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Newsletter

Spring 2007

GATEway General Membership Meeting and Olmsted County History Center Family Program Saturday, May 12, 2007, 5:00 – 7:30 PM

GATEway's annual membership meeting will be held Saturday, May 12, 2007 at the Olmsted County History Center, 1195 West Circle Drive SW, Rochester. Parents will attend a short membership meeting and vote on next year's officers while the children take part in activities led by Olmsted County History Center staff. Activities will be geared toward students in grades K-8 and are expected to include topics such as Genealogy and History Detectives, Pioneer Toys and Games, and Schoolhouse and Dee Cabin Tours. A few parent volunteers will be needed to chaperone the children, so please consider helping out if you will have two adults attending.

This program is FREE to GATEway members! Non-member families are welcome to attend for \$5 per student, or they may choose to join GATEway that evening and attend for free.

From 5:00 to 5:45 PM, weather permitting, families may gather in the outdoor shelter to meet and socialize. Pizza slices will be offered for purchase or families may bring their own picnic dinner. Decisions about cancelling the picnic portion of the meeting due to inclement weather will be made by 3 p.m. and posted on the GATEway webpage, www.geocities.com/gateroch.

The adult membership meeting will begin at 6:00 PM in the museum conference room with GATEway members voting for officers for next year's Board of Directors. The children's activities will also begin inside the museum at 6:00 PM and will include two sessions. To prevent overcrowding at the programs, tickets for these activity sessions will be handed out as families enter the museum.

Space is limited so advanced reservations are essential. Please RSVP by May 8th to Melissa Amundsen at 289-3899 or by email to gateroch@yahoo.com, including number of attendees and grade levels of students attending. If you miss the deadline, please feel free to contact Melissa to see if additional space remains.

Many thanks to the Olmsted County History Center for working with GATEway to present this wonderful educational opportunity!

2007-2008 Board Elections