



# Gifted Unlimited, II

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Chartered in 1963, NWGCA is a statewide, nonprofit organization of people with an interest in meeting the special needs of highly capable children

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## There's more to raising gifted than managing their education



*Report of Presentation by Dr. James Webb, sponsored by NWGCA, SENG, and Lake Washington School District*

"Parents are the most important factor in a gifted child's life," affirmed Dr. James Webb, noted child psychologist at a talk on July 27, 2010, at the Redmond High School Performing Arts Center. He also noted that parents have the fewest resources to carry out that task and emphasized that there is more to raising gifted children than managing their academic experience.

More than 300 parents of gifted had the extraordinary opportunity to hear Webb talk about the joys and challenges of parenting

**NWGCA urges parents to learn more about their gifted children by attending parent events scheduled throughout the upcoming year. (See back page for dates and registration details.)**

high-potential children, a term he prefers instead of the label "gifted."

Many parents become concerned that their gifted children struggle at school with boredom and underachievement. "A quarter to one-half of classroom time is spent waiting for others to catch up," said Webb, who supports parents' need to be advocates for their children within the school system. He noted that most underachievement starts in the first, second, and third grades, thereby depriving a child of the opportunity to learn resilience, a key to adult success.

*Continued on p. 5*

## Where parents can go to learn more about raising gifted children

Parents of gifted rarely have the opportunity to receive information about the specific academic, emotional, and social needs of their gifted children. They have even less opportunity to talk with other adults candidly about the delights and the

challenges of raising truly bright children.

Once again, NWGCA is holding its popular CONNECTIONS CONFERENCE in Redmond, Washington, on Saturday morning, January 29, 2011. Save this date on your calendar. We are planning each ses-

sion to have lots of time for parents of gifted children to talk with one another, to ask questions, and to learn helpful tips for supporting their gifted children.

The goals of the conference are to provide parents

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## President's Letter

### PARENT SUPPORT GROUPS FOR GIFTED EDUCATION PROGRAMS ESSENTIAL IN 2011

If your school district does not have a parent support group for gifted students, it needs one! Here are the reasons why.

Parents' involvement in their children's education is the most important determinant of successful school experiences.

Most school administrators and even gifted education teachers have little or no training in identifying and serving the academic needs of gifted children. It is often left to parents to educate the educators on appropriate academic accommodation for their chil-

dren, based on best-practices and research rather than opinion and bias.

- Gifted education programs in many school districts are in peril. Some school boards and administrators believe funding for gifted has been eliminated. *It has not!* Funding will remain constant and categorical as long as parents continue to convince legislators of the need.
- Gifted education has been included in the new basic education definition. Once gifted education is actually funded as part of basic education, (no later than 2017), legislators are counting on parents to *insist* that the gifted education funds be spent on actual gifted education programs and services in their school districts.

I am pleased to report that a number of parent support groups have formed or become more robust this last year. I have had the privilege of working with parent leaders across the state to design parent support groups that reflect the unique needs of their school district and program.

One of the services Northwest Gifted Child Association provides is guidance to parents who want to work successfully with their school districts to provide the best gifted program possible for children in their school district. Please contact NWGCA if you would like to discuss forming a parent group (our snail mail and email addresses can be found in the box on page 1; email addresses of board member on page 8). *Marcia Holland*

## Organizational skills and gifted children



*Carol Fertig, Prufrock Press, January 22, 2006, www.prufrock.com.*



Frequently parents and teachers complain that gifted students lack organizational skills. In fact, it is the lack of these skills that often hold students back.

The National Association for Gifted Children has an interesting article titled *Organization Skills*. It suggests possible **reasons** why a gifted child may appear to lack organization.

1. He doesn't see a reason to participate appropriately at school.
2. She has missed some basic foundation skills along the way.

3. The student has a subtle learning disability.
4. It may be a sign of perfectionism.

There are many reasons for lack of organization, but none of them should be used as an excuse for poor school performance. It is vital that parents help students to overcome this problem. How the child views the situation will make a difference in the best way to approach the problem. In this article, suggestions are given that get student buy-in when selecting methods that may improve organization.

