



Loving a child with Down syndrome is contagious... Help us spread the love!!!

Now with two locations!

GiGi's Playhouse
March, 2006

People helping people

This is an email from a new mom of a child with Down syndrome writing to us about her first visit to GiGi's Playhouse:

"Just a quick note to tell you what you have done for me. By chance I showed up at GiGi's and by chance another mom (Sally) came too. Wow, to sit and talk to another parent was awesome! We talked doctors, food, therapy, etc. I walked out of there feeling like there is a place I belong. As a mom of a child with different abilities you just talk to doctors about them and hear their medical conditions, but there is nobody to talk to about their first smile, to laugh with you about the silly things these children do. I guess you look for someone who understands and I found that on my very first trip to GiGi's. Thank you for all your hard work in getting GiGi's started. This mom feels very welcomed, and grateful for GiGi's."



The coolest part about this scenario, is the mother that happened to be there (Sally) had a child who was only 10 months old. She probably got as much out of the interaction as this mother did!

The other night we accidentally double booked the Playhouse! We walked in on a family support group meeting. It was awesome! The moms and dads had children with different disabilities. The kids and siblings were all playing and the parents were having great conversation, food and fun! The kids had a blast and so did the parents!!

At the Valentine making party we had a girl scout troop come in to volunteer. It was awesome! One of the girl scout's exclaimed before she left "This was the best day of my life! I have never had so many friends!" This happens with most of our volunteers and this is why community awareness is so important. She learned that kids with Down syndrome can help us as much as we can help them!

In April we have a group of families of children with Down syndrome coming in from all over the world! They are an on-line support group. They have families coming in from as far away as Australia!! We are so proud that they picked GiGi's Playhouse as their meeting place.

Remember GiGi's Playhouse is your Playhouse too!! To host a party or reserve the Playhouse for a play group or support group, simply call and reserve the time!

Please help raise us Down syndrome awareness!

As you know, the more people see our children the less they appear to be different.

That is why we reserved a portion of our beautiful 2006 GiGi's Playhouse Down syndrome Awareness Calendars to be given out for **FREE** to area schools, hospitals, churches, therapy Centers, doctors offices and other educational institutions.

We need your help in distributing these calendars. Simply pick up the calendars and give us a list of where you will be distributing them.

We have already had comments from schools that they use the calendar as an educational tool to teach the kids about Down syndrome! By providing these tools for **free** we can ensure Down syndrome awareness will be going strong!! Help your child and help us spread the word!!

(The calendars are still for sale so if they are being used as a gift we do ask that you pay the \$10.00. The FREE ones will have a donation sticker in them.)

Calling all couch potatoes!! 5k training to the rescue!



You've always wanted to run a race, but couldn't get motivated? Or...it's never even crossed your mind. Time to get movin' for the 3rd Annual GiGi's Playhouse Down Syndrome Awareness 5k Fun Run 1 Mile Walk. It is just 4 months away! The run/walk will take place on Sunday June 12th at Busse Woods. **This year the Playhouse will be offering a running training program for those interested in doing the run.** No running experience necessary. (A 5k is only 3 miles!! You can do it!) This 12 week training program begins March 19. So don't wait! Sign up now! Please email qaylegio@yahoo.com to sign up, ask questions or get more information. One on one training is available for individuals with Down syndrome. Remember we have the best finish line in town!! Just imagine the feeling you and your family will have as you cross that finish line!!



Be my Valentine!



A big Thank you to the Girl Scouts who came to volunteer!!! Everyone made new friends!!

Kylie and Ian helped welcome new baby Annabelle to open play! (yes, that is a real baby!) Every Thursday from 12:30-2 we have open play time with a pizza lunch and volunteers to help with the kids!! The kids love it and the parents do too!
FUN-FUN-FUN!!!!



St. Patrick's Day Parade

March 18th
Elmhurst St. Patrick's Day Parade!
 Please join us as we spread Down syndrome awareness through the streets of Elmhurst.
Saturday, March 18th 11:00 A.M
 Please call to reserve your spot. Siblings and family members are welcome too.



Every month we have more and more families visiting GiGi's Playhouse from all over the country! We had a family drive in for our Friday friends group (18 and over) the other night from Michigan! They got a hotel room and made a weekend out of it! Hi Michael!!

