Using Technology to Better Serve You!

The Michigan Alliance for Gifted Education provides the resources and the know-how to help parents and educators improve the lives of Michigan's advanced and accelerated children. We are THE source of information, education, advocacy, and support for this diverse community of learners, and the adults who love them.

Whatever you're seeking, be it an article, a link, a contact name, event information or more, we hope you will find it here. If you don't, please feel free to use the “Contact Us” tab to find the name of a staff member or volunteer who can assist you.

We invite you to join us as we work together for the benefit of Michigan's gifted students. Click Join Today or Contribute to learn more about how you can be a part of this vital organization!

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**NEW WEBSITE UNDER CONSTRUCTION!**

**Nan Janecke**

The Michigan Alliance for Gifted Education is happy to announce that a newly redesigned website is nearly finished! After months of designing, debating, and decision-making, the new website will soon be ready for Alliance members and the general public. Our hope is that you will find this site to be warm, welcoming, easy to use, and full of information about gifted children in the State of Michigan.

As you saw on page 1, the new website will be substantially different from its predecessor. But that doesn’t mean we aren’t still looking to make improvements! If you think of something that you would like to see on the new site that is not there – information you would like us to include, or questions that haven’t been answered – please feel free to contact us at alliance@migiftedchild.org with your comments or suggestions.

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First, many gifted and talented students enjoy learning through exploration and experimentation. Technology enables them to hypothesize and inductively pursue solutions to problems they are investigating. Technology allows the freedom to investigate various paths to multiple solutions. Technology transforms students from receptacles of knowledge to active producers who direct their own learning.

Second, technology increases the sophistication of products that gifted and talented students can create by allowing them to function in roles similar to practicing professionals. Technology allows students to produce products in a real-world fashion. For example, students can write, edit, and produce books or publications – with a desktop publishing program – that rival in appearance those produced by publishing houses. Today, students can access software that enables them to compose music, design buildings, and collect data with laboratory probes in ways similar to practicing professionals in each of these fields. Thus technology permits students to develop their talents at a higher level of professional sophistication at an earlier age.

**At what age should gifted students begin to use computers and other technology?**

One might ask at what age children should begin using crayons, pencils, paint, and paper. Computers and other technologies can be considered similar forms of expression, and children can begin to use them as soon as their physical coordination allows. Most early childhood educators recommend children begin experimenting with computers around age three, although it may be appropriate at an earlier age for gifted and talented students.

Children need variety in their lives. Just as parents would not allow their children to spend every waking hour sitting in a chair watching television or reading a book, parents should not accept such behavior with children who are continually fixated to a computer. Children need opportunities for a variety of physical, social, and intellectual pursuits. While the time for each does not need to be evenly divided, balancing these activities based on the children's interests and personalities is important. Research indicates that children who use the Internet spend less time watching television and more time with friends and family. Children who spend time on computers at home spend no less time reading or playing with other children. There are also modest benefits associated with home computing on cognitive skills and self-esteem. Unfortunately, young children who use computers at home for more than eight hours per week tend to be heavier than those who do not use home computers.

(See Technology, page 14)
Fall Conference a BIG Success!
Sherelyn Kahn, VP for Programs

A tremendous “thank you” goes out to everyone who attended or volunteered at the Michigan Alliance for Gifted Education’s Fall Conference. Held on October 2 at Lawrence Technological University in Southfield, this event for parents, children, and teachers of gifted kids was hugely successful!

Included in the approximately 25 different sessions were an architecture class where children built their own structures and a class that included robots battling in the hallways. In addition, music filled the air! We received generous door prizes and raffled them off after our lunch with Mango Languages. It is our hope that everyone took away some piece to the puzzle of how to best serve our gifted children at home and at school.

Special thanks to our conference sponsors for their generous support: Lawrence Technological University, Wings for Education, Steppingstone School for the Gifted, Rooper School, Mango Languages, The Creative Arts and Humanities Fund, www.greaybox.com, and Michigan Odyssey of the Mind.

Plans are already underway for our Spring Conference, scheduled for Saturday, March 26, 2011, at Michigan State University. Based on the results of previous member surveys, a speaker on the subject of differentiation is being planned. This event promises to be a very exciting event for parents, teachers, and children. Please watch our website, www.migiftedchild, in the coming months for further details.

PARENTS REVIEW FALL CONFERENCE

Parents who attended the Michigan Alliance for Gifted Education Fall conference at Lawrence Tech found it difficult to contain their excitement, and their eagerness to attend the next planned conference.

Parents learned so much from the breakout sessions they attended, it left them wanting more! They were amazed and relieved to learn they were not alone in having difficulty understanding their unique children, and yet their children were not as unique as they thought. Other parents were describing similar situations in their homes and at school.

Some of the most excited parents attended the session “Big Words, Big Thoughts, Little Body.” They not only learned excellent information on the social and emotional development of gifted children, but were able to ask the questions they had been pondering since their children were born – questions about sleep habits, unevenness of learning development, the meltdowns, allergies, and on.

Children at the conference had a great time experiencing and learning about robots, aeronautics, geology, music and more. Several of the instructors were so enthusiastic for their subject, it was literally contagious. The lead presentation for parents and teachers was on understanding and working with underachievers. This platform provided educators and parents with valuable information that was immediately applicable in the classroom and at home.

Similar programs are being planned for the Michigan Alliance for Gifted Education Spring Conference, scheduled for Saturday, March 26, 2011, on the campus of Michigan State University.

Mark your calendars now for the
Michigan Alliance for Gifted Education
2010 Spring Conference

Seminars for Educational Enrichment
Saturday, March 26, 2011
Michigan State University Campus

• Featured Speaker: Dr. Bertie Kingore on Differentiation
• Breakout sessions for adults and children, all day
  • Camp Fair Exhibit Hall
• Watch www.migiftedchild.org for more information
Budget cuts shorting your gifted students?