When a child tries a new method for organization, the method must come from the child according to *Organizational Skills for Visual-Spatial Learners*, an article found at

[www.giftedhomeschoolers.org](http://www.giftedhomeschoolers.org). It simply will not work to try to become organized under somebody else's (like a parent's) system. (I think this is probably true whether a person has a strong visual-spatial bent or not.) The student must create his own meaningful strategies that can be understood and remembered. Here's how to help your young person get started:

- Be sure to visit office supply stores and other places that carry a variety of products designed to help with organization.
- Color-coded envelopes, files, and pocket folders are perfect for storing specific papers.
- Colored index cards are a great tool for note taking.

*Continued on p. 6*



# Convening your initial parent group meeting

By Joanne Hall

The Gifted Education Advisory Council (GEAC) is the parent organization for parents of highly capable students in the Lake Washington School District (LWSD) which has an enrollment of 23,000 students. The GEAC is a 501(c)3 organization that has served families for 21 years. Its mission is to provide outreach, enhancement, and advocacy support for the students, teachers, parents and staff associated with LWSD highly capable learning programs. We expand educational opportunities for students through direct classroom support, and for parents through parenting classes, educational forums, and improved communication. We also work to raise awareness of state and national gifted learning professional organizations and legislative issues. Our Web site can be found at [www.lwsdgeac.org](http://www.lwsdgeac.org).

On a personal level, this will be my tenth year serving on the GEAC board. I have personal experience from the elementary through the college years for my children. For the past three years, I have also chaired Parent Education at our district level PTSA Council, a junior high PTSA, and a high school PTSA. Hence, I organize programs for a broad population of parents in addition to those parents in the highly capable program.

Keys to building successful parent education programs include:

**Relationship Building.** It is important to understand the parents you serve as well as the students and the staff (teachers and administration). Programs planned must take into consideration needs, sensitivities, strengths and areas of interest. Our gifted parent group has a very strong and positive working relationship with

our administrative and teaching staff in the gifted program. Parents and staff who attend events and find the information valuable come back to future events and share upcoming events with friends, neighbors, etc.

**Free programs.** In general, we do not charge parents fees for single event programs. This is useful when starting a program because otherwise you compete with all of the others offering programs with fees (hospitals, cities, organizations, etc.)

**Topic Selection.** Topics must be pertinent to a significant portion of the parent population. Avoid topics that appear negative or might create conflict with staff. Topics we have hosted in the past two years have included the following: parents with students transitioning to or within the gifted program; parenting the highly capable adolescent; “The gifted child: superachiever or underachiever—parents and teachers make the difference” (webinar with Sylvia Rimm); the twice exceptional child; applying to highly selective colleges; and AP information night; brain sports or competitive sports for the mind—an opportunity to learn about enrichment competitions.

We have offered an eight-week SENG Model “Guiding the Gifted Child” series twice a year for the last three years. An experienced psychologist facilitates the series, and we charge a fee to pay for the instructor and the accompanying book.

**Speakers.** Select speakers with significant experience with the topic. Those having a sense of humor are well received. Be sure speakers provide strategies in their presentations that parents can use.

**Parents Limited Time.** I am a firm believer in separating parent education programs from the organization’s business meetings (PTSA and GEAC). If a parent is willing to spare me two hours of their time, I try to ensure that they laugh a little, build a little community, and go home with some strategies they can implement easily. Be sure the speaker addresses the topic described in the promotion.

**Promotion.** GEAC sends out regular email communication to parents including upcoming events (our own and other local programs of interest as well as Web sites and occasional articles of interest.) Our parent organization does not have the email addresses of all families, but we continue to build an email contact list. We depend on teachers and the administration to send out some information. Hence, those relationships mentioned earlier are critical to spreading the word. I prefer a several sentence description of the program highlighting the topics to be covered.

PTSA Council programs are promoted in all of the schools by PTSA leadership and the district administration. The events are posted on our district Tandem calendar. We collect email addresses of all those attending events and send upcoming events to those who have attended prior events or those requesting information. We begin promoting an event three or four week ahead and send a reminder four to seven days in advance .

**Evaluation.** Find out whether the program met parents’ expectations. Parents of gifted students can set very high expectations so some unexpected, negative feedback may occur.

