



Northwest Gifted Child Association (NWGCA)

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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A Parent's Perspective on GE Day

By Cindy Zetts

Anyone near the Capitol Campus in Olympia on February 6, 2009, probably had little trouble spotting advocates for gifted education. It was hard to miss those neon green felt scarves, the six-inch gold circular stickers, and the hand-painted signs with slogans in support of gifted education, worn or carried by 200 or so students, teachers, and parents who converged in Olympia that day. Organizers of the event—Northwest Gifted Child Association, Washington

Association of Educators of the Talented and Gifted, and Washington Coalition for Gifted Education—wanted state lawmakers to take notice of the participants and recognize the necessity of funding gifted education in Washington's public schools.

As a parent attending for the first time, I was unsure what to expect. I accompanied Ann Koch and Marcia Holland, long-time gifted education advocates, to meetings with two of our 47th District lawmakers, Rep. Geoff Simpson and

Sen. Claudia Kaufmann. For more impact, we brought along my daughter, Sabrina, and her friend, Alaina Mothershead, so that they could tell lawmakers about the benefits of gifted education and its importance for the future of bright students. (Check out their essay on p. 3.)

The day started in the Columbia Room of the Capitol building, where large contingents of students, parents, and teachers from Puyallup and Edmonds joined other smaller

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Connections conference well-received

Nearly 50 parents and educators attended NWGCA's first Connections :Parents of Gifted Conference in Tukwila on March 7, 2009. Below is a letter from a parent participant:

"I want to thank you for organizing the Connections conference on parenting gifted children. This was the first time I have been surrounded by parents who are dealing with the same challenges (and joys!) that I

am in parenting a gifted "out of the box" child. The networking and opportunity to exchange ideas with parents who have been down this road before me was fabulous! The seminars and break out groups were also terrific. The expertise of the speakers during the seminar was evident. For the first time I can remember, I asked questions about how to foster my

child's unique abilities and I felt that someone was listening, understanding my family's situation, and providing me with useful answers. I hope to have the opportunity to attend more seminars in the future as parenting a gifted child has proven, thus far, to be a perpetually changing course into (for me) uncharted territory."

—Amy Prezbindowski,
Puyallup

President's letter: A time to be vigilant



It has been a busy spring for NWGCA. We started 2009 with conversations with Rep. Pat Sullivan, a champion of gifted education. He has been leading the effort in the Washington House of Representatives to include gifted education in the definition of basic education. Doing so will provide more stable funding for the education of the gifted learners in our state.

We supported Gifted Education Day activities in Olympia on February 6, 2009, that brought together over 200 parents, students, teachers, and administrators. One of the main organizers of the event, Barbara Poyneer of the Washington Coalition for Gifted Students remarked, "It was exhilarating to be in the Columbia Room on Friday morning and see the large crowd of parents, teachers and

students and to feel the energy flow. All the bright green scarves from Puyallup and the purple t-shirts from Edmonds were a heartening sight." She further pointed out that participation in Gifted Education Day has gone from "strength to strength these past few years." We can only hope that these efforts will be reflected in positive results for gifted children in the current legislative session. Contact was made during this year's event with 22 legislators.

NWGCA has created its first Web site at www.nwgca.org, and it will soon be fully functional. We were able to use the site to promote our first parent education conference, CONNECTIONS. The conference featured two excellent keynote speakers: Nancy Cartwright, PhD, who spoke on "Beyond Boredom and Anxiety,"

and Steven Curtis, PhD, who gave insights into how to help gifted children avoid underachievement in his presentation, "Continually Motivated to Learn."

Despite a spring snow squall on Saturday, March 7, about 50 parents came together with curiosity and questions. They enjoyed interacting with one another and the presenters, and some even went to lunch afterwards to continue their dialogue on the challenges and joys of raising their unique children.

NWGCA is committed to continuing to find ways to support parents, promote key legislation that provides appropriate education for gifted children, and educate policy makers, educators, and parents on the needs and characteristics of gifted children.

—Marcia Holland

CONNECTIONS: Parents of Gifted Conference March 7, 2009, Tukwila, Washington



Parents participate in break-out session with Dr. Nancy Cartwright.



Dr. Steve Cartwright addresses large group.



Parents from Edmonds School District enjoy discussion.

Photographs by David Berg

GE Day, Continued from p. 1

groups from around the state to hear speakers and get some instructions before heading out to meet with individual senators and representatives. Speakers included 47th District Rep. Pat Sullivan, a gifted-education supporter who came to encourage the group, and Robert Harkins, deputy superintendent for communications and external relations at the Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction.

Harkins, who attended the event in place of Randy Dorn, the new state schools superintendent, said he empathized with students in the crowd because he had been a gifted student who needed to be challenged in school. As he talked about his educa-

tion, adults and kids in the crowd nodded in agreement, recognizing that he understood how they felt.

