



**Down Syndrome Awareness Centers**  
[www.gigisplayhouse.org](http://www.gigisplayhouse.org)

# GIGI'S NEWS

Serving two locations

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

Hoffman Estates  
1069 W Golf Rd • Hoffman Estates, IL 60169  
847-885-PLAY • [www.gigisplayhouse.org](http://www.gigisplayhouse.org)

Plainfield  
10052 S. Bode Rd, Unit D • Plainfield, IL 60585  
630-778-PLAY • [www.gigisplayhousetoo.com](http://www.gigisplayhousetoo.com)

July 2007

## Turning negatives to positives.

The playhouse received a phone call from a new mother who had a negative experience at a renowned theatre company. Her first night out with her husband since her baby girl with Down syndrome was born, they were excited to have a date! The night turned sour when the actors began an extremely derogatory skit based on out of date and untrue stereotypes of Down syndrome. Imagine the heartbreak that these new parents felt! Rather than simply being upset by the negative stereotype that was reiterated, this mom called the Playhouse to ask for some advocacy help. "The issue for me isn't so much about my personal feelings or even the ruined evening," she says, "I'm concerned about our society's attitudes, prejudices, and misconceptions. I'm concerned that this major cultural institution not only reflects society's values, but also, in many ways is an arbiter of all things hip, cool, acceptable, and true. They consider themselves progressive on many social issues, but obviously they are way behind on this one." Together, we are working to educate the actors and the company that by performing these skits not only are they hurting people like these new parents, but they are also planting seeds of negative stereotypes that may not have been there before. The playhouse is equipped with letters and material to help you educate others around you that may still believe certain stereotypes about Down syndrome. It may be hard to change the world but we can change one person at a time. If you have had a negative experience of this type of discrimination, let the Playhouse help you break down these stereotypes. Call 847-885-7529 for more info.

**OUR MISSION: to increase awareness of Down syndrome by providing programming, support, and education.**



## 4th Annual 5K a Huge Success!

Thanks to our amazing sponsors, runners, walkers and dashers we not only raised funds for our literacy program but we also raised awareness and acceptance in our communities! The US Army warmed up the crowd with stretches as Rick Federighi energized the crowd as our emcee! Pride, determination and inspiration fueled this event (with lots of love, laughter, and tears mixed in!!)

Look inside for more pictures of the event!



## Annual Golf outing

The 2007 Golf Outing is Monday, July 30th at the Royal Hawk Country Club in St. Charles. Registration forms can be found at your local GiGi's location. Any questions about registration or sponsorship opportunities, please contact Tom May at [mayfamily00@sbcglobal.net](mailto:mayfamily00@sbcglobal.net) or 630-805-2575.

We still need raffle donations and sponsorships for the golf outing! Suggested raffle donations include weekend stays, power tools, game tickets and autographed sports memorabilia.



# HOFFMAN ESTATES LOCATION



## Softball Challenge!

Friday Friends challenges their parents, siblings and friends to a friendly game of softball! July 27th at 7pm. RSVP at 847-885-7529.

## Thank you Chicago Slaughter!!

GiGi's Playhouse and Friday Friends wants to thank Sue Bergman and Chicago Slaughter Arena Football Team for inviting us to our very first game! We all had a blast and will be back again!



The limo ride was awesome! Thanks Arthur, from Touch of Class Limos!!

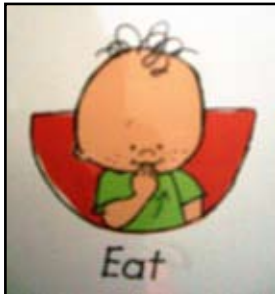
## Hop, Skip & Jumpers!!

The Hop Skip and Jumpers welcome Krysta as their new facilitator! This group will continue to sing, dance, and play games while building their social interaction skills with each other. Calling all 3-5 year olds! Join us from 12-1:30pm on the 2nd Saturday of the month!



## Baby Signs!

Teach your baby language – sign language! Research has shown that the use of sign language at an early age will facilitate speech and language development. It will be held on 3 consecutive Wednesday mornings at 9am: July 11th, 18th, and 25th. You must be able to commit to all classes in order to enroll. The class will be taught by an Independent Certified Instructor. Call the playhouse to register.



