

GRC Celebrates 20 Years!

Gifted Resource Council was founded in 1983 to provide high quality enrichment opportunities (beyond the everyday school setting) for gifted children ages three through fourteen. Twenty years later many students still do not have opportunities to work with gifted peers or participate in enriched curricula at their regular schools, and for them the unique opportunities GRC provides are invaluable.

If anything, the need for Gifted Resource Council's enrichment courses and supportive programming is just as great now as it was in 1983.

Currently GRC programs reach 2,500 students per year, and our twentieth anniversary offers us an opportunity to spread the word to an even broader audience of parents, teachers and students.

Instead of throwing a gala fundraiser, the GRC Board of Directors has decided to celebrate twenty years of service by sponsoring a series of initiatives which reinforce its educational mission. These initiatives will expand the awareness of teachers and parents about GRC and issues related to giftedness while opening opportunities for more children to benefit from GRC programs.

GRC Course Sampler

Great teachers and stimulating classes have powered the success and amazing growth of Gifted Resource Council over the past two decades.

Now parents who are thinking about enrolling a child in GRC classes and teachers who might refer children can get a firsthand look at the stimulating enrichment opportunities GRC offers.

Interested parents and teachers will be invited to sample "mini GRC classes," while children are involved in their own classes during the Winter 2003 Learning Labs. Veteran GRC teachers will present a variety of activities for parents and teachers.

Parents will have a chance to sample experiences

from Learning Labs, Summer Academies and Academic Challenge Cup. This sampler will give them an authentic impression of the wide variety of enrichment classes and skilled teachers which make GRC so effective. What better way to learn about the hands-on approach, challenging projects and class teamwork so characteristic of GRC and so valuable to students?

Teacher-Parent Workshops

Education about giftedness for parents and teachers has always been a part of the GRC mission and has found expression in workshops, conferences and informative articles in *mindwonders*.

Prospective teachers and interested parents will be treated to a special workshop on giftedness as part of our twentieth year celebration. All topics selected for 2003 will be of special value to teachers as well as parents.

Psychologist Agnes Meyo will discuss ways to identify a gifted child and strategies to work effectively with gifted children at home and at school. This special workshop will be a part of the four workshops which are a regular feature of the Learning Labs during the winter of 2003.

Other workshops will focus on learning experiences that are particularly appropriate for the classroom as well as emotional characteristics unique to gifted children.

Creative Convention/Academic Challenge Cup

Each spring hundreds of area students participate in Academic Challenge Cup which GRC sponsors on the campuses of Fontbonne and Washington Universities. In addition to math and verbal skills competitions for older students, younger students participate in Creative Convention. Teams of five are given supplies

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Dialogue with the Director

“Twenty years! Is it REALLY twenty years? You must be so proud!,,

That was the response from a former GRC Board member and devoted GRC volunteer for fifteen of those twenty years, when I mentioned to her that Gifted Resource Council will be celebrating its 20th Anniversary in 2003. And, yes, we as an organization are proud of the fact that GRC has been and continues to be a viable and vital group dedicated to enhancing the potential of gifted children in the St. Louis metropolitan area.

And so I ponder... What is it that has made this small, not-for-profit organization so successful? Was it the four women who had the initial vision to begin GRC? Is it the members of the Board of Directors, current and past, who have given of their time and energy to oversee the organizational development of GRC? Is it the children, inquisitive and eager, who gather in our classes year after year? Is it the volunteers who develop Creative Convention “problems,, and spend countless hours with Equations and LinguISHTIK competitions? Is it the teachers who inspire and nurture those young people who represent the “best and the brightest stars,, of our future? Is it those of us who labor behind the scenes to keep it all going? Is it the loyal donors whose generosity helps make all these efforts possible?

The answer is “YES!,, It is all these people (and more) who have caused Gifted Resource Council to thrive for twenty years. But no one piece of this puzzle can make the whole picture. It is truly the connections between these groups – teachers, parents, children, volunteers and donors – that have enabled GRC to remain focused on its original mission, that of helping bright and talented children achieve their potential.

