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www.gigisplayhouse.org

GiGi's News

September 2009

Guess Who is Turning 6?

GiGi's Playhouse!

Join us as we celebrate 6 years of spreading positive awareness about Down syndrome! So much has happened in these 6 years and we couldn't have done it without you! What started as a local Playhouse with a mission of spreading awareness to the community has now become a nationwide organization, reaching people all over the world. In just 5 years, we have opened 5 playhouses, Nancy Gianni was voted as Chicagoan of the Year, our Sibling Video was awarded an Emmy! While all of those things are incredible feats, we are most proud of the services that we provide to our families.

We have spread hope to thousands of new parents who receive the diagnosis of Down syndrome, created a literacy program that help children and adults with Down syndrome reach their potential, and helped replace outdated perceptions with positive and accurate information. Most amazing is the fact that these accomplishments were all done by volunteers! That's why we are having our annual anniversary party — to celebrate you and all you have done for GiGi's Playhouse and all people touched by Down syndrome. You are helping make the world a better place for all of our kids!

You're Invited!

Join us at GiGiFest!

October 4th, Noon-3pm

2010 Calendar Revealed!

This years awareness calendar, "Share the Joy of Me", is sure to inspire you in many ways! Thanks to Bagby and Co. and Metamorphosis Photography, these kids are featured like you've never seen them before! Be sure to order your calendar today by going online or sending in this order form. **Look inside (page 2) for your order form!**

See the 2010 Calendar Models walk the Red Carpet at GiGiFest!



i have a voice

Good news! The *i have a voice* exhibit will be at the DesPlaines Library for the entire month of November. Look for more details in the next issue

of the newsletter.

We are hard at work planning for where we would like to see the gallery go next. On our wish list is the Harold

Washington Library, O'Hare, State of IL building, the Cultural Center, Lutheran General, Edwards Hospital and Central DuPage just to name a few. We are looking for locations that will host the exhibit for more than a month and that has very high visibility. Please contact Lisa Schuh at lschuh@bagbyco.com

We are also putting together a volunteer based group of Dads, Brothers, Uncles and Grandfathers to be trained and available to put up the exhibit for GiGi functions. We are looking for at least 10 volunteers to be trained.

Please contact Frances Senesac at senesacfm@msn.com if you are interested.



Excelling in Phonics!



Ashley's mom said, "Ashley is doing well with the Phonics program — she tested ahead in her kindergarten skills for reading and letter sound recognition! The school was impressed!"



Angelique

Angelique is new to the literacy program, and is quickly learning to read! She loves using the sets of pictures and

Literacy Corner

Therapists and Educator Open House! September 29th, 7pm at Hoffman Playhouse

Together as a team — parents, educators and therapists — we are the best advocates to surround a child and we can learn from each other! Come to GiGi's Playhouse to learn about some of the ways a child with Down syndrome learns to read and hear

about the educational and therapeutic programs we have to offer. We can support your efforts in your work with children with Down syndrome. Request a flyer from the HE Playhouse to invite your teachers and therapists. RSVP to info@gigisplayhouse.org

word cards available at GiGi's. She practices using the materials at home and enjoys showing off her increasing skill in matching print to pictures.

Angelique has so much fun in Literacy that she and her tutor Rose look together for more books to read when Literacy is finished!

Programs & Activities

To view a full description of our programs, go to our website: www.gigisplayhouse.org

2 & Under Playgroup ♦ Children play while their parents network with each other.

Crawlers ♦ Focuses on crawling, fine motor skills and social interaction with peers.

Walkers ♦ Focuses on post walking skills with peers to prepare children for school activities.

Hop, Skip & Jumpers ♦ Promote friendships, social skills, and interactive play through fun creative activities! (3-5 year olds)

Playhouse Pals ♦ Structured playgroup focus-

es on developing friendships and confidence all while having a great time! (6-8 year olds)

Kids Club ♦ Fast paced group incorporates social, communication and confidence-building skills and activities! (9-12 year olds)

Teen-Tastic ♦ Pizza party of watching movies and playing games. (13-17 year olds)

Friday Friends ♦ Karaoke, dances, softball games — the fun never ends! (Adults 18 + over)

Nuestros Angeles ♦ Spanish speaking families gather for food, fun, friendship and education!