Groups from Puyallup and Edmonds met with their lawmakers in the Columbia Room, but the rest of us met with legislators in their offices, either individually or in small groups. Although the words were different, the message was the same: Gifted education is essential to provide a challenging education in public schools. Without adequate funding for public-school gifted programs, gifted education could become a bastion of private schools, making it accessible only to students from well-off families are well-off.

Some of the brightest kids in the state's schools are unchallenged, even bored in the classroom and some are in danger of dropping out altogether, because the state does not mandate gifted education and does not include it in funding for basic education, advocates say. That means that the money could be cut any time.

If you feel your children aren't reaching their highest potential in public schools, let your legislators know. Amid an enormous state budget crisis, adequate funding for anything is hardly guaranteed, but the more we demand gifted education be included in basic-education funding, the more lawmakers might listen.



Students, grades 2 - 9 from Evergreen EXCEL program.



Rep. Deb Wallace talks with students in house gallery.

Photographs by Kate Altenhof-Long

Student perspective on gifted education

By Alaina Mothershead and Sabrina Zetts

Gifted education is an essential part of our learning. We feel it is what has made us successful in school. Funding and mandating gifted classes are important, but being challenged is what really helps us.

Regular classes are good for non-gifted students but not for highly-capable students. In regular classes, students can't move at their own pace.

They all have to be doing the same work no matter whether they're struggling or excelling in their work. In gifted classes, in most subjects, you can move ahead of the class or receive extra help.

All gifted students need to be challenged to their personal potential, which means that they can't be in regular classes. If you are not challenged in class, then you are uninter-

ested in your work and feel like everything is too easy for you. A challenge is something hard, and in our opinion, it is usually for your own benefit..

For example, I, Sabrina, am in a school for gifted kids. I skipped fifth grade because I felt that I could do sixth-grade work and be challenged to the right degree. I am now in the sixth grade, and I feel that I am challenged.

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2009 summer opportunities for the gifted

ENRICHMENT FOR HIGHLY CAPABLE KIDS

Eastern Washington University
2009 SATORI Camp, July 26-Aug 1
Residential, Ages 12-18
509-879-2183
www.satoricamp.org
info@satoricamp.org

Western Washington University
SPY Camp, week-long Residential / Commuter
Grades 4-6 July 6-10
Grades 7-8 July 13-17
+variety of other day programs
360-650-3308
youth@wwu.edu
www.wwu.edu, "summer programs"

University of Washington Robinson Center/Young Scholars
Summer Challenge, grades 5-6, 3 weeks
Summer Stretch, grades 7-9, 3-5 weeks
Commuter only
206-543-4160
cscy@u.washington.edu
<http://depts.washington.edu/cscy/>

Washington State University
Cougar Quest, grades 7-8, 9-12
July 19-24/July 26-31 - Residential
509-335-1235
cougarquest@wsu.edu

Keyboard Explorations & String Camp,
grades 7-12, June 28-July 3 – Residential/Commuter
509-335-3898
www.summer.wsu.edu/programs/rcchandler@wsu.edu

Summer at Seabury, Tacoma
Weekly day camps starting June 15,
sessions for K-2 grades, 3-4 grades,

5-6 grades
9 a.m.-3 p.m. Before- and after-care available.
seaburydirector@comcast.net
www.seabury.org

Online Courses
Prospective students, grades 2-12
Stanford University
www.epgy.stanford.edu
Johns Hopkins University, Center for Talented Youth, www.cty.jhu.edu

ENRICHMENT FOR ALL KIDS

iD Tech Camps
Ages 7-17
Week-long technology camps
Day/extended day/residential options
35 universities nationally including the University of Washington
888-709-8324 (TECH), option 1
info@internalDrive.com
www.internalDrive.com

Port Townsend Marine Science Center
Port Townsend, Washington
Marine science day and residential (week-long)
camps; daily interpretive programs for families and beach walks
Family and ages 8-14
Marine Biology
residential program, ages 9-13
360-385-5582, 800-566-3932
Research Cruises for the Family
www.ptmsc.org or info@ptmsc.org

Oregon Museum of Science and Industry
Portland, Oregon
503-797-4662
Summer camps, ages 7-18; also for

adults and families
Day classes, ages 4-14 and activities
camps@omsi.edu
www.omsi.edu

Portland State University
Portland, Oregon
Saturday Academy
22 week-long day camps, grades 2-12
www.saturdayacademy.com
503-725-2344
Project oriented classes held throughout Portland Metro area
TAG Challenge Commuter Camp
Reed College, grades 4-5, June 22-26

Pacific Science Center
Seattle, Washington
Summer science day camps
grades K-8
Shows and exhibits
www.pacsci.org
206-443-2925