*Continued on p. 4*



# Gifted parent track included in WAETAG conference on October 16, 2010

Northwest Gifted Child Association (NWGCA) is collaborating with the Washington Association of Educators of Talented and Gifted (WAETAG) to provide a day of information for parents of gifted children on October 16, 2010, at the WAETAG Conference.

The conference theme is “Proficiency Is Not Enough”, referring to the additional challenge of educating gifted children in a time of No Child Left Behind legislation. An interesting article on the conference theme can be viewed at [www.nagc.org/index.aspx?id=997](http://www.nagc.org/index.aspx?id=997).

Sessions especially for parents will be provided to make this informative day valuable to parents who will come away with tips and tools to deal with underachievement and development of organizational skills suitable for their gifted child. Facilitated sessions will promote sharing, connection with other parents, and a sense of no longer being alone with the task of raising your gifted child.

In addition, parents will be able to attend the keynote presentations by Michael Thompson, the author of 30 books on language arts for gifted children, including *The Word Within the*

*Word* series, *Caesar’s English*, and *The Magic Lens* series. Thompson, through his teaching, books and presentations, has inspired thousands of students and educators with a new love of language and literature. During his 30-year career, he has been a classroom teacher, middle school head, and academic. He is now a full-time author, consultant and acclaimed speaker and workshop presenter.

Thompson has served on the Board of Directors of the National Association for Gifted Children and is an online instructor in language arts for the Northwestern University’s Gifted Learning Links program.

There will be three breakout sessions on Saturday specifically designed for parents of gifted. These sessions will cover:

### 10:00-11:00 **Bright Kids: Dull Performances**

*Moderator, Pauline Bowie*

Attend this facilitated session based on excerpts from SENG’s webinar, *The Gifted Child: Superachiever or Underachiever—Parents and Teachers Make the Difference*, presented by Sylvia Rimm. Gain new tools to help your children seek and reach their real potential.

Learn some new techniques from other parents.

### 11:15-12:15 **Be a Powerful Advocate for Gifted**

#### **Panel of Parents from Different School Districts**

*Moderator, Marcia Holland*

Join this forum on being a powerful advocate for gifted—your child, your school, your district, our state, our nation. Get caught up on what’s new in Washington. Sharpen your advocacy skills so that you will be heard and get results. Share what you know. Learn from others. Collect resources.

### 2:15-3:15 **Gifted Organizational Skills—An Oxymoron?**

*Facilitator, Marcia Holland*

Parents share, in a facilitated dialogue, the challenges, frustrations, and successes of helping our gifted children get and stay organized. Hone your creativity, sense of humor, patience, and belief in ultimate success. Explore learning and thinking styles that require different approaches to organization for different kids.

Don’t miss this rare opportunity to learn more about your gifted child! Registration details are included on page 8 of this newsletter.

## Parent Groups, continued from p. 3

### ADDITIONAL RECOMMENDATIONS AND INFORMATION

- Research webinars. SENG and NAGC offer monthly webinars for viewing after the event. This is a low cost approach with reputable experts on many topics of interest.
- Learn what is going on in your neighboring districts, private schools, etc. There are opportunities to share resources

and expenses. Well-attended events (20 or more) seem to help build program momentum.

- Parents value handouts; which can also be posted on Web sites for those unable to attend.
- Parents most likely to attend programs are those new to a program, transitioning between schools, or experiencing problems.



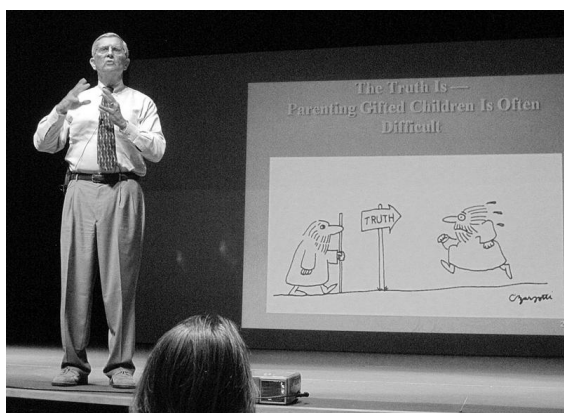
## Raising gifted, continued from p. 1

Webb pointed out that parents need a better understanding of their high-potential children who are often prone to social and emotional problems that can affect their development. These include power struggles, existential depression, misdiagnosis, stress and perfectionism, and judg-

ment that lags behind intellectual ability. Understanding these problems is further complicated for parents. Four factors that add complexity include the level of giftedness, asynchronous development, over-excitability, and thinking and learning styles.