Need a cost-effective, unbiased and accurate testing program to help plan services for them?

For 30 years, educators and parents just like you have taken advantage of Northwestern University’s Midwest Academic Talent Search (NUMATS), a research-validated, above-grade-level testing program, to assess a student’s academic talents and find appropriate courses and programs.

Join the thousands in Michigan who have already realized the benefits of NUMATS.

To request information, call 847/491-3782, extension 3 or e-mail numats@ctd.northwestern.edu.

Learn more about NUMATS through new features on our web site, including interactive webinars, voice-over PowerPoint presentations and an informational video.

www.ctd.northwestern.edu/numats
EDUCATION COMMITTEE NOTES

Intellectually Intriguing Opportunities Available Near You!
Karen Channell
Education Committee Co-Chair

Many intriguing learning events and activities are available for gifted students throughout Michigan, particularly for those with an interest in science. Here are some you may want to check out. Go as a family or group, but we encourage you to take gifted children together as a group whenever possible.

Brain Bee (www.brainbeemsu.com)
The Brain Bee at MSU is a live Q & A competition that tests the neuroscience knowledge of high school students. Young men and women compete to determine who has the “best brain” on topics such as intelligence, memory, emotions, sensations, movement, stress, aging, sleep, addiction, Alzheimer’s, and stroke. Participants can study this material by using “Brain Facts” (a pdf is available free on the website to anyone). In addition, MSU will offer several on-campus evening coaching sessions, taught by working neuroscientists, open to all interested teachers and students. Coaching sessions and practice Brain Bees will be held on campus starting on September 29, 2010, with the actual Brain Bee competition slated for February 5, 2011. There will also be laboratory experiences for a limited number of students over several weekends. All participants will receive a certificate of completion and t-shirt.

The winner of the Brain Bee at MSU competition will receive an all-expense-paid trip for the student and a guardian to attend the National Brain Bee Competition in Baltimore, Maryland, on March 18 – 19, 2011. For more details see: http://www.internationalbrainbee.com/

The student will also win a paid fellowship to work in the laboratory of an MSU Neuroscientist next summer, as well as a new copy of Purves’ Neuroscience (a medical school textbook). Second and third place winners will be awarded a cash prize of $200 and $100, respectively. Prizes are great, but this is also a fun way to learn and explore.

Please see the website for more information, or contact brainbeemsu@gmail.com if you have additional questions.

Saturday Morning Physics (www.lsa.umich.edu/physics/seminars)
Designed for general audiences, these lectures are an opportunity to hear physicists discuss their work in easy-to-understand, non-technical terms. The multimedia presentations include hands-on demonstrations of the principles discussed, along with slides, video, and computer simulations.

Upcoming topics for this series include: Particle Accelerators or Atom Smashers: the Engines of Discovery (12/4/2010) and Celebration of Physics (12/11/2010). Each talk begins at 10:30 a.m. in 170 Dennison at the University of Michigan’s Ann Arbor Campus.

All lectures are free and open to the public. For a complete list of topics and for additional details including parking procedures, please see the updated “important information” section of the website. Arrive early – the space fills quickly!

Science Cafes (www.sciencecafes.org)
Science Cafe is a worldwide program designed to educate the public in science. Science Cafes are free presentations that happen in casual meeting places with a relaxed atmosphere. Some are located in separate rooms at restaurants (so you can eat while or before you listen), others at colleges or book stores. All include questions and answers at the end. Science Cafes were originated and produced by Nova Science Now – just to share science with many.

These programs are generally presented by professors and scientists and usually include a lecture with a power point, videos, models, demonstrations, or all of the above. Upcoming Science Cafe presentations are being planned for Jackson, Ann Arbor, Lansing, Muskegon, Detroit, and Kalamazoo, but more can be started. Previous Science Cafes have included topics such as Giant Galaxies in the Universe, A Supernova in the Lab: Nuclear Research at NSCL, Forensic Toxicology For Chemists: An Informal Discussion of the non-CSI World of Forensic Science, and Was Pluto Ever a Planet?

For more information on upcoming dates, locations, and topics, please visit their website http://sciencecafes.org.

If your area doesn't have a Science Cafe nearby, check out their website to help begin one! Many community colleges, colleges, and universities may be willing to provide presentations as part of their community outreach – sometimes it is just a matter of asking!

Science Cafe is appropriate for adults, college students, and gifted teens. Smaller children, even when well-behaved, can be distracting for both for audience and speaker.

Check out the location if you want to bring a gifted teen and remain there with young siblings. There may be a place you can sit away from the presentation, but still be close enough to keep an eye on your child.

(Continued on page 7)
Head Rush (http://headrush.discovery.com) – The Science Channel

Head Rush airs at 4 p.m. weekdays on the Science Channel. Hosted by Kari Byron of Mythbusters fame, this new show is perfect for after school, for recording, or as part of the school or home school curriculum. Segments are short and include a demonstration and explanation – most of which are centered around physics and chemistry. There are also some experiments that could be used at home or with a mentor or teacher. It does seem most appropriate for ages 8-12, depending on the gifted child and their interest/knowledge in physics. The website includes some clips, including multiple choice questions with a demonstration, answer, and explanation. Be sure to watch the online demo of the shrimp on a treadmill! The website also includes some experiments.

