

C-FB AGT Gifted Gazette

Newsletter of Carrollton-Farmers Branch Association for the Gifted & Talented

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www.CFBGifted.org

May 2007

HUNDREDS ATTEND SYMPOSIUM 2007

What comes in red or purple but never pastel? As many parents and teachers know, the answer is 'gifted kids.' From their many questions to their creative writing, high-ability children can be energetic, imaginative, sensitive and demanding, but they are certainly never dull.

"They're full of logic. They're full of questions. They wear us out" said keynote speaker Kathleen Fischer. But that high energy, she said, means they're learning.

One important task, she said, is to help gifted kids learn to navigate their way in a society in which they don't always fit in well, in which other children may see them as awkward or self-absorbed. Simply finding other high-ability children to befriend can make a huge difference to lonely children and help them see that someone can understand and appreciate their humor and insights instead of teasing them.

"There are a lot of smart people in the world," Fischer said. "The gift is that they love learning. They love curiosity." The parent of a gifted child has to work daily to keep the child's love for learning alive and not let it get squelched by class work that can be too repetitious. Another challenge is to help gifted kids realize they have an obligation to use their many skills wisely. "We need to help bright kids understand that their sizable capabilities are best used in service to others," she shared. "There are many kinds of being smart. These can include musical talents, physical abilities, interpersonal skills or mechanical aptitude. Special talents should be seen as a benefit and be allowed to develop and flourish. Unfortunately, gifted children sometimes are mislabeled as hyperactive or strange, when in fact, they are just different."

Fischer's keynote launched a day of educational seminars for parents and hands-on science and imagination workshops for children. Adult seminars explored such topics as math concepts, fine-motor skills, study skills and hyperactivity.

One new feature was a six hour robotics camp offered by DeWitt Perry Middle School's award winning robotics team.

The cities of Carrollton, Farmers Branch and Irving each proclaimed April 21 as a day to celebrate educating gifted children. Senator Florence Shapiro provided a Texas Flag that had flown over the State Capitol in honor of the symposium.

The symposium was the largest to date.

-Kristin Eoff

David Culp Earns 2007 SWAN Award

Mr. Culp is the LEAP science teacher at DeWitt Perry and coaches the robotics team. He was recognized for his outstanding and dedicated service to the students and the district's gifted community. Whether it is coaching robotics, hosting game nights, creating curriculum for LEAP, and other science classes, conducting workshops at a career conference for 7th and 8th grade girls in math and science, or hosting rocket nights, Mr. Culp instills his enthusiasm and love of learning in his students. Congratulations Mr. Culp!!

Jan Waggoner Awarded First Lifetime Achievement Award

Mrs. Waggoner, a longtime G/T educator and previous Swan winner, continues to serve our community beyond 'retirement.' She has served on C-FB AGT's board probably longer and in more capacities than any other.

Mrs. Waggoner was recognized for her work teaching gifted pupils, mentoring, coaching and advocating on behalf of children and parents. Jan received a standing ovation by symposium attendees as her accomplishments were shared.

Jan was surprised and humbled to receive the new award. "Working with gifted kids and parents has been a longtime passion for me," she said. "I am also honored to have in some way touched the lives of many students and parents over the years. I knew when I was just a young girl that I was meant to be an educator."

Laurie Fantine, C-FB AGT's Vice President honored Mrs. Waggoner with donations from the community that reflected Jan's other passions: traveling and motorcycling. This award, along with the Swan award will be presented at the School Board meeting May 24, 2007.

C-FB AGT Unveils New Logo



At Spring Symposium, C-FB AGT unveiled the new C-FB AGT logo displayed here. The logo was selected after a district-wide contest. Fran Bolte, C-FB ISD's art director helped the committee select the winning entry submitted by Sean Huang, a fourth grader at Las Colinas Elementary. This logo will appear on C-FB AGT T-shirts, and will

help brand C-FB AGT. Said Laurie Fantine, "This entry exemplifies what we are about as an organization. It is simple, visually appealing and makes a positive statement. How wonderful that a talented student from our district designed it!"

Gerry Charlebois Named Regional Advocate of the Gifted

TAGT (Texas Association for the Gifted & Talented) awarded Ms. Charlebois this honor for Region 10. The Regional Advocate for the Gifted demonstrates their commitment to gifted education by

- Positively impacting gifted education at the local, regional and/or state level.
- Promoting support for gifted education among key administrators and policy makers at all levels of government.
- Positively influencing gifted students, parents and/or educators.

- Creating and/or facilitating awareness and understanding of gifted and talented students.

Region 10 provides services to more than 650,000 students and 53,000 educators in 80 public school districts in the 9 counties in North Texas. Region 10 includes Plano, Frisco, McKinney, Dallas, Richardson and Highland Park, to name but a few of the ISDs. Gerry is a deserving candidate and worthy recipient of this award.

Gerry will be recognized at TAGT's Annual Convention in the Fall with award winners from throughout the State. Congratulations Gerry!

C-FB AGT Elects Officers at Symposium

The elected officers for the 2007-2008 term will be:

President: Mary Lovell
 Vice President: Alex Sagcal
 Treasurer: Kathy Duda
 Secretary: Karen Viegut

Volunteers are needed to serve in appointed positions, including those willing to 'team' with a current board to learn the ropes and provide a smooth transition in 2008. Positions open for this role include membership (Excel skills needed), and webmaster/e-blaster (html skills needed). Please contact Mary Lovell if you're interested or have questions: cfb_agt_president@yahoo.com

News from Advanced Academic Services

Dear Parents of C-FB's Gifted Students,

It sounds cliché to say the year has gone by so quickly, but it is true! We are at the point where we are finishing up final assessments, end-of-year ceremonies and special events while simultaneously planning for the Fall semester.