Parents were startled to hear that it is common for gifted children to be misdiagnosed with behavioral issues when, in fact, they are exhibiting characteristics of giftedness. For example, gifted children with psychomotor oversensitivity can be labeled ADHD. Children with reactive hypoglycemia due to a brain that consumes all of their carbohydrate fuel faster than they can replace it are accused of poor attention spans.

Dr. Webb, one of the 25 most influential psychologists in gifted education, founded Supporting the Emotional Needs of the Gifted (SENG) in 1981, a national nonprofit organization with programs that support not only gifted individuals but also their parents, educators, and health-care providers.



Dr. James Webb



## Where parents can go, continued from p. 1

of gifted with the opportunity to CONNECT, INTERACT, and EXPLORE.

While the program is not fully flushed out, we can tell you a bit about two of the sessions.

**STEVEN CURTIS**, PhD, child clinical psychologist, will speak on “Appropriate Parent Expectations of Their Gifted Child’s School Experience”. His goal is to help attendees get a grasp on what the school experience can be and what expectations are too ambitious. He will help attendees think about how to find other activities that can fill in gaps left by the realistic school experience. His presentation can certainly help lower parent anxiety; help parents take the pressure

off themselves, teachers and students; and encourage parents to be accountable for setting educational goals that truly meet the values held by the gifted child and his or her family.

**JANE HESSLEIN**, fifth grade humanities teacher at Seattle Country Day School, will talk about, “The Five Things Gifted Children Want Their Parents to Know” based on surveys she has done with 40 gifted students at the school. This will open up a conversation on some of the social and emotional needs of gifted children.

### Why attend the Conference?

- Do you have questions about your child’s exceptional abilities and differences?

- How often can you talk with educators and other parents who understand about the joys and challenges of raising a high-ability child?
- Will you invest half a day to remind yourself of the joys of raising a high-ability child?

Don’t miss this rare opportunity to continue to learn how to help your children manage their giftedness.

I've always known I was gifted, which is not the easiest thing in the world for a person to know, because you're not responsible for your gift, only for what you do with it. —Hazel Scott



## Organizational skills, continued from p. 2

• The use of a day-timer or planner to record due dates and appointments is a tool available for the visual-spatial learner.

I do think that Linda Leviton, a member of the Visual-Spatial Resource Access team and a visual-spatial learner herself, has an interesting idea. She states that visual-spatial learners are either horizontal or vertical organizers. If they are horizontal, they need a long table (preferably not deep) to put out and leave out works in process. If they are vertical, they need places to create stacks. She bought herself one of those paper

sorters with cubbies and keeps it right next to her computer with labels for each section.

Other ideas to help with organization include:

- Using different colors to record homework assignments in one's planner
- Allowing enough time during transitions to record assignments, put materials away, etc.
- Marking assignments as they are finished to give one a sense of accomplishment

• Placing materials to go to school or to take to a practice or lesson in a specific area near the door that your child exits. If this can be done the night before, it eliminates stress in the morning

- Having adequate office supplies. It's difficult for a child to do homework if she can't find paper, pencils, scissors, tape, post-its, and the like
- Setting a good example as an adult by having good organizational skills yourself



Garden Party

On a pleasant July evening gifted education leaders from around the Puget Sound area gathered at the Seattle home of Pauline Bowie for an informal evening of sharing and conversation. Hosted by the Bowies and NWGCA, the event provided an opportunity for parent group leaders to exchange ideas and resources with each other and with gifted education experts Dr. Nancy Robinson; Dr. Steve Curtis; Amy Price, SENG, executive director; Marcia Holland, NWGCA board president; and Stephen Martin, WAETAG president. Parent groups represented the Bellevue, Edmonds, Everett, Kent, Lake Stevens, Lake Washington, Puyallup, Seattle, Shoreline, and Tacoma school districts.

Interested in attending the next gathering or hosting an exchange in your area? Contact NWGCA at [northwestgca@gmail.com](mailto:northwestgca@gmail.com).