Polish Group ♦ Polish speaking families gather for food, fun, friendship and education!

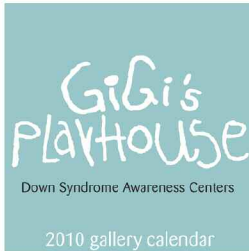
Open Play ♦ Everyone welcome to this weekly gathering of networking and friendship building.

Literacy ♦ Free program teaches kids how to read. By appointment only — Call ahead!

Daddy & Me ♦ Dads, bring your kids and meet other fathers in your area!

Reserve it! ♦ Playhouses can be reserved for any function or other special needs group.

2010 Down Syndrome Awareness Calendar Order Form



Share the Joy

Our 2010 Down syndrome awareness calendar has been created specifically to invite others to share the joy of all the individuals featured in this awareness piece! The pictures portray the kids of GiGi's like you've never seen them before! This is an excellent tool to share the potential and depth of individuals with Down syndrome — it makes a great holiday gift for teachers, therapists, family and friends! All proceeds go into spreading Down syndrome awareness!

name _____ order date _____
 address _____
 city _____ state _____ zip _____
 phone _____
 email address _____

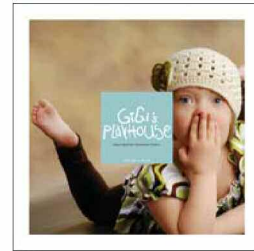
number of calendars _____ X \$12 each = _____
 shipping (1-4 qty, \$5) (5-8 qty, \$8) (8+ qty, \$12) _____
 order total \$ _____

send check made out to GiGi's Playhouse or money order to:
 GiGi's Playhouse, 1069 west golf road, hoffman estates, IL 60169

name on credit card _____
 credit card type (visa, mastercard, etc.) _____ card number _____ expiration date _____
 signature _____

Calendars will be mailed in September. To order this calendar or other products online check our website at www.gigisplayhouse.org

name of calendar kid to credit for this purchase _____



GiGi's phone: 847-885-PLAY

SIoux CITY, IOWA

SUN	MON	TUE	WED	THUR	FRI	SAT
		Literacy 5-6:30pm Open Play 6-7:30pm Walk Pre-Registration 6-7:30pm Pick-Up 1	Literacy Program 5-7pm 2			Literacy Program 9-10:30am 5
6	7 <i>Labor Day</i>	Literacy 5-6:30pm Open Play 6-7:30pm Walk Pre-Registration 6-7:30pm Pick-Up 8	Literacy Program 5-7pm 9	10	Teen-Tastic 6-8pm Program: Ice Cream Social Patriot Day 11	Literacy 9-10:30am Kid's Club 10:30-11:30am 12
13 <i>Grandparents Day</i>	Open Play 6-7pm 14	Literacy Program 5-6:30pm 15	Literacy Program 5-7pm 16	17	Walk Set-Up 6pm North Middle School 18	Walk for Awareness 9am-Noon North Middle School 19
20	21	Open Play 9-10am Literacy Program 5-6:30pm 22	Literacy Program 5-7pm 23	24	25	Literacy Program 9-10:30am Hop, Skip & Jumpers 10:30-11:30am 26
27	Motivational Monday 6pm Program: Special Quest 28	Literacy Program 5-6:30pm 29	Literacy Program 5-7pm 30	September		

Who's Teaching Who

"Tutoring at GiGi's Playhouse has given me an opportunity to become involved and to give back. Becoming a Literacy Tutor for children has been way more than I could have asked for. These kids have huge hearts and always find a way to



make me smile and laugh. And seeing what new faces and animations they come up with is one of my favorite parts of being there. It is also a very rewarding experience when one of the children being tutored begins to make great progress and knowing I have helped them in this journey. I am always in a great mood when I leave and have a smile plastered on my face. I never regret volunteering, and I am excited to continue to see these kids progress and to continue to be a part of this great organization."

— Britney Prevail



Way to go Tasha!

Congrats on all your Special Olympics medals.

