



GiGi's Playhouse Wins Six-Figure Grant from The Coca-Cola Foundation

Grant helps non-profit ramp up its efforts to meet massive demand for free programs for people with Down syndrome

June 13, 2019 (Hoffman Estates, IL) – GiGi's Playhouse Down Syndrome Achievement Centers ("GiGi's Playhouse") is proud to announce it has been awarded a \$150,000 grant from The Coca-Cola Foundation. The "Roadmap to Change" grant from The Coca-Cola Foundation will be used to support the ongoing growth of GiGi's Playhouse, bringing its unique and highly sought-after model into new communities.

GiGi's Playhouse was founded by Nancy Gianni for her daughter GiGi. Nancy's vision for GiGi's Playhouse was to create a place where families could celebrate their children with Down syndrome and find resources, community and empowerment. Nancy had a dream to alter the experience and perspective of parents expecting a child with Down syndrome. She knew that parents needed a place filled with joy and hope, not fear and limitations. They needed a place where they could learn from one another and help their children to achieve their dreams with programs focused on the specific needs of individuals with Down syndrome and their families.

Since opening the doors to its first location in 2003, GiGi's Playhouse has grown from a single location in Hoffman Estates, IL to a network of 46 playhouses in the U.S. and Mexico. GiGi's Playhouse provides therapeutic, educational and career development programs that are 100% free.

"There is massive demand across the U.S. and beyond to bring a GiGi's Playhouse into communities," explained Nancy Gianni, GiGi's mom and Chief Belief Officer at GiGi's Playhouse. "Our model creates opportunity for people with Down syndrome to learn, thrive and break through barriers in ways never imagined. We've heard from more than 200 communities in 39 different countries. This grant will help us respond to the enormous demand for our model of helping those with Down syndrome."

“Our ultimate goal at GiGi’s Playhouse,” Gianni said, “is to change the way the world views Down syndrome and to send a global message of acceptance for all. This grant sends a message that corporate America believes in GiGi’s Playhouse and believes in individuals with Down syndrome.”

About The Coca-Cola Foundation

Established in 1984, The Coca-Cola Foundation is a global philanthropic organization that supports organizations across the globe. The Coca-Cola Foundation’s three priority areas are Empowering Women, Protecting the Environment and Enhancing Communities.

About GiGi’s Playhouse

GiGi’s Playhouse is the ONLY nationwide network of Down syndrome achievement centers. GiGi’s Playhouse was founded by GiGi’s mom, Nancy Gianni, in Hoffman Estates, IL. Through its first 15 years, GiGi’s Playhouse has grown to 46 locations throughout the United States and Mexico and offers over 50 different therapeutic, educational and career development programs for individuals with Down syndrome of all ages, their families and the community. The organization is 99% volunteer-run, and all programs are 100% free to families. From pre-natal diagnosis through career skills, GiGi’s Playhouse makes a lifetime commitment to families. With over 200,000 free program participation hours annually, GiGi’s Playhouse helps participants thrive through building educational, developmental, fitness, fine and gross motor, social-emotional and speech and language skills.

For more information about free programs, volunteerism, impact partnerships, events, and many ways to support GiGi’s Playhouse families: please visit www.gigisplayhouse.org.

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Images of GiGi and Nancy Gianni are available here:
<https://www.flickr.com/gp/181978838@N05/rt8t00>