

SPECIAL GIFTS THEATRE

BY MAUREEN BRANDWEIN

Special Gifts Theatre, a non-profit organization founded in 2000, is dedicated to fostering the artistic talents of individuals with disabilities. Through its unique blend of educational and therapeutic techniques, SGT empowers individuals with disabilities to shine on stage, discover their voices, and embrace their individuality. For the past 6 years, SGT has had the opportunity to provide a Musical Theatre program in Libertyville that supports growing friendships and building a community. Including Libertyville, SGT will host 13 performances in 2024 in Chicago, the northern, and northwest suburbs.

The relationships between students, peer mentor, staff, and volunteers is an incredible component of the musical theatre program. Valerie Van Roeyen, MTL Program & Educational Manager and District 70 teacher, shared, "The impact this program has made on the relationships formed between students and mentors has been a great asset. This bond has gone a long way in making our events successful and will continue to do so for years to come."

"These students are gaining confidence and communication skills, all while making new friends and having fun. SGT has become one of my favorite extracurricular activities because it's been a joyful experience making new friends and seeing the growth that I have been able to be a part of." - Savannah Agee, LHS student and SGT peer mentor.



Nicholas Godoy Delgado, District 70 student and SGT student, playing the role of Timon in the Lion King performance shared, "One of my teachers asked my parents to join Special Gift Theatre. Wow! I did not know acting would become a window for me to make lots of new friends."

Recently added SGT board member from Libertyville, Robin O'Connor, expressed her thoughts for joining the organization, "I have been a strong advocate of the arts within my educational



career, and I knew immediately that I wanted to be a member of Special Gifts Theatre. I encourage those I meet to learn about this beautiful organization, its joyful mission, and how valuable it is for our community."

Mark your calendars for SGT's Libertyville Musical Theatre performance of The Lion King! The performances will take place at Copeland Manor Elementary School on February 10th &



COMMUNITY

11th at 2:00pm. For more information and to purchase tickets, visit www.specialgiftstheatre.org. Contact SGT at info@specialgiftstheatre.org or call 847-564-7704 for more information.

