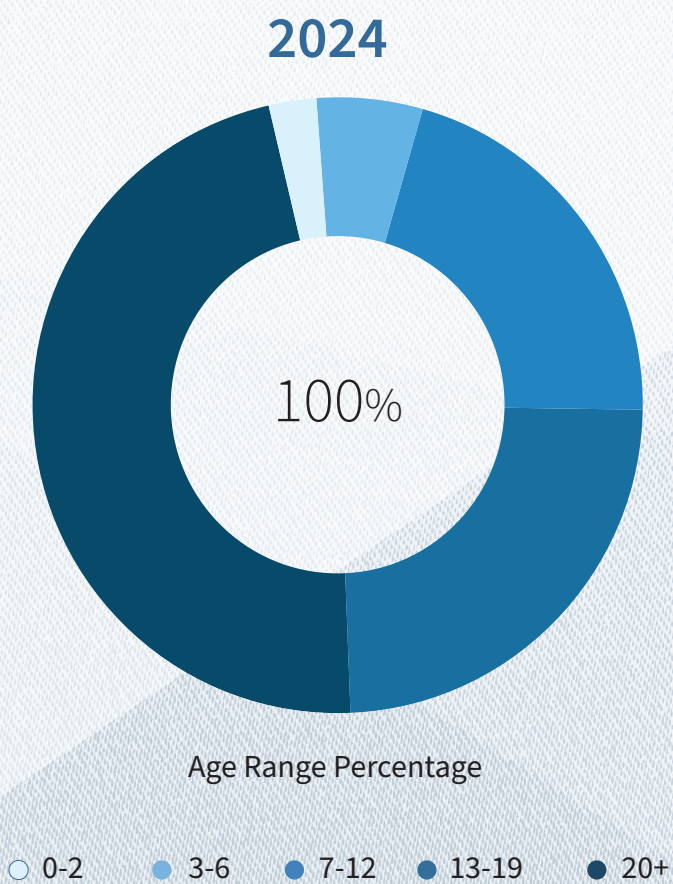
Founders' Principles

Established in 2012, GiGi's NYC was founded by Tracy Nixon and Debbie Morris with a clear vision: to create an inclusive environment where their daughters could engage, learn, and cultivate enduring friendships. More than a decade later, we remain the premier organization in New York City dedicated to supporting the Down syndrome community. We achieve this through a comprehensive array of therapeutic, educational, and recreational programs and events tailored for participants and their families.

GiGi's Playhouse NYC is committed to advancing our mission and vision. We are proactively transforming the narrative surrounding Down syndrome in New York City and beyond by recognizing, celebrating, and promoting the significant accomplishments of our diverse community.



Our Community



New families: 67	Ages served:
Total families served: 1,200+	0-2: 2.77%
Total unique volunteers: 326	3-6: 5.39%
Volunteer hours: 3,826.21	7-12: 20.80%
	13-19: 24.17%
	20+: 46.87%



Letter from our Staff:

Angie Capistran

As we reflect on the remarkable year of 2024, I am filled with gratitude and inspiration. This year marked my first with GiGi's NYC, and from the very first day, I knew I had found a truly special place. Jumping right into our Annual Gala on my first day, I felt an immediate sense of purpose and belonging, an indication of the extraordinary journey ahead.

GiGi's NYC quickly became more than just an organization to me; it became a community, a family, and a source of hope. Getting to know our incredible participants has been nothing short of inspiring. Even though I was only present for the last three months of the year, I was privileged to witness firsthand the growth, resilience, and determination of each individual we serve. The progress I saw in them, and the unwavering spirit they show every day to push boundaries and break barriers, reaffirmed why we do what we do.

Working at GiGi's NYC has reignited my faith in humanity. It's a place where acceptance blossoms, where courage is celebrated, and where the power of community transforms lives. Every moment spent with our participants reminds us of the incredible strength that exists within each of us and the importance of spreading awareness and understanding about Down syndrome.

None of this would be possible without our dedicated volunteers and generous donors. Your unwavering support fuels our mission and enables us to continue changing perceptions, fostering inclusion, and empowering individuals with Down syndrome to reach their full potential. Thanks to you, we celebrate our participants every day, honoring their hard work, resilience, and the barriers they bravely break down.

