

A Look Into 2023:



Down Syndrome Achievement Centers
educate. inspire. believe.

Southern Tier NY

2023 was a ground breaking year for GiGi's Playhouse Southern Tier.

We continued to welcome new families, participants, and volunteers at our Vestal location while promoting the 'Believe in our Build' Capital Campaign to raise funds for our move and expansion to the Oakdale Commons in Johnson City. All to create awareness and spread the word about acceptance for all.

In 2023, we served 210 families with over 7,259 participation hours, and we welcomed between 50 and 75 volunteers into the Playhouse each month with over 2,700 volunteer hours logged for the year.

2023 was the year we raised over \$570,000 to fund our move and expansion to the Oakdale Commons. In July of 2023 FAHS Construction officially began the demolition and rebuild of the space in the Commons. New learning labs for tutoring, meeting spaces, staff offices, a sensory room, storage for program materials, and expanded programming spaces (a gym, play space, and a larger kitchen!) were all created to accommodate our growing and active Playhouse!

The flourishing that our Playhouse has experienced is a reflection of needs that are being met through our 100% free, educational, and therapeutic programs for participants of all ages and abilities. The dedication that our donors and sponsors, volunteers, and our staff and board bring forth is making a tremendous impact on the Southern Tier disability community.

Because of you, we are impacting each life that walks into GiGi's Playhouse; participants, families, and volunteers. Without your support, the mission of creating a more generous, kind, and accepting world for all would not be possible. Thank you for believing in us. And, thank you for your ongoing commitment to this disability community.

Katherine Whaley
Playhouse Site Manager
GiGi's Playhouse Southern Tier



Thanks to you... We've Broken Down Barriers!



Our Move & Expansion

In 2023 we pushed out the 'Believe in our Build' capital campaign out to our local community of supporters to help fund our move and buildout into a new and bigger location to the Oakdale Commons in Johnson City. We were blown away with the generosity we were met with by families, volunteers, businesses, and grant organizations. At the end of 2023, we packed up the Vestal location Playhouse and moved into our new permanent home at the Oakdale Commons. More than 250 families joined us for our Grand Re-Opening and we've been off with a bang ever since in the new location!

By The Numbers

Because of the generosity of this community, GiGi's Playhouse was able to reach its financial goals for 2023. Our move to Oakdale Commons is complete and is totally paid for. Thanks to local foundations, businesses, and many individual supporters, we raised over \$578,000! Many of the same contributors to our 'Believe in Our Build' Capital Campaign came through and also supported our fundraisers events. All of our fundraisers were successful. Our 'i have a voice' Gala was a huge success....we had a capacity crowd! Even with the Capital Campaign and our special events, we also had many individuals continuing to make regular donations. All of these financial successes help us to spread the word about our Mission; to educate our community about Down Syndrome acceptance and education and to keep free programming for our families.

Reaching New Highs!

In 2023, the Southern Tier Playhouse ascended from peer-group two into peer-group one among the other 59 Playhouses nationwide. This reflects important data the Playhouse collects; the number of families in our data base and volunteer and participant hours, in conjunction with only having one full time staff! We are in the same peer group as Playhouses that are located in large, highly populated cities much larger than ours! The Southern Tier is bursting with life!



"Walking into GiGi's Playhouse for the first time and being met with huge smiles and sincere welcomes from everyone there - participants, staff, volunteers, and other families - is a very heartwarming and humbling experience. Having Mikey turn to me and say "I like it here, everyone is happy, can we come here again?" made me realize we had found someplace truly special. He has grown in self confidence, social skills and independence throughout this past year of participating in tutoring, art programs, dance, and the cleaning workshops. We clearly see the positive impact this organization has on individuals and families. ."

-MaryAnn, mom of Michael