Create your own ‘field trip’

If you live near a college, check the calendars for the departments where your child has interest. MSU has weekly astronomy lectures (for older teens or early college), observatory hours, weekly computer science speakers and many other topics. If the college has outreach programs to connect with the public, they are also excellent for finding places to go. Often, department professors are willing to take a gifted children on a tour. Cyclotron at MSU will always take groups on tours – a group of gifted students is wonderful! Tour guides enjoy it too. MSU also has Bug House for younger kids as well as a tour of the Cyclotron (they love having a gifted group come for a tour). An MSU biology professor took our son and me on a tour of their plant labs. University of Michigan’s 3D Lab will sometimes take gifted children on tours. We went to U of M to visit solar cars with a group of gifted children. Getting gifted children together (even if it is just a few) gives them a wonderful opportunity to be with others who “understand what I'm talking about.”

If you are seeking additional opportunities, Karen is glad to help whenever she can. Send her an email at ckchan777@yahoo.com.

Recommended Reading

Looking to implement new strategies and educational opportunities using technology in your classroom or home? Consider the following books, all available from Prufrock Press …


… and an important article:

Mind the (Other) Gap!: The Growing Excellence Gap in K-12 Education, Jonathan A. Plucker, Nathan Burroughs, Ruiting Song, Indiana University Center for Evaluation and Education Policy (CEEP), February 4, 2010. A recent report from Indiana University’s Center for Evaluation and Education Policy (CEEP) shows that achievement gaps among high ability students from different economic, racial, and linguistic backgrounds in the U.S. are large and growing, and some of the top achieving groups aren't performing as well as in the past.

Read the entire article at https://www.iub.edu/~ceep/Gap/excellence/ExcellenceGapBrief.pdf.
Technology and the Gifted Student
Dr. Katrina Woolsey Jordan
Louisiana State University at Alexandria

Educating gifted children is not a modern concept. Societies from ancient China to Sparta to Renaissance Europe had programs for children and youth with high potential (Colangelo & Davis, 2003). Each of these systems of education had certain characteristics by which they identified the gifted. Today, we still incorporate this practice into our education system. According to Susan K. Johnson (2004), editor of Identifying Gifted Students: A Practical Guide, the following are characteristics related to giftedness that many researchers agree upon:

- Has vocabulary advanced for age – precocious language.
- Has communication skills advanced for age and is able to express ideas and feelings.
- Asks intelligent questions.
- Is able to identify the important characteristics of new concepts, problems.
- Learns information quickly.
- Uses logic in arriving at common sense answers.
- Has a broad base of knowledge – a large quantity of information.
- Understands abstract ideas and complex concepts.
- Uses analogical thinking, problem solving, or reasoning.
- Observes relationships and sees connections.
- Finds and solves difficult and unusual problems.
- Understands principles, forms generalizations, and uses them in new situations.
- Wants to learn and is curious.
- Works conscientiously and has a high degree of concentration in areas of interest.
- Understands and uses various symbol systems.
- Is reflective about learning.

In order to meet the needs of the gifted, certain curriculum adaptations can be used by teachers of the gifted. These include acceleration, enrichment, sophistication, and novelty (Colangelo & Davis, 2003). Other elements that should be included within these adaptations are creative and critical thinking, Higher Order Thinking Skills (HOTS), Bloom’s Taxonomy, and open-ended questioning. What tool can provide all of these adaptations for the gifted student? The answer is simple: technology.

Technology, of course, advances every day. Riding the wave of the future are companies that make technology products for educators. If you don’t know what a Kindle is or what a Promethean board does or how to Skype, find out today! According to Edutopia, the education magazine put out by the George Lucas Foundation, many teachers are beginning to embrace social networking sites such as Twitter and Facebook. If you can’t beat ’em, join ’em, right?

Of course, technology is expensive. However, there are many organizations and foundations waiting to give you money for it. Find out from your technology coordinator if there are any grants available for technology in your school districts. You might also want to go to http://www.grants4teachers.com/; http://www.grantsalert.com/resources.cfm; or http://www.grantwrangler.com/ for more ideas about grants available to teachers.

New software is always coming out. However, there are a few tried-and-true programs that many people love to use. Timeliner is one example. Other Tom Snyder products may be found at http://www.tomsnyder.com/. Kidspiration and Inspiration are two other popular options. Product information and tutorials may be found at http://www.inspiration.com/. If you are looking to buy a license for on-line subscriptions, check out Brain Pop at http://www.brainpop.com/.

You may not get a grant for that new Smart Board you wanted or for all of the new software on your wish list, so what can you do instead? If you have a computer and an Internet connection you can still meet the needs of the gifted through the use of technology. Here is a short list of some of the millions of creative and interesting websites that are available through the click of a mouse. These are all sites I have used with gifted students in the past. Enjoy!

Free Web Site Makers
http://www.thefreesite.com/Free_Web_Space/ (this is a list of sites that offer free websites)
http://teacher.scholastic.com/homepagebuilder/index.htm (free class homepage builder)

Science
http://www.miamisci.org/ Miami Museum of Science: Science of Tsunami; Mystery object (you can submit a guess), Atoms Family (exp. Suggestions & explanations)
http://animal.discovery.com/ Animal Planet: Wild Animals

(Continued on page 9)
(Continued from page 8)

http://www.hhmi.org/coolscience/ Cool Science for Curious Kids: on-line biology activities, exp. suggestions and explanations

http://pbskids.org/cyberchase/ Go to Games Central: computer science related games, also has other math/science related games

http://pbskids.org/zoom/ Zoom: go to games and choose: Kitchen Chemistry (perform on-line exp.), and/or Pendulum (make it swing, factoids)

http://www.pbs.org/teachersource/ PBS Teacher Source: Savage Earth (Tsunamis, earthquakes), ideas for exp. When you browse by subject (science)

http://dsc.discovery.com/ Discovery Channel: Science News, Myth Busters (use exp. to prove/disprove urban legends), sharks, mummies…all kinds of stuff to read about.

http://science.discovery.com/ The Science Channel: lots of stuff to read, also has “fun and games” section including a 3-D shark tank & Build a Roller Coaster

http://www.nasa.gov/offices/education/programs/national/dln/index.html/ NASA center for distance learning