Centrum
Residential, grades 8-12
Port Townsend, Washington
360-385-3102
Various music, dance, and creative writing workshops
www.centrum.org
info@centrum.org

Centrum Young Artists Project
High School Summer Arts Intensives
June 21-27, 2009, Residential
Port Townsend, Washington
360-385-3102, x. 114

Camp Invention
Day camps for grades 1-6
Numerous sites in Washington and Oregon
800-968-4332
www.campinvention.org

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Summer Opportunities, Continued from p. 4

U.S. Space Camps & Space Academy

Ages 9-18; adult programs, and adult+ child programs, commuter/residential Huntsville, Alabama

800-637-7223

www.spacecamp.com

University of Oregon

www.uoyouth.org

541-346-1400, -1402, -1405

Summer Enrichment Program

2-week residential program

grades 6-10

Session 1: July 5-18

Session 2: July 19-Aug 1

Super Summer 2009 Grades K-5

3-week commuter program

1-3 classes/day, June 29-July 17

Summer Scholars Program 2009

grades 3-5

2-week commuter program focused on advanced, accelerated work in three curricular areas

OPPORTUNITIES FOR GIFTED ADULTS

Boise State University

Edufest 2009: Celebrating 13 Years

Boise, Idaho

July 26-31, 2009

2009 Edufest Parent Institute

July 25, 8:30-3:00 p.m.

A Counselor's Perspective on Parenting Gifted Children & Adolescents

Presenter: Dr. Jean Sunde Peterson

208-378-0579

info@edufest.org

www.edufest.org

Think It Forward, 32nd Confratute Summer Institute, University of Connecticut

July 13-24, 2009

Two, one-week residential programs for gifted education professionals and parents of gifted learners

www.gifted.uconn.edu/confratute

Annual SENG Conference—

26th Anniversary: Mission Possible

Orlando, Florida

July 17-19, 2009

845-797-5054

www.SENGifted.org

office@sengifted.org



Mark your calendar for world conference on gifted

18th World Conference on Gifted and Talented Children, August 3- 7, 2009, Sheraton Vancouver Wall Centre Hotel, Vancouver, Canada

The 18th Biennial World Conference on Gifted and Talented Children is the largest international gathering of teachers, administrators, faculty, researchers, and parents in the field of gifted and talented learners. Those interested in all aspects of this field, from experienced teachers to junior teachers, faculty members to administrators and school trustees, human resource promoters to parent advocates, are all encouraged to attend.

The conference has an ambitious list of objectives, including:

- Share and discuss recent advances in programs, planning and practices in the field of high-ability learners
- Review advances in classroom practice and how they apply to personalizing teaching
- Discuss administrative options emerging throughout the world
- Review parent developments for families with special needs children
- Provide youth summit activities to increase skills and networking in high-ability learners
- Support the career development of educators and researchers with an interest in gifted and talented children.

The Youth Summit will run alongside the World Conference, from August 3-7, 2009, on the University of British Columbia's scenic campus.

Participants will investigate, problem-solve, and create action plans that will unite 180 gifted students from around the world in realizing a dream for a better future.

Registration deadlines include: early registration, May 15; hotel reservations, July 1; and regular registration, July 15. For more information, go to www.worldgifted2009.com/.



Vancouver, Canada.

Steps we can take today to help gifted students

Rising unemployment, an economy in continued decline and a credit market in crisis are only a few of the many challenges awaiting our newly elected and re-elected lawmakers in Washington, DC, and Olympia.

Though not the subject of front-page headlines, our nation is in the midst of perhaps an even more serious calamity when it comes to educating our highest performing students. If our lawmakers don't take appropriate action, this quiet crisis will negatively affect our nation for generations to come.

Gifted students throughout the nation are, as a whole, underserved and overlooked, with high-achieving students from high-poverty communities hit the hardest. While low-performing students from disadvantaged backgrounds have made encouraging academic progress in recent years, the learning progress of their classmates who were initially high performers has stagnated. Recently, we've learned that U.S. student performance has remained flat in science and is only middle-of-the-pack when compared to the performance of students around the world.

Only when gifted students, especially those from high-poverty backgrounds, are supported—instructed by teachers trained to work with them, challenged by rigorous curriculum, and grouped by ability rather than age—will their skills and talents be carried into all sectors of society. Properly prepared gifted students will ensure that America is better prepared to participate in the increasingly competitive global market. We must urge lawmakers at all levels to get serious about addressing the crisis in gifted education.

Our top students deserve the attention and programs that will allow them to excel and to reach their full potential. Nothing less than our nation's future is at stake.