## Like to Play?

Come to the Playhouse every Thursday for pizza and fun! From 12:30pm-2pm we play, talk, eat and have a great time! It's open to everyone! New parents welcome!



## New Walkers group starting!!

Our new Walkers session starts this month! Every month has a different theme and will concentrate on different gross motor skills. Call the playhouse to register! Classes meet the 3rd Saturday at 9am.



## Watch out Broadway!

Our Leaps and Bounds dancers impressed everyone at the 5K with their choreographed dance to 'This Old Flag.' Thanks to our amazing teachers, Nancy and Julie, we are learning new dances and at the same time gaining muscle strength! Look at us practicing!!



# HOFFMAN ESTATES LOCATION

# July 2007



SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
1	2	3 Literacy 3pm- 7pm 	4 HAPPY FOURTH OF JULY 	5 Open Play 12:30pm-2pm <i>Everyone Welcome!</i> Literacy 5-7pm	6	7
8 Nuestros Angeles 11-1pm	9	10 Literacy 3pm- 7pm 	11 Baby Signs 9am- 9:45am Literacy 10am-4pm 6-8pm 	12 Open Play 12:30pm-2pm <i>Everyone Welcome!</i> Literacy 5-7pm 	13	14 Crawlers 9-9:45 2&Under 10-11:30 Hop Skip & Jumpers 12-1:30 
15	16	17 Literacy 3pm- 7pm 	18 Baby Signs 9am- 9:45am Literacy 10am-4pm and 6-8pm 	19 Open Play 12:30pm-2pm <i>Everyone Welcome!</i> Literacy 5-7pm	20	21 <i>Private Party</i> 3pm-7pm Walkers 9-9:45 Leaps and Bounds 10-11:30
22 Polish group 11-1	23	24 Literacy 3pm- 7pm 	25 Baby Signs 9am- 9:45am Literacy 10am-4pm and 6-8pm Literacy Nite 6:30-8:30pm <i>Everyone welcome</i> 	26 Book Fair 11am-4pm Open Play 12:30pm-2pm <i>Everyone Welcome!</i> Literacy 5-7pm 	27 Book Fair 10am-2pm Friday Friends 7-9pm	28 Book Fair 10am-4pm
29 Book Fair 1-7pm Ice Cream Social 4pm	30 Golf Outing	31 Literacy 3pm- 7pm				

**Open Play**-Every Thursday! 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!!!!

**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!

**Hop, Skip and Jumpers**- For 3-5 year olds, this program will help promote friendships, good social

skills and interactive play through fun creative activities!

**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.

**Reserved**- Playhouse may be reserved for private play groups, parties or support groups

**GiGi's Crawlers**: This group focuses on crawling skills as well as fine motor skills, social interaction with peers in a semi-structured environment. Children need to be crawling and are accompanied by a parent/adult.

**GiGi's Walkers**: This group focuses on post walking skills with peers to prepare children for school activities (balance beam, kicking, throwing, jumping, etc.) Children need to be walking and must be accompanied by a parent/adult.

The Playhouse can be reserved for any Down syndrome related event.

When it is available it may also be used by other groups with special needs.

**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 [nancy@gigisplayhouse.org](mailto:nancy@gigisplayhouse.org). Feel free to leave a message!

Check the website for constant updates and to see pictures of the activities  
[www.gigisplayhouse.org](http://www.gigisplayhouse.org)!

GiGi's Playhouse is located 3 miles West of Woodfield Shopping Mall next to Schaumburg Toyota in the Hoffman Center at  
1069 W. Golf Road  
Hoffman Estates IL, 60169  
847-885-PLAY!

# PLAINFIELD LOCATION

## Meet our New Board of Directors Members

### Tom Benco

Tom and his wife, Lisa, are the parents of Kevin 15 and Abby, 2, who has Down syndrome. Tom, who works in the computer field, and Lisa are the current leaders of the Two and Under Playgroup. Tom looks forward to the opportunity to give back to GiGi's Playhouse, since the playhouse has offered Abby so much.



### Michele Ptaszek

Michele and her husband, Jerry, have three children: Vince, who is 5 with Down syndrome, Gianna, 3, and Sela, 2. Michele, a former Marketing Manager with Spiegel Catalog, was previously involved in volunteering with GiGi's Playhouse Too and is excited to be involved once again. "GiGi's Playhouse Too is a special place for our family."