**Social Studies (ancient cultures)**

**Egypt:**

http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/nova/pyramid/

http://www.virtual-egypt.com/

**Mesopotamia:**

http://ancientneareast.tripod.com/Babylon_Babil.html

http://www.crystalinks.com/assyrian.html

**The Americas:**

http://www.crystalinks.com/aztecgods.html

For a full list of web sites about ancient cultures go to:

http://teacher.scholastic.com/professional/profbooks/technology/netexplorations/ancient_civ.htm

**Math**

http://www.c3.lanl.gov/mega-math/

http://www.math.com/

http://www.aplusmath.com/

http://www.coolmath.com/

**Educational Games**

www.scholastic.com

www.kaboose.com

www.funbrain.com

http://disney.go.com/disneyxd/#/disneyxd/games/

www.funology.com

www.eduplace.com

**Miscellaneous Cool Stuff**

Periodic Table of Comic Books: www.uky.edu/projects/chemcomics

Make Your Own Movie: www.digitalfilms.com

American Rhetoric: audio recordings of famous speeches at http://americanrhetoric.com

Answers.com: new search engine at www.answers.com

Buzzwhack: latest business and technology buzz words at: www.buzzwhack.com

How Stuff Works: good for research to answer questions at http://www.howstuffworks.com

Flaming Text.com at www.flamingtext.com

**References:**


Dr. Katrina Jordan has a BA from the University of Louisiana, Monroe, a M.Ed. from Northwestern State University, a Plus 30 from Louisiana Tech University, and a Doctorate in Education from Louisiana Tech University. She has fourteen years of teaching experience at both public and private schools as well as at the university level, and spent seven years as a gifted education teacher and as the coordinator of the gifted program in Winn Parish, Louisiana. Dr. Jordan also has experience as a public speaker, having presented at local, regional, state, national, and international conferences. Her accomplishments include being named the Hoagie’s Gifted Teacher of the Year for 2009 and the LACUE Middle Teacher of the Year for 2007. Dr. Jordan is also a published author, having published articles in both Essays in Education and the Language Experience Forum of the International Reading Association. Currently, Dr. Jordan is an Assistant Professor in the Department of Education at Louisiana State University at Alexandria where she teaches Math and Science methods as well as Educational Technology classes.
Contribute an Article to Images!

Parents, students, teachers, administrators, counselors, researchers: Share your experience educating, parenting, advocating for, or studying gifted children – or even being a gifted student yourself. Write an article for a future issue of Images!

Volume 21, Issue 1, 2011
Articles due: February 1, 2011
Publication date: March 15, 2011

Volume 21, Issue 2, 2011
Articles due: August 1, 2011
Publication date: September 15, 2010

Would you like your events and activities publicized in this newsletter or would you like to submit an article? Contact Nan Janecke, editor of Images:

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5355 Northland Drive, NE, Ste. C-188
Grand Rapids, MI 49525
616-365-8230
Website: www.migiftedchild.org

2010 Summer Scholarship Winners

Each year the Michigan Alliance for Gifted Education funds a number of Student Summer Scholarships.

This last summer we had two scholarship winners:

Allison Brownell from Marshall (7th grader attending Marshall Middle School) who attended the 3-week Musical Theatre Workshop at Interlochen Summer Arts Camp.

Brian Grahl from Tecumseh (9th grader attending Britton-Macon Area Schools) who took the Mathematics of Baseball virtual course offered by the Michigan Virtual High School (an eight-week class, completed entirely online).

2011 Summer Scholarship applications will be available in February. Watch our website (www.migiftedchild.org) and upcoming e-Images for more information, including deadlines and applications forms. If you would like to be added to our “news and information” email list, please send an email to alliance@migiftedchild.org with your email address (home emails work better if you have strong spam filters at your school or office).
It’s Talent Search Time!
Dr. Kelly Schultz

Does this sound familiar?
- “My child is bored in school”
- “My child does not feel challenged at school”
- “My child gets an A without studying”
- “My child ‘acts out’ at his/her school”

If you’ve heard yourself saying any of the above, your child may be academically gifted and talented. Academically talented students need accelerated, above-grade level course content. The talent search philosophy is rooted in the idea that intellectual development often outpaces social and physical development. We should teach children according to intellectual capacity, not age or grade level. The Talent Search model began at John Hopkins University in the 1970s to identify, challenge, and reward academically able young people. The talent search is done in our area through Northwestern University’s Midwest Academic Talent Search (NUMATS). They service students in the Midwest region from Pre K – 12th grade.

The talent search is a two-step process for students in the 3rd – 9th grades. The first step is identifying students who are potentially academically gifted. The identification process and requirements to participate in the talent search are meant to include those who might benefit from extra challenge – not to keep people out. Students can participate if they:

- Scored at the 92nd percentile or higher in the mathematical or verbal section or subsection of a nationally normed standardized achievement test (such as the California Achievement Test or Iowa Test of Basic Skills). A student needs to have the required percentile on only one section or subscore to qualify.
- Scored at a scaled score on one section of the most recent math or verbal portion of the MEAP test (see ctd.northwestern.edu for specific grade level scores).
- Qualified for NUMATS at any time.
- Qualified for a gifted program at their school or in their school district.
- Been recommended by an adult (teacher, counselor, or parent) as a gifted student.
- Been in a gifted program at a previous school (for new students).
- Been identified by a teacher because of the student’s exceptional ability in math or verbal skills, even if the student hasn’t tested well or has behavior issues.

The second step in the talent search is taking an above-grade level test. An above-grade level test is a test designed for older students. The reason for giving an above-grade level test is that it has enough ceiling (difficult questions) to differentiate students with advanced abilities. Students in the 3rd – 6th grade take the 8th grade EXPLORE test. While students 6th – 9th grade take the high school SAT or ACT test. These tests allow the students to show what they already know – even before being taught.

