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The Best Finish Line in all of Chicagoland: GiGi's Playhouse Runs, Walks, Dashes and Parties for Individuals with Down syndrome



Hoffman Estates, IL, June 13, 2017 – Thousands of children, families, volunteers, sponsors and friends crossed the finish line together in support of individuals with Down syndrome at GiGi's Playhouse Down Syndrome Achievement Centers 14th Annual Chicagoland 5K fun run, 1-mile walk and Dash for Down syndrome. For the second year in a row, MB Financial Park in Rosemont, IL graciously hosted the GiGi's Playhouse community for a day of racing, and to celebrate global acceptance and kindness for people of all abilities.

Over 2,000 participants raised more than \$200,000 to help fund FREE, purposeful programs. These vital programs help kids and adults with Down syndrome improve their speech, literacy, math, fitness, career skills, and self-confidence.

Guests enjoyed bounce houses, face painting, recreational and therapeutic games, dancing from music by DJ Dave; also, snacks and beverages courtesy of event sponsors. Many guests also enjoyed brunch discounts at Hofbrauhaus, Park Tavern, Sugar Factory, Bub City, Kings Bowl and Adobe Gila's. A special thank you once again to Hofbrauhaus for donating all course-side tables on their expansive patio to GiGi's Playhouse teams and families to use as basecamps for the day.

GiGi Gianni, the organization's namesake and global ambassador, led guests in the singing of the National Anthem and helped start both the 5K fun run and walk. GiGi and her friends also greeted and congratulated runners as they crossed the finish line. Hugs & Mugs mentor and Special Olympics champion Christine Maxwell led guests in warm-ups for the 5K and walk with the partnership of Infinity Fitness, and shared inspirational words for all at the starting line. Adult interns Chris Tucker and Tim helped supervise the Hugs & Mugs mobile pop-up store. Perhaps most inspirationally, dozens of children with Down syndrome dashed to victory during the fan-favorite Dash for Down syndrome!

GiGi's Mom and Chief Belief Officer welcomed a 6-week old baby with Down syndrome and her courageous parents to their very first GiGi's Playhouse event. Nancy shared, "Every year at the 5K run, walk and Dash, we see families raise the bar for what their kids can achieve. We see recent graduates of GiGi University walking the 1-mile course. We see children overcoming low-muscle tone in the Dash for Down syndrome. We see acceptance from our hosts and sponsors. We greet and welcome new families. And, we see people who just come to discover all that GiGi's Playhouse offers. People transform around our kids and we literally see acceptance grow. There is always something for everyone at this family and sponsor friendly event, and with our continued partnership with MB Financial Park we know this events will help advance our mission and programs!"



For a full gallery of event photos [please click here](#). GiGi's Playhouse thanks MB Financial Park, Mid-America Tile, G.M. Sloan Tile, Comprehensive Marketing, Industrial Source, Wickstrom Auto Group, Aspire Health Beverage, eDOC printing, Wi-Tronix, Aspire Healthy Beverage, American Eagle Packaging, GoGo Squeez, Hanger Clinic, PepsiCo, Infinity Fitness, Blistex, and the Windy City Bulls for your acceptance and generosity! Individual and team donations along with all sponsorships will fund educational, therapeutic and career training programs at GiGi's Playhouse. *All programs are 100% free to Playhouse families.*

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About GiGi's Playhouse:

GiGi's Playhouse is the ONLY network of Down syndrome Achievement Centers. Every day, we provide FREE, life-changing therapeutic, educational and career training programs. GiGi's Playhouse is an inspirational and dedicated place for families to celebrate their child and benefit from free programs that unleash joy, confidence and continuous improvement. Playhouses empower children and adults to achieve their "Best of All" and to pursue their dreams. Founded by GiGi's Mom, Nancy Gianni, in Hoffman Estates, IL, the organization now includes 32 community Playhouses including the first global Playhouse location in Mexico. Last year, over 30,000 individuals with Down syndrome benefited from programs and positive support.

By offering free programs and through our Generation G Campaign for global acceptance, we EMPOWER families by maximizing opportunities for daily achievement and lasting acceptance. To ensure lasting acceptance, we must show the world what individuals with Down syndrome are truly capable of achieving as students, co-workers, volunteers, friends, and valued members of their communities. Our program outcomes help advance this vital social impact goal. Engagement campaigns and impact partnerships help change society's outdated perceptions by showcasing individuals with Down syndrome's skills, contributions and character. By breaking down barriers and changing the way the world accepts individuals with Down syndrome, we foster a daily mindset of acceptance and generosity for everyone.

For more information about free programs, volunteerism, impact partnerships, events, and the many ways to support our families: visit www.gigisplayhouse.org.

**Discover Generation G: A conscious decision to be better every day.
Be Accepting. Be Generous. Be Kind.**

Show your support by posting a picture of "G" and a heart on your hand to social media.
Invite others to do the same! Join Generation G online: <http://gigisplayhouse.org/generationg>.

