



## **Teenager with Down Syndrome Wows Cubs Fans with National Anthem**

**GiGi Gianni has overcome obstacles, inspired a network of playhouses that help others learn and achieve**

**June 27, 2019 (Chicago, IL)** – When teenager GiGi Gianni stepped to the microphone to sing the national anthem at Wrigley Field on June 25, she fulfilled a lifelong dream and demonstrated what people with Down syndrome can do. She also delivered a performance that brought Cubs fans to their feet as they cheered her on wildly.

Just 16 years old, GiGi is the daughter who sparked the creation of a fast-growing international network of playhouses that help people with Down syndrome learn, thrive and break through barriers in unprecedented ways. Young GiGi is the namesake for GiGi's Playhouse Down Syndrome Achievement Centers ("GiGi's Playhouse"). GiGi's Playhouse was founded by GiGi's mom Nancy, who wanted to create a place where families could celebrate their children with Down syndrome. Nancy wanted to completely alter the experience and perspective of parents raising children with Down syndrome. She knew parents needed a place filled with joy and hope, not fear and limitations. Since opening the doors to its first location in 2003, GiGi's Playhouse has grown to a network of 46 playhouses in North America. GiGi's Playhouse provides therapeutic, educational and career development programs that are 100% free.

People with Down syndrome have low muscle tone, which makes speaking and singing difficult, explained Nancy, who is also Chief Belief Officer at GiGi's Playhouse: "It takes an average of 70 muscles just to speak one word, so imagine how challenging it is to sing the entire national anthem! It took GiGi years of hard work and determination to prepare her muscles for this performance. It's a remarkable accomplishment!"

Making appearances is a regular part of GiGi's life. GiGi has been featured on CNN and The Today Show. She's a full-time student, but she also travels the world to celebrate each new playhouse and to change the way the world views people with Down syndrome.

### **About GiGi's Playhouse**

GiGi's Playhouse is the ONLY nationwide network of Down syndrome achievement centers. GiGi's Playhouse was founded in 2003 in Hoffman Estates, IL and offers 50+ different therapeutic, educational and career development programs. The organization is 99% volunteer-run, and all programs are 100% free. For more information, visit [www.gigisplayhouse.org](http://www.gigisplayhouse.org).

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To see video of GiGi Gianni's big day at Wrigley Field, click link below:

[https://www.dropbox.com/s/6x755vpuvd3xmzo/GiGi%20Anthem%20Highlight\\_RC02%20%281%29.mov?dl=0](https://www.dropbox.com/s/6x755vpuvd3xmzo/GiGi%20Anthem%20Highlight_RC02%20%281%29.mov?dl=0)