Steppin' Up for Down Syndrome

The 2009 Ambassador Family is Todd & Rhea Greve. The family is very active in providing awareness about Down syndrome across Siouxland. Michaela is in 9th grade and is active in Teen-Tastic at GiGi's Playhouse and loves to meet new friends her age! Michaela's mother has reflected on the birth of her daughter and knows she was a true gift! She feels thankful Michaela was sent to their family and can't even begin to imagine life without her. The

Greves will carry the 2009 Buddies For Life and GiGi's Playhouse Flags at our 3rd Annual Walk for Awareness in Sioux City, IA at North Middle School on **Sat., Sept. 19 from 9am-Noon.** For more walk information email siouxcity@gigisplayhouse.org or call **712.226.PLAY.**



Awareness Poster Contest

Individual Awareness Posters are available now. The cost is \$7 per poster to be displayed during the Steppin' Up

for Down Syndrome Walk. Winner will receive a gift certificate. For more information, email: siouxcity@gigisplayhouse.org

Ice Cream

Join us on **September 11th from 6-8pm** with a Celebration for America's Favorite Dessert with an Old Fashioned Ice Cream Social. Bring your family, friends & your favorite topping to share!



HOFFMAN ESTATES

SUN	MON	TUE	WED	THUR	FRI	SAT
		1 Special Intentions Meeting 7-9pm	2 Open Play 12:30-2pm Meeting 2-3pm	3	4	5
6 Labor Day	7	8	9	10 Open Play 12:30-2pm Wendy's Night 4-8pm Golf & Roselle Road all are invited!	11	12 Crawlers 9-9:45am 2 & Under 10-11:30am Hop, Skip & Jumpers Noon-1:30pm Playhouse Pals 2-3:30pm Teen-Tastic 5-6:30pm
13 Nuestros Angeles Hispanic Playgroup 11am-1pm	14	15	16	17 Open Play 12:30-2pm	18	19
20 Meeting 7pm	21	22 Literacy 4:30-6pm	23 Group Meeting 9am-4pm Open Play 12:30-2pm Wendy's Night 4-8pm Golf & Roselle Road all are invited!	24	25 Friday Friends 7pm	26 Kid's Club 10-11:30am
27 Polish Group 11am-1pm RSVP to Krystyna at 847.962.4820	28 Meeting 7pm	29 Educator Open House 7pm	30 Literacy Bookmaking 6:30-8:30pm	<h1>September</h1>		

Girl Scouts for GiGi's

Megan, a local Girl Scout, chose to support the Playhouse as part of her Gold Award project. "I chose GiGi's because I realized that most people probably don't know about Down syndrome." She organized Miles for Smiles, a 1.5 mile run/walk for kids, and collected donations of new games and toys for the Playhouse as part of the "entry fee" for the race. She had signs posted with information about GiGi's and Down syndrome at the race. Megan met many of the Playhouse kids during Open Play and plans to volunteer when she is home from college on break.

Megan — thanks for supporting our kids!



Help the Playhouse!

GiGi's Playhouse relies on donations so that we can provide free programs and materials to our families. One fun way to help — attend a Wendy's night! The Wendy's at the corner of Golf & Roselle Roads donates proceeds to the Hoffman Playhouse twice a month between **4-8pm on Thursday**.

Flexing Their Muscle

Cathy, a Physical Therapist, and Sue, a gymnastics teacher, lead the Crawlers group. They look at each component of what a child gets out of crawling physically. If a child is not crawling yet, they would work on the muscles that are not being used to help get the child crawling. They can help with muscle strengthening and development for kids who scoot rather than crawl, a child who is in the early stages

of crawling, or a child who is just taking first steps. Parents work with their child during the program and are given ideas to try at home.

Join the Crawlers group on the **2nd Sat.** of each month from **9-9:45am**.



Teen-Tastic

On **September 12**, Teen-Tastic will be bringing movement to a whole new level! Teens & families are asked to bring their favorite music & dance move to share with the group! On **October 10**, we will be shaking fall loose with an autumn themed dance & teen social! Join us for the fun filled evening, for karaoke, dancing. The dance will go from **5-6:30pm**.

Hop, Skip & Jumpers and Playhouse Pals


In **September**, Hop Skip & Jumpers and Playhouse Pals will be focusing on Fun in Motion! In **October**, will be walking the plank into GiGi's Playhouse for a true **Pirate** adventure! We will be navigating our way with our very own pirate ship through the ocean looking for all different kinds of treasures!

