

## GRC's 25th Anniversary Featured Hands-On Science, Ecological Themes

To celebrate its 25th Anniversary of providing valuable enrichment activities to gifted children, Gifted Resource Council chose to do what it does best: challenge students to learn and have fun doing exciting, hands-on, high interest activities. More than 400 alumni, parents, former Board members and teachers participated in the three-hour "Silver Celebration" at Alberici Corporate Headquarters on October 5, 2008.

"We were delighted by the turnout, the enthusiasm people showed about GRC and their loyalty over the years," said executive director Susan Fleisch. "It was really exciting to see so many friends of GRC in one place – reconnecting with one another while doing the hands-on activities that characterize all of Gifted Resource Council's educational programs."

Children conducted experiments featuring a loveable "Eggbert," applied space science principles to construct and fly their own paper airplanes, and participated in a mini space station. Young geneticists experimented with DNA in strawberries, replicating research done in high-tech labs. Other activities featured cup-stacking competitions, genealogy, calligraphy and water experiments. In addition to these hands-on learning activities, guests toured the "LEED Platinum Certified" Alberici building to

see why it has earned the highest rating available for its "green" design and construction.

Gifted Resource Council has provided challenging enrichment programs for 37,500 academically talented students since 1983.



GRC offers academic day camps (Summer Academies) and Saturday enrichment classes (Learning Labs) during the school year. Each winter and spring it sponsors seven days of Academic Challenge Cup (Creative Convention, Equations and LinguiSHTIK) on

the campus of Washington University. Gifted Resource Council serves 3,000 students each year.

On behalf of children whose lives have been touched by Gifted Resource Council programs, thank you to everyone who celebrated GRC's 25th Anniversary – from the coordinating committee to the Board of Directors, from teachers past and present to students and parents from near and far. Thank you for supporting the mission of GRC. All donations directed to GRC's "Silver Celebration" by December 31st will be used to provide scholarships to GRC's programs. Thus, children throughout the metropolitan area will be celebrating for years to come. Thanks for 25 years; we look forward to many more!

## Dialogue with the Director

**“Happy Birthday, GRC!”** And what a wonderful anniversary party – or birthday party – as some children have called it, was enjoyed by all! Sunday, October 5th was a glorious day of celebration for families and friends of Gifted Resource Council at the amazingly GREEN Alberici Corporate Headquarters building.

The family-friendly activities, which provided a “taste of GRC”, were educational and fun for everyone – young and old alike. One Mom reported to a GRC teacher that her daughter was remembering weeks later that she “just had so much fun at Alberici!” Another parent took the time to write a letter to GRC, saying that her daughter “did not want the day to end, and came home and typed up an experiment she learned about to share with her Science teacher at school. It was wonderful to see her excited about learning.”

Yes, celebrating a birthday (or anniversary) is always a good thing. And the giving and receiving of gifts is often a part of that celebration. Through our year-long celebration, Gifted Resource Council has been the recipient of gifts in honor of GRC’s twenty-

five years of service to gifted children throughout the metropolitan community. For those donations, we are grateful and say a profound “thank you!”



*Sue Flesch, GRC executive director*

Indeed, the Board of Directors of Gifted Resource Council has determined that ALL donations to GRC in honor of our 25th anniversary will be used to provide scholarships for children to attend GRC programs. This will provide gifts to many in our community for years to come.

Especially in this time of economic uncertainty, we are delighted to be able to offer additional financial assistance to families. Because of the generosity of our donors, partial scholarships for GRC’s Summer Academies will be available for

those who apply and demonstrate need. Feel free to go to the GRC Web site ([www.giftedresourcecouncil.org](http://www.giftedresourcecouncil.org)) to download a financial aid application. If a grant of \$200 – more or less – will enable your child to participate in one of GRC’s programs, please do NOT hesitate to apply. We truly want as many children as possible to benefit from the hands-on learning experiences that we offer each year.