Once a student has taken the test, they will receive follow-up information from the test company and from NUMATS. NUMATS will send information about programs around the state and also about programs at Northwestern University’s Center for Development in Evanston, Illinois, just north of Chicago. Doing the talent search is a great way to find out about programs that your student might utilize.

Michigan is one of the few states in the country to have available accelerated high school classes for public school middle school students. There are programs available in Kent County, at Michigan State University, at Central Michigan University, at Hope College, at Western Michigan University (main campus and Battle Creek campus) and even the Newaygo area. Participating in NUMATS can be a way to see if a student is eligible for one of these programs.

Other benefits of the Talent Search include:

- Students usually have an area of strength; taking the SAT or ACT can identify that strength and allow the student to focus their attention on acceleration or enrichment in that area.
- There are many others out there in your position! Finding each other may seem difficult but if many people participate in the talent search and opportunities after it, you can find each other.
- You and your student begin to think about the possibilities that exist instead of focusing on the missed opportunities.
- Your school discovers that you are academically talented when they receive your scores from NUMATS.

To participate just go to the website at Northwestern: ctd.northwestern.edu/numats and register today! Tests will be given in January – March and the deadline for online registration is December 15. Do not miss this opportunity to help your gifted student!

Bibliography
Northwestern University’s Midwest Academic Talent Search: http://www.ctd.northwestern.edu/numats
Academically Talented Youth Program Recruitment Presentation: http://www.wmich.edu/honors/atyp

Dr. Kelly Schultz is Program Coordinator of the Academically Talented Youth Program at Western Michigan University’s Lee Honors College, an instructor of geometry and AP Computer Science for ATYP, and the mother of two gifted sons.
Meet … Kim Waters,

Kim Waters, M.S., is our new Vice President for Membership. She is responsible for establishing and maintaining an ongoing plan for recruitment of new and renewing members, as well as coordinating membership efforts with the VP for Affiliates. Kim is a limited licensed psychologist specializing in the treatment of a variety of challenges facing children and their families, brings over 19 years of experience in the fields of child development, parenting and behavior management, and has an expertise in gifted individuals. She has additional experience in sensory processing disorder and other developmental disorders. Kim is the acting chair of the Michigan Alliance for Gifted Education’s committee on the social-emotional needs of the gifted, and acts as a substitute teacher at the Roeper School. Kim is on staff at the Child and Family Solutions Center in Farmington Hills, Michigan, and continues to present workshops for parents and professionals including: Gifted and “Quirky” Kids; Sensory Processing Dysfunction Impacts Behavior; and Sensory Processing in the Home, throughout the state.

Kim grew up in Waterford, Michigan. She and her husband Rob have two wonderful gifted sons who attend The Roeper School. Brendon is 16 years old and a junior thinking about studying physics. Nolan is 13 years old and in 8th grade. He would love to be a pilot some day.

The Waters Family loves the Red Wings and enjoys boating in the summer. They are having a lot of fun with their newest family member, a shitzu yorkie mutt named Kirby that they rescued last December.

Sharon White …

Sharon White is the new Treasurer of the Michigan Alliance for Gifted Education. As such, Sharon oversees receipt of income, approves payment of bills and preparation of financial reports. She also helps to prepare tax forms, handles insurance, and works with the Finance Committee, other committee chairs and the Executive Secretary in preparing a budget for each fiscal year.

Sharon founded Bedside Notes, a business that provides visitors to patients in hospitals and nursing homes. Sharon is the mother of at least one gifted child and another showing signs. She became an Alliance member in September 2009 and credits the organization with helping to discover that her son was gifted. After the principal from the planned public school said he never saw a gifted kid bored in class, she knew there must be a better way. Sharon has found some of those better ways through the Michigan Alliance for Gifted Education.

Sharon’s last year has been a crash course in the process of identification, advocating, partnering, teaching, and dealing with the social aspects of a gifted child. Out of this experience, she has identified and documented at least 23 challenges to parents of gifted kids. During the past year, she has talked to a number of families that have subsequently confirmed that their child is gifted. The knowledge gained from the past year is something that Sharon would like to share with other families as they seek an education that lives up to their child’s abilities.

and Sherelyn Kahn

Shere Kahn is the new Vice President for Programs. She is responsible for planning at least two one-day conferences each school year, including site selection, planning the program, finding speakers and presenters, budgeting, overseeing the registration process, and conference evaluation.

Shere owned a dental laboratory at the onset of the dental implant revolution in dentistry and organized many educational meetings across the state for dentists and their staff during those years. She has written a technique manual in the area of denture construction and lectured nationally at many state and local meetings. Her experiences on both ends of successful meetings provides her with a unique understanding of what is necessary to plan and execute an educational conference.

Shere organized a weekend retreat for the Midwest Region of the Davidson Young Scholars for profoundly gifted children, of which her children are members. She has also organized workshops and seminars for the parents and students of Steppingstone School for Gifted Education and serves as Treasurer of SPARC (the Steppingstone Parent Advocacy Resource Coalition). In addition, she has been active in fundraising and community building for Steppingstone. Her daughter is in 4th grade while her son is in 8th grade.
Hartland Parent Group is Ready for Action!

The Hartland Chapter of the Michigan Alliance for Gifted Education is starting the 2010-2011 school year with a rush to “begin the race.” Hartland Parents for Kids (HP4K), led by Jeannine and Glenn Gogol-ski, met on September 1 with over a dozen parents from various schools in Hartland, as well as their administrative liaison, Bill Cain, principal of Village Elementary School, Hartland Community Schools. Several parents volunteered to represent individual schools within the district. These people will act as liaisons for the group, sharing information on HP4K, including upcoming meetings and events.

