



2025 Final Wrap Up Report
December 29, 2025

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY



This report breaks down all components for the following People of Play (POP) initiatives surrounding 2025 POP Week:

- Inventor Pitch & Innovation Conference;
- Toy & Game Innovation Excellence Awards - The TAGIEs;
- Chicago Toy & Game Fair & the first-ever Wishlist Weekend;
- And the Young Inventor Challenge.

Carve implemented a multi-faceted, strategic PR program, driving coast-to-coast visibility across media, television stations, influencers and more. This program generated widespread coverage for the Fair as well as highlighting exhibitors, sponsors and their key drivers.

In total for 2025, the PR campaign generated over **1,983,942,973+ impressions**, netting a **30% increase from 2024!**



PR Highlights



OVERVIEW



Public Relations - In the months leading up to the Chicago Toy & Game Fair and Wishlist Weekend, Carve Communications undertook an aggressive, national media campaign targeting outlets and industry experts coast-to-coast to spread the awareness of the Fair and the new Wishlist Weekend element.

To date this included 116 online/print clips and 14 broadcast segments, including WGN-TV (Chicago), WBBM-TV (Chicago), WFLD-TV (Chicago), WXIN-TV (Indianapolis), WTHR-TV, WTMJ-TV (Milwaukee), WLS-TV (Chicago), KING-TV (Seattle), KMAX-TV (Sacramento) and more for a total of 130 placements.

The industry trade press in the North America and Europe also featured regular news of all People of Play events throughout the year. A total of 7 press releases in 2025 highlighting numerous POP events including Young Inventor Challenge, Innovation Conference and Inventor Pitch, TAGIEs and more.

Direct Marketing and Co-Branded Partnerships - Throughout the year, numerous direct marketing and co-branded promotions helped to drive consumers to the show, for an additional 13,274,059+ million impressions.

DIRECT MARKETING



Event eBlasts

- LinkedIn (260,316 impressions) & POP (3) x 90,000 = **530,316**
- Pro Inventor (3,700) and Product Acquisition Exec (1,050) x 5 = **23,750**
- Play in Education (2) x 150,000 = **300,000**
- Consumer (2) x 20,000 = **40,000**
- Young Inventor Challenge (4) = **5,407**
- Co-Branded Partnerships (next slide) - **4,000,000+**

Past Adult Ticket(s) Purchaser eBlasts

- Young Inventor Challenge (1,351), Girl Scouts & Scouts (5,624), First Responders/Vets (533), Grandparents (772), Special Needs (467), Educators (2,802), Trade (1,028) = **12,577 x 4 = 50,308**

Eventbrite & Groupon Adult Marketing

- Eventbrite 4,866 past adult attendees x 5 sends = **24,330**
- Eventbrite **13,747** page views
- Groupon 3,000,000 impressions x 2 = **6,000,000**

Sponsor Logo Placement (your logo is featured for 1 year)

- The Bloom Report 53 issues x 26,500 = **1,404,500** impressions
- **peopleofplay.com 181,453 unique visitors** (over 80% consumer), **773,000 event count** (logo on the sidebar of every page) from 198 countries
- **chitag.com 58,800 unique visitors** and **96,904 page views**
- YouTube **11,800 views**
- Facebook **70,379 views**

POP/CHITAG Attendee Locations:

- **25 states: AZ, CA, CO, CT, FL, GA, ID, IL, IN, IA, KY, MD, MI, MA, MN, MO, NE, NJ, NY, OH, OR, PA, TX, UT, WI**
- **18 countries: Japan, Spain, Canada, Finland, Austria, France, Netherlands, Germany, Hong Kong, Honduras, China, Mexico, South Korea, Switzerland, Israel, Hong Kong, U.S., U.K.**

TOTAL IMPRESSIONS/VIEWS: 13,570,947 Million

CO-BRANDED PARTNERSHIPS



In addition to our direct reach, we benefited from partners that spread the word in advance to consumers about the Fair via newsletter blasts, social media postings, digital/print ads and promos/contests. Here are some of the partners!



@ILLINOISYOYO
@ILLINOISKENDAMA
501st Star Wars
ASTRA
Baby Paper
Chris Byrne
Dani Standring (infl)
Disney
Duncan
Exhibitor Promo Codes
Girl Scouts
Grant Lyon (infl)



Gray Matters Games/A&W
Hasbro (Inventor)
IndyWithKids Giveaway
Innovation DuPage
Ross Thompson (infl)
Mattel (Inventor)
Scouting America
TOTN Events (200)
Toy Association Comms
WGN Radio giveaways
Zigazoo (8,384)



Chicago Toy & Game Fair



Once again, the Mayor of Rosemont officially opened the event with a ribbon-cutting ceremony, joined by a host of beloved characters and mascots, creating a fun and memorable kick-off for the **first-ever People of Play Wishlist Weekend™**. This new element to the two-day Fair gave attendees the opportunity to create their own wish lists and kick off their holiday shopping right on-site!

