



Special Gifts Theatre, Inc.

Opening Doors to New Possibilities

August 2007

Special Gifts Theatre (SGT) is not-for-profit organization that provides children and teens with special needs, a unique, creative drama experience enabling personal growth while breaking down stereotypes related to disabilities within the community at large.



Celebrating Success *By Susan B. Field, Founder & Executive Director*

One of Special Gifts Theatre's core values is **"we celebrate success at every turn."** SGT focuses on every step of the journey, taking time to celebrate what is accomplished along the way. We recognize not only the achievements of our students and peer mentors, but the efforts of our Board of Directors, staff, volunteers and all of you! This newsletter highlights our many successes this past season and previews the outstanding programs we have planned for our upcoming 8th season.

★ *We celebrate the success of our recent production of "The Wizard of Oz!"*

Our production of "The Wizard of Oz" marked the first time we had two distinct casts, allowing us to feature more children with special needs and their equally talented peer mentors. Two casts afforded us the opportunity to take children off of our waiting list and share the magic of SGT with them.

★ *We celebrate the recognition our program has achieved!*

SGT and our production of "The Wizard of Oz" were recently featured on FOX News. We have now been featured on ABC, NBC and WGN! They did a wonderful job representing our program and the children we serve.

Senator Susan Garrett and State Representative Elaine Nekritz took time from their busy schedules to come to observe a dress rehearsal of our production of "The Wizard of Oz." They both said they were honored to have a program of this caliber serving our children in Illinois.

★ *We celebrate the many foundations, corporations and individual donors that support SGT!*

Due to the significant donation of over \$122,000 from Deerfield High School, along with recent grants and individual donations, we are able to open the doors to our new *SGT EARLY CHILDHOOD PROGRAM* in September, 2007 (more information about this program is included in this newsletter).

★ *As always, we continue to celebrate all of you!*

Your individual contributions, in kind donations and attendance and support of our productions are what enable SGT to keep growing. We thank you in advance for your continued support as we move forward creating new SGT programs, serving more children with and without special needs and their families.

★ *We celebrate our SGT Team of Professionals!*

Our SGT team has grown exponentially from a staff of two people in 2000 to our current roster of close to fifty professionals hired for our 2007-08 season. A formalized SGT Training Program, initiated last year, has developed into a comprehensive two-day Team Development and Interactive Workshop. Responses from all of the participants were that they not only learned about SGT theories and techniques, but gained a greater understanding of the "Special Gifts" every child possesses.

★ *We celebrate our Board of Directors!*

SGT is fortunate to have a dedicated and active Board of Directors that is also growing in strength and numbers! Board members participated in an extensive Board Retreat focusing on SGT's sustainability and growth. We celebrate the guidance they provide for us as we navigate our path for geographic expansion. We welcome our two new Board members, **Cliff Perry** and **Buggie O'Grady!**



SGT Board of Directors

Len Rubin, Chairman
Judith Bregman
Scott Field
Jann Greenberg
Sandye Lerner
Buggie O'Grady
Barry Paul
Cliff Perry
David Peterson

Contact Information

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Susan B. Field Wins Northbrook Community Relations Commission Award

SGT Executive Director, **Susan B. Field** was honored in June as the first recipient of the 2007 Northbrook Community Relations Commission (CRC) Award. Each year the award will be given to a Northbrook resident who has initiated, implemented, participated in, or otherwise engaged in an activity or lifestyle that reflects the values and mission of the Commission to an extent that is exemplary.

Rochelle Singer, Ed.D., CRC Commissioner and Chair of the CRC Award Committee, said, "Our board's decision was unanimous. Mrs. Field has set the bar very high for any future candidates." The team at SGT is so proud of Susie and her accomplishments. We thank family, friends, students, mentors, parents and the entire community at large that has helped turned this amazing dream into a reality. Thank you for celebrating in this success each step of the way. *Continue the great work Susie!*



Support SGT through GoodSearch.com



What if Special Gifts Theatre could earn a penny every time you searched the internet? Well, now we can! GoodSearch.com is a new search engine that donates half of its revenue, about a penny per search, to the charities its users designate. You use it just as you would any search engine, and it's powered by Yahoo! so you get great results. Just go to www.goodsearch.com and be sure to enter Special Gifts Theatre as the charity you want to support. Just 500 of us searching four times per day will raise about \$7,300 in a year without anyone spending a dime! Be sure to spread the word!



SGT Opening new Early Childhood Program (ECP) in September, 2007!

Due to significant funding from Deerfield High School and other foundations this past year, SGT will be opening its doors to the first **SGT Early Childhood Program (ECP)**. This unique program will be the first of its kind in the nation. Research gleaned from our partnership with the University Of Illinois, Chicago (UIC) has formally proven the strong positive impact SGT has on the children it serves. ECP has been created to determine if communication, social and pre-literacy skills

develop earlier in young children identified with special needs when they participate in our dramatic arts program. Gross and fine motor activities, music and other multi-sensory experiences will be used as a bridge between a child's natural propensity for active learning and the demands of a structured pre-school or kindergarten curriculum.

To find out more about our new Early Childhood Program, contact our office at 847-564-7704.



Judy Vass, Making a Difference



Judy Vass

This year, Special Gifts Theatre has introduced an annual award entitled "The **Harvey L. Miller Making a Difference Award.**" This award was created to honor **Harvey Miller**, a founding member of our Board of Directors who has retired this past year. To honor him and his ability to make a difference in so many lives, SGT has created an annual award in his name. This award has been created to recognize the SGT staff member that spreads the mission and vision of SGT and has made a significant difference in the lives of others.

We are proud to announce that the 2007 Harvey L. Miller Making a Difference Award was presented to **Judy Vass**. Judy has been with SGT since 2002. She is an occupational therapist that continues to share her theater and therapeutic skills with the students of SGT. Judy's rapport with the children and her strong commitment to the SGT mission made her an excellent recipient of this award. Congratulations!

SAVE THE DATES!

★ "Annie" ★
March 8, 9, 15 & 16, 2008
2pm - Skokie School,
Winnetka

Tickets will go on sale February 1, 2008. If you would like to receive information on advertising your business or would like to include a personal ad for one of our young stars, please contact SGT at 847.564.7704 so we can be sure you are on the list to receive this information.