The connections are what it’s all about. Connections between parents who seek answers to the challenges of raising a precocious child and the speakers who provide insight during our “Parenting



Sue Flesch, GRC executive director

Classes,, at Learning Labs and Academic Challenge Cup. Connections between children who seek answers to so many questions and the teachers who guide them to those discoveries, whether from outer space or ancient cultures or inner thoughts and feelings. Connections between Board members who struggle with balancing budgets and volunteers who give generously of their time year after year.

Yes, the connections are what make the puzzle whole. And in celebration of Gifted Resource Council’s 20th Anniversary during 2003, we want to make more connections! Please help us to make the connections with more children, parents, and teachers who might benefit from what GRC has to offer. Invite your child’s teacher or principal to a “Parenting Class,, so that they can better understand how to help nurture gifted students. Tell your co-workers and friends about the amazing array of class offerings for children between the ages of three and fourteen. Encourage them all to come to the “GRC Sampler,, during February and March. Share the thoughtful articles about issues that face talented children which appear on GRC’s Website (www.cybam.com/grc). Volunteer to help GRC as we celebrate and look to the next twenty years.

Help us as we share the connections...

GRC Celebrates, continued from page 1

and challenged to work together to create something which solves a problem revealed to them when the contest begins.

A topic related to GRC's twentieth anniversary will form the basis of the challenge—which cannot be revealed here—issued to teams participating in the Creative Convention portion of Academic Challenge Cup in the spring of 2003. The children's creative response to the topic will surely inspire us all as we move into the next decade of GRC programs.

Summer Academies

Two of the ten 2003 Summer Academies will revolve around themes related to GRC's twenty years serving bright and talented youngsters.

Students in ECO Academy—the newest (and very popular) Summer Academy—actually organize themselves into a “company., While striving to be ecologically friendly, they create and manufacture a product, market it and return profits to investing shareholders. Visiting experts from the sciences and business enrich their discussions and bring a touch of real world

authenticity to the mix.

In 2003, these young entrepreneurs will develop, market and sell a product related to GRC's twentieth anniversary. Because GRC classes foster research, teamwork and group decision-making, just what that product will be, as well as their marketing and manufacturing plans, is for the children to decide.

Space Academy is one of the most popular of the summer offerings, partly because students design, make and launch their personal rockets.

In Space Academy during the summer of 2003, students will review the past twenty years of space exploration and rocketry and look at what might be expected space-wise when GRC celebrates its 40th anniversary in another twenty years.

Other Initiatives

Gifted Resource Council is considering even more ways of celebrating its twentieth anniversary during 2003. Plans have begun to take shape for a “GRC Trivia Night,, to be held in September. There has even been talk of a “GRC video., All celebration activities have as their goal expanding the awareness among teachers and parents of the enrichment opportunities provided by GRC for gifted children. We'll keep you posted.

☆☆

GRC Sampler

Teachers, principals and parents are invited to sample learning experiences from Summer Academies, Learning Labs and Academic Challenge Cup. These mini-classes are a great opportunity to get a firsthand look at the stimulating enrichment opportunities GRC offers gifted children.

The samplers are free to all, but reservations in advance are necessary. All sample classes will take place at Wydown Middle School, 6500 Wydown Blvd, Clayton, MO 63105, from 9:45 to 10:45 a.m.

February 15, 2003

Summer Academies
Ancient Academy
ECO Academy
Math, Marvels & More

February 22, 2003

Academic Challenge Cup
Creative Convention
Equations
LinguiSHTIK

March 1, 2003

Summer Academies
Advanced Space Academy
Jr. Science Searchers
Space Academy

March 8, 2003

Learning Labs
Art & History
Creative Expression
Science

For more information or to reserve your place, call 314-962-5920.

How can I tell if my child is gifted?

By Dennis O'Brien

When parents wonder whether their child is gifted, chances are that the child is doing things which seem remarkably precocious compared to children of the same age and indeed very well may be gifted. Here's what parents should do.

❖ Make sure your priorities reflect your values.

There is something much more important than a child's giftedness to keep in mind: your child is a child, and the most important thing is to help your child master the developmental tasks he or she faces in order to become well-rounded and socially connected in appropriate ways. A child's intellectual giftedness should not become a dominating priority.

When children speak in whole sentences while other children are using only words or phrases, show unusual awareness of their environment or ask thoughtful questions, parents sometimes become so impressed that they center their parenting on developing their child's intellect instead of nurturing their child's emotional and social growth.

