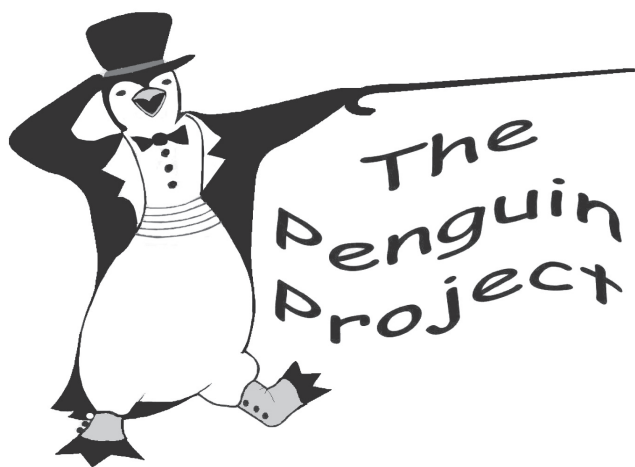


The Penguin Project was originated by Dr. Andrew Morgan, a developmental pediatrician with the University Of Illinois College Of Medicine. He created The Penguin Project, recognizing that theater not only provides children with a valuable recreational experience and an opportunity to display their creative talents, but also enhances social interaction, communication skills and self esteem. The Penguin Project strives to demonstrate that individuals with disabilities are fully capable of participating in community activities with the same dedication and enthusiasm as others, if given the opportunity and support.

The Penguin Project is open to any individual age 8-21 with a disability. This includes children with cognitive, learning, motor, hearing and visual impairments, genetic or neurological disorders. There are no restrictions based on level of cognitive ability, restriction of mobility or lack of communication skills. The peer mentors are children without a disability who are linked to an age-level actor. They work side by side with their partners, assisting them throughout the entire rehearsal process and on stage, participating in group numbers, but they are trained to remain "in the background" and provide direct assistance only as needed.

The goals of The Penguin Project are to...



- **provide an opportunity for children with disabilities to develop creative skills in a theater experience**
- **facilitate interaction and appreciation between children with disabilities and peer age mentors**
- **facilitate interaction among medical, developmental, educational and theatrical professionals, and**
- **to provide a forum for support and interaction for families of children with disabilities.**

June 2009 saw the first production of The Penguin Project of McLean County! In this inaugural year 40 young people performed "Annie Jr." Join us for the next Penguin Project when we will present

Music Man Jr.

June 18-20, 2010

Bloomington Central Catholic High School Auditorium

Join us for an informational meeting, either February 4 or February 9 (6:30pm each night) at the Central Catholic auditorium. Put it on your calendar today!