

Gifted Resource Council Online

Put your child in touch with www.giftedresourcecouncil.org . . .
and use it yourself.

Did you know that Gifted Resource Council has a new address on the Web? It does, it's easy to remember, and you should visit it soon. GRC's Web site is a valuable resource for gifted children—and their parents and teachers as well.

The Web site is organized into four primary sections: *Home*, *About GRC*, *Programs*, and *Resources*, with subheadings clearly delineated under each.

Where to Start?

With the next course. Select the tab for *Learning Labs* or *Summer Academies* on the *Home* page to get all the information you need if you have not enrolled your child in GRC's next enrichment program. There are complete descriptions of the classes and even an application which contains information about how you can lower your tuition by becoming a GRC member.

Then select *Academic Challenge Cup* (also on the *Home* page) to see if you might want to interest your school in sending a team to the January or March competitions at Washington University. These are special team-building events that GRC sponsors for children in grades 2-8.

Resources for Children: *Kid Links*

The GRC Web site offers amazing informational resources for the enrichment of curious children who have been taught how, and encouraged to, access them. *Kid Links* (under *Resources*) offers links to twenty-three different Web sites including:

- Electronic Zoo
- Le Louvre Museum On-line
- National Space Science Data Center
- NASA's K-12 Internet Initiative
- Smithsonian Museum Online

Parents who help their children explore resources like these are preparing them for future success as a resourceful

learner.

Make It Easy for Your Child

- Encourage your child make GRC's *Kid Links* the starting point for on-line adventure and learning.
- Arrange a shortcut to the GRC Web site www.giftedresourcecouncil.org on your child's computer.
- Spend time with your child exploring the educational opportunities available through the GRC Web site.
- Play some of the educational games with your child, talk to your child while he or she is engaged in some of the scientific discoveries available, and shows your excitement for what your child is learning.

• Enrich the list. Select *Mary* and let our Webmaster know about other valuable links you want her to add to our Web site.

Resources for Parents

For the past six years, GRC has included practical articles for parents in its newsletter, *mindwonders*. These are accessible in the *Articles* subsection (also under *Resources*) of the GRC Web site.

The *Tips for Parenting a Gifted Child* section addresses issues that parents of gifted children frequently face. For example: "How can I tell if my child is gifted?" or "What should I say when I don't know the answer?" or "How can my gifted child make more friends?" These articles blend theory with practical advice and focus heavily on the very important psychosocial development of gifted children. Rereading all the articles from time to time would be a valuable way to stay in touch with key issues you will face in trying to provide the guidance, discipline and nurturing your child needs.

The *Why Choose GRC Programs?* section contains articles which describe specific programs and how they

GRC Online, continued on page 5

New GRC Web Address
Please note that GRC has a new,
easier to remember Web address:
www.giftedresourcecouncil.org

Dialogue with the Director

Ah, the wonders and benefits of our never-ending, expanding technology! From the exchange of e-mails to the organizing influence of palm pilots to the boundless resources available on the Internet, we are surrounded and enveloped by the possibilities that our technological world provides.

We at Gifted Resource Council are proud to share with you our new Web site address and the vast array of resources that it can bring to your home. We want to collect e-mail addresses from those of you who would like to receive reminders regarding upcoming activities with GRC via the net. And we are exceedingly grateful to Mary Angert (one of GRC's Board members), who has volunteered for eight years, keeping us linked with all sorts of technological tools of communication.

Yet even as I consider the benefits of all these means of communicating, I am struck by the profound importance of the everyday, personal contacts that each of us has with others. The smile, the knowing look, the "thank you", the words and acts of affirmation that make a difference in a person's life. These are also the lines of communication that we want to use with children and families who experience Gifted Resource Council programs.

Midst the marvels of 21st century tools, I hope that we never forget the importance of the interpersonal connections that are the hallmark of GRC activities. Yes, teachers are chosen for their topical expertise, but also for their ability to understand the social and emotional needs of gifted children. Speakers regularly share suggestions and insights with parents regarding the blessings and challenges of raising a gifted child. Students interact with each other as peers who share a common bond, that of interest in a particular subject as well as the need to be accepted for being who they are, bright and talented young people. And we pride ourselves on our personal connections with families.



Sue Flesch, GRC executive director

All in all, this enables the fulfillment of our purpose...empowering gifted children to realize their potential. To that end, let's "stay connected" in as many ways as possible!



Constructing the "Flower Clock" during GRC's new Academy Americana.

Proven Benefits Prompt Teachers to Refer Students to GRC Programs

Ever wonder why teachers make the effort to refer their students to Gifted Resource Council programs? By far the most frequent way that students get introduced to GRC programs is through referrals by teachers.