### Genia Latka

Genia has three daughters, including Natalie, 2, with Down syndrome. Genia, a former math teacher, said "As scary as Natalie's diagnosis was 2 years ago, we have gotten through a lot with the support and strength of others....It is nice to have someone to talk to who is living in similar shoes. I love coming to the Playhouse to talk with the parents and meet the children....It is a place where we are always welcome--like family. After every visit to the Playhouse I feel that we are in a 'good place'. My hope is that every family who visits the playhouse feels and experiences all the good things happening there."



## 2 and Under

The 2 and Under Playgroup had a great turnout on May 5! Group leader Tom Benco helped several children add their hand prints to the wall! But our newest attendee, 5 week old Hailey Wedel, thought she might hold off on adding her set of prints until she's just a little bit older. We continue to see new families every month at our 2 and Under group. Make sure you bring your infant or toddler to our next playgroup on July 7 from 9:30 to 11 a.m. And remember, siblings are always welcome!



## Our Growing Wall of Hand Prints

Max Foster and his dad Mike work with Tom Benco at the 2 and Under Playgroup to add Max's hand prints to our wall!



## Sign Up Now for Kindermusik in July!

Andrea Kendrick will be hosting a Kindermusik program on Tuesday, July 31 from 10-11 a.m. The program is geared toward preschool-2nd grade, but all ages are welcome. The program is limited to 25 children. The first 25 kids that sign up will get in, so sign up today! There is no cost for the program and siblings are welcome and encouraged to attend! There will be puppets, stories, hand motions/finger play, songs, use of multiple instruments, dancing, using balls and a parachute! Don't miss out on this fun and exciting opportunity. RSVP by July 24th to Wendy Eurich by calling 630-423-4035 or emailing weurich@comcast.net.



Introducing Our Newest 2 and Under Member! Hailey Wedel, of Downers Grove, and her mom Kimberly, made it to their first GiGi's Playhouse event on May 5 when they came out to the 2 and Under Playgroup! Welcome to the Playhouse!!!

## New Playgroup Coming Soon!

Planning is underway to start a new group for 1st and 2nd graders. If you have a child in this age group and would like more information please contact Wendy Eurich at 630-423-4035 or weurich@comcast.net. We will be sending out more information very soon. This will be a very fun and exciting group!

## Help Us Thank The Troops on July 8!

Come out to the Playhouse in Plainfield on July 8, from 3-5 p.m. We'll be celebrating Independence Day and showing our thanks to our troops overseas! We'll celebrate with an afternoon of — music, games, snacks and beverages. And while we're gathered, anyone who wishes can show their appreciation of our U.S. Service Members by writing a thank you letter or card (or coloring a picture to send to our troops!) We'll gather up all of our thank you notes, along with a write-up about our Playhouse, and send them to our troops as part of the A Million Thanks campaign. For more information on the A Million Thanks campaign, visit <http://www.amillionthanks.org/>. RSVP to our Independence Day Celebration by calling 630-778-PLAY.