As we look ahead, I am more committed than ever to our mission. Together, we are creating a world where everyone is seen, valued, and celebrated for who they are. Thank you for being part of this incredible journey. Here's to a future filled with hope, acceptance, and endless possibilities.

Warmest,



Angie Capistran
Operations Manager



Letter from our Staff:

Megan Moore

What an epic year we had at GiGi's NYC! When I first started as the Special Educator of Adult Programs in 2023, I didn't realize just how much this role would teach me in return. Every day, I get to work alongside incredible human beings who are growing in confidence, building imperative skills, and chasing their career goals!

As the teacher of the Career Development Programs, I have the unique honor of watching a cohort of participants learn, grow, and thrive in the three semesters we spend together. After completing GiGi Prep in 2023, our students went on to complete GiGi University and GiGi Professional. The learning at the Playhouse was nothing short of magical, as we focused on skills necessary for the workplace. We spent time learning how to use a paper shredder, answering phones at the front desk, navigating a hot plate while making lunch, moving our bodies to Just Dance videos, and role playing to help us prepare for life in the workplace. Career development is about more than job skills. It's about building confidence, independence, friendship and walking alongside people as they find their place in the world.

Our learning continued outside of the Playhouse, as we ventured around the city to: explore the offices and roles of lawyers, bankers, and security guards at Royal Bank of Canada, volunteer as gardeners at the High Line, explore architecture at Perkins&Will, deliver donations to the Sojourner Truth School on Giving Tuesday, honor

World Down Syndrome Day and learn from an Human Resources professional at BlackRock, and learn about debit & credit cards at MasterCard. Thank you for helping us continue to share that representation, awareness and acceptance matter.

I'm so proud to share that all seven participants successfully graduated from the Career Development Programs in December of 2024! To the surprise of nobody, I was teary eyed and bursting with pride as we celebrated the hard work every single person put into making these programs as successful as possible. We had committed participants, dedicated volunteers, and the unwavering support of GiGi's behind us. I love you all!

To everyone who supports our programs at GiGi's NYC—families, staff, volunteers, and of course our incredible participants—thank you. You make this all possible, and I'm so grateful to be on this journey alongside you! Our participants make the world a better, brighter and more positive place, and I'm proud to be a part of it.

Warmly,



Megan Moore
Special Educator of Adult Programs



GiGi's NYC Ambassador: Laura Lyle



GiGi's NYC is thrilled to introduce Laura as our Ambassador for 2025. Laura has been a valued member of the GiGi's NYC community since our inception in 2012, demonstrating her unwavering commitment from day one when she assisted on move-in day at only 6 years old.

As an outgoing and engaged young woman, Laura has become a passionate advocate for individuals with Down syndrome, tirelessly championing our community for many years. Her remarkable contributions include serving as the Grand Marshal for the National Down Syndrome Society 2024 Buddy Walk, a role that highlights her leadership and dedication. Laura consistently utilizes her voice to empower herself and advocate for the broader Down syndrome community, inspiring others to join in our mission. We are proud to have Laura as our ambassador and look forward to her continued impact in the coming year.

Read below to learn more about Laura:

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

To me, being GiGi's ambassador means to stand up for inclusion and to be a role model for my community. I want to be able to show people that we are not just a pretty face or someone they can control, we can read we can write and do things just like anyone.

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 see GiGi's growing and thriving with more programs and events where people can come together and celebrate the power of us.

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

I would like the GiGi's community to know that we are one big loving family. I've been at GiGi's since I was six years old, and I have never left. This is my home, my family.

How do you enjoy spending your free time?

I enjoy writing, reading and spending time with friends and family. I love making art and eating.

What does Down syndrome awareness and acceptance mean to you?

To me, Down syndrome awareness and acceptance mean that everyone understands and appreciates that we're all unique. It's about showing the world that people with Down syndrome can do anything we set our minds to, have big dreams, and be confident in who we are. Being accepted means people treat us with kindness, respect, and include us in everything. As GiGi's 2025 Ambassador, I want to help spread love, understanding, and positivity so that everyone feels proud and happy being themselves!

What achievements are you most proud of?

One achievement that I am most proud of is winning a basketball championship. I got the winning point. I was co-captain and it really meant so much to me.

What are some of your goals?

Some of my goals are to travel the world, become a professional rapper and to save my money so that I can be so successful like my mom who always tells me to keep pushing for my dreams.