Hippy Hop it's time to Hop on over to GiGi's Playhouse for our 3rd Annual Easter Egg Hunt!!! The Hunt will take place on **Saturday April 8, from 1-3** There will be lots of eggs to be found and a SURPRISE VISIT from a VERY SPECIAL GUEST (I wonder who it could be?!)
 RSVP, ASAP to reserve your basket!



The 3rd Annual GiGi's Playhouse Down Syndrome Awareness 5k Fun Run/1 Mile Walk is moving to Busse Woods!!

Sunday June 11, 2006 @ 9 AM

In order to accommodate the increasing crowds we had to move this event to a bigger location this year! Email your friends and family and ask them to help support your child with Down syndrome!

Make your group stand out with arm bands, headbands, flags, etc... BE CREATIVE!

The GiGi's Playhouse team is working very hard to ensure another AMAZING day of Down syndrome awareness!! If you know of any businesses that would like to sponsor this awesome event please call the Playhouse ASAP and we will send out a sponsor packet! All proceeds will benefit the GiGi's Playhouse FREE "Learn to Read" literacy program and promoting Down syndrome awareness..

Calling all new parents!!

LORA WHITE ANSWERS YOUR QUESTIONS!

WEDNESDAY MARCH 15, 2006 AT 7:00P.M.















Communication skills begin building at birth! Learn tips on how to help your infant avoid forming bad habits that will hurt his speech in the future.

Lora White, M.A., CCC-SLP, is a pediatric Speech and Language Pathologist in private practice. Her presentation will be geared for parents who have a child birth to age three. Lora will be happy to address specific questions and concerns in regard to the development of the young child with Down syndrome. She will also provide an overview of the basic knowledge a parent needs to make sure their child's oral motor, feeding and communication needs are being addressed. Please feel free to come with specific questions in regard to your child.

Everyone is welcome at GiGi's Playhouse! Due to the need for scheduling volunteers and acquiring supplies, reservations are greatly appreciated. (847) 885-PLAY, or you can e-mail gianni4567@aol.com or sloenneke@gigisplayhouse.com. Feel free to leave a message! Check the website for constant updates and to see pictures of the activities www.gigisplayhouse.com!



MARCH

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
GiGi's Playhouse is located 3 miles West of Woodfield Shopping Mall next to Schaumburg Toyota in the Brandess Center. 1069 W. Golf Road. Hoffman Estates, IL.60194 847-885-PLAY www.gigisplayhouse.com			1 Special Intentions Support Group 7:00	2 Open Play 12:30 - 2:00 	3 	4 Open Birthday Party! 10:00 - 12:00
5 Hispanic Open Play 11:00 - 1:00 	6 Literacy Program 9:00 - 3:00 	7 Literacy Program 9:00 - 12:00 3:30 - 6:30	8 Literacy Program 10:00 - 2:00	9 Open Play 12:30 - 2:00 	10 "FUTURE" Friday Friends 4:30-6:30	11  & Under Play Group 10:00 - 11:00
12	13 Literacy Program 9-3 ----- Committee Meeting 7pm 	14 Literacy Program 9:00-12:00 3:30 - 6:30 	15 Literacy Program 10:00 - 2:00 ----- Lora White 7:00	16 Open Play 12:30 - 2:00 	17 Happy St. Patrick's Day! 	18 St Patrick's Day PARADE in Elmhurst meet @ 11:30 AM
19 	20 Literacy Program 9:00 - 3:00 ----- Scrapbooking Night 7:00 	21 Literacy Program 9:00 - 12:00 & 3:30 - 6:30	22 Literacy Program 10:00 - 2:00 ----- Reserved for support group 7PM	23 Open Play 12:30 - 2:00 	24 "FUTURE" Friday Friends 4:30-6:30 ----- Friday Friends 7-9 (18 & up)	25 Ups for Downs Lunch with the Kids 11:00 - 1:00
26 Polish Play Group 1:00 - 3:00	27 Literacy Program 9:00 - 3:00 	28 Literacy Program 9:00 - 12:00 & 3:30 - 6:30	★ RSVP Greatly Appreciated (847)885-PLAY Friends & Family are always welcome and there is no charge for GiGi's Playhouse events			

Open Play-Everyone is welcome! Stop by for pizza, pop and fun! We have volunteers to assist with the kids so the parents can hang out! It is awesome!!!!

