



Down Syndrome Achievement Centers
educate. inspire. believe.

Overview: GiGi's Playhouse



GiGi's Playhouse is an established series of Achievement Centers serving children and adults with Down syndrome. Each Playhouse provides educational and therapeutic programs at no charge to families; and in a format that individuals with Down syndrome learn best. All programs aim to maximize self-confidence and empower individuals to achieve their greatest potential. Founded by GiGi's Mom in 2003 in Hoffman Estates, IL, the organization has grown into a network of 29 Playhouses including the first international Playhouse in Queretaro, Mexico. Last year, over 25,000 children and adults benefited from Playhouse programs. Our points of difference include:

- **Distinct brick & mortar locations**-fostering consistent program attendance and parent networking.
- **30+ educational, therapeutic and career development programs**-advancing skills in literacy, math, muscle tone, speech, life skills, career skills, and more.
- **100% free programming for all individuals**-cost will never be a barrier to participation or achievement!

Mission:

To increase positive awareness of Down syndrome through national campaigns, educational and therapeutic programs, and by empowering individuals with Down syndrome, their families and the community.

History:

GiGi's Playhouse began in 2003 after founder and visionary Nancy Gianni gave birth to her second daughter, GiGi. When Nancy received the diagnosis that GiGi had Down syndrome, her fears, coupled with the negative reactions of the medical staff, made Nancy believe that her life, as she knew it, was over. She soon realized that GiGi could do the very same things that her other children do! What began as a mother's vision to change perception and maximize her daughter's success has evolved into a global movement of acceptance and achievement.

A single Playhouse in suburban Chicago has evolved into a series of inspirational Achievement Centers across the US and Mexico where thousands of individuals and families participate in free educational and therapeutic programs. Each Playhouse benefits from ongoing support and resources via a 501(c)3 nonprofit "national headquarters". Support areas include program training and development, IT, fundraising best practices, marketing & branding, web site management, financial oversight, and board development. GiGi's Playhouse continues to spread positive and accurate information about Down syndrome as well. By helping individuals with Down syndrome achieve their greatest potential, the organization continues to change outdated perceptions and enrich many more lives.

GiGi's Playhouse will continue to believe in our participants and their families, celebrate their achievements, and work tirelessly to change society's outdated perceptions about individuals with Down syndrome.