

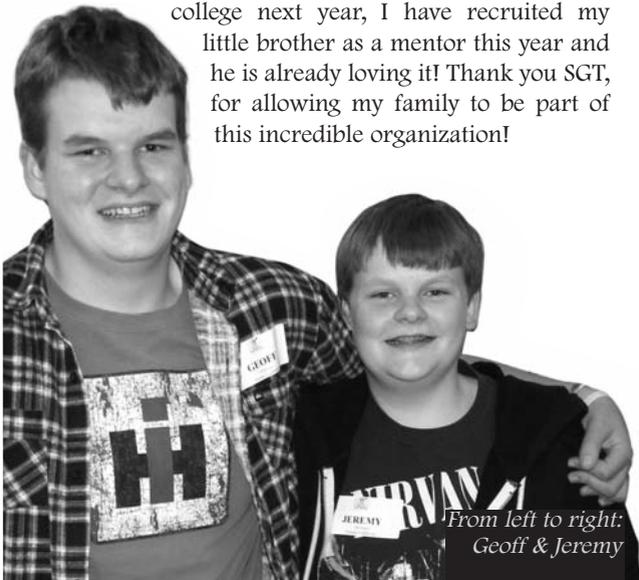
## Peer Mentor Advisory Committee

*1 committee, 11 students, unlimited ideas!*

Our Peer Mentor Advisory Committee has taken on more than simply advising new mentors. Sarah has raised over \$5000 with her fundraising efforts, Kevin is putting together a group of friends to support SGT, Katie is increasing our social media efforts - the list goes on! They lead groups during training, provide assistance in the classrooms and act as peer mentors to a buddy, modeling how natural friendships form. A big thank you to all our committee members for your efforts, devotion and example!

## Geoff & Jeremy, SGT peer mentors

Being part of SGT has helped me become a better leader and a more understanding and open-minded person. I return every year because I love to help people, I love the program, and honestly, it's really fun! SGT has shown me how diverse our population really is. The students come from all different backgrounds, families and homes. Yet it has also shown me how similar we all are. We all enjoy working together towards a common goal, we all strive for positive reinforcement, and we can all have a fun time in the great program! This is my fourth year as a mentor of Special Gifts Theatre and even though I am going off to college next year, I have recruited my little brother as a mentor this year and he is already loving it! Thank you SGT, for allowing my family to be part of this incredible organization!



*From left to right:  
Geoff & Jeremy*

# Shining the Spotlight on...



Opening Doors to New Possibilities

Every gift makes a difference to provide these quality programs and is deeply appreciated. To make your tax deductible gift, please use the reply envelope or go to [www.specialgiftstheatre.com](http://www.specialgiftstheatre.com) and click on the "Donate Now" button. 

Help us meet our challenge grant! Any new or increased donations will be matched up to \$15,000!

*Thank you for making a difference!*



*Programs such as 'High School Musical' (above) would not be possible without the support of donations*

### **Kenneth & Susan, Grandparents of Emma, SGT peer mentor**

Special, that's what Special Gifts Theatre is all about. How it tugs at our hearts to see the pride and sense of accomplishment that these kids receive being a part of the production. We must also remember the peer mentors that gladly give their time. And, a special "shout out" goes to the entire staff who work tirelessly to put the productions together.

We are very proud to support this great organization.



*From left to right:  
Susan, Emma, Kenneth*

### **YOU!**

For many of the students and mentors in our program, SGT has played a significant role in their development and future career aspirations. They all have grown together to become part of something special that is filled with friendship, teamwork, determination and success that will impact their lives for a lifetime.

A truly great program depends on a strong foundation of support. Today, we are inviting you to help take this program to greater heights. Your gift to Special Gifts Theatre can help us in many ways.

#### **\$100**

- Production kits for students (scripts/CD/DVD)
- Picture books for classroom use
- Props for a production

#### **\$250**

- Training manuals for one Peer Mentor Program
- Music and equipment for one program

#### **\$500**

- Staff training for programs
- Costumes for one cast

#### **\$1000 and above**

- Technical support for one production
- Program materials and communication

SGT is successful and growing. As we enter our 12th production season, we have introduced a corporate sponsorship program that has secured five new sponsors, planned an Annual Sneak Peek fundraiser that attracted new supporters and have initiated several social outings for the students, mentors and other friends in the community.

With your support we will build upon our accomplishments.

#### **Special Gifts Theatre, Inc.**

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### **Musical Theatre (10-21 years old)**

Using the stage as a platform, this program enhances social & emotional literacy skills and increases self esteem. The students and their mentors practice character development, learn choreography, and perform stage work - all of which culminates into a full production for audiences of over 1,800!

### **Creative Drama Program (7-9 years old)**

Through the use of drama activities including improvisation, story telling, and role playing, students develop the ability to empathize with the expressed emotions of others, explore creative thinking abilities, and gain confidence in using unscripted conversational skills. The final performance is scripted by the students themselves!

### **Early Childhood Program (3-6 years old)**

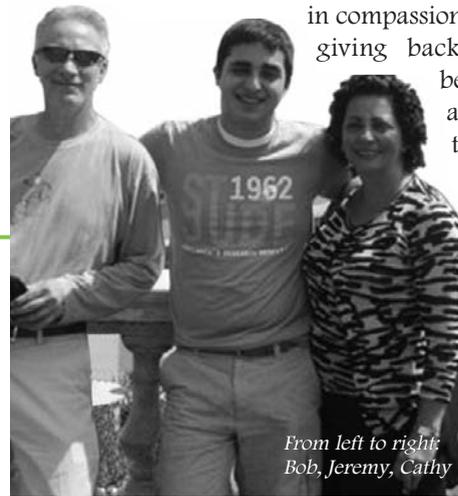
Providing active experiences compatible with a range of learning styles, children make connections to stories utilizing story dramatization, music and other multi-sensory experiences. The active learning opportunities focus in the areas of movement, language and early literacy development.

### **Peer Mentor/Buddy Program**

Our unique Peer Mentor/Buddy Program consists of typically developing peers who work one-on-one with their SGT buddy on choreography, classroom activities, stage work and more! The program has proven to extend beyond the walls of SGT, as friendships, understanding and respect grow between the pairings and continue even after the SGT season is over!



### **Cathy & Bob, Parents of Jeremy, SGT staff member**



*From left to right:  
Bob, Jeremy, Cathy*

"SGT has provided our family with wonderful lessons in compassion, understanding and giving back. Our family has benefited just as much as the Special Gifts themselves. We have been happy to support the organization over the years."  
- Cathy and Bob, Parents of Jeremy

Special Gifts Theatre has been part of my life since I became a mentor in 3rd grade. I could never have imagined the relationship created with my buddy throughout the years. We met every week practicing lines and celebrating accomplishments. By seventh grade, we were simply friends, as opposed to a mentor and buddy. Just last year, he told me that he took two public buses to see the show; demonstrating what SGT is all about: breaking down barriers and showing the true potential of all individuals.

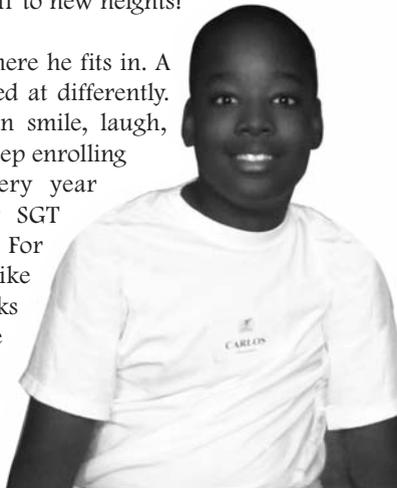
After mentoring for six years, I began volunteering on the stage crew and soon after, accepted the position of Stage Crew Chief - becoming the youngest team member on staff. My years as a mentor, volunteer, and staff member at SGT have set the course for my life to be one of compassion, acceptance, and advocacy for all individuals.

This has truly been a family effort. My sister, Hannah, joined me as a mentor for most of her high school experience, while my parents remain proud supporters. Together, we thank SGT for the lessons learned and encourage you to help be part of continuing this hard work.

## **Carlos, SGT student**

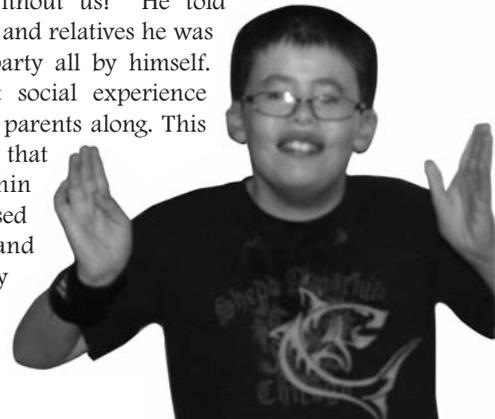
Carlos was 10 years old and had never had a playdate. Then we joined SGT and all that changed. Not only does he now have friends and frequent social activities that he is part of (including attending his mentors Bar Mitzvah) but his social skills have taken off to new heights!

We finally found a place where he fits in. A place where he is not looked at differently. A true place where we can smile, laugh, cry and share a hug! We keep enrolling him because he asks every year what the next play is at SGT and when does it start? For him to ask a question like that is wonderful! He talks about SGT all the time and tells anyone who will listen about all of the plays he's been in and his characters.



## **Kyle, SGT student**

For Kyle, 10, SGT is about much more than acting. It's about friendships and independence. As a parent, it is refreshing to have him be part of something he can be proud of doing all by himself. At birthday parties or school social events we have always been asked to help out. When SGT had the social pizza party, Kyle was most pleased by participating in his first outing without us! He told therapists, teachers and relatives he was going to a pizza party all by himself. This was his first social experience without one of his parents along. This independent spirit that SGT fosters within my son has increased his self esteem and it shows in every aspect of his development! You have a student for life.

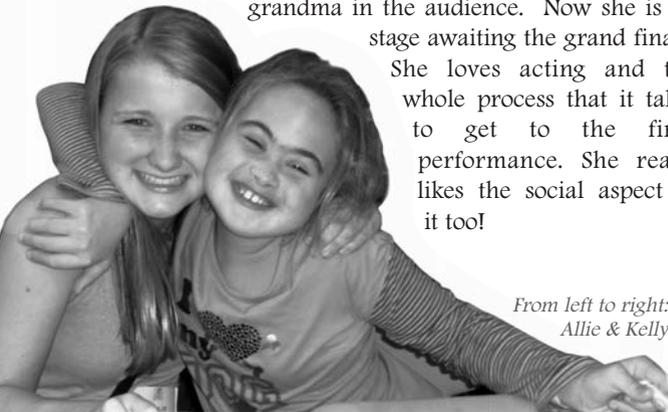


## **Kelly, SGT student**

This is Kelly's 8th season with SGT. She has been in the program since she was four years old and absolutely loves coming back year after year! SGT is a place that Kelly can express herself without judgment and a place she can perform and shine. I have seen growth in her confidence and in her ability to memorize words to songs, learn dance numbers and focus and complete a task.

In her first few years, our only goal for her was that she stayed on stage the whole time. She used to go to the bathroom during the performance or would want to be with grandma in the audience. Now she is on stage awaiting the grand finale.

She loves acting and the whole process that it takes to get to the final performance. She really likes the social aspect of it too!



*From left to right:  
Allie & Kelly*

## **Katie, SGT peer mentor**

I can't even describe to you how lucky I am to have discovered this organization seven years ago. SGT literally changed my life. It changed my perception of people with disabilities. It changed my approach to people in general. It gave me such an incredible peek into what life is like for those who don't have everything that I have. More importantly, it gave me an opportunity to meet friends I will have for the rest of my life, special needs or not.

I have pictures all over my room of past buddies and productions. SGT allowed me to understand and accept those from all walks of life. I learned the virtues of patience and understanding. And I got to wear some pretty fun costumes along the way.

Being part of this program has been the most significant and important thing I have ever done... hands down.