Open Birthday party-If you were born in March or just love a good birthday party come on by! The birthday child gets a gift and everyone gets a goodie bag!

The literacy program- GiGi's Playhouse provides FREE private tutoring to children with Down syndrome. Customized materials are provided for each individual student. The program also assists teachers and parents on how to tutor their children.

"Future" Friday Friends- AGES 6-8 Only. Kids create lasting friendships through facilitated interactive play, while promoting good social skills. Each session ends with a pizza dinner in which social skills and table manners will be encouraged.

Friday Friends- Ages 18 and up only. Party with the gang! Equal numbers of peers with Down syndrome as without. Karaoke, dances, laser tag, bowling, prom, movie nights, friends and fun!

2 and under group- Families with kids 2 and under get together to play, and have fun while the parents network with each other!

Hispanic Group- Spanish speaking families gather for food, fun, friendship and education.

Polish Play Group- Polish speaking families gather for an afternoon of fun and friendship.

The Playhouse can be reserved for any Down syndrome related event. When available it may also be used by other groups with special needs.

For GiGi's Playhouse Too (Plainfield location) activity calendar go to www.gigisplayhousetoo.com or call 630-778-PLAY. (They are doing some awesome stuff!!)

GiGi's Playhouse
 1069 West Golf Road
 Hoffman Estates, IL 60194
 Phone: 847-885-PLAY
 Fax: 847-885-4901

E-mail: Gianni4567@aol.com
www.gigisplayhouse.com

GiGi's Playhouse too
 Plainfield, IL 630-778-PLAY

Loving a child with Down syndrome is contagious...Help us spread the love!!

Our Hoffman Estates location is 3 miles west of Woodfield in the Brandess Center next to Schaumburg Toyota

I-RISH you could come!



The 2 an under group is ready to party!! Come join them in all your green!

Saturday
 March 11th
 from 10-12!

Playhouse News!

GiGi's Playhouse Literacy Program update:
 Did you know that there are teachers in area schools using our literacy program everyday?

Be sure to let your teachers know if they have any questions they can call us too! Part of our program includes teacher consultation. We had our first volunteer meeting for the Literacy Program in February. We are getting more help to expand the program. Beth Spenadel will be tutoring on Wednesdays from 10 A.M. to 2:00 PM. We now have over 50 students from the ages 2-26!



Attention Future Olympians!!
 The Special Olympics gymnastics coach is looking for some early recruits!!

Tumbling classes for kids ages 3-8 are coming to GiGi's Playhouse this spring!!

A doctor's note and release form will be required for your child to participate in this program.

For information or to reserve a spot (only 10 tumblers per session) please call the Playhouse. More information will follow in next months newsletter.

Crawlers!!

GiGi's Playhouse Too hosts an awesome group called Crawlers. It is facilitated by a PT, OT and DT!! If your child is crawling and needs a little extra help this group can help you out!!

GiGi's Crawlers
 The 4th Saturday of the month from 10-11!
 GiGi's Playhouse Too
 Plainfield IL, 630-778-PLAY



Give me a "G"!!!
 The Carmel High School Cheerleaders will be hosting a 4 session clinic in April and May at GiGi's Playhouse. They will stretch the girls, teach them some fundamentals & techniques, a couple of side chants, & a dance. At the last session they will perform for the parents. The dates are Sunday April 9, Sunday April 30, Sunday May 7, Sunday May 21. From 1:30-2:30.

We would like to send hugs, kisses and prayers to Angie, our regular cheerleading coach, who is home recovering from breast cancer.

SAVE THE DATE!!! SUNDAY June 11th 9 AM for our 3rd Annual 5k Fun Run 1 Mile walk!!!



Join us on March 18th
 for Elmhurst's
 St. Patrick's day
 Parade! We'll be
 walkin' proud down the
 streets of Elmhurst!!
 Family and friends welcome!

Address label

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GiGi's Playhouse
 1069 West Golf Road
 Hoffman Estates, IL 60194
www.gigisplayhouse.com