



Down Syndrome Achievement Centers
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Media Contact:

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Stephanie Krol, cell 773-580-9726

Stephanie@SKPRmedia.com

GiGi's Playhouse Down Syndrome Achievement Centers Announces Groundbreaking Partnership with Microsoft

Hoffman Estates, IL November 2, 2018— [GiGi's Playhouse Down Syndrome Achievement Centers](#) publicly announced today an ongoing partnership with technology leader [Microsoft](#) to conduct research, using artificial intelligence and machine learning to impact the daily lives of those with Hypotonia, a major issue for individuals with Down Syndrome. This innovative partnership formed in March of this year, will also include technology to assist the daily operations and communications for the international GiGi's Playhouse network that provides free, life changing therapeutic, educational and career training programs for 30,000+ individuals of all ages every day.

“There is nothing I love more than collaboration. I especially loved that not only were the Microsoft teams brains in it, but their hearts and souls were too,” said Nancy Gianni, Founder & Chief Belief Officer of GiGi's Playhouse. “Real-life demonstrations from the GiGi's therapists helped the Microsoft team to understand the functional issues surrounding hypotonia and how it affects their daily lives. GiGi's Playhouse is thrilled to be the chosen partner to advance these future technologies.”

Hypotonia or low muscle tone impacts speech, feeding, swallowing, fine motor skills such as handwriting as well as gross motor skills such as running and jumping. Muscle tone is regulated by signals that travel from the brain to the nerves and tell the muscles to contract; those with hypotonia have to work twice as hard and teach their body to do the muscle repetition. The hope is that artificial intelligence and machine learning could help muscle memory and repetition.

The partnership was sparked by Clover Technologies Group, LLC a neighbor of GiGi's Playhouse in Hoffman Estates. The first major step in the partnership was an educational download by Dr. Sarah Mann, Dr. Victoria Jay and GiGi's therapy teams. GiGi's therapists shared information about hypotonia and demonstrated its real-life effects on speech, fine motor and gross motor skills. In addition, the core team reviewed apps and technology that could assist caregivers and therapists when sharing medical information in real-time.

Gianni called it one of the most significant meetings in GiGi's history because it opens up real possibilities to use technology to impact the daily lives of those with Down Syndrome and their caregivers.

Gianni's daughter GiGi inspired her to start GiGi's Playhouse 15 years ago to provide a place to change lives and offer therapeutic, educational and career training. Today, GiGi's Playhouse has expanded to 39 locations across the United States and Mexico with more than 200 inquiries expressing interest in starting locations around the world.

About GiGi's Playhouse:

GiGi's Playhouse is the only network of Down Syndrome Achievement Centers, with 39 brick and mortar and pop up locations across the United States and Mexico and 200 inquiries to start new locations all over the world. Every day, GiGi's Playhouse provides free, life changing therapeutic, educational and career training programs for 30,000+ individuals of all ages. Down Syndrome is the largest chromosomal disability in our country and yet, it is the least funded. From prenatal diagnosis to career skills, GiGi's makes a lifetime commitment to remain by their side, empowering families with the tools their child needs to exceed.

Through free programs and the Generation G Campaign for global acceptance, GiGi's helps maximize opportunities for daily achievement and lasting acceptance. The program helps advance a vital social impact goal by showing the world what individuals with Down Syndrome are capable of achieving as students, co-workers, volunteers, friends, and valued members of their communities. For more information about free programs, volunteerism, impact partnerships, events, and the many ways to support our families: visit www.gigisplayhouse.org.

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