

Special Gifts Theatre:

CREATING INCLUSIVE THEATRE EXPERIENCES

BY JESSICA WRUBEL



FOR MORE THAN TWO DECADES, SPECIAL GIFTS THEATRE (SGT) has been using the performing arts to create inclusive, transformative experiences for individuals with disabilities. Based in the North and Northwest suburbs and Chicago's Northside, SGT fosters a world where all people with disabilities are valued, included, and accepted. Through innovative theatre programming, the organization empowers students with disabilities while also providing peer mentorship opportunities for neurotypical participants.

SGT has deep roots in the Deerfield community. Board member Paul Keidan, a longtime Deerfield resident, has been involved with the organization for years. His daughters, both Deerfield High School graduates, served as peer mentors in SGT's programs, inspiring their career paths in Special Education and Occupational Therapy. Many other students and families from Deerfield have also been involved, enriching the community's connection to SGT's mission.

This spring, SGT is excited to present a lineup of live performances showcasing the talents of its participants:

SEUSSICAL JR. *Performed by the Musical Theatre Palatine-Rolling Meadows (MTP-RM) program.*

- Saturday, April 12, 2025, and Sunday, April 13, 2025
- 2:00 pm (lobby doors open at 1:30 pm)
- Conyers Learning Academy
- General admission seating; no intermission

WILLY WONKA JR. *Performed by the Creating Outside the Lines (COL) Palatine program.*

- Sunday, April 27, 2025 • 2:00 pm (lobby doors open at 1:30 pm)
- Walter R. Sundling Middle School
- General admission seating; no intermission

MADAGASCAR JR. *Performed by the Creating Outside the Lines (COL) Winnetka program.*

- Sunday, May 18, 2025 • 2:00 pm (lobby doors open at 1:30 pm)
- The Skokie School
- General admission seating; no intermission

These performances offer audiences the chance to witness firsthand the confidence, creativity, and collaboration fostered by SGT's programs. Get Involved SGT welcomes volunteers to assist with stage crew and ticket sales at their 13 live performances this winter and spring. Those interested in volunteering can reach out via email at info@specialgiftstheatre.org or fill out a form on their website: <https://specialgiftstheatre.org/volunteer/>. For more information, visit specialgiftstheatre.org, follow @specialgiftstheatre on social media, or call 847-564-7704.

SGT will be celebrating their 25th anniversary this year. They are having a celebration at Cotillon Banquet Hall in Palatine, on November 8 from 6 to 9:30pm. Anyone is welcome! SGT's commitment to inclusion and the performing arts continues to transform lives, proving that theatre is for everyone.