“The variety of learning experiences that GRC courses offer is one of the most important reasons I want kids to participate. It adds to and enriches what they get in the regular classroom. The topics are always of interest to the children, and they learn in a more experimental, hands-on way than is possible in a regular classroom,” Geta Jackoway said.

Jackoway is a regular classroom teacher who refers 5-8 students to GRC programs every semester. Jackoway, who teaches first grade at Meramec Elementary School in the Clayton School District, has been referring children to GRC for ten years.

“In many ways their experiences are more in-depth than learning in the regular classroom. The richness of the courses means that students can go deeper into a topic of interest, whereas in a regular classroom we may skim the surface of a topic and move on, or return to it a few years later,” Jackoway continued. “It’s a great opportunity for a different type of learning, and the kids really benefit. GRC programs are open to talented students who have the interest to get involved in high-interest, hands-on exploratory learning situations.”

Gifted Resource Council programs are a great resource for talented students who just missed the gifted cutoff in a district. GRC programs are designed to be inclusive rather than elitist. Specialized testing is not a requirement.

Teachers who specialize in teaching gifted children also refer students to GRC programs.

“It often starts with the parents. They ask me about enrichment opportunities that would benefit their child, and I tell them about the GRC programs. There are so many choices for children—science, math, and history—to name just a few. The kids come back really excited, really psyched. They tell about how they actually figured out how to do it, built their own rockets—and launched them!” said Lanie Mitchell.

“A course about the economy is also very special. The students actually form a ‘company,’ make a product, market and sell it. It’s all very exciting,” she said.

Mitchell is a gifted specialist working with students in grades K-5 at Shenandoah Valley School in the Parkway School District. Mitchell has been teaching gifted children for 15 years, and she has referred students to GRC class for all seven years she has taught at Shenandoah Valley.

“Parents also pass the word to one another about the program,” she said, “and so do the kids.”

“Besides the variety of subjects and the hands-on approach, I really like that the staff is trained to work with gifted students. They know how to set a pace that works. They know the materials to cover, the speed at which to cover it, and how to help gifted students interact with one another,” Mitchell said.

“My school also sends teams of children to participate in the competitions (Academic Challenge Cup) GRC sponsors. Working with opened-ended challenges is another way to learn, and the GRC competitions give them a chance to meet gifted children from other districts,” she said. “This openness to other programs and other ways of doing things is something we value in the Parkway School District.”

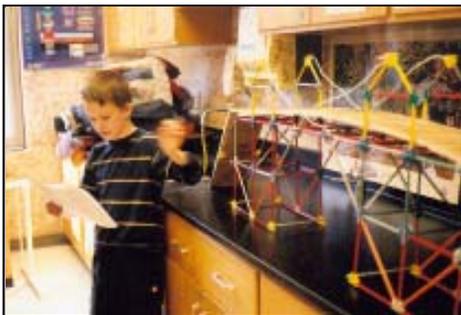
“Don’t forget that GRC offers a lot for teachers and parents. It’s a wonderful resource for reading material and great speakers so that teachers and parents can learn about gifted children at different stages of development and with different needs. I have met some well-known and very helpful experts though GRC—and it’s all been free.”

“I think these are some of the reasons that many Parkway schools support Gifted Resource Council programs,” she said.

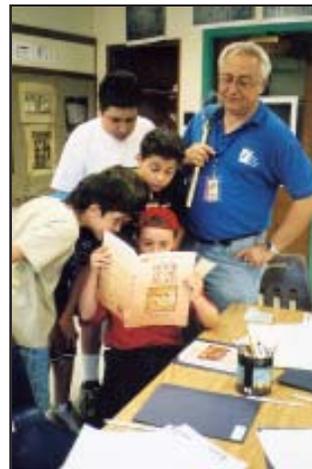
These are some reasons teachers refer students to GRC programs. From your experiences, why would you refer children to GRC programs?

How to Refer a Student to GRC

- ✓ Call GRC for additional materials if necessary.
- ✓ Tell the student about GRC, describe the hands-on, exploratory approach, and provide handouts.
- ✓ Explain the benefits to the child’s parents and encourage them to check into it.
- ✓ Give the parents the GRC phone number (314-962-5920) and GRC’s Web address (www.giftedresourcecouncil.org).
- ✓ Follow up with the child’s parents: Did they visit the GRC Web site? Did they enroll their child? Are they ready to enroll now?



Learning Lab students proudly display their bridge creations.

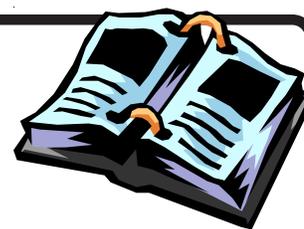


Ancient Academy scribes are engrossed in learning!