**“Happy Birthday, GRC!”**

*Susan C. Flesch*



*Celebrating  
Gifted  
Resource  
Council!*

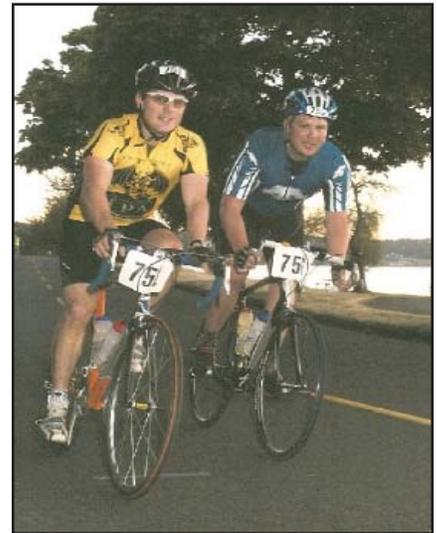


## Board Member Rides for GRC Scholarships

GRC Board of Directors member John M. Jennings, JD, CFP, rode his bike 203 miles in one day during July in the great “Seattle to Portland Bicycle Classic” with his brother Brian, raising more than \$600 to fund scholarships for GRC programs. The ride included 9,500 other riders, with about 1,500 riding in one day and took John and his brother about 12 hours of biking time. “A lot of focus is placed on children at risk and struggling with school, but few think of gifted children as needing attention as well,” said Jennings, who is Vice President of The St. Louis

Trust Company. “I used this bike ride as an opportunity to introduce people to the issues facing gifted children and the key services provided by GRC.”

“We are delighted – and very grateful – that John has used his creativity as well as his love of biking to spotlight gifted children, who need GRC’s programs to better develop their potential,” said GRC Executive Director Susan Flesch. “Thanks, John, for thinking ‘outside the box’ – and for riding your bike for GRC students!”



## Influential GRC Board Member Dies

Long-term GRC Board member Roberta “Pudge” Landau passed away at her home of complications from Parkinson’s disease at age 82. Mrs. Landau was a member of the Board of Directors and the Advisory Committee of Gifted Resource Council for more than 20 years.

Professionally, Pudge Landau was an assistant professor of physics from 1975-1998 at St. Louis Community College at Forest Park. She was the Science Center’s education director when it moved from Oak Knoll Park in Clayton to the Planetarium in the mid-1980s. Her suggestion that the Science Center be placed above ground on the south side of Highway 40 and connecting it to the Planetarium via a pedestrian overpass so as not to consume more of Forest Park was an alternative plan that was ultimately adopted.

Pudge earned a degree in Physics from the University of Chicago in 1945 and a master’s

degree from Washington University before marrying Dr. William M. Landau, who later became head of the neurology department at the Washington University School of Medicine. Pudge was passionate about making physics and astronomy understandable to both children and adults.



*Pudge Landau (second from right) along with Linda McCall, first executive director of GRC, Sue Flesch, Sandy Kalin, and Bev Berla.*

Beverly Berla, former executive director of GRC, remembers, “When Pudge was education director at the St. Louis Science Center, she welcomed our efforts to collaborate by opening doors and helping us make community connections. Pudge’s interest in our mission lead her to serve enthusiastically on GRC’s Board. She brought

positive energy, intelligence and fun to all of our work together.”

Pudge’s family has designated Gifted Resource Council as a recipient of memorial gifts in her honor.



## Parents Ask: How Damaging is “Failure” to a Child’s Self-Esteem?

By Dennis O’Brien

Terribly damaging – if that’s how a child interprets situations where she does not excel. And far too often, that’s how gifted kids, with encouragement from their parents, approach life: always expecting to be the best and viewing anything else as “failure.” Unfortunately, this is a terribly unrealistic, self-limiting and self-destructive mindset. How many of us can really be the best? The smartest? The funniest? The fastest? And why should we need to be?

Well-intending parents who make the mistake of believing their child must always excel raise children afraid to take risks because they fear “failure” as they define it. They incorrectly believe that self-esteem depends on always being right, always knowing and being able to do more than any peer, and often being the center of admiring adult attention.