Sometimes loving parents become so caught up in trying to satisfy a child's need for intellectual stimulation that they make it less likely their child will develop as a well-rounded person.

Rather than focusing on their child's intelligence, parents of bright children need to stress play, responsibility, perseverance, imagination, affection and having fun with others.

❖ Be careful when comparing your child with other children.

You can form some impressions by observing your child in playgroups or preschool and by talking to other parents. But keep in mind that, during their first 8 years, children reach developmental stages at very different paces and often change quite dramatically within a relatively short period of time. These are fluid years, and parents must be cautious about forming any hard and fast conclusions from a few impressions.

For instance, although some gifted children are very early readers, many others learn to read as first graders, when their peers do. Children often have unusual talents in some areas, but not in others.

❖ Consider your child's overall characteristics, not just one.

Because there is no single criteria of giftedness, parents need to be on the lookout for a variety of traits which typify gifted children.

There are a number of lists of age-specific behaviors

which parents can get from their child's pediatrician or access through the Gifted Resource Council Website (www.cybam.com/grc). Be wary of lists which concentrate exclusively on a child's intellectual development. While lists like these can help identify giftedness, they tend to focus parents' concerns too narrowly on intellect at the expense of the whole child.

A broader approach offers the advantage of helping parents consider the entire range of a child's behavior and personality, including traits which result from the child's intellectual prowess. It's important, for instance, to realize that a child who learns very rapidly may tend to be more emotionally intense, competitive and perfectionistic than is healthy.

Twenty years of experience has shown GRC that gifted children tend to be:

- ♦ abstract thinkers
- ♦ challenged by difficult tasks
- ♦ concerned about world issues
- ♦ competitive
- ♦ creative
- ♦ different from their peers
- ♦ emotionally intense
- ♦ humorous
- ♦ leaders
- ♦ logical
- ♦ perfectionistic
- ♦ rapid learners

These traits express themselves in age-appropriate ways, are not characteristic of every child, and are not present to the same degree in all gifted children.

❖ Let Gifted Resource Council's programs help you evaluate your child.

One practical thing parents can do is to enroll their child in GRC's Learning Labs. These Saturday enrichment classes are open to children as young as age three, and no testing is required. If a child enjoys the stimulating curriculum and seems to fit in with other very talented children, chances are that the child may be gifted. In addition, participating in Learning Labs offers a child opportunities to experience intellectual stimulation and to interact socially with other bright children.

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Identifying Giftedness, continued from page 4

❖ Consider testing.

Many parents turn to testing to confirm their own observations, uncover areas of weakness which might be masked by a child's general intellectual prowess, or inform a decision about early enrollment to kindergarten.

Testing is generally not useful until a child is at least four years old. Parents should be aware that testing can be unreliable for preschoolers because many factors—like shyness, fear of a particular tester, or just having a bad day—can cause a preschool child to score lower than his or her true abilities.

Testing is also used to screen children into, or exclude them from, gifted programs run by public schools. Generally these programs are open to children with an IQ of 130 or

above, or about 2% of the population.

If your child's school does not have a gifted program, or if your child attends a competitive independent school, IQ testing may not be necessary.

❖ Remember your priorities.

Being a parent of a gifted child means nurturing a well-rounded, emotionally healthy, socially adept child who can utilize the talents and intellectual gifts he or

she possesses.

Dennis O'Brien is a licensed clinical social worker, experienced educator and therapist, and executive director of KidzLink, an organization serving medically fragile children.

Help your child master developmental tasks . . . promote well-rounded growth . . . encourage fun and socializing with peers.



Gifted Resource Council Relocates Office

We are pleased to inform you that the GRC office moved in August to its new location in the Owen Ridge Office Park in Webster Groves. Our new address is:

357 Marshall Avenue, Suite 6
St. Louis, MO 63119-1827

Gifted Resource Council's office had previously been located in schools – The College School (1984-1990) and Truman Elementary in the Lindbergh School District (1991-2002).

Through the years, GRC's Learning Labs and Summer Academies have been located in a variety of schools, including CBC High School, Forsyth School, Jackson Park, Flynn Park, Wydown Middle, Parkway East, Parkway North, John Burroughs, Country Day, Fontbonne College, Clayton High School and Forest Park Community College. We get around!