GiGi's NYC congratulates
Laura on this amazing
accomplishment!



Recurring Programs



Best Buddies Friendship Programs

In partnership with Best Buddies, we continued 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

This program provides a performing arts experience to assist individuals with Down syndrome in social and educational development. Theater and choral performance develop skills such as listening, vocal production, diction, body awareness, memorizing, creating, and working together. Participants rehearsed motivational and empowering songs in preparation for their performance at our annual Gala. 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.

Family Speaker - TableTalk 0-5 yr. Olds

This program was requested by our community. Family Speaker: TableTalk offers a safe space for parents, caregivers, siblings, and friends of young children with Down syndrome to share experiences, exchange resources, network, and build connections. This program focuses on topics that help loved ones and allows for time to listen, learn, ask questions and network. Recommended for parents, caregivers, siblings, and friends of young children 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 - GiGi’s NYC 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 (Teens)

Our friends get together for physical activity and a healthy snack! Recommended for ages 13 to 17.

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.

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 through active games, fine motor and self-help skills through various activities. Recommended for ages 8 to 12.

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 in their 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.

Teentastic

We relaunched our Teentastic program, allowing our teen 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.

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 - Summer Clubhouse

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 - Summer Adventures

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 13-17.

Fantastic Friends - Summer Horizons

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

Friends, Fun & Fitness (Adults)

Our adult friends get together for physical activity and a healthy snack! Recommended for ages 18 and older.

Art Explosion, MAD Art

In collaboration with Theatre Within, a New York based non-profit, we introduced a dynamic art program through a series of fun and interactive workshops where participants dived into the exciting world of caricature and cartooning, guided by none other than the acclaimed illustrator Sam Viviano. Recommended for our participants aged 13-17.

Best Buddies Transitions

In partnership with Best Buddies NYC, this program combines classroom-based employment training workshops, experiential learning opportunities, and corporate mentorships for individuals with Down syndrome. Recommended for ages 14-22.

Dance

In partnership with Unique Movers, who use a positive reinforcement approach to teach dance and movement skills to children and young adults of all ages and abilities. This program introduces basic dance styles, techniques, and movements to participants while improving gross motor skills, increasing mental and muscle memory and increasing cardiovascular conditioning, strength, flexibility and coordination. Recommended for ages 13 and older.



GiGi Professional

This career development program builds on the skills learned in GiGi U with practical applications and the achievement of certifications. During each 13-week session, participants with Down syndrome will purposefully progress through certifications, learning and demonstrating strengths and interests in transferable job skills, building their resume for placement in a job or volunteer position in the community. Pre-req: GiGi U. Recommended for Adults 18+.

GiGi University

A comprehensive and progressive learning program tailored specifically for motivated adults with Down syndrome to achieve their highest potential in the real world while developing their abilities in the areas of wellness, communication and career skills with emphasis on job interviewing, communication skills, money management, public speaking, customer service, computer skills, team building and health. Recommended for Adults 18 and over.



Career Development Programs



Thanks to the generous support of our dedicated donors, GiGi's NYC proudly continued our Career Development Programs in 2024. With over half of our participants aged 18 and older, families expressed a clear need for meaningful opportunities to equip our participants with essential workforce skills and a pathway to greater independence. Bringing this vision to life has been an honor—and it would not have been possible without your support, and particularly the support of the RBC Foundation USA.

The Career Development Programs are comprised of three semesters, or tiers: GiGi Prep, GiGi University, and GiGi Professional. These dynamic programs support adults with Down syndrome in building valuable job skills and real-world experience, with the aim of securing employment or volunteer roles in the community. The cost for one participant to complete all three semesters is \$10,000, covering a specialized educator, classroom space, administrative support, and all required materials. These programs—and the steps toward independence they make possible—would not exist without your support!

2024 was a year full of energy, growth, and hands-on learning! Our participants explored goal setting, team building, customer service, public speaking, and professionalism—essential skills for succeeding in the workplace. They also got moving with fitness sessions, whipped up tasty meals in weekly cooking classes (using a hot plate!), learned about healthy habits through nutrition lessons, and tackled money management to build financial confidence. It was an exciting and empowering journey, helping our participants take meaningful steps toward independence.