Friday Friends

Our Friday Friends were joined by a dance instructor, and learned some classic moves and hip hop. A dance off wrapped up the night! Get ready for movie night in **September**.



FOX VALLEY

SUN	MON	TUE	WED	THUR	FRI	SAT
		Literacy 1-3:30pm 1	Literacy 9:30-10:30am Literacy 4-5pm 2	Literacy 3-4pm 3	Teen-Tastic 7-9pm RSVP 630.778.PLAY 4	Literacy 9-11am 5 2 & Under 9:30-11am 3-4 yr old Playgroup 11am-Noon
6	Literacy 1-3pm 7 <i>Labor Day</i>	Literacy 1-3:30pm 8 Special Olympics Young Athletes 5:45-6:30pm 6:30-7:15pm	Literacy 9:30-10:30am 9 Literacy 4-5pm	Literacy 3-4pm 10 Wendy's Fundraiser 5-8pm Francesca's Fundraiser 5-9pm	11	Literacy 9-11am 12 Walkers Group 9:30-10:30am RSVP 630.423.4035 Daddy & Me 3-4:30pm
13	Tot Class 9:30-11am RSVP 630.778.PLAY Open Play 11am-1pm RSVP 630.778.PLAY Literacy 1-3pm	Literacy 1-3:30pm 15 	Literacy 9:30-10:30am 16 Literacy 4-5pm Karate Kickers Ages 8-12: 5:15-5:45pm 13 and up: 6-6:30pm	Literacy 3-4pm 17	18	Literacy 9-11am 19 Hop, Skip & Jumpers 10:30am-Noon RSVP 630.335.4824 Playhouse Pals 2-4pm Tour De GiGi
20	Tot Class 9:30-11am RSVP 630.778.PLAY Open Play 11am-1pm RSVP 630.778.PLAY Literacy 1-3pm	Literacy 1-3:30pm 22 	Literacy 9:30-10:30am 23 Literacy 4-5pm 	Literacy 3-4pm 24	GiGi's Family Night 6-8pm RSVP 630.844.1720 25	Literacy 9-11am 26 Crawlers Group 9:30-10:30am RSVP 630.423.4035
Nuestros Angeles 11am-1pm Hispanic Playgroup Bag Toss Tournament 27	Tot Class 9:30-11am RSVP 630.778.PLAY Open Play 11am-1pm RSVP 630.778.PLAY Literacy 1-3pm 28	Literacy 1-3:30pm 29 	Literacy 9:30-10:30am Literacy 4-5pm 30	<h1>September</h1>		

What a Day!

Thanks to the many golfers, sponsors, volunteers and supporters, the GiGi's 4th Annual Golf Outing at the beautiful Tamarack Golf Club in Naperville was a success!! It was wonderful to welcome both new and old friends who came together to support the Playhouse and spread positive awareness about Down syndrome.

Event Sponsors:

Ryder Charitable Foundation, Aileen S. Andrews Foundation, Plaza Square, LLC, Butera Center Management, Heineken, City Beverage and Gatorade. Biggers Chevrolet provided our hole-in-one contest.

Hole Sponsors:

Omnicon Restoration, Inc., A.C. Electric, The Lepore Family, The Schafer Family, Shamus Mudron with Northern Insurance, Domo 77, Home Run Inn Pizza, Dan Watzke of State Farm Insurance, John Maples of Pepsico, Pat Buckstaff with City Beverage, Homelink Corporation, BP & the Vlasaty Family, American Inrepro of Illinois, Inc., Chris Schultz with Merlin 200,000 Mile Shops and Jenny Lane Coffeehouse.



2nd Annual Double Bag Toss Tournament

The event will be held on **Sun., Sept. 27th** at the Fox Valley Kickers, 1015 Harvey Rd., Oswego, IL. Check in will begin at **1pm**, and games to begin at **1:30pm**. Register your team by **Mon., Sept. 21st**.



Each person must collect \$30 in donations to participate. (\$60 per team)

Come Join the Fun!

- Cash prizes top three teams!
- A light lunch will be available for \$5.
- Participate in a 50/50 raffle.

