



CALENDAR OF EVENTS 2026 - 2027



 **giantSTEPS**
SERVING THE AUTISM COMMUNITYSM

 **CANOPY**
ADULT AUTISM PROGRAM: A DIVISION OF GIANT STEPSSM

SEPTEMBER 2026

9th | Elementary Meet & Greet *Kindergarten - 8th Grade*

Please join us to kick off the new school year with our Meet and Greet from 6 to 7 p.m. Visit your child's classroom and meet the staff. (Siblings are welcome to attend).

29th | Canopy Gator Crawl

30th | Giant Steps Gator Crawl



OCTOBER 2026

3rd | Fall 5K Walk For Autism

Located at Rich Harvest Farms in Sugar Grove, this annual fundraising event is fun for all. Walk, Donate, Fundraise! Walk.gsteps.org

5-9th | Homecoming Spirit Week

6th | Student & Staff Picture Day

8th | Secondary/ S.T.R.I.D.E. Homecoming Dance

The Homecoming Dance is a fun and festive celebration where students can enjoy music, refreshments, and time with classmates in a safe environment that lets our students shine.

9th | Homecoming Football Game

24th | Trunk or Treat

Hosted by the Parents' Club

Bring your decorated car trunk or truck bed and lots of treats to the Giant Steps parking lot to give our students a safe place for Trick-or-Treating.

30th | Elementary Halloween Parade



NOVEMBER 2026

2nd | Giant Steps Annual Appeal

Our Annual Appeal begins November 2nd and runs through December 31st. Donations support programming for all of Giant Steps.

2-6th | Annual Book Fair

4th | Parent-Teacher Conferences

7th | Mobile DMV Event

The Illinois Secretary of State's Department of Motor Vehicles will host the Mobile DMV on-site for Giant Steps students to obtain their state ID, disability ID, or REAL ID. Appointments only, more information to come.

16-20th | Thanksgiving Spirit Week

19th | Canopy Thanksgiving Feast



DECEMBER 2026

1st | Giving Tuesday

Supporting Christine's Dream Equestrian Center.

3rd | Student/Staff Picture Retake Day

14-18th | Holiday Spirit Week



FEBRUARY 2027

8-12th | Winter Formal Spirit Week

12th | Winter Formal

For Secondary and S.T.R.I.D.E. (transition) students, the Winter Formal is an afternoon dance hosted at Giant Steps.



APRIL 2027

12-16th | Annual Book Fair

TBD | Giant Steps Annual Gala

Join us for dinner, dancing, auctions, and raffles to raise money for our programs.

Learn more at Gala.gsteps.org

MAY 2027

TBD | Day of Connections

A Day of Connections is Giant Steps' Annual resource fair that brings together government agencies, private vendors and expert speakers from across our state to help families connect to resources available for their child now and to help them plan for their future!

3-7th | Staff Appreciation Week

TBD | Secondary / S.T.R.I.D.E. Prom

For High School and S.T.R.I.D.E. students and their parents, Prom is one of the most memorable events of the year.

21st | 8th Grade Graduation

25th | High School Graduation

26th | S.T.R.I.D.E. Graduation



JUNE 2027

22nd | Tri-City Chargers Day

JULY 2027

23rd | Giant Steps Field Day

Giant Steps year-end celebration for students. A fun day of games and activities to celebrate a successful year.

Support for Programs for Individuals with Autism is CRITICAL.

Today, the CDC estimates the prevalence of Autism is 1 in 31, a 317% increase in less than 23 years, making Autism the FASTEST-GROWING DEVELOPMENTAL DISABILITY in the United States.

Get Involved

Giant Steps Illinois Inc. depends on the generosity of kind individuals to support our superior programming for our students and young adults with autism. Together we can make a difference! Each step brings us closer to a world where every individual with autism is understood, accepted, and empowered to thrive. Get involved today and help share our passion for the possible.

GS Day School Parent Club

Our Parent Club provides various opportunities for parents to get involved in their child's school activities. The Parent Club supports schoolwide activities such as the "Trunk-Or-Treat" each October, school dances, our annual gala, and the 5K Walk. It also hosts meetings with guest speakers on transition topics, housing, or legal issues parents may face on their life journey with their children. Meetings are held in person and virtually throughout the school year. If you want to become involved in the Parent Club, contact Sarah Novotny, Program and Outreach Coordinator, at snovotny@mygiantsteps.org or (630) 864-3825.

Canopy Family Connections

The Canopy Family Connections meetings provide an informal gathering for parents to hear program updates, ongoing fundraising efforts, development team updates, and connect with other family members of Canopy Participants. Meetings are held in person and virtually approximately four times a year.

About Giant Steps

Giant Steps is a 501 (c)(3) nonprofit organization which provides educational and therapeutic services in a safe and engaging environment for children and families impacted by autism.

Canopy Adult Program is a division of Giant Steps Illinois, Inc. that provides programming for individuals with Autism over the age of 22.

Christine's Dream Equestrian Center is a division of Giant Steps Illinois, Inc. and is a PATH International Certified Therapeutic Horse Program.

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