Leading up to the Fair, the Carve team worked tirelessly to drive coast-to-coast visibility, securing widespread media coverage across multiple outlets! Efforts were used to amplify the excitement surrounding **Wishlist Weekend™**, highlighting key exhibitors and sponsors, and positioning the event as a must-visit destination for families, toy lovers, and holiday shoppers alike!



Chicago Toy & Game Fair Event Images



Young Inventor Challenge®



Celebrating its 20th year, the Young Inventor Challenge® (YIC) gives kids ages 6 to 18 the opportunity to develop and pitch their inventions to major toy companies and industry professionals at the Chicago Toy & Game Fair. This STEM-accredited program encourages creativity, critical thinking, and STEAM skills while bringing ideas to life.

Leading up to this year's competition, Carve secured media coverage for the 2024 winners on WGN-TV x2 (Chicago, IL), KING-TV (Seattle, WA), The Belmont Voice (Belmont, MA), First Stop News. Additionally, local [Patch.com](#) articles were shared, showcasing the winner's inventions to inspire participation in the 2025 Challenge.

Ahren Hoffman, Young Inventor Challenge® Director, highlighted the impact of the YIC on KMAX-TV (Sacramento, CA), emphasizing how the program nurtures young inventors by guiding them through the invention process and giving them a platform to present their ideas to industry professionals.

**Game Design Challenge
Results in Teen's First Place
Finish**

March 24, 2025 by Mary Byrne

[Facebook](#) [Twitter](#) [Email](#)



Keegan Franck, 14, sets up his board game, *Endless*. (Mary Byrne/Belmont Voice)

Keegan Franck
Belmont Voice (Belmont)



Olivia Sheets
WGN-TV (Chicago)



Elliot Anderson
WGN-TV (Chicago)



Palash Bhasin
KING-TV (Seattle)



Claire Drapa and Richard Lee
First Stop News

NATIONAL KID INVENTOR DAY
Chicagoland Kid Invents "Smack It!" Game

SPOTLIGHT CHICAGO
11:00 AM

CHICAGO TOY & GAME FAIR
Young Inventor Presents "Aliens vs. Cows" Game

SPOTLIGHT CHICAGO
1:05 PM

YOUNG INVENTORS CHALLENGE WINNER
ISSAQAH TWEEN INVENTS BOARD GAME

KX

MAKENI

Claire
Junior Young Inventor Winner

Richard
Junior Young Inventor Winner

FIRST STOP

Young Inventor Challenge®



This year, 180 young inventors submitted a total of 127 toy and game creations to the Young Inventor Challenge® (YIC), representing 8 U.S. states, as well as countries such as Mexico, Switzerland, Italy, and England. Each participant brought global perspectives to their creative concepts. The YIC continues to expand its international reach, offering a platform for young inventors worldwide to share their ideas.

The esteemed judges collectively dedicated over 200 hours to reviewing, scoring, and providing thoughtful feedback for each participant online. This rigorous review process helped identify winners across six categories, representing the best in innovation, originality, creativity, and market potential.

Carve is currently gearing up for press opportunities highlighting the 2025 winners!



TV Segments Coast-to-Coast



NBC in Indianapolis



NBC in Chicago



NBC in Wisconsin



CBS in Chicago



ABC in Chicago



FOX in Indianapolis



CBS in Sacramento

TV segments were aplenty this year in advance of the Fair, coast-to-coast. Carve worked with lifestyle and industry experts to secure both in-studio and Zoom segments highlighting exhibitor and sponsor priority products while also promoting Wishlist Weekend.

A new element this year was Zoom segments live from the Fair floor the Friday before show open. Carve was able to secure a live hit on KMAX-TV (Sacramento), kicking off Wishlist Weekend and exhibitor products, and a recorded spot on WISH-TV (Indianapolis) for the Toy of the Year (TOTY) award finalists that exhibited at the Fair.

Print & Digital Media



On the print & digital media front, the team was able to generate significant press for the Fair with placements in Indy with Kids, Fox 32, Neighborhood Parents Network, and many more!

As part of the TAGIE finalist announcement, Persy Arcement was featured on Fox & Friends and in the Wall Street Journal twice, highlighting her participation in the Chicago Toy & Game Fair. This story ran digitally in advance of the Fair and was featured front page of the Journal the weekend of the Fair!

From a B2B perspective, the toy and game trade media came through consistently for People of Play, publishing press releases and mentions about the Young Inventor Challenge, the TAGIEs and CHITAG.

Additionally, Carve utilized GlobeNewswire to promote both the Fair and the TAGIE winners. A Chicago Toy & Game Fair media alert was distributed through the local Chicago wire to drive interest from media and consumers, and a national press release highlighted the 2025 TAGIE Award winners post Fair.

Following the Fair, IndyStar (who attended both the TOTY finalist press conference and the TAGIE awards), highlighted the TOTY finalists in two holiday gift guides.

Influencer Marketing



New this year, Carve implemented pre-Fair specially curated influencer packages that were sent to toy, family, and lifestyle content creators to build awareness of Wishlist Weekend and CHITAG overall.

In the months leading up to the Fair, Carve reached out to confirmed exhibitors and sponsors gathering interest and securing samples for those who opted in to participate. Each specially-curated box highlighted 5 companies and included a \$50 Amazon gift card, courtesy of Wishlist Weekend sponsor, Amazon.