This year was full of exciting adventures as our participants took part in several inspiring off-site visits with our important community partners! At **RBC**, the students learned about banking, money management, and workplace professionalism. A highlight of this visit was being able to walk the trading floor! At **Mastercard**, participants learned the differences between credit and debit cards—and even getting a close-up look at what each one looks like. At **BlackRock**, our students celebrated World Down Syndrome Day, using creativity to construct yellow and blue bracelets alongside BlackRock team members. A visit to **Perkins&Will** gave our students a behind-the-scenes look at how architects turn ideas into amazing spaces. We rolled up our sleeves and got our hands dirty on the **High Line**, volunteering alongside a horticulturist.

Each visit brought new ideas, new confidence, and lots of inspiration about the many possibilities ahead! To all our donors and community partners—both longstanding and new—thank you. Your support has made a lasting impact on our participants, staff, volunteers, and the growth of our initiatives.

GiGi Professional, the third and final class in the three-tiered program focuses on professionalism, revolving around various certifications: Work Readiness, Professionalism, Administrative Skills, Finance, Fulfillment Center, Marketing & Development, Point of Sale, Product Development, Product Presentation, Program Support, Shipping and Technology. Each certification is broken down into specific lessons to allow us to dive deeper into our learning and real-world practice to build confidence, independence, and pride. Our learning continued in the



community, as we traveled to BlackRock for interview practice and a presentation from the Human Resources department. The visit gave our students a chance to apply their skills in a real-world setting, ask thoughtful questions, and experience what a professional workplace feels like firsthand.

On Giving Tuesday, our participants experienced the joy of giving back and the power of community support, as we collected and delivered donations to a local public school, P.S. 149 Sojourner Truth. Getting out into the world helps our participants build confidence and make meaningful connections—but it also lets the world see us as capable, engaged, and full of potential. These moments break barriers and show what true inclusion really means.

In December, all seven of our participants successfully completed all of the required certifications for GiGi Professional, and in turn, completed the first ever three-tiered Career Development Programs at GiGi's NYC.

They entered the Career Development Programs as aspiring bakers, writers, party planners, paramedics, fashion stylists, photographers, and music producers. After completing the three semester-long programs, we are proud to share that our participants are more confident and capable than ever.

Life after the Career Development Programs is looking extra bright for our graduates! Our seven graduates have wonderful futures ahead of them. Since completing the programs:

- Tracy is working as a writer for an online magazine, writing short stories and conducting interviews!
- Troy was hired to work at a pediatric dentist's office, assisting the dentists with tool sterilization and helping children pick a toy at the end of their visit!
- Denise became CPR, First-Aid & AED Certified, allowing her to continue to achieve her goal of becoming a paramedic.
- Troy and Eve have been selected to work as interns for a GiGi's NYC Pilot Program, GiGi's Achievers in January 2025.
- Malik maintained his employment at Harlem Biscuit Company, applying skills he learned throughout the Career Development Programs.

As our graduates enter the world of work, explore volunteer opportunities, teach programs at GiGi's NYC, dive into acting, take weekly baking classes, and launch their own businesses, we are so incredibly proud of everything they have accomplished and vow to support any future endeavors.

We look forward to launching the second round of the Career Development programs in 2025! The sky is the limit.

Special Events

Annual Fashion Show

Our 6th Annual Fashion Show was an incredible success! Once again, our models dazzled on the runway, serving stunning looks, radiating confidence, and demonstrating why inclusion truly matters. The event was brimming with happiness, joy, and inspiration, creating a memorable experience for everyone involved. Participants, families, attendees, and even the PIX11 news team joined in the celebration, capturing the moment with a fantastic news segment. It was a day filled with empowerment and community spirit we won't forget!

Mother's Day Celebration

We hosted a joyful Mother's Day celebration at our playhouse, where participants made delicious chocolate-dipped strawberries and enjoyed playing fun games with their mothers or mother figures. The event was filled with love, laughter, and special moments, celebrating the important women in our participants' lives and strengthening our sense of community.

Sports Clinic

Participants actively engaged in a variety of basketball and soccer drills during our Sports Clinic, working on their skills, coordination, and teamwork. The sessions provided a fun and energetic environment where everyone had the chance to improve their athletic abilities while enjoying the spirit of sportsmanship. It was a great opportunity for participants to stay active, build confidence, and have a lot of fun while developing their skills in both basketball and soccer.