Formerly an organization composed almost entirely of speaker-led presentations, the Hartland Chapter has decided to branch out, brainstorming ideas for several activities to enrich the lives of children in their community. Some of these ideas include:

- Family events
- Events/activities for teacher conference/professional development days
- Arts activities
- Forensics/debate team for 6th grade
- Referral/tutor/activity suggestions through discussions/webpage
- Facebook/webpage through a link with Hartland Consolidated Schools
- Speakers for HP4K meetings
- High school students sharing their talents and receiving community service hours

HP4K also elected a treasurer, Lisa Klink, to maintain its financial records and collect a $5 per family annual membership fee. This minimal charge will be used to cover some of the chapter’s expenses. HP4K parents are also encouraged to join the Michigan Alliance for Gifted Education to further support statewide advocacy efforts, conferences and training.

Hartland Parents for Kids will meet again on October 25, November 30, and January 18 at 7:00 p.m. at the Village. If you would like to contact the Hartland chapter, please contact Glen Gogoleski at gjhgogos@comcast.net. For more information on starting your own chapter of the Michigan Alliance for Gifted Education, please contact Marie Brucker, Vice President for Chapters (formerly affiliates) at m.brucker@comcast.net. Marie is ready, willing, and able to work with any other chapter to create opportunities similar to these for children across Michigan.

PLUS Presents What Makes an Effective Advocate?

On Monday, November 29, from 7-9 pm at the Valley View Elementary School Library in Battle Creek, Partners in Learning for Unlimited Success (PLUS) of Southwest Michigan will host a free program, “What Makes an Effective Advocate?”

Margaret Mead said, “Never doubt that a small group of thoughtful, committed citizens can change the world; indeed, it is the only thing that has.” In order for the world of gifted education to change so all children learn something each and every day, people must know how to become thoughtful and committed advocates.

Learn the top ten points of what makes an effective advocate such as how to craft messages and deliver them to the right audience, and how to establish relationships with decision makers, so they can make a real difference. These strategies will help you to work with the teacher and school district to provide the best educational opportunities for your child.

This FREE presentation is open to the public. For more information, call 269-353-3757, or visit the PLUS website at www.plusofswmi.org.

The mission of Partners in Learning for Unlimited Success (PLUS) is to provide leadership, support, and advocacy of education and services to meet the needs of advanced and accelerated learners. PLUS is the Southwest Michigan affiliate of the Michigan Alliance for Gifted Education.
How is technology being used to enhance gifted students’ education? Can you share an example of what today’s technology enables students to do that would not have been possible 10 years ago?

Technology can be used to accelerate or enrich student learning. Ten years ago, online classes did not exist. A myriad of classes are now available that enable parents and educators to accelerate their student’s learning. Online courses may be necessary when classes that students wish to complete conflict with their school schedule, when more advanced classes are needed to meet students’ instructional levels, and when the pace of traditional classes is too slow for students. While the online option is not suitable for all students, gifted and talented students who are self-motivated, comfortable using technology, and possess excellent reading and writing skills are excellent candidates.

Another use of technology is specialized software. The price of these programs has dropped dramatically over the last few years. As mentioned earlier, these products allow gifted and talented students to function as practicing professionals. This not only accelerates the development of students’ talents, it also enriches their learning experiences. For example, students can now edit and create professional looking movies. Ten years ago the cost of software and equipment to produce a film was prohibitive. Today, the software is packed free on many computers, and digital video cameras are commonplace.

I began experimenting with photography when I was nine years old. The interest and passion I have today for photography was already developed at that point. My learning experience with photography would have been enhanced and accelerated if I had had access to today’s digital photography technology.

Gaming is also showing promise for student learning. Research in this arena is just beginning, but educators are beginning to explore how to capture the popularity of video games to enhance student learning.

Why is the Internet such a significant learning resource for gifted students?

The Internet creates a level playing field. It does this in three ways.

First, it provides universal access to information. Students who are interested in medical developments can access the latest medical news as quickly as the medical researchers produce it. The Internet is the most extensive and accessible collection of information available to gifted and talented students. It provides a breadth and depth that far exceeds the holdings of their school library, their community library, or even a nearby university library. A simple Google search can satisfy even the most insatiable and inquisitive minds.

Second, the Internet provides a common platform for gifted and talented children to share their ideas. With the Internet, a 10-year-old student has the same publishing power as The New York Times. Students can create web pages or blogs and share their ideas with the world. Distribution of knowledge is no longer restricted to those who own a printing press.

Finally, the Internet allows gifted and talented students to connect with each other and with electronic mentors. Gifted and talented students who have felt isolated in the past due to their unique abilities and interests can now interact through email and chat with other individuals with similar abilities and interests. The satisfaction that many gifted and talented students feel when attending special summer programs such as those offered at the Center for Talent Development can now be experienced throughout the year thanks to online classes, email, chat, and online mentors.

How can parents help students use the Internet as a tool for learning, rather than simply a place to surf, browse, and chat?

Parents can use children’s interests to enhance their use of the Internet. Based on conversations that parents have with their children, they can help their children explore topics related to special areas of interest. A child who is interested in baseball may wish to learn more about Shoeless Joe Jackson or may be interested in developing a database of statistics related to his or her favorite teams. Such information is available on the Internet. By jointly exploring their children’s interests on the Internet, parents can assist their children in two areas. First they can help them become critical consumers of information. From an early age, children must be trained to develop a healthy skepticism of the validity of the information they find. This can involve comparing information from a variety of sources on the web.

Second, parents can also help children surf more effectively and efficiently. This includes modeling the best selection of keywords with-in a search. Many children quickly become discouraged because they cannot immediately find the information they are seeking. With some guided practice, children learn to locate the information they desire quickly.