For more information: registration form, pledge sheet and a sponsorship letter to aid in collecting donations, visit our website:

www.gigisplayhouse.org

or contact Genia Latka at

glatka@gigisplayhouse.org

Francesca Passaggio Eat & Earn

On **Thursday, September 10th**, between **5-9pm**, Francesca Passaggio's restaurant of Naperville will donate 15% of their guest checks to GiGi's Fox Valley. The restaurant is located at 3124 S. Rte. 59 in Naperville.

McHENRY

SUN	MON	TUE	WED	THUR	FRI	SAT
		Open Play 10am-Noon 1		GiGi's Cheer 4pm 3 <i>at Layton Athletics</i>	Signing 'Til Dawn Baby Sign 10am 4	5
Nuestros Angeles Hispanic Playgroup 10am-Noon 6 	Signing 'Til Dawn 10am 7	Open Play 10am-Noon 8 Wendy's Nite 5-8pm 	9	Options & Advocacy 10am 10 GiGi's Cheer 4pm <i>at Layton Athletics</i>	Signing 'Til Dawn Baby Sign 10am 11 Teen-Tastics 7pm 	12
13	Signing 'Til Dawn 10am 14	Open Play 10am-Noon 15 Volunteer Orientation 7-8pm 	16	GiGi's Cheer 4pm 17 <i>at Layton Athletics</i>	Signing 'Til Dawn Baby Sign 10am 18 FFF & Kid's Club 6:30pm	Skill Builders 10am 19
20	Signing 'Til Dawn 10am 21	Open Play 10am-Noon 22	23	GiGi's Cheer 4pm 24 <i>at Layton Athletics</i>	Signing 'Til Dawn Baby Sign 10am 25 Friday Friends 7-9pm 815.385.7529	26
Daddy & Me 9-11am 27 	Signing 'Til Dawn 10am 28	Open Play 10am-Noon 29	Book Making Nite 6:30pm 30 	September		



Shiver Me Timbers!

The S.S. GiGi set sail for the first time in the 61st annual Fiesta Days Parade! It was a beautiful warm summer afternoon that was filled with smiles and laughter. The crowds were excited to see our crew wave their swords and flags as they shouted "Aaarrgh!" The Family Ideas Network for Down syndrome marched in the parade along with the Playhouse families helping spread Down syndrome awareness and candy to the community.

New Signing 'Til Dawn — for Babies

New for babies! This baby sign class will be **every Friday** starting at **10am**.

Malachi

Proud parents Josh & Erin Horton are in the processes of adopting a beautiful boy, Malachi. Here are a few quotes from their 'Horton's Happenings Blog' that they use to keep family and friends updated. "We never knew that amazing journey God would take us on. He blessed us with our son Malachi. Today we went to our first ever GiGi's Playhouse open play! Malachi and I met some amazing new people and we can't wait for our friendships to grow. It's is so great to meet people who have walked in my shoes who can give advice, tips and even encouragement."



To read more on our newest families wonderful journey, please visit their blogspot at hortonshomepage.blogspot.com

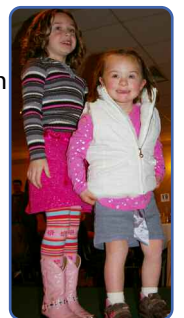
Birthdays!

McHenry is "growing" with all summer birthday celebrations. 3 Open Plays in a row and our Friday Friends all had birthdays to celebrate, Abraham brought some of his family in from Mexico to share his 1st birthday celebration and to meet his new friends at the GiGi's, Ava turned 1 the following week and, Jessica & Brenna both celebrated birthdays at Friday Friends. **HAPPY BIRTHDAY TO ALL!!**



Save the Date! Nov. 1st 2nd Annual Fashion Show & Brunch

If you are interested in having your child/adult participate in our Fashion Show, email: mchenry@gigisplayhouse.org—to attend, register at: www.gigisplayhouse.org



CHICAGO

SUN	MON	TUE	WED	THUR	FRI	SAT
		Literacy 4-6:15pm 1		Open Play 11:30am-1pm 3	Literacy 9-11am 4	Open Play 11:15am-12:30pm 5
Nuestros Angeles Hispanic Playgroup 11:15am-1:15pm 6	Literacy 9-11am 7	Literacy 4-6:15pm 8			Literacy 9-11am 11	Playhouse Pals 11:15am-12:45pm 12
13	Literacy 9-11am 14	Literacy 4-6:15pm 15		Open Play 11:30am-1pm 17	Literacy 9-11am 18	Open Play 11:15am-12:30pm Kids Club 4-5:30pm 19
20	Literacy 9-11am Motivational Monday 7pm 21	Literacy 4-6:15pm 22		24	Literacy 9-11am Pizza Party 7pm 25	Crawlers 10-10:45am 2 & Under 11am-12:15pm Hop Skip & Jumpers 12:30-2pm 26
27	Literacy 9-11am 28	Literacy 4-6:15pm 29		30	September	



Parade!!