"Roasting" Mike Moore who has taught Physical Training with GRC's Summer Academies for 15 years!

Mark Your Calendar



November 22, 2004 – Annual GRC Phonathon

January 12-14, 2005 – Academic Challenge Cup's Creative Convention at Washington University's Wohl Center. Parenting classes will be offered.

January 29, 2005 – Summer Opportunities Fair at MICDS, 101 N. Warson Rd.

February 5-March 12, 2005 (Six Saturdays) – Winter Learning Lab at Wydown Middle School, 6500 Wydown Blvd. Parenting classes will be offered.

March 8-11, 2005 – Academic Challenge Cup's LinguisHTIK and Equations Competitions at Washington University's Wohl Center. Parenting classes will be offered.

June -July, 2005 – GRC's Summer Academies at Ronald E. McNair School, 8136 Groby.

Call GRC at 314-962-5920 for more information on any of these events.

GRC Online, continued from page 1

benefit gifted children. They probe beneath the list of courses and thumbnail descriptions to explore how the curricula, the teachers and the guiding educational philosophy of GRC work together to create wonderful enrichment opportunities for gifted children.

Make It Work for You

- Download or print key articles you will want to reread.
- Share articles and the Web site address with other parents.
- Arrange a shortcut to GRC's Web site www.giftedresourcecouncil.org and make it your portal to on-line support of your gifted child.
- Select *Mary* and tell us about the topics and questions you would like us to address in future articles.

Online Resources for Parents and Teachers

Two sections, *For Instructors Only* and *Family Resources*, contain links to an incredible variety of Web sites and resources to help teachers and parents stimulate gifted children.

Sites range from the Educational Resources Information Center (ERIC) to enrichment and summer programs around the country, early entrance programs, educational resources and services, gifted publications, distance learning programs and many dozens more. All these valuable resources are organized into categories, listed with brief descriptors and accessible with just the click of a mouse!

GRC needs your charitable support to continue providing talented children with special enrichment opportunities. Tax deductible membership gifts keep fees as low as possible and provide scholarship assistance to those who need it.

Please use the enclosed envelope to mail your membership gift today.

About GRC: *mindwonders*, Membership, Sponsors and Board

Here you can review our mission statement and meet our board of directors, key staff and supporters. The GRC calendar is also posted, so that you can anticipate the next program you may wish to enroll your child in. You can learn about the benefits of becoming a supporting member of GRC.

Complete editions of the GRC newsletter, *mindwonders*, dating back to 1998, are also accessible.

Gifted Webmaster

GRC's Web site has been maintained and steadily improved by board member Mary Angert.

Mary welcomes your suggestions, and we encourage you to let her know what you like best and that you appreciate her volunteer efforts. You can do all this on the Web site by selecting *Mary*.

We hope you will find the GRC Web site useful and visit it often.



Solving a robotics challenge during GRC's



Two Space Academy cadets show their pleasure with space creations.

How can I help my child's teacher do the best for my child?

By Dennis O'Brien

All parents of gifted children face this question. Some parents find ways to be proactive about enlisting support from teachers. On the other hand, some parents manage to alienate the very teacher whose support they want to enlist. Pointing out the obvious ("My child is gifted."), confronting the teacher ("Why aren't you challenging him more?") or making demands ("Can't you give him special assignments?") are sure to backfire. It's all in the approach. Here are some strategies that will help parents be proactive, positive and—more often than not—effective in their efforts to help a teacher do the best for their gifted child.

Collaborate with the Teacher

 Try to understand the teacher's situation before you do anything else. She's got twenty-something children to deal with at once, many of them at different levels and with different needs. She's trying hard, but her focus is pulled in many different directions. "Reading levels in a typical classroom now span 10 years, ranging from those that are reading well below grade level to those that are advanced readers," said Sally Reis, principal investigator for the federally funded National Research Center on the Gifted and Talented.

The underfunded No Child Left Behind legislation and the Missouri Assessment Program make remediation a top priority in many schools and classrooms, whether this is acknowledged or not.

It's a serious problem, and blaming the teacher won't get your child the support he needs and deserves.

 Assume that the teacher wants what's best for your child. No one becomes a teacher who doesn't care about children and want what's best for every one of them. She's not there to make it hard for your child or to ignore your child's needs. Her resources are stretched to the breaking point with the demands she faces on a daily basis, and sometimes it is easier to let the good students fend for themselves, even if they are bored and unchallenged.