### NWGCA Membership Application

Does your employer match contributions?  Yes  No

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

Phone \_\_\_\_\_ Email \_\_\_\_\_

School District \_\_\_\_\_

I don't want to share my information with other Washington organizations for the gifted.

Please cut or copy this form and send it with a check for \$35 (yearly dues) to:  
NWGCA Treasurer, PO Box 10704, Spokane, Washington 99209. Make check payable to NWGCA.

2009-2010

# Washington Highly Capable Membership Campaign

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[northwestgca@gmail.com](mailto:northwestgca@gmail.com)

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[www.waetag.net](http://www.waetag.net)

### WCGE—since 1985

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**Be a part of the force to further gifted education in Washington  
“Join 1 or all 3 statewide organizations”**

*Northwest Gifted  
Child Association*

*Washington Educators  
of Talented and Gifted*

*Washington Coalition  
for Gifted Education*

## NWGCA

### Mission

To support highly capable/  
gifted children by:

- Supporting **parents**
- Disseminating information
- Encouraging development and maintenance of programs for gifted students
- Supporting legislation

### Major Activities

Publishes a newsletter with local, state and national resources for gifted families

### Why Join?

Parents need a voice at the state level as well as a way to connect on a local level. Parents are vital to ensure gifted programming remains a priority.

## WAETAG

### Mission

To improve educational opportunities for gifted students by strengthening services to and providing information for **professionals** serving these students in all settings.

### Major Activities

- Leadership symposium
- Annual statewide conference and workshop
- Quarterly coordinator meetings by ESD
- Newsletter
- Student scholarship for summer opportunities
- Web page on regional, state, and national issues

### Why Join?

Teachers, parents and students face many of the same challenges in meeting the needs of the highly capable student. WAETAG provides a way to share ideas, voice concerns, and increase professional preparation.

## WCGE

### Mission

To work collaboratively with key state governmental decision makers on issues related to the education of highly capable students, their families, and their schools.

### Major Activities

- Employ a **lobbyist**
- Educate key decision makers on issues
- Provide legislators with current information and seek their support for funding and programs .
- Work with state agencies on highly capable issues
- Inform members about legislative issues

### Why Join?

The Coalition is YOUR voice in Olympia and is the only non-profit gifted advocacy group in Washington that can hire a lobbyist. As a member of the Coalition, you provide the necessary financial support.

**JOIN TODAY** for the 2010-2011 school year  
NWGCA/WAETAG  
**TAX DEDUCTIBLE**

## Membership Information

## Does your employer match contributions?

Name \_\_\_\_\_ School District \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_  I do not want to share my information with other WA gifted organizations

Email Address \_\_\_\_\_

Join:  NWGCA \$35/year      Mail to PO Box 10704, Spokane, WA 99209  
 WAETAG \$35/year      Mail to 830 Cary Rd., Edmonds, WA 98020  
 WCGE \$35/year      Mail to B. Poyneer, 18149 147 Ave SE, Renton, WA 98058  
 **JOINT MEMBERSHIP SPECIAL**      Mail to B. Poyneer, 18149 147 Ave SE, Renton, WA 98058  
**Only \$90 for all 3 organizations**      **Make joint membership check payable to WCGE**

**TOGETHER  
WE'RE STRONGER**



## More opportunities to learn about raising your gifted child

### **“Proficiency Is Not Enough”**

WAETAG Conference  
October 16, 2010  
Bellevue Hilton Hotel  
Bellevue, Washington  
Register at [www.WAETAG.org](http://www.WAETAG.org)

### **CONNECTIONS Conference**

Parents—The Key to Gifted  
Children’s Success  
January 29, 2011  
Redmond High School Performing  
Arts Center  
Redmond, Washington  
8:00 a.m.-12:30 p.m.  
Register at [www.nwgca.org](http://www.nwgca.org)

### **2011 Gifted Education Day in Olympia**

February 11, 2011  
Columbia Room, State Capitol  
Olympia, Washington  
Register at [www.wagifted@earthlink.net](http://www.wagifted@earthlink.net)

### **SENG in Seattle 2011 Annual National Conference**

July 15-17, 2011  
SeaTac Doubletree Hotel  
Seattle, Washington  
Registration detail at [www.sengifted.org](http://www.sengifted.org)



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