# PLAINFIELD LOCATION

# July 2007



SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
<b>1</b>	<b>2</b> <b>Literacy Program</b> 3-6 pm <i>By appointment</i>	<b>3</b> <b>Literacy Program</b> 3-6 pm <i>By appointment</i> 	<b>4</b> <b>HAPPY FOURTH OF JULY</b> 	<b>5</b>	<b>6</b> <i>Private Play Group</i> 12-2 pm <b>Teen-Tastic</b> 7-9 pm	<b>7</b> <b>2 &amp; Under</b> 9:30-11 am  <b>Literacy Program</b> 10-11:30 am <b>3-4 Playgroup</b> 11 am-12:30 pm
<b>8</b> <b>Independence Day Celebration</b> 3-5 pm <i>RSVP 630-778-PLAY</i>	<b>9</b> <b>Literacy Program</b> 3-6 pm <i>By appointment</i> 	<b>10</b> <b>Literacy Program</b> 3-6 pm <i>By appointment</i> 	<b>11</b> <b>Open Play</b> 10 am-12 pm	<b>12</b> <b>Come Sign with Us</b> 6-7 pm	<b>13</b> <i>Private Play Group</i> 12-2 pm <b>Signing Time</b> 10:00-11:00 am	<b>14</b> <b>Daddy &amp; Me</b> 3-4:30 pm <b>Pre-Walkers</b> 9-10 am <b>Walkers</b> 10-11 am <i>RSVP to 630-423-4035</i>
<b>15</b>	<b>16</b> <b>Literacy Program</b> 3-6 pm <i>By appointment</i> 	<b>17</b> <b>Literacy Program</b> 3-6 pm <i>By appointment</i> 	<b>18</b>	<b>19</b>	<b>20</b> <i>Private Play Group</i> 12-2 pm <b>Signing Time</b> 10:00-11:00 am	<b>21</b> <b>Literacy Program</b> 10-11:30 am
<b>22</b>	<b>23</b> <b>Literacy Program</b> 3-6 pm <i>By appointment</i> 	<b>24</b> <b>Literacy Program</b> 3-6 pm <i>By appointment</i> 	<b>25</b>	<b>26</b> <b>Come Sign with Us</b> 6-7 pm	<b>27</b> <i>Private Play Group</i> 12-2 pm	<b>28</b> <b>Pre-Crawlers</b> 9-10 am <b>Crawlers</b> 10-11 am <i>RSVP to 630-423-4035</i>
<b>29</b> <b>Hispanic Group</b> 11 am-1 pm 	<b>30</b> <b>Literacy Program</b> 3-6 pm <i>By appointment</i> 	<b>31</b> <b>Literacy Program</b> 3-6 pm <i>By appointment</i> <b>Kindermusik class</b> 10-11 am <i>RSVP to 630-423-4035</i> 				<b>All Events are Free unless noted</b> <b>*RSVP to 630-778-PLAY</b> <b>Bring a friend who doesn't have Down syndrome</b>

**2 & under playgroup:** Families with children 2 and under get together and play while the parents network with each other. Siblings always welcome.

**3-4 year old playgroup:** Families with children ages 3-4 get together and play while the parents network with each other. Siblings always welcome.

**Pre-crawlers/Crawlers:** This group focuses on crawling skills as well as fine motor skills, social interaction with peers in a semi-structured environment. Pre-crawlers is for children who are just starting to crawl and the Crawlers is for children who are crawling on all fours. Children must be accompanied by a parent/adult.

**Pre-walkers/Walkers:** This group focuses on post walking skills with peers to prepare children for school activities (balance beam, kicking, throwing, jumping, etc.) The pre-walkers is for children who are just starting to walk

independently and the Walkers group is for children who are walking independently. Children must be accompanied by a parent/adult.

**Teen Tastic:** This group meets from 7-9 pm. We order pizza for dinner and have lots of fun watching movies and playing games with each other. 6th-12th grades.

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

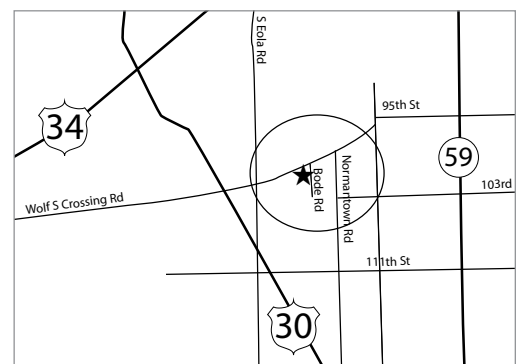
**Come Sign with Us:** Come with or without your children to learn basic sign language skills. New words introduced each session.

**Signing Time Group:** Learn sign language by signing along to the songs from the TV series. All ages are welcome.

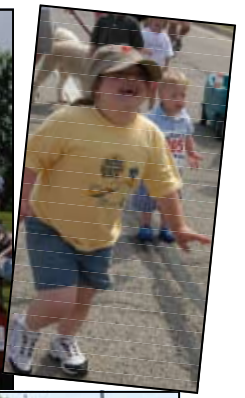
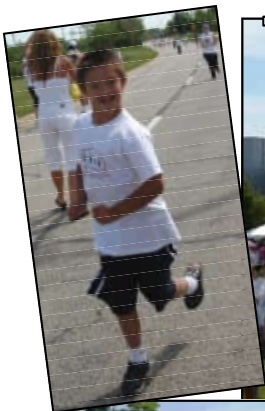
**Daddy and Me:** Dads get out with the kids and get together with other dads. All ages.