Currently, Learning Labs are held at Wydown Middle School in Clayton, Summer Academies at a centrally located school in the School District of University City, and Academic Challenge Cup at Washington and Fontbonne Universities.



Professional Workshops

Teachers, counselors, principals and prospective parents are invited to attend four special workshops conducted by educators and psychologists with special expertise in working with gifted children.

Educators and prospective parents are invited to attend one session for free (Regular cost: \$15/session), but reservations in advance are necessary. The workshops will take place at Wydown Middle School, 6500 Wydown Blvd, Clayton, MO 63105, from 11:10 a.m. to 12:40 p.m. For more information or to reserve your place, call 314-962-5920.

February 15, 2003

“Who are the Gifted? How Can Their Needs be Met at Home and School?,”
Dr. Agnes Meyo

February 22, 2003

“Challenging the Gifted Child: Learning Experiences that Work,”
Dr. Linda Smith

March 1, 2003

“Perfectionism -Definitions, Perspectives and School Strategies,”
Nancy Bonn-Winkler

March 8, 2003

“Recognizing and Working with the Asynchronous Development of Gifted Children,”
John Yunker

From the GRC photo gallery ...



Three young ladies share smiles along with enjoyable learning experiences during Math, Marvels, & More.



Enthusiastic Summer Academies' students expand their horizons.



Learning takes off for a cadet in GRC's Space Academy.



Eco Academy entrepreneur and teacher are engrossed in creating their company product.

Funding the Future

In addition to regular membership categories, Gifted Resource Council has established a special 20th Anniversary fund to help underwrite our future.

Your gift to this special fund will strengthen our ability to expand and maintain high quality services to gifted children over the next twenty years. Everyone who gives \$50 or more to GRC's Funding the Future will be recognized in the spring *mindwonders*.

What better way to help celebrate Gifted Resource Council's 20th Anniversary and show how much you value the wonderful support that GRC has offered gifted children for 20 years?

BECOME A MEMBER OF GIFTED RESOURCE COUNCIL

Now *you* can participate in shaping America's future by becoming a member of **Gifted Resource Council**, a not-for-profit education agency serving bright and talented young people. Your tax-deductible contribution will enable us to improve existing programs, extend offerings and reach more children. Your membership will not only benefit gifted children, but also entitle you to receive the following:

Member: \$50

- ☆ Priority registration for all programs
- ☆ \$10 discount off a Learning Lab registration
- ☆ **FREE parenting classes**
- ☆ Use of GRC Library
- ☆ Free registration at selected work shops and lectures

Friend: \$75

- ☆ All of the above, *plus*
- ☆ \$10 discount off a summer program

Institutional Membership: \$100

(for schools and other organizations)

Sponsor: \$125

- ☆ All of the above, *plus*
- ☆ Additional \$25 discount off a summer program (\$35 total)

Patron: \$250

- ☆ All of the above, *plus*
- ☆ One FREE Learning Lab course *or*
- ☆ Learning Lab scholarship in your name at your request

Funding the Future: \$50 or More

- ☆ A special donation, above and beyond your membership level
- ☆ Celebrate GRC's 20th Anniversary
- ☆ Be a "star,, for the future of gifted children

Membership: _____

Member - \$50

Friend - \$75

Sponsor - \$125

Patron - \$250

Funding the Future: _____

Total Enclosed: _____

Name (as you wish your membership to be listed) _____

Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____ Phone _____

I am also interested in helping as a volunteer. Please contact me.

Please mail check to: Gifted Resource Council, 357 Marshall Ave. Suite 6, St. Louis, MO 63119-1827

mindwonders

informs the public about activities of Gifted Resource Council and about issues relevant to the development of bright and talented children and youth.

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Enhancing the potential of talented young learners

Gifted Resource Council

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*Help celebrate GRC's
20th Anniversary!
Check out our website
at
www.cybam.com/grc*

Gifted Resource Council is a not-for-profit education agency serving the greater St. Louis Metropolitan area. Its purpose is to bring together the resources of the community, the schools and parents to help bright and talented children achieve their potential.