As citizens deeply interested in gifted education, NWGCA urges you to please take the following actions immediately. The Washington legislature is debating the state budget for

Properly prepared gifted students will ensure that America is better prepared to participate in the increasingly competitive global market.

the next two years even as you read this article. Contact your state legislators, your senator and two representatives, and let them know why you believe they must include gifted education in the definition of basic education and provide adequate funding so that highly capable children receive the education they will need to be competitive in the twenty-first-century world they are inheriting.

Two major education bills are ESB 6048 and SHB 2261. Neither of these bills currently include gifted education in the definition of basic education. If gifted education is excluded, its funding will continue to be in peril within every economic downturn, and, indeed, with every budget discussion for the next couple of decades.

In addition, reach out to your local community by writing a letter to the editor of your local paper. We suggest the following focus for letters:

- support of your local program; include information on cuts if this is a reality for your district
- support of inclusion of gifted in the definition of basic education

- support for adequate (in the constitution, “ample”) funding

Legislators and their staffs tally requests received from constituents and pay close attention to what appears in their local papers.

If you write to your local newspaper, please send a copy to the Coalition for Gifted Education by sending a “blind copy email” to wagifted@earthlink.net. If your letter is published, send a clipping to 18149 147th Ave. SE, Renton WA 98058. Any articles on gifted programs that are published are forwarded to legislators who serve that school district.

Thank you for your participation in our advocacy efforts.

—Cindy Zetts, _____

Letters to the Editor Resources

1. NAGC has a web site devoted to Letters to the Editor www.nagc.org/index.aspx?id=3148 and one On Working With the Media www.nagc.org/index2.aspx?id=1004.
2. There is a very comprehensive, though not complete, list of newspapers in the state on www.secstate.wa.gov/library/wa_newspapers.aspx. Each entry is a link to a paper and on each Web site you can locate a means to send an electronic letter to the editor or a snail mail address. Another list of state newspapers (some not listed in the Secretary of State's list) is www.usnpl.com/wanews.php.
3. There is a list of legislators in Washington State by district at <http://apps.leg.wa.gov/rosters/MembersByDistrict.aspx>.

Why we need booster clubs for gifted students

Booster clubs or parent groups that support the needs of gifted students can accomplish amazing feats. They have the ability to advocate for the educational needs of their children at both the state and local levels; they can provide support for the families of gifted student; and they can help raise funds to offer educational opportunities above and beyond what a district funds. A group of like-minded parents can be a very powerful force when they have the focus of a structured organization.

The needs of gifted students are often overlooked and never guaranteed in our state. Parent groups can participate in Gifted Education Day, local school board meetings, local town hall meetings, as well as conduct massive “contact campaigns” via phone and email. The structure and communication channels that are gained by creating a parent group are extremely valuable tools when advocating for the needs of gifted students. A large organized group always gets

their point across more effectively and efficiently.

Many parents of gifted students feel alone and unsure of where to turn.

Parent groups can offer:

- Supporting the Emotional Needs of Gifted (SENG) training
- Newsletters with applicable resources and information targeting the needs of gifted families
- social events where families can network and feel connected
- conferences at the local and state levels to provide training and networking opportunities for parents of gifted students

Providing these activities for families of gifted students can really make a positive difference.

Most gifted programs do not receive enough funding from the state and local levels, if they receive any at all. Parent groups can conduct fund-raising campaigns that help these programs provide a variety of increased opportunities such as field trips, educational materials, technology, profes-

sional development for teachers, parent education speakers, SENEG groups, and family events. All of these things assist in maximizing the potential of every gifted child.

When you think about it, it becomes crystal clear why every district should have a parent group that supports gifted education. Parents can get so much more accomplished as a team rather than as individuals. The sky is the limit for gifted students, but only if we help them reach their potential. The bottom line is simply put—gifted students deserve our support!

NWGCA Membership Application

Does your employer match contributions? ☐ Yes ☐ No

Name _____

Address _____

Phone _____

Email Address _____

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.

Student point of view, Continued from p. 3

I, Alaina, feel that since Washington does not mandate gifted education, a lot of gifted students are not getting classes to meet their needs and standards. I would lose interest in school as I did when there was no gifted first-grade class.

One of the reasons some students drop out of school is lack of challenging work. We think Washington should mandate or fund gifted education, preferably both. According to the Davidson Institute for Talent Development (www.gt-cybersource.org/), Washington has the funding

available but does not mandate gifted education. We aren't saying that they don't have other meaningful programs to fund, but children are priceless, and not to guarantee funds for their educational needs is uncalled for.

Our point is that gifted education is important and beneficial to those who need more challenge in school. Also, it needs to be funded and mandated by the state and supported by the public. Gifted students are not properly provided for without gifted classes. Please support us!

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Please check your NWGCA membership status under the address label below. If your membership is expired or about to expire, please renew using the form on page 7 of this newsletter. Or, go to www.nwgca.org and use our PayPal link. There has never been a more critical time in the last 25 years to support gifted education.

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