Annual Dancing For Down Syndrome

Our 10th Annual Dancing For Down Syndrome event took place as part of the National GiGiFIT Acceptance Challenge, a movement dedicated to promoting acceptance. Once again, the event was led by our Youth Board, with support and guidance from our Young Professional Board.

GiGi University

All seven students from our inaugural GiGi University class successfully graduated! It was a fantastic semester full of practical learning both inside and outside the classroom. Throughout the program, our students had the opportunity



to visit organizations such as the Royal Bank of Canada, Mastercard, the High Line, and Perkins&Will, gaining valuable insights and real-world experience.

Summer Double Dip

We were honored to be named a charity partner by Summer Double Dip, which raised \$10,000 for the GiGi's NYC community. Summer Double Dip is dedicated to creating a brighter, healthier, and more independent future for individuals with Down syndrome and other differing abilities.

NYS Senator Cordell Cleare's Back-to-School event

We had the privilege of participating in NYS Senator Cordell Cleare's Back-to-School event, where we provided resources and support to youth in Harlem. This event helped families prepare for the new school year by offering supplies and community information.

Annual Halloween Spooktacular

We had a fantastic time at our Annual Halloween Spooktacular Party, filled with fun games, delicious Halloween-themed snacks, lively music, and plenty of festive activities. It was a memorable celebration enjoyed by everyone, full of laughter and community spirit!

Giving Tuesday

For Giving Tuesday, our participants gathered clothing and essential items to support families served by a local public school in Harlem. This school educates children from under-resourced families as well as those who have recently migrated from around the world. Additionally, our Community Chorus contributed by performing at the neighborhood retirement home, Vista on 5th, spreading joy and uplifting spirits through their music.

Annual Holiday Market

We hosted our 2nd Annual Holiday Market to celebrate the end of the semester, showcasing a wonderful variety of unique items crafted by our talented participants. It was a festive and inspiring event that highlighted their creativity and hard work, bringing the community together to enjoy the holiday spirit.



World Down Syndrome Day

BlackRock

BlackRock kindly hosted our participants at their offices to celebrate World Down Syndrome Day (WDS). The event provided a great chance to connect, network, and build relationships in a welcoming environment. Participants enjoyed activities like arts and storytelling, sharing joy and positivity. BlackRock team members and our participants came together to honor WDS, celebrating the talents and achievements of individuals with Down syndrome but also highlighting the importance of inclusion, awareness, and support in the workplace and society at large. It was a memorable day that empowered and strengthened our community bonds.

Inaugural Broadway Cabaret

We hosted our inaugural Broadway Cabaret, an unforgettable evening celebrating the magic of Broadway through powerful performances and heartfelt storytelling. The event was a spectacular showcase of talented performers who delivered captivating vocals that moved and inspired the audience. Each act was thoughtfully curated to highlight the diverse stories and rich history behind the musical theater world, creating a truly immersive experience. Attendees were transported into the enchanting world of Broadway, feeling the emotion and passion that define this art form. The evening

not only celebrated musical excellence but also brought our community together in a shared appreciation for the arts, making it a memorable milestone for all involved.

Crunch Staten Island South

Crunch Staten Island South hosted a special fundraiser class in partnership with GiGi's NYC as their designated charity partner. The event was a wonderful success, bringing together community members and fitness enthusiasts to support a meaningful cause. A huge thank you to everyone who participated and contributed.

Alivia

Alivia launched its Spring 2024 collection in collaboration with GiGi's NYC participant, Victoria Krasny. This partnership highlights Victoria's talent and creativity, showcasing her beautiful art contribution to the collection.

AIG

AIG proudly showcased artwork created by our talented participants at their NY disAbilities & Allies Sixth Annual Art Show. The exhibition highlighted the incredible creativity and skill of our participants, celebrating their artistic talents and personal expressions. The event provided a wonderful platform for our community to share their work and be recognized for their achievements.

Community Education

Dr. Bonnie Keilty, Professor in the Special Education Department at Hunter College, led the March edition of Family Speaker: TableTalk. During the session, she explored the **mission of early intervention** and explained how it “works” according to the latest research. Her discussion covered key topics such as the Individualized Family Service Plan (IFSP), family rights, and what intervention visits typically entail.

