Giggles Children's Theater ~ Frequently Asked Questions

What is Giggles Children's Theater?

Giggles Children's Theater has been a haven of the healing arts for disadvantaged, sick and injured children since opening in 2005. Our primary mission is to help improve the quality of children's lives as they meet the challenges of illness and treatment. Hospitalization creates great anxiety and stress for children as well as their families. While hospitalized children are at their lowest emotional point - undergoing painful procedures, separated from family and friends, and in fear - Giggles provides emotionally beneficial artistic, educational and culturally-rich programs that are designed to reduce anxiety by inducing laughter and engaging young minds.

Our secondary mission is to bring free, live, cultural and artistic programs to the community of Paterson. Arts programs, such as Giggles, help to improve the resident's quality of life. According to Arts Watch, "University of Pennsylvania researchers have demonstrated that a high concentration of the arts in a city leads to higher civic engagement, more social cohesion, higher children welfare and lower poverty rates". Giggles aspires to be part of the solution to revitalize our community by offering access to free live theater.

Where is Giggles Children's Theater located?

Giggles Children's Theater is located in St. Joseph's Children's Hospital, on the second floor of the Seton Building, 703 Main Street, Paterson, NJ.

What kind of programs do you offer?

Each year Giggles presents more than 90 live shows performed by theater companies, singers, dancers, clowns, choruses, magicians and musicians. We also have literacy-focused readings by authors as well as story time in both English and Spanish. Giggles also broadcasts educational "field trips" where we virtually transport patients on live interactive journeys to places like the International Space Station, Australia's Great Barrier Reef HQ Aquarium, Alaska's Glacier Bay National Park, Africa's O'iada Cultural Center, the Smithsonian Institute and the Manhattan School of Music.

When do the shows take place?

The live shows are normally scheduled on Tuesdays and Thursdays of each week, but please contact us before you come to make sure there has not been a change or cancellation: (973) 754-4960. Previously-recorded shows are also available daily for patients to view over the hospital's closed-circuit TV system, Giggles Channel 55.

How can I learn about upcoming shows?

Sign up for our Giggles mailing list! When you sign up for the email list, you will receive a monthly show schedule and receive up-to-date information on cancellations, delays or changes to the schedule. Your email address will not be shared with third-party vendors.

Can groups such as daycare centers come to a show?

Yes, groups such as day care centers are always welcome but please contact us first to reserve seats for your group. You can email us at giggles@mmissions.org or call (973) 754-4960. All shows are broadcast live over the hospital's closed circuit TV, so please be prepared to sign a permission slip for all show attendees to be on TV.

Can I come to a Giggles show? Is there a cost?

Shows are FREE! All are welcome to attend.

Can I perform at the theater?

If you or your performing group would like to perform a child-friendly, 30- to 40-minute show, please email giggles@mmissions.org or call (973) 754-4960. We are always looking for new shows that are uplifting and appropriate for sick children and their families. A contract and other paperwork is required and is due no later than the 15th of the month before your scheduled appearance. December shows tend to book early so please call a few months ahead.

How can I help support Giggles?

Please consider financially supporting Giggles by making a donation in any amount:

- Mail checks made payable to Medical Missions for Children, 35 Getty Ave., Bldg. 400, Paterson, NJ 07503 with "GIGGLES DONATION" in the memo line.
- Use PayPal or a credit card on our website www.mmissions.org, click on the MAKE A DONATION button below and choose to support GIGGLES.
- Before you shop online, go to the Giggles link on Amazon Smile and they will make a small donation to Giggles based on your purchases – it won't cost you a penny: https://smile.amazon.com/ch/22-3536072.

Can I donate books or toys to Giggles?

One of our most popular games is HOSPITAL BINGO where we award prizes to pediatric patients for winning the game. As we are not permitted to give out used prizes to patients, only new items can be donated. Patients range in age from newborn- to 21-years old. To coordinate donating books or toys, please email giggles@mmissions.org or call (973)754-4960.

How many children do you serve?

Each year Giggles entertains more than 3,000 sick children on site and more than 300 children from the local community. According to the St. Joseph's Regional Medical Center Finance Department each year between 76% and 81.1% of the pediatric patients are qualified as low income.

What organizations have supported Giggles in the past?

Giggles has received support from The Turrell Fund for Children, Wells Fargo Bank Foundation, Investor's Bank Foundation, the Passaic County Cultural & Heritage Council, the Paterson Community Development Block Grant Program, the Bloomingdale Fund of the Macy's Foundation, the Paterson Great Falls Rotary Club, Fit Female and Company Kidz, the PNC Foundation, the Edward W. & Stella C. Van Houton Memorial Fund, the George A. Ohl, Jr. Charitable Trust, the Provident Bank Foundation, the TD Bank Foundation and the Thomas and Agnes Carvel Foundation.

Do I have to register to come to a show?

No, registration is not required. If you do register or sign up for our email list we will notify you if there is a last minute change in the show schedule.

Is Giggles a nonprofit?

Yes, Giggles Children's Theater is a program of Medical Missions for Children, a Paterson based 501(c)3 nonprofit organization dedicated to helping heal sick children in Paterson and around the world.

MEDICAL MISSIONS for CHILDREN