This year we administered almost two thousand Advanced Placement exams at the TLC. Many of your high school students took two, three and four AP tests within the first two weeks of May. Students who pass these exams will receive college credits, so it benefits them financially as well as academically.

We are continuing our journey into International Baccalaureate. The Diploma Programme at Ranchview High School has completed the first year in the authorization process. We are planning the teacher training to initiate the Middle Years Programme at Barbara Bush Middle School. Good Elementary is the farthest along and will be assisting Las Colinas Elementary as they begin the process to implement the Primary Years Programme at both campuses. The teachers from each of these four campuses will attend IB training in Austin this summer. We are proud and excited!

SAGE (Summer Academy of Gifted Education) will start on Monday, June 4th at Blalack Middle School. There are exciting classes for gifted students entering first through eighth grade. You may register online or in person on Thursday May 24th at Blalack. Call our office if you have questions: 972.968-4370.

While students are swimming, relaxing, having family time, our teachers continue to prepare for the coming school year. We have many teachers attending a College Board summer Institute to prepare for their advanced classes at the secondary level. Advanced Academic Services will be offering several weeks of staff development for teachers to receive their gifted certification or update training.

A favorite quote states, "You can't direct the wind, but you can adjust the sails." We at C-FB are adjusting our sails so we can have smooth sailing in the future!

Enjoy your summer!

Gerry Charlebois
 Executive Director, Advanced Academic Services
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Former LEAP Student named Presidential Scholar

Amelia H. Linn was named a 2007 Presidential Scholar. The U.S. Presidential Scholars Program was established in 1964, by executive order of the President, to recognize and honor some of our nation's most distinguished graduating high school seniors. In 1979, the program was extended to recognize students who demonstrate exceptional talent in the visual, creative and performing arts. Each year, up to 141 students are named as Presidential Scholars, one of the nation's highest honors for high school students. You may recall from an earlier newsletter, that Amelia has also been accepted to Harvard University. Congratulations and best wishes Amelia!



Web Resources: National Association for Gifted Children: www.nagc.org
 Texas Association for the Gifted and Talented – www.TXgifted.org
 Hoagies Gifted Education Page – www.hoagiesgifted.org

Seven Things To Do Before School Starts August 27th

1. Take a deep breath and enjoy each moment.
2. Have a great big laugh and put on a smile.
3. Play a game or read a book as a family.
4. Check out the resources for summer provided by the teachers.
5. Go to the library. Did you know that Carrollton and Farmers Branch have reciprocal library privileges? Get and use library cards for both cities' libraries. Each has wonderful summer-time programs.
6. Check out some web resources noted in the *Gifted Gazette* like www.hoagiesgifted.org or www.sengifted.org.
7. Join C-FB AGT and TAGT for 2007-2008. Go to the websites (www.cfbgifted.org and www.txgifted.org) Click through the membership links. You'll be glad you did.

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Some Snippets from Symposium 2007 Workshops

Parents sometimes forget that gifted kids are “kids” first and “gifted” second. As one high ability boy put it: “We’re just like other kids, only more so!” Other folks are charged with educating or refining the talent of gifted kids. Parents are charged with helping them become fine human beings.

Kathleen Fischer
Symposium Keynote Speaker and author
www.kathleenfischer.com

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Italics indicate quotations from John Stuart Mills

Gradually we realized that our babies had minds much quicker than average. School entrance brought difficulties to our entire family. Children suffer when placed in classrooms covering material already mastered. Children suffer when confined in uninteresting, unchallenging environments. Parents tire of the task of advocating for “square peg” children assigned to “round hole” schools.

Persons of genius are, ex vi termini, more individual than any other people—less capable, consequently, of fitting themselves, without hurtful compression, into any of the small number of moulds which society provides in order to save its members the trouble of forming their own character.

Mill’s words speak clearly to what I learned during two decades of advocating for gifted children. He realized that our primary concern should be their social and emotional needs, and our secondary concern should be their academic needs.

Whenever I asked schools for academic accommodations for my children, I based my request on their social and emotional needs. I did not worry about academic achievement-- we had that in spades. What I found far more compelling was insuring that my children and their minds didn’t feel imprisoned by curricula and instruction suited to the majority of children.

If they are of a strong character, and break their fetters, they become a mark for the society which has not succeeded in reducing them to commonplace, to point at with solemn warning as "wild," "erratic," and the like; much as if one should complain of the Niagara river for not flowing smoothly between its banks like a Dutch canal.

During my parenting years, I learned that we must teach gifted children not merely academic matters, but also matters of the heart. We need to validate their feelings about their differences from the norm. We need to validate their feelings about how society treats genius. We need to tell our children that whatever makes them smart in academic senses likely also makes them smart in other senses.

We also need to tell our children that many new discoveries and works of great literature have come with social and emotional costs, including social rejection and emotional turmoil. Galileo was held under house arrest until his death. Darwin was attacked by the churches of his time. Orville and Wilbur Wright felt great skepticism. More than a few Nobel Laureates suffered forms of ostracism during the initial years after their great works.

I support the work of SENG because I believe that gifted children and adults need social and emotional support.

Wenda Sheard, J.D., PhD.
Boardmember, Supporting Emotional Needs of the Gifted (SENG)
www.sengifted.org

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