 Align with the teacher. Let her know you recognize the problem from her perspective. Ask what you can do to help her try to meet all these needs, including those of your child. Listen to her ideas, and encourage her to try them. Then ask if she would want to hear some suggestions about ideas that seem to have worked for other teachers trying to work with gifted children in the regular classroom. If so, offer to gather some resources or ideas for her. If she is not interested in hearing more about this from you, thank her for all she is doing for your child and ask if you can check back in a month or six weeks to compare notes about how things

are going.

 Prepare a list of your child's character traits, interests and learning style for various subjects. Include strengths and weaknesses. Describe strategies that have worked well with your child in the past, as well as some that have not worked so well. Tell the teacher that you have prepared this in case it might be helpful to her. Hand her a copy and offer to talk about it if she would like. The important thing here is to convey a genuine sense of wanting to help her with a difficult job. Avoid anything that seems to suggest that you have all the answers or that other teachers have done it better. Think collaboration.

 Volunteer to help with other children, especially those who might need remediation. If you volunteer in the classroom, you will make it easier for the teacher to attend to the needs of other children, including but not limited to your child.

 Offer to help in other ways if you can't spend time at school. Would the teacher like help cutting shapes, making phone calls, picking up supplies, organizing events or recruiting special guests for the class?

 Offer the teacher resources. Gifted Resource Council has a lending library of books that can be helpful. For example, *Teaching Gifted Kids in the Regular Classroom*, by Susan Winebrenner, is full of helpful strategies for the classroom teacher. You might consider purchasing this book yourself and offering it to the teacher for the school's educational library.

The GRC Web site also offers links to resources for teachers, including many lesson plans and activities. These can be found on the *For Instructors Only* section of the Web site. For example, [Education World](#) provides teachers with lesson plans in every subject area and provides updates on a monthly basis for new sites.

What To Do on the Home Front

 Help your child fit in. Make it clear to your child that, no matter how bored he might be, you expect him to cooperate with the teacher, to relate well to classmates, and to not call attention to himself. Many academically talented children show off, put other children down, or make a big deal of their boredom with work that comes easily to them but not to others. This alienates classmates and teachers. It also makes it difficult for your child to develop the healthy social relationships and skills he will need to succeed in life.

 Coach your child. Talk to your child about how he

How can I help?, continued on page 7

How can I help?, continued from page 6

can approach the teacher in a constructive way. He could talk about his eagerness to learn by going beyond the regular assignments for the class. Could he work out an arrangement with the teacher to do some special projects? Role-play with your child until you are comfortable he can handle this in a constructive, non-confrontational way.

 Be patient yourself. If you find yourself growing impatient, remind yourself to look at the situation through the eyes of the teacher. Any displays of impatience or disapproval of the teacher will empower your child to act disrespectfully himself. That will only make things worse.

Parents who utilize strategies like these stand the best chance of helping their child's teacher do the best for their child. Respecting the teacher, while offering what assistance you can, will generate the respect and support you want for your child. It's a two-way street.

Dennis O'Brien is a licensed clinical social worker, experienced educator and therapist, who writes educational materials for the Washington University School of Medicine Dept. of Psychiatry.



Math, Marvels & More is so much fun!

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 workshops and lectures

Friend: \$75

- All of the above, *plus*
- \$10 discount off a Summer Program

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

Institutional Membership: \$100

(for schools and other organizations)

Member Friend Sponsor Patron Institutional

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.

Gifted Resource Council
357 Marshall Ave. Suite 6
St. Louis, MO 63119-1827
314-962-5920
www.giftedresourcecouncil.org

Susan C. Flesch
Executive Director
JoAnn Hetisimer
Administrative Assistant
Linda Sher
Editor

Fall 2004

Non profit org.
U. S. Postage
PAID
St. Louis, MO
Permit 4757

or current resident

Enhancing the potential of talented young learners

GiftedResourceCouncil

Gifted Resource Council Board of Directors

Larry K. Harris, President
Margaret W. Cohen, Ph.D., Vice President
Richard Heuermann, Secretary
Christopher Dadian, Treasurer

Directors

Barbara Anderson
Mary E. Angert
Robert Coulter, Ed.D.
David Drebes
Lars Gacad
Mary Gismegian
John M. Jennings
Sandy Kalin
Agnes Meyo, Psy.D.
William T. Moore
Stephen C. Murphy
Eve M. Riley
Mulugheta Teferi
Carol Thudium
Atia Thurman

Advisory Board

Beverly K. Berla
David Blasingame
Karen Levin Coburn
Sherman George
Donn Johnson
Pudge Landau
Joy Melman
Linda H. Smith, Ph.D.
M. Frederic Volkmann

Ready for Timely Updates?

Curious about what may be coming next? Now you can register to receive timely updates online. Just register and we will put you on the list for periodic e-mail updates.

Send your contact information to: info@giftedresourcecouncil.org



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.