

Seeds of Education ...



Special Gifts Theatre (SGT) offers multiple programs throughout the year for individuals with special needs of all ages. The stage is used as an educational platform to develop speech and language skills, social and emotional literacy and increase self confidence. Professional staff develop lesson plans individualized to each student. Our students have so much fun in the classroom and on stage; they do not realize they are receiving educational and therapeutic benefits! Riley, SGT student, can attest to that!

Riley has participated in SGT for seven years! She participates in the **Creative Drama Program** (7-12 years old) and our movement class, **Creativity in Motion** (all ages). Her mom explains, "Riley is motivated by music, dance and stories, and through these programs Riley is given a forum to be creative with her body, voice and mind.

One of our goals is for her to form meaningful relationships with her peers. The peer mentors accept Riley for who she is and all of her abilities. This year when we pulled up to the school for the first class Riley could not contain her excitement!"

*"Every year we see such huge improvement in Riley! She **LOVES** Creative Drama. Riley has more self confidence each year and at the last three shows she has been verbal on stage!"*
Shannon, Riley's mom



Seeds of Friendship ...



"Having two siblings with special needs can be tough. But SGT is a place where I can do something together with them....they love the program and I love being a mentor!"

Kiran, Peer Mentor

"SGT has been a wonderful experience for my three children. They have learned to respect other people with and without disabilities, and develop solid friendships. It is a blessing to be part of the SGT family."

Carol, Parent

"SGT is an opportunity for Daniel to move outside the insular world that autism creates, and to interact as part of a team. Serving as peer mentors, Nathaniel and Ethan are deepening their appreciation of those with disabilities."

Michele, Parent

A Family Affair! Pictured above are some of our mentors and their siblings in the program.

Being a peer mentor takes courage. Empathy. Humor. It means finding out what someone else's gifts are and helping to make those gifts shine. It means acceptance— not tolerance. It means reaching across the barriers of differences and learning to appreciate what makes us each unique. In our **Peer Mentor Program**, mentors have chosen to be part of something unique that develops character and leadership skills as they befriend their peers with special needs. What starts out as a group of students and mentors ends up as a beautiful ensemble of friends!