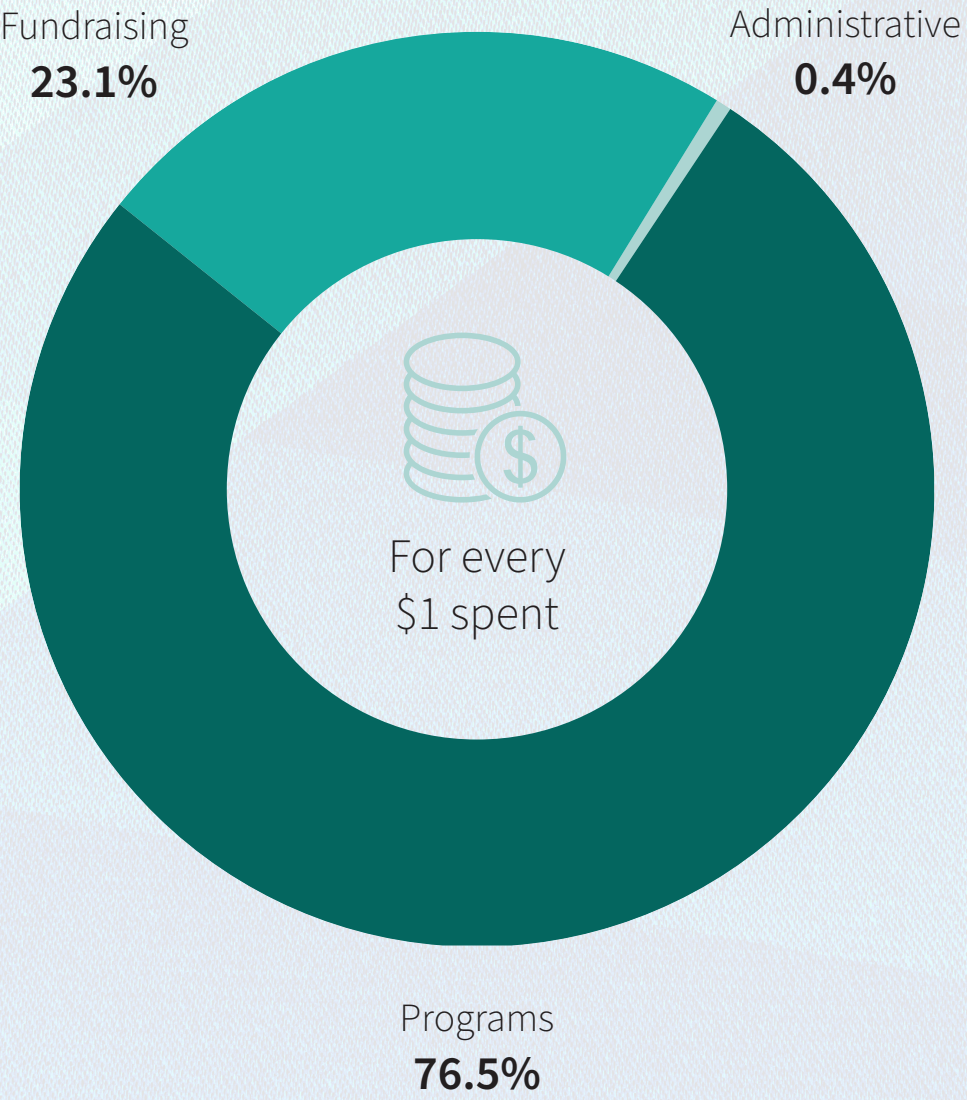
The National Down Syndrome Society kindly sponsored an in-person presentation by Dr. Brian Chicoine, MD, titled **“Forming a Partnership with Your Healthcare Provider.”** Dr. Chicoine is the medical director of the Advocate Medical Group Adult Down Syndrome Center in Park Ridge, Illinois, and serves on the faculty of the Family Medicine residency at Advocate Lutheran General Hospital.

Steve Friedman and his wife graciously hosted our community for the workshop titled **“March to Independence.”** During the session, they provided valuable information to support individuals with Down syndrome on their journey toward independence. The discussion covered a range of important topics, including social skills, safety, health, financial benefits, legal tools, housing options, and more.

Taylor’d Speech and Language Services hosted our community for a two-part virtual workshop titled **“Understanding Feeding Challenges.”** The sessions offered an in-depth overview of feeding difficulties in infants, emphasizing the differences between dysphagia and feeding delays. Participants learned strategies to promote safe feeding, explored therapy techniques for managing dysphagia in children, and examined assessment methods and tools used by professionals to identify and evaluate these conditions.



