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Ms. Kathy Hanrahan
Lifestyle Editor, *WRAL News*
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Dear Ms. Hanrahan:

It takes over 70 muscles to form a single word, something most of us never think about, but a daily and lifelong challenge for many individuals with Down syndrome.

GiGi's Playhouse, a Down syndrome achievement center, offers free, research-based programs designed to build confidence, independence and communication skills. Among them is the Amina Grace Speech and Language Program, created in memory of Amina Ali. The program provides individualized one-on-one speech therapy for youth, teens, and adults. With more than 56,000 participation hours across 23 locations, it helps participants strengthen articulation and fluency, while encouraging families to continue progress at home and in the community.

I am writing to suggest a feature story about how free programs change the lives of individuals with Down syndrome and their families. This piece would explore the emotional and practical impact of improved communication, while also highlighting why free access is essential for families who might otherwise be unable to pursue long-term therapy.

MacKailey Braga, social media coordinator for GiGi's Playhouse Raleigh, has agreed to let me interview her for this story. Through her sister, Braga has a close personal connection to the Down syndrome community through her sister which has allowed her to witness how deeply these programs empower individuals and families.

Would you be interested in an 800- to 1,000-word piece that illustrates how the Amina Grace Program gives individuals with Down syndrome the tools to find their voice, and the confidence to use them? I can also provide compelling photos from recent visits. A potential working title could be "How GiGi's Playhouse Helps Individuals with Down Syndrome Find Their Voice."

Through my service-learning course this semester, I have volunteered closely with GiGi's Playhouse Raleigh. This has given me access and insight that will help bring this story to life. Thank you for your time. I look forward to hearing from you.

Sincerely,
Emily Norman
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