Tragically, these children limit their exposure to life, restrict their chances for developing satisfying relationships or exploring their interests, and end up with a brittle self-esteem resting on the fragile underpinnings of demonstrable intellectual superiority. Fearing “failure” in other venues, they avoid activities that might threaten this self-image, fail to develop the interpersonal skills that would allow them to form nurturing friendships and avoid challenging experiences that could help develop the capacity to cope with life’s inevitable adversities.

Why is experiencing “failure” so important for gifted children? Because they need to “fail” and learn from it. To be resilient in life, a child needs to learn to try things, to enjoy activities without measuring the results, and to keep participating.

Most children experience adversity repeatedly in the normal flow of their lives and, with support from nurturing adults, learn to cope with it. But academic achievement comes so easily to the gifted that they often breeze through school seemingly without effort and certainly without failure. What’s more, they are so accustomed to dominance in their areas of strength that they tend to restrict their participation in other areas where they may not excel. Learning to cope with the frustration of being average broadens their sense of self beyond the constrictions imposed by their intellectual prowess and helps them to understand others who do not have their special talents and to develop a healthy persistence in the face of adversity.

Parents who encourage their child to engage in a range of activities in which she probably may not excel actually nurture a well rounded and durable child who is much better equipped to develop fulfilling personal relationships, well prepared to succeed in real life and much more likely to achieve personal and professional fulfillment. These parents understand that success in life depends on more than intellectual ability and that falling short of lofty expectations can be an irreplaceable opportunity for a gifted child to grow more resilient, self-confident and healthy.

Here’s what concerned parents can do:

\* Start by assessing your priorities. Are you as aware as you should be of the importance of helping your child grow

emotionally and socially? Do you sometimes get too caught up in what your child can learn or accomplish at the expense of her development as a well-rounded person?

\* Next, assess your child’s situation. Does your child take risks? How involved is your child with activities where he may not be the best? Does he enjoy them for the fun, challenge and companionship they offer, or does he withdraw, brood or get critical of others? How well does your child interact with peers? What kind of coaching or support does he need from you in order to take more risks or expand his scope of activities and relationships with peers?

\* Arrange for your child to become involved in activities in which she may not be “the best” so that she learns she is OK as a person, valued and valuable for who she is. Be sure to include group activities that teach cooperation with others – and where success is not measured by academic prowess.

Team sports provide wonderful opportunities for gifted children to both experience the frustration that most of us feel at being just good enough at something, not great, and to learn about working together with others. In addition to giving your child opportunities to learn to cope with adversity by participating in activities where she may not be the best, activities like these also help your child become more well rounded.

Should you force your child to participate? Yes, if you must. Obviously it is better if your child participates in activities that interest her, but sometimes a child who fears “not-being-the-best-at-every-thing” must be compelled to participate in activities that are healthy for her. “I want you to try soccer now. If you really don’t like it at the end of the season, you can try swimming, dance or theater.”

\* Praise and encourage your child for participating, always keeping the focus on the process of making the effort rather than the results.

\* Enroll your child in GRC’s Summer Academies and Saturday Learning Labs where he will be challenged by chronological peers who are his intellectual equals and nurtured by master teachers specially prepared to make it a safe environment for children who may be facing this situation for the first time in their lives. Every year GRC trains its instructors to promote cooperation, not competition, and to focus on the process of learning and discovery, not the product. Talk to your child in advance about what to expect and what you expect from him - to cooperate, to enjoy the experience and to respect the talents of others.

When parents set the right priorities, gifted children grow to be healthy, happy and extremely productive people. Parents who make it safe for their gifted children to experience frustration and the “failure” of not being the best, encourage participation in team activities, and nurture the development of friendships are doing the most important things they can to help them develop the healthy self-esteem and interpersonal skills they will need for lasting success.