**Birthday Party:** All ages

10052 S. Bode Rd, Unit D  
Plainfield, IL 60585  
630-778-PLAY (7529) • fax (630) 778-7519  
www.gigisplayhousetoo.com



Thousands of people celebrate Down syndrome at GiGi's Playhouse 4th Annual Run/Walk!

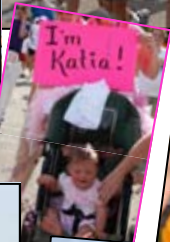


Runners

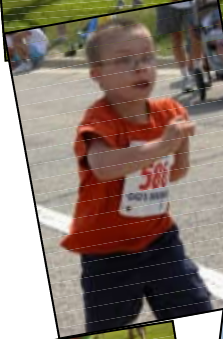
Walkers



Teams



Volunteers



Cheerleaders



Cousins



Friends



The new "Dash for Down Syndrome" was a big hit!!



## Thank You to our 5K sponsors



Caribou  
Coffee

### Thank You to our Exclusive 5K Water Station Sponsors!!!



June is volunteer month at Van Kampen and they

brought 22 volunteers to help at the event!



This is their 4th year sponsoring this event!

### Thank You Women's Club of Inverness!!

The Womens Club of Inverness has recognized GiGi's Playhouse as making the community a better place. With their donation of \$2000, they will be sponsoring 2 months of our newsletter as well as contributing to our expanding literacy program.

### Calling interested Chicago Board Members!

Chicago Playhouse is looking for Board of Director members. Please contact Heidi Aldama at Chicago@gigisplayhouse.com for more info on the Chicago Playhouse.

### We would also like to Thank the following for donating goods and services:

- Dick Pond Sports
- Entenmann's
- Pepsi
- Kim & Scotts Gourmet Pretzels
- Starbucks Coffee
- Caribou Coffee
- Dominick's Finer Foods
- Jewel
- Costco
- M & M Sports
- Dr. Michael Sullivan D.D.S.
- Arlington Pediatrics Therapy Services
- Pati Schaefer Photography
- Rick Federighi
- Party Hoppers
- Hoffman Estates Jaycees
- U.S. Army
- Chicago Storm Soccer Team
- Chicago Shamrox LaCrosse Team
- Chicago Slaughter Indoor Football Team
- GE Volunteers

ALL of our amazing volunteers!!!

### Thank You Assurance Agency!

A group of volunteers from Assurance donated a full day of work to the Playhouse for our Literacy Program! They made books for all the kids that are currently receiving tutoring as well as materials for those on the waiting list to take home. Through their stapling, cutting, laminating and binding, our literacy families are able to take home new materials with them every time they come for tutoring!



### Literacy Room

Like Barney? Dora? Sesame Street? We have it all! We make individualized books based on what your child is interested in! They have fun while learning new words and sounds! We have a newly painted Literacy Room decorated in fun colors and pictures of children reading! The computer is easily accessible and there are lots of books and games to choose from! To get on the waiting list, call the playhouse for an application.



1069 W Golf Rd  
Hoffman Estates, IL 60169

NONPROFIT ORGANIZATION  
U.S. POSTAGE  
**PAID**  
SCHAUMBURG, IL  
PERMIT NO. 93



### Calling all 6-10 year olds

Camp GiGi with George is filling up quickly! Join us for a week of activities, games and a whole bunch of fun! Camp GiGi is August 6-10th from 10-11:30am for kids ages 6-10. Call 847-885-7529 to register.

### Join Clifford at the Playhouse for an Ice Cream Social!

Time: 4pm  
Date: Sunday, July 29th  
Location: Hoffman Estates Playhouse Parking Lot

Bring your friends and Family!  
Come early to find a good book at our 2nd Annual Scholastic Book Fair at the Playhouse to benefit our free "Learn to Read" program. Call the playhouse for more information at 847-885-7529.



Book Fair will run:  
Thurs., July 26 – 11am-4pm  
Fri., July 27 – 10am-2pm  
Sat., July 28 – 10am-4pm  
Sun., July 29 – 1pm-7pm

**We have another group of crawlers! Pub crawlers that is!** On August 18 we will be having our 1st Annual Playhouse Pub Crawl in the Lincoln Park area of Chicago to help raise funds for the future Chicago Playhouse. There will be numerous raffle prizes at each bar along with fun, laughter and drinks. WE ARE RAISING OUR GLASS TO RAISE AWARENESS! Mark you calendars. More details coming soon.