On Saturday, July 25th, several Chicago Playhouse families attended the 6th Annual Disability

Pride Parade.

The parade was held in downtown Chicago on a beautiful summer morning. We proudly marched in our



GiGi's t-shirts from the Harold Washington Library to the Daley Center. The parade was a success, with individuals from over 70 organizations participating. The mission of the Disability Pride Parade is to change the way that people think about "disability" and to generate visibility of the Disability community.



Motivational Mondays update...

We are excited to present an informative lecture featuring Shirley Griffin, Social Needs Planner, and Matthew Quick, Estate Planning Attorney, for our next Motivational Monday on **September 21st**. Both Shirley and Matthew come highly recommended by the ARC of Illinois and Illinois Life Span. They will discuss Special Needs Trusts, Guardianships, Financial

Planning, State and Federal Laws and Legislation, and what all families can actively do to plan for their child's future. This lecture promises to fit the needs of all GiGi's families. They will have information for families with financial resources and for those without such resources. Please RSVP to Peggy Delaney by emailing pdelaney@klcorp.com if you plan to attend.



2nd Annual Taste of GiGi's Playhouse

Sat., October 24th

Join us for Live Band Karaoke!
Logan Square Auditorium
Register online at:

www.gigisplayhouse.org

Pizza Parties at the Chicago Playhouse

Come join us for pizza and fun at our monthly pizza party. On the last Friday of each month, we will watch a movie and enjoy some Chicago style pizza. ALL are welcome to attend these events – the more the merrier! Call your family and friends and tell them to join you at GiGi's for pizza on **Sept. 25th at 7pm**. We look forward to seeing you there!!!



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Hoffman Estates, IL 60169

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■ **Sept. 19th @ Sioux City Playhouse**
Walk For Awareness

■ **Sept. 19th @ Fox Valley Playhouse**
Charity Bike Ride

■ **Sept. 27th @ Fox Valley Playhouse**
Bag Toss Tournament

■ **Sept. 28th @ Sioux City Playhouse**
Motivational Monday — at 6pm

■ **Sept. 29th @ Hoffman Playhouse**
Therapist & Educator Open House

■ **Oct. 4th @ Hoffman Playhouse**
GiGiFest — Everyone Invited!!

■ **Oct. 24th @ Chicago Playhouse**
2nd Annual Taste of GiGi's

■ **Nov. 1st @ McHenry Playhouse**
2nd Annual Fashion Show & Brunch

To learn more about all of these events and to register, go to:
www.gigisplayhouse.org

SAVE THESE DATES



Christine & Carrie at the GiGi's booth!

What a Conference!

GiGi's Playhouse was represented at the National Down Syndrome Convention in Sacramento, California. Our booth was full of people all weekend — people who wanted to know how to open a GiGi's, how to spread awareness in their area, and how to order the 2010 calendar!

Be sure to order yours today (order form is on the front cover of this newsletter).

DDC Buddy Walk September 20th

Lambs Farm
Libertyville, IL



Join Us Oct. 4th for GiGiFest Our 6th Anniversary Celebration! Noon-3pm

- Bounce Houses
- Petting Zoo
- Ronald McDonald
- Pony Rides
- Our 2010 Calendar Models!

Everyone's Invited!

This is a party you don't want to miss! Invite your friends for this fun family-friendly event.

Be a Hero...

Not every hero can run at the speed of light or jump over tall buildings in a single bound. Some heroes make a difference by simply giving a smile at just the right moment or extending a helping hand to a friend when needed the most.

7th Annual Chicagoland Buddy Walk
Oct 11, 2009 • 1-5 PM • Cantigny • Wheaton, IL
www.chicagolandbuddywalk.org
(815) 272-1068

Registration: Individual \$15
Family of 4 \$40
Includes free T-shirt

