

35 Years and Counting!! GRC Continues to Empower Gifted Children

Gifted Resource Council was founded 35 years ago with the compelling mission of bringing together the resources of the community, schools and parents to help bright and talented children in the greater St. Louis metropolitan area achieve their full potential. Recognizing that gifted children were an underserved at-risk population, GRC's founders joined together to create challenging academic opportunities typically not available in school for bright children.

Remarkable Program Expansion

The original Learning Lab (offered on Saturdays) flourished, and soon other programs were established to offer a year-round variety of enrichment opportunities for gifted children in grades PreK-8. GRC now offers over 60 Learning Lab courses every year, 11 two-week-long Summer Academies and seven days of Academic Challenge Cup.

Regional Resource

Although most students come from St. Louis City and County, parents bring children from Columbia, IL, in the east, Edwardsville in the north, and Barnhart and Cape Girardeau in the south. Why? Because they recognize that there is nothing in their immediate environment that offers the unique opportunities for academically talented children that GRC offers. In 2017 GRC served students from more than 224 different schools, 36 districts and 68 zip codes!

Efficient Model Multiplies Resources, Opportunities

Since its founding, the need for the unique services GRC provides has actually grown as school districts channel scarce resources into remediation for underachievers rather than enrichment. In fact, over the ensuing 35 years, GRC has served nearly 50,000 students in pre-K through 8th grade, stimulating them, enriching their academic experiences and helping them develop the essential social skills that will enable them to become the leaders of tomorrow.

GRC has accomplished this with a lean administrative staff, hundreds of talented part-time teachers and thousands of devoted volunteers who have made this low-budget nonprofit so impactful. Scholarships are available for qualified students who cannot meet GRC's modest tuition fees. In fact, efficiently run GRC is one of only 220 local agencies that meet all 20 of the Better Business Bureau's "strong and comprehensive standards" for fiscal management, board governance, truthfulness and transparency. Here's how GRC serves children—and their parents:

Academic Challenge Cup engages 1,200+ students each year over seven days in friendly competitions in



GRC's 2018 Math, Marvels & More students eagerly engaged in hands-on, minds-on explorations of buoyancy and wind energy.

math, language and creative engineering on the campuses of Washington University and the University of Missouri-St. Louis. Students' academic gains are much greater than might be expected of a three-hour event because they practice these critical skills for months before or after school, under the guidance of volunteer coaches trained by GRC.

Learning Labs enable students to take 90-minute high-interest courses on Saturdays during the fall

and winter. Children interact with others who are their intellectual peers while being challenged by an exciting, hands-on enrichment curriculum.

GRC's Summer Academies are eleven two-week academic day camps in a variety of topics students would not study in school. Students who want to prepare for the future by looking back on world or natural history can reenact life in ancient cultures, learn about dinosaurs, fossils and continental drift. They can create a "green" business and earn a profit, or consider the myriad possibilities of space exploration.

GRC Nurtures Emotional and Social Development

In addition to academic challenges, GRC fosters

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Dialogue with the Director

There were some amazing firsts in 1983. Motorola made the first commercially available mobile phone. Astronaut Sally Ride became the first female U.S. astronaut in space. Microsoft Word was first released. And it was in 1983 that Gifted Resource Council began addressing the need for more opportunities for gifted children, holding its first Learning Lab and Summer Academy that year!

Yes, GRC has been offering enrichment to children in the St. Louis metropolitan area – and beyond - for thirty-five years. Its three major programs have grown throughout the years. GRC alums who are now parents often enroll their children in these programs because of their first-hand experience of the positive impact GRC made upon their lives.

Families return to GRC's programs often because parents know they can count on their child having quality experiences in a safe and enriching environment. Learning Labs and Summer Academies have skilled teachers who understand and nurture gifted and talented children. Parents recognize this, as noted by a parent this summer who wrote,



Close observations are made while investigating the properties of surface tension during GRC's 2018 Summer Academies

“I especially love how staff are sensitive to the different needs of all the children...” Another noted that her son, “...really felt like he belonged.”

Workshops available during Learning Labs and GRC's Academic Challenge Cup offer support to grateful parents and teachers. GRC's partnerships with the community, such as local school districts as well as Washington University and the University of Missouri – St. Louis, provide excellent locations in which these quality programs and services can happen.

Gifted Resource Council's longevity and success can be attributed to the dedication of people who passionately believe in its mission of helping bright and talented children achieve their

potential. Among them is Sue Flesch, who for thirty years has channeled her energies into creating an organization that has made a positive impact on so many families throughout the years. GRC and the St. Louis community are indebted to her, and the organization will continue to provide quality programs and services for bright and talented children and their families while honoring Sue's legacy.



Susan Jesse, GRC Executive Director

GRC's Creative Convention - Where future engineers construct great ideas!

Bring your own STEAM team to GRC's Creative Convention February 28 or March 1, 2019, and experience the excitement of critical thinking, cooperation and creativity encapsulated in one morning's friendly competition. Whether you are a parent, teacher or someone home schooling, you can coach a team to academic accomplishment, downright fun and potential victory.

During the half-day event, five team members (second through fourth graders) use the engineering design method to solve an open-ended, real-world problem. They brainstorm solutions, develop a plan, create a prototype or model, and present a creative marketing message to a small audience. The challenge encompasses science, technology, engineering, art and math (STEAM).

Parents, teachers and home-schooling individuals will find GRC support for coaching. "We want to encourage people to bring a team to this exciting, fast-moving competition, so we've made some changes this year," said GRC's Executive Director Susan Jesse. "We have a Facebook group where you can ask questions and get support from GRC and from other people who have participated. We also expanded the age range to include fourth graders, making it easier to build a team.

"Those who have coached before also will find a simplified scoring process this year, and we offer some written supporting materials for team preparation as well as for judging the competition."

Since 1984, Creative Convention has blended creative expression with the scientific process. GRC encourages teams to develop a team name

and descriptive costuming, something that builds teamwork. The problem or challenge for the event, such as designing a special exhibit for a children's museum, brings together the main elements of the engineering problem-solving process. This involves divergent (brainstorming), convergent (planning and focus) and emergent (elaboration and creation/building) thinking.

GRC's focus since its inception on critical thinking, problem solving and creativity through hands-on activities has put the organization well ahead of the recent educational trend to promote STEM/STEAM. Early on, schools jumped at the opportunity to encourage these skills by sending teams to Creative Convention. Some of the larger districts sent as many as 25 teams. In addition to the friendly competition itself, students benefit from the opportunity to engage with children from the entire metropolitan area.

For more information about how you can get a STEAM team to Creative Convention, email the GRC office at info@giftedresourcecouncil.org, call 314-962-5920, or connect with GRC on Facebook. On the Gifted Resource Council Facebook page, click "Join Group" to connect with the Creative Convention Support Group.

More information about Creative Convention and the other Academic Challenge Cup programs, Equations and LinqiSHTIK, is available at <https://www.giftedresourcecouncil.org/index.php/academic-challenge-cup/>



Children enjoy creative expression activities during GRC's 2018 Summer Academies.



Proud design engineers with a model of their "Playspace Unplugged" at GRC's 2018 Creative Convention.

Parents Ask: How can we help our child show empathy and consider friends' feelings?

by Dennis O'Brien

That's a great question about something very important. Bright children often fail to understand or empathize with others who may struggle to learn or accomplish things that come easily to them. Their lack of awareness of how others feel can make them appear unintentionally cruel, alienate people and, even more importantly, hurt the feelings of classmates who may already be struggling to accomplish things or feel good about themselves. This is certainly behavior you want to help your child recognize and avoid doing. Here's how you can help.

Make empathy important

- Make it clear that you expect your child to learn to recognize how others feel, empathize with them and show support when it's appropriate.
- Explain how important this is in order to get along with others, forge friendships and be a caring, supportive person. Give examples—both from your life and that of your child—of receiving support when needed and of giving support when appropriate. Describe what you did and how you felt. The more realistic and concrete you can make understanding how others feel and showing empathy, the more readily your child will understand why it's so important to you—and should be to her.

Prepare and coach your child

- Brainstorm with your child to identify situations where it's especially important to understand what others are feeling and to respond supportively. Keep a list of these situations so that you can explore them regularly.
- Roleplay with your child. Begin with some situations that are relatively easy to understand and respond to. As she seems to master these smaller challenges move on to situations that are more difficult, perhaps calling for more tact. Praise her as she completes each roleplay situation while continuing to coach as needed.
- Reverse roles so that she has opportunities to be the child who struggles and needs support. That may help her get closer to understanding what her friend might experience.
- Make it clear that you are practicing how to respond precisely because getting it right with a friend is very important—and can be difficult. Explain that sometimes learning how to understand and be supportive of other people can be much more challenging—and often more important—than mastering facts, calculating answers, doing excellent homework or excelling at a test.
- Be sure to praise him for trying, even if not as successfully as he might have liked.
- Identify and list some clear, short phrases that your child can use in situations calling for empathy, such as, "I've felt like that" and "I think you did well."
- Involve your child in extracurricular activities that promote cooperation—including activities that she may not excel at, such as team sports, theater, band or Scouting. These will help your child develop her social skills and empathy for

those who struggle to achieve. Avoid individual sports that promote competition. In fact, participating in a team sport in which her performance is average or below average will help your child develop empathy for others who do not excel at school. It will also help her develop perseverance, an invaluable trait for real success in life.

Follow through, daily if possible

- Look for opportunities to help your child learn to identify how others might feel by asking questions about specific classmates. How did school go for him? Did he have trouble with any of his homework? Did he get it all done? Done well enough? Was he satisfied? Was he included in the group at recreation? In conversations at lunch? How does your son think his friend felt if he was not included?
- Ask how your child reacted when a classmate struggled or was feeling bad. What could she have done or said to support her classmate? Did she? What would she have liked to hear if she were in that situation? What might she like to do or say next time?
- Ask how your child would have felt if what happened to a friend had happened to her? Has it? If so, how did she feel? What would have helped her feel better?
- Follow up with questions about students and situations you have previously discussed.

Bottom line: You've asked an important question about your child learning to show empathy for others, and there are a number of things you can do to help your child with this important developmental challenge. Be persistent.

Dennis O'Brien is a licensed clinical social worker, experienced educator and therapist, who has led five nonprofits. He has written educational materials used by the Washington University School of Medicine Dept. of Psychiatry, weekly columns on parenting for the Suburban Journal/Post-Dispatch and numerous columns for St. Louis Moms and Dads, CHARACTERplus, Family Connection (Mo. Dept. of Mental Health) and Gifted Association of Missouri. O'Brien's April 6, 2010 Family Matters column, "Prevent teen suicide by addressing it," won the 2010 Missouri Institute of Mental Health award for outstanding reporting.

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While online, don't forget to follow Gifted Resource Council's Facebook page to keep up with GRC updates!

Long-serving Board Member Enriches GRC

Mary Angert, MEd, MA, an Assistant Vice President who works as a system analyst and administrator for CSI Leasing, has empowered GRC's use of all things technological since she joined GRC's Board of Directors in 1998.

"As a member of GRC's Board of Directors, Mary Angert has gone 'above and beyond,'" said a grateful Sue Flesch. "Mary provided the impetus and continual support for GRC's use of technology. She without hesitation shared her personal expertise for everything from the design and implementation of GRC's Website to the numerous updates that made it possible for Gifted Resource Council to electronically communicate information regarding programs. Beyond this incredible amount of volunteer hours, Mary has referred others to GRC and its mission – families, teachers and fellow Board members. She has been a generous donor to Gifted

Resource Council, contributing monthly. Indeed, Mary has served as a model for GRC Board members both now and into the future."

Mary herself describes her efforts as "fun" and a "labor of love." Gifted Resource Council has benefitted greatly from her support throughout two decades!



*Mary Angert at Rainbow Mountain -
Peru - 16,000 feet!*

Committed Leader Guides GRC Expansion

Susan C. Flesch, M.Ed., has been GRC's driving force for more than thirty years and is primarily responsible for developing it into the invaluable asset to the community GRC has become. As a leader, Sue's done an outstanding job of identifying talented staff, recruiting them, inspiring them and then empowering them to do the things that they each do best.

Sue joined GRC as part-time Program Director in 1988, becoming Executive Director in 1995 while she also continued to serve as Program Director. Sue served in that dual capacity until 2016 when she recruited Susan Jesse as part-time Executive Director. After over 30 years of advancing the organization, Sue plans to retire completely at the end of 2019.

Her leadership—more than any other factor—has enabled GRC to thrive for decades. Thousands of grateful children have benefited from her thoughtful, dedicated leadership.

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teamwork and cooperation in an effort to improve the social skills that gifted children need in order to achieve successful careers and develop as leaders.

GRC fosters effective parenting of gifted children by offering special workshops in conjunction with Learning Labs and Academic Challenge Cup. Every issue of GRC's Fall mindwonders contains an article full of practical tips for parents, ranging from how to communicate with a gifted child to dealing with being average in some areas, boredom in school and nurturing healthy self-esteem. Past publications can be found at www.giftedresourcecouncil.org. The article in this

issue contains tips about how to foster a child's understanding and empathy for others.

Gifted Resource Council has indeed made it a priority for 35 years to offer quality programs and services for bright and talented children and their families, and will continue to serve the St. Louis metropolitan community through its mission in years to come.

Thanks to...

...the following individuals who made financial contributions to Gifted Resource Council from October 2017 through September 2018. We apologize for any names which may have been inadvertently omitted or misspelled.

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Mark Your Calendar

February 2 - March 9, 2019 (Six Saturdays) – **Winter Learning Lab** at Wydown Middle School, 6500 Wydown Blvd.

Parenting Classes will be offered.

February 26 and February 27, 2019 – GRC's Academic Challenge Cup

Equations Competitions at University of Missouri-St. Louis.

Parenting classes will be offered.

February 28 and March 1, 2019 – GRC's Academic Challenge Cup

Creative Convention at University of Missouri-St. Louis.

Parenting classes will be offered.

March 12 and March 13, 2019 – GRC's Academic Challenge Cup

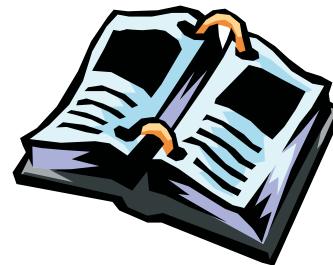
Equations Competitions at Washington University in St. Louis.

Parenting classes will be offered.

March 14, 2019 – GRC's Academic Challenge Cup **LinguiSHTIK** Competitions at Washington University in St. Louis. Parenting classes will be offered.

June 10 – July 19, 2019 – GRC's **Summer Academies** at

Wydown Middle School, 6500 Wydown Blvd.



**For more information on any of these events, contact GRC:
314-962-5920 or info@giftedresourcecouncil.org**

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 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

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

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.