## Scholarships for GRC's Summer Academies

Gifted Resource Council is pleased to announce that families seeking partial scholarships for a child can find an application on the GRC Web site: [www.giftedresourcecouncil.org](http://www.giftedresourcecouncil.org). "We think that a \$200 scholarship could make a great deal of difference for some students who would clearly benefit from the challenging, hands-on learning activities of one of GRC's Summer Academies," said executive director Susan Flesch. "We are very pleased that our donors have made it possible for us to make GRC affordable for more families at a time when the economy is so precarious." Applicants must write a short essay (two paragraphs) about how they hope to benefit from a Summer Academy. All applications are confidential.



A GRC student smiles proudly after building his tower of cards higher than 25" to celebrate GRC's 25th Anniversary.



Former GRC Board member Ernie Wolf and his wife visit with GRC teacher Art Koenig at the Ancient Academy table.



*Helen Weiss, former member  
of the Gifted Resource Council  
Board of Directors.*

## Helen Weiss Remembered

Helen Weiss, who served on the GRC Board of Directors from 1997-2001, recently passed away from complications of colon cancer at age 83. For nearly fifty years she served as the public relations maven for Famous-Barr and Macy's in St. Louis. Born in Wheeling, West Virginia, Helen graduated from University City High School and Washington University. In 1947 she married Richard M. Weiss, who became a news producer and on-air business reporter for KSDK.

"Helen's optimism, creative ideas, and respect for children were gifts to GRC during the years she served on the Board," said GRC Board Member Margaret Cohen. Gifted Resource Council benefited from Helen's incomparable knowledge of St. Louis' people and organizations."

## Mark Your Calendar

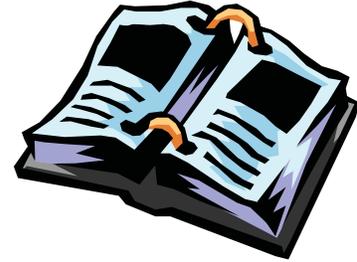
*January 7 & 8, 2009* – Academic Challenge Cup's Creative Convention at Washington University's Wohl Center. Parenting classes will be offered.

*January 9, 2009* – Academic Challenge Cup's LinguSHTIK Competition at Washington University's Wohl Center. Parenting classes will be offered.

*January 31, 2009* – Summer Opportunities Fair at Whitfield School, 175 South Mason Rd.

*February 7-March 14, 2009 (Six Saturdays)* – Winter Learning Lab at Wydown Middle School, 6500 Wydown Blvd. Parenting Classes will be offered.

*March 10-13, 2009* – Academic Challenge Cup's Equations Competitions at Washington University's Wohl Center. Parenting classes will be offered.



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

## 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:

### Gifted Member: \$60

- ★ Priority registration for all programs
- ★ *FREE parenting classes (\$160 value)*
- ★ Use of GRC Library

### Intelligent Friend: \$100

- ★ All of the above, *plus*
- ★ \$10 discount off two Learning Lab registrations

### Sharp Sponsor: \$150

- ★ All of the above, *plus*
- ★ Additional \$25 discount off a Summer Academy

### Talented Patron: \$250

- ★ All of the above, *plus*
- ★ Additional \$25 discount off a Summer Academy (\$50 total)

### Brilliant Benefactor: \$500

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

### Wise Philanthropist: \$1,000

- ★ All of the above, *plus*
- ★ GRC logo lapel pin
- ★ The undying gratitude of gifted children throughout the metropolitan area

### Imaginative Institution: \$100

- ★ For schools and other not-for-profits

Gifted Member  Intelligent Friend  Sharp Sponsor  Talented Patron  Brilliant Benefactor  Wise Philanthropist  Imaginative Institution

Name (as you wish your membership to be listed) \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

City \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_\_ Zip \_\_\_\_\_ Phone \_\_\_\_\_

**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**  
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# GiftedResourceCouncil



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*GRC teacher Tim Brennan assists a student in the creation of his catapult during GRC's "Silver Celebration".*

**See inside for more about GRC's  
25th Anniversary celebration.**

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.