In advance of the Fair, Carve secured interest from over 40 influencers who were to share these packages by November 4th to encourage their followers to attend the Fair and participate in Wishlist Weekend. These posts generated a ton of excitement on social and brought Wishlist Weekend to life.

At the Fair, over 30 influencers were able to attend, capturing content onsite to share on their pages as well.

Carve is continuing to follow-up with those who attended the Fair to garner additional post-show content.

Chicago Toy & Game Fair Influencer Content



Social Analytics



300+

POSTS FROM
INFLUENCERS,
BRANDS, OUTLETS
AND MORE

11M+

AUDIENCE REACH
ACROSS TIKTOK,
INSTAGRAM,
FACEBOOK, ETC.

5.5%

ENGAGEMENT RATE
AVG ACROSS ALL
PLATFORMS

6%

- In 2025, over **1M+ fans** were exposed to UGC from this year's POP Week including CHITAG, the Young Inventor Challenge, and the TAGIEs.
- This represents a **+267% increase** in audience from 2024. Engagement rate (5.5%) remained consistent with 2024 posts, and above industry average (1%-5%)



Social Analytics



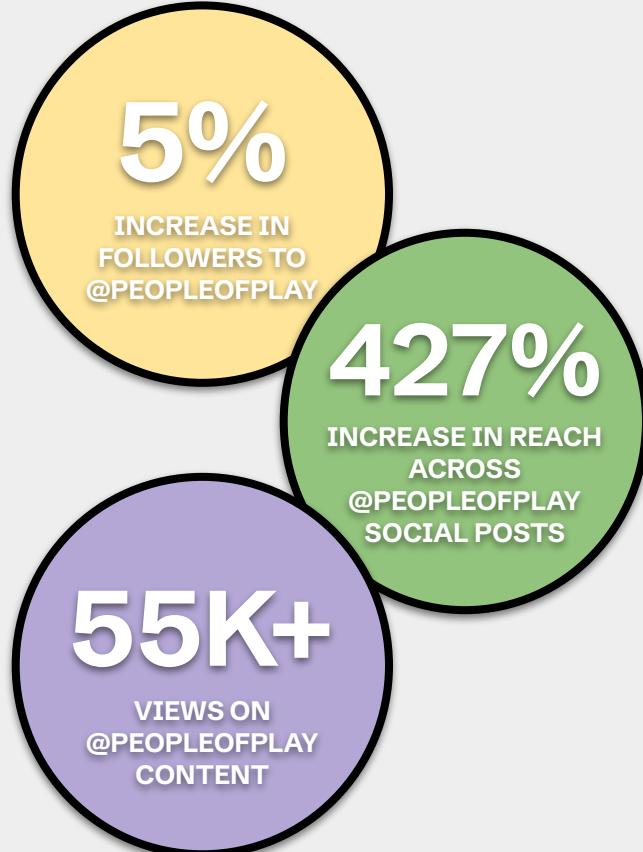
- Audience levels were elevated this year thanks to **strategic influencer partnerships, exciting press coverage, and support from exhibiting brands.**
- Popular content included influencer unboxing and giveaway posts, toy features, and footage tied to exclusive events like the Illinois State Yo-Yo Championships.



People of Play Owned Social Media



- 2025 post volume and viewership was softer than 2024, but still resulted in impressive gains on @PeopleOfPlay, including a **+427% increase in audience reach**.
- While some paid media was implemented, only **7% of audience came from paid support**, meaning the majority of viewership was organic.
- **60% of post views came from non-followers** to @PeopleOfPlay, helping driven a **+5% increase in followership** to the Instagram account.



Social Partners



Once again, the team partnered with leading influencers from the family, toy, and game space to help amplify awareness for CHITAG and Wishlist Weekend.

Alongside longtime supporter Katy Mann, who has attended the Fair for over 10 years, collaborators included Toy Testing Sisters, Grant Lyon, and Dani Standring.



Katy Mann
Indy with Kids
[@indywithkids](https://www.indywithkids.com)

As a 10-year supporter of the Fair, Katy promoted CHITAG on **WXIN-TV (Indianapolis)** and **WTHR-TV (Indianapolis)** featuring both exhibitor and sponsor toys while encouraging viewers to attend. She also shared the pre-Fair promotional graphic and discount code with her readers.

Following the event, she posted videos highlighting all the excitement and fun from the Fair!



Mandy Merrell & Mel Craig
Toy Testing Sisters
[@toystestingsisters](https://www.toytestingsisters.com)

Mandy and Mel from TTS promoted the Fair on Instagram, sharing a pre-Fair graphic in advance to help drive participation. During the Fair and post-Fair, the duo shared their favorite finds and highlights.



Grant Lyon
[@grantsgamerecs](https://www.grantsgamerecs.com)

Grant and Dani both promoted the Fair by encouraging their followers to attend and created unique opportunities for guests to interact with them directly.



Danielle Standring
[@dani_standring](https://www.dani_standring.com)

Through gameplay and hosting events at various booths, they brought an extra level of energy and engagement to the Fair!