Financial Overview





2024 Annual Gala

On Tuesday, October 15th, over 200 distinguished guests gathered at City Winery to celebrate the remarkable achievements of our community, exemplifying our ongoing commitment to Changing Lives Through Partnerships. The evening honored esteemed partners, Dede McMahon and RBC Capital Markets, whose dedicated philanthropy and unwavering friendship continue to significantly impact our mission.

The event successfully raised over \$320,000 to support our programs and initiatives.

We extend our heartfelt appreciation to Rosanne Sorrentino, Actress, Comedian, and Podcast Host, who served as our emcee. Her engaging humor and beautiful rendition of “A Million Dreams” captivated the audience, while her dedication to our cause kept guests entertained and inspired.

The evening featured heartfelt testimonials from GiGi’s NYC family members—including Jim and Dyani Parkinson, Caroline Meier, and Yvette Cam—who shared personal stories illustrating the profound impact of GiGi’s NYC on their lives. Additionally, Megan Moore, our Special Educator of Adult Programs, provided an inspiring update on the many successes achieved through our Career Development Programs, highlighting how our participants are surpassing expectations.

Troy Providenti, our 2024 Ambassador, reflected on his impactful experience in the role before passing the baton to Laura Lyle, who graciously accepted the position of 2025

Ambassador. Laura committed to representing GiGi’s NYC at upcoming events and advocating for our life-changing programs.

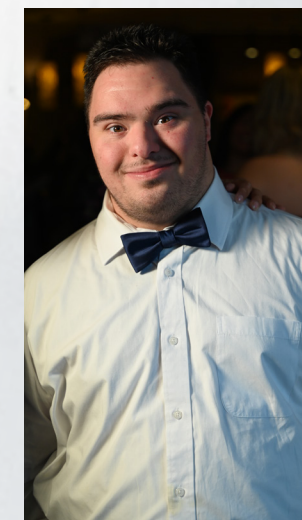
The Community Chorus delivered memorable performances of “Brave” and “Unwritten,” leaving a lasting impression. Special guest Mia Rodriguez, a singer with Down syndrome, performed “If We Hold On Together,” exemplifying the spirit of breaking barriers. Following these performances, Auctioneer Chris Ward skillfully conducted the live auction and Fund-a-Need segment, demonstrating enthusiasm and determination.

We also celebrated our Volunteer Champions—Sarah Pomerantz, Dora Corniel, Denise Colon, CaraMia Costa, Gerritt Schmidt, Abigail Smith, and Kathleen Garvey—whose exceptional dedication has been instrumental in delivering the highest quality programs to our community.

Our sincere thanks to all supporters whose generosity empowers us to continue providing transformative opportunities for individuals with Down syndrome. Your commitment ensures that more individuals than ever are achieving their full potential.

With gratitude,

The GiGi’s NYC Team



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Aspen	Latonia Garrett-Millennium Hilton
Avanade	MakeInspires
Best Buddies Friendship Program - Columbia Chapter	Mastercard Midnight Theatre
Best Buddies Transitions Program	Mercer
BILLY Footwear	Merlin's Magic Wand
BlackRock	Metropolitan Museum of Art
Brittany's Baskets of Hope	Microsoft
Bronx Zoo	Morgan Stanley
Bullhorn	Moyinoluwa Rainbow Foundation
Catapulta Learning	Museum of Natural History
Columbia University - Genetic Counseling Graduate Program	Nasdaq
Common Pantry	National Down Syndrome Society
Coney Island Aquarium	New York Cares
Connor's Canine Cookies	New York Junior League
Cooke School	NYU Speech-Language-Hearing Clinic
CORNBREAD26	One Sandwich at a Time
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Donate2Dance	The Imagine Society
Dr. Bonnie Keilty	Theater Within
Dr. Brian Chicoine	Turn Down For What
ELTSUH	Unique Movers

In compiling this Annual Report, we have endeavored to recognize all our dedicated volunteers who generously contributed their time and effort to our organization. If any volunteers' were inadvertently overlooked, we sincerely apologize for the oversight. Your commitment is highly valued and essential to our mission's success.





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Check out our wish list here:

gigisplayhouse.org/newyork/wish-list

Contact us at

nyc@gigisplayhouse.org.



Scan the QR code to make a donation.



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