

To New **POSSIBILITIES**

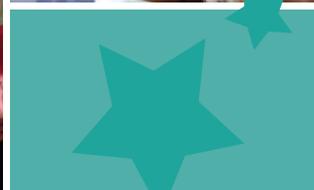


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ENDLESSPOSSIBILITIES

Special Gifts Theatre
PO Box 2231
Northbrook, IL 60065-2231



Be Part of the **POSSIBILITIES**



SGT gave me the skill of being happy with being different!

– Meg Conroy

Wow! That is a skill most of us are continuing to learn throughout our lives. But Meg, who has been an actor at SGT for seven years, thanks SGT for giving her that skill. She goes on to say, "Once you accept your differences, then you can be happy with them."

That is what SGT is all about. We put our students on the stage and turn the spotlights on. They get to shine just as they are! The self confidence they gain empowers them to go after their own dreams! Meg is now acting in community theater and has returned to SGT as a peer mentor alongside her brothers, Peter and Kevin! Kevin is a member of our **Peer Mentor Advisory Committee** which acts as a supportive guide for new mentors. Our peer mentor program and entire SGT ensemble is stronger thanks to the Conroy family and their dedication to helping others learn to be happy with what makes them unique!



*I have friends.
I have a job.
I have Down syndrome.
I am Maggie!*

When Mara, Special Gifts Theatre (SGT) Board Member, saw Maggie perform with the Traveling Troupe at a community event, she was so impressed that she offered Maggie a job on the spot! Now, seven months later, Maggie has been serving ice cream at the Peppermint Stick Restaurant, Long Grove, IL and loving it! Whenever she misses a day, her customers ask where she is! The purpose of our **Traveling Troupe** is to share the abilities and talents of our students out in the community. The results are a community that becomes more understanding and accepting – and opportunities abound!

I love introducing my twins and their unique gifts to the world. My boys really flourish with social interaction. And as a mother of two children with special needs, it is difficult to find an activity that engages and challenges both boys. SGT uses the theatre as a platform to develop social skills, enhance speech, and promote self confidence. As a result, natural friendships form and extend beyond the walls of SGT! Our **Peer Mentor Program** is a unique opportunity for typically developing peers. They are matched 1:1 with students in our program and they work on everything from stage work to social skills!

*We are twins.
We are individuals.
We have Cerebral atrophy.
We are Spencer and Quinn!*

*I am a professor.
I am a mother.
I am autistic.*

I always wanted to teach and speak publicly about disability awareness. But having autism, I did not have the interpersonal skills or self confidence to make my dreams a reality. That is, until my professors suggested theater training. This changed my life. I am now a professor at National Louis University and speak internationally. **All of this is possible for me because of theater.**

Special Gifts Theatre provides children with amazing opportunities at an earlier age than I had them. I want to do whatever I can to see that as many kids as possible receive the same benefits I received from theatre.

The irony is that by playing other characters, I learned how to play myself. The theatre helped me be me!

Thank you. Thank you for believing in people like me who don't want to be defined by a diagnosis. **Thank you for supporting SGT and helping children all over the Chicagoland area learn how to play the most important role in life – themselves.**

*- Elizabeth Grace
SGT Board of Directors*



Because of YOU...

- ★ We were able to pilot our first summer program!
- ★ We had the largest cast in our Musical Theatre program in the past four years!
- ★ Our Traveling Troupe has performed at over 10 venues across the Chicagoland area!
- ★ Our community is seeing the ABILITIES in all our students!

With YOUR help, we will...

- ★ Be able to take more children with special needs off the waiting list!
- ★ Raise a generation of peer mentors who accept people for who they are!
- ★ Continue to spread awareness about the potential of ALL people!

Thank YOU!

Please accept the enclosed jar opener as a token of our appreciation and a symbol of the impact you are making! Every gift you give helps open doors to new possibilities!



Visit us at specialgiftstheatre.org and follow us on Facebook!

*Want to
DOUBLE your
DOLLARS?*

Here are two ways...

- Any new/increased donations will be matched dollar for dollar!
- Check to see if your company has a matching gift program – MOST DO!