Blindly following links in not an efficient way to locate information on the Internet and is not only a waste of time, it is often unproductive. Parents can help children develop purposes and strategies for using the Internet.

What are telementoring programs, and how can gifted students benefit from them?

In Francoys Gagné’s gifted and talented model, he discusses turning gifts into talents. He views giftedness as untrained natural abilities and talent as the mastery of those abilities through development. Benjamin Bloom found that the pro-

(Continued from Technology, page 3)
cess of developing talent requires a concerted effort of a variety of individuals. The nature and diversity of gifted and talented students’ interests and abilities demand resources beyond the confines of the home, school, and sometimes beyond the boundaries of the community. At some point, students need contact with more knowledgeable others who share their expertise and can guide them. Ideally this process takes place in person. Unfortunately, time and distance constraints often prevent this from occurring.

Telementoring is one way to provide gifted students with opportunities to interact with others who are very knowledgeable. It is particularly valuable for students in isolated areas, for students with esoteric interests, or for students whose academic needs exceed the local educational system’s capacity. In these cases, it may be difficult to find a mentor in the community who is willing to spend time with the young talent. Telementoring is a viable solution. During the experience, the student and the telementor work toward a student goal that the two have jointly set. They usually communicate through monitored email or bulletin board postings. While parents and educators can set up such relationships if they know appropriate mentors, a number of organizations provide this service on a large scale. One of the more prominent ones is the International Telementor Program (www.telementor.org).

Mentoring is not for every student and telementoring is even more restrictive. Just because students are disenfranchised with their educational program does not mean they need a mentor. An authentic mentorship is more than students receiving supplemental information. It can provide students with opportunities for real-world application of their passions, self-confidence, an increased knowledge base, deepened enthusiasm for a subject, a role model, and growth in their area of giftedness.

You’ve written about technology giftedness. How do you define this term, and how can parents help a technology gifted student develop his or her talents?

My thinking about technology giftedness has been influenced by Reva Friedman-Nimz. Technology giftedness appears to manifest itself in three distinct ways.

1. The talent to write computer code appears to be one type of technology giftedness. I have known gifted students who, as early as first grade, have begun exploring how to write computer code. While this is unusual, all of the fourth-grade students with whom I have worked were able to create simple computer programs. Some of those students had a special talent with programming. They were able to conceptually breakdown programming tasks and see the rela-

(See Technology, page 17)
Q: As an English teacher, I would really like to differentiate materials for a cluster of gifted writers in my classroom. Do you have any suggestions for how I can practically provide them with greater challenge while still within the boundaries of a standard curriculum?

A: One of the most important things for gifted students – next to being challenged academically – is to feel that they are still part of the regular classroom and accepted by their peers. Gifted children need the opportunity to explore a subject in depth but remain, in the eyes of their friends, “regular kids.”

Allowing gifted children to remain in the classroom setting using the standard curriculum but giving them the chance to connect with other advanced students through activities they originate themselves is vital for these children to remain healthy, integrated students. Since gifted children are able to finish the regular assignments quickly, offer them the opportunity to work in small groups to create their own projects to share with the class. Other students will be exposed to possibilities that they themselves might not normally consider. A unit on “peace education” could be greatly enhanced with gifted students’ presenting a 3-d model of “the pillars of peace,” for example, which might include pillars labeled “respect,” “honor,” “courage,” and “justice.” This would be invaluable in facilitating a discussion addressing the questions, “What does this actually look like in our classroom? In our world?” Answers could be written in phrases and wrapped around the pillars; quotes from texts and famous authors can be utilized as well. A physical model sitting in the corner of the room afterwards would remind all students that this is what the class is about and offer the teacher a useful aid in maintaining and building upon those ideas throughout the year.

A play, written and produced by the gifted students, can offer everyone the chance to see literature “come to life.” Such performances bring meaning to the text; students develop a sense of empathy through their efforts to understand and behave as a particular character would in the given circumstances. Indeed, it is likely that the whole class will better remember the story and its themes, characters, etc., having seen even a short scene performed; but most importantly, they’ll recall what the literature meant to them personally. Given that our society has become a fast-paced, “I need to have it/know it/understand it now” kind of society, the sheer immediacy of such performances fulfills this kind of need as well, and therefore is highly engaging and extremely evocative: the perfect platform for discussing and developing ideas, understanding feelings, understanding others’ way of thinking, and ultimately understanding oneself.

Small groups can further challenge themselves by looking up the other works an author has written, reading and discussing these pieces amongst themselves, identifying common themes important to the writer, creating their own quizzes for each other about the works, and writing a short story in a voice emulating the author’s. All of this can be done with the standard curriculum as the guideline and allow everyone to remain connected to each other through their class work. Feeling they are individuals yet are part of the whole will allow gifted students to remain connected with the class at large, with each other as peers, and ultimately, with themselves as the bright, gifted people they are.

Laura Livingstone-McNelis is currently teaching English 11/12 to 8th graders in the Academically Talented Youth Program through the Lee Honors College at Western Michigan University. She has taught preschool through twelfth grades and is now homeschooling her daughter.

“Peas in a Pod” Lesson Plan

“Peas in a Pod,” a lesson plan devoted to Mendelian genetics, has been added to the plans posted at http://www.mensaforkids.org/teachers.

The most recent addition is designed for sixth-graders; grade levels now available range from Kindergarten to 12, and subjects range from the moon to Fibonacci numbers to teaching literary concepts through song lyrics.

Since these plans are designed to be completed with minimal supervision, they serve as independent coursework either in the traditional classroom or outside it. You can view the course materials online and download complete copies to hand to your favorite gifted student(s). These plans are sponsored by the Mensa Education & Research Foundation.

You can receive updates to the Mensa for Kids website by subscribing to their “MFK Update” enewsletter at http://www.us.mensa.org/enews
relationships between them. This certainly is a special kind of thinking. For many of them, it appeared to be a natural way of thinking and looking at the world. Such gifts need to be developed. Elementary students should be exposed to some simple programming. The early Apple computers with Apple BASIC were a wonderful medium to introduce programming. Seymour Papert’s LOGO is still a great program to introduce very young children to programming. Those who show an interest and talent for programming can advance to more advanced programming such as Visual BASIC, C++, or JAVA. Student who enjoy creating web pages with HTML script also fall into the programming category.

2. A second area of giftedness involves the application of technology. These students are adept at using the technology to produce products. They can apply technology in effective and creative ways. Students in this category can exhibit the following behaviors:

- They demonstrate a wide-range of technology skills. They are attracted to a variety of different types of technology.
- They often learn new software without formal training. This is often because they are able to apply what they learned with one piece of software to another piece.
- They spend their free time developing their technology skills. There is nothing they enjoy more than “playing with technology.”
- They often assist others with technology problems. Because of this trait, students can easily identify who among them has this type of technology giftedness.
- They are able to incorporate a variety of technologies into the products they produce. For example, at an early age their PowerPoint™ presentations may include unique graphic images or custom sounds that they have created or edited.
- They eagerly pursue opportunities to use technology. When a new piece of technology appears, they cannot wait to experience it.
- Finally, they demonstrate more advanced technology skills than others their age. This reveals itself in the sophistication of the products they produce.

Parents can expose these students to the technologies related to their interests. A student who is interested in photography will enjoy working with a digital camera and a photo editing program. Students who are interested in music may enjoy a music composition program.

3. The third area of technology giftedness involves those who enjoy working with technology equipment. While the first two types involve creating products with technology, these students enjoy maintaining, or even creating the technology for others to use. They may enjoy creating a computer from spare parts, fixing a broken calculator, maintaining a classroom server, or installing a car stereo.

Del Siegle, http://www.delsiegle.info, is an associate professor of educational psychology in the Neag School of Education at the University of Connecticut, where he is a teaching fellow. Prior to earning his PhD, Siegle worked as a gifted and talented coordinator in Montana. He is president-elect of the National Association of Gifted Children (NAGC) and serves on the board of directors of the Association for the Gifted. In 2001 he was named NAGC Early Leader. He writes a technology column for Gifted Child Today. Siegle’s research interests include web-based instruction, motivation of gifted students, and teacher bias in the identification of students for gifted programs.

A Response from Dr. Ellen Fiedler

This article is excellent and has some very interesting new information in it that I wasn't aware of about "tele-mentoring." However, I disagree with Dr. Siegle about the Internet's creating a level playing field. I think that he's ignoring the differences in computer access between affluent families and those in poverty situations. We all need to find ways of closing this digital divide for gifted kids who don't have computers at home and sometimes don't even have many chances to use them at school or elsewhere.

Ellen Fiedler, Ph.D., is Professor Emeritus, Northeastern Illinois University, Chicago, Illinois, and Immediate Past President of the Michigan Alliance for Gifted Education.
Michigan Alliance for Gifted Education Affiliates

Each of these local affiliates provide parents opportunities to share information, to work with the schools, to hear speakers on various gifted and talented issues, and to generate and promote enrichment activities for gifted children. Note that some affiliates also have their own websites. If you have further questions or would like to start a new affiliate in your area, please contact Marie Brucker at 810-227-5379 or m.brucker@comcast.net. This list is regularly updated; we apologize for any errors or any exclusions. If you have any changes, please contact Marie Brucker.

**Groups forming; not affiliated at this time. **Affiliates

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### Images

*Volume 20, Issue 2, 2010*

Nan Janecke, Editor
Sue Belaski, Production Editor

**Mission**

The Michigan Alliance for Gifted Education is dedicated to providing leadership, advocacy, and support of differentiated education and services for meeting the unique needs of gifted, talented, and creative students in Michigan.

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<td>1/2 page</td>
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<tr>
<td>Business Card</td>
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These rates apply to members of the Alliance. Non-members must include an additional $30, which will provide one year’s membership in the organization. Advertising is a feature that is meant to serve the members of the Alliance. Endorsement by this organization of services or items advertised is neither implied nor intended. Any ad may be refused at the discretion of the Michigan Alliance for Gifted Education.

Ads should be submitted to the Michigan Alliance for Gifted Education, 5355 Northland Drive, NE, Suite C-188, Grand Rapids, MI 49525; sbelaski@comcast.net.

[www.migiftedchild.org](http://www.migiftedchild.org)
Membership Form

I would like to join the Michigan Alliance for Gifted Education as an:

☐ Individual member - open to any individual interested in furthering the goals of the Alliance. Yearly Dues: $25.00

☐ Institutional member - open to any organization or institution interested in furthering the goals of the Alliance. Institutional membership entitles the organization or institution to designate five individuals as members of the Alliance. Yearly Dues: $100.00

4 Individuals: _________________________________________________________________________

☐ Affiliate member - Name of my Affiliate:____________________________________________________

Yearly Dues: $25.00

☐ Donation to the Michigan Alliance $__________________

☐ New ☐ Renewal ☐ Student ☐ Teacher ☐ Parent ☐ Administrator ☐ Other

Name ____________________________________________________________ Referred by _________________

Address _________________________________________________________________________________

City ___________________________________________ State _____________Zip Code _______________

County _________________________________ School ____________________________

(The Michigan Alliance for Gifted Education is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit, tax-exempt organization.)

Phone __________________________ Email _____________________________________________

Make checks payable to: Michigan Alliance for Gifted Education.
Mail to: Michigan Alliance for Gifted Education, 5355 Northland Drive, NE, Ste. C-188, Grand Rapids, MI 49525
Email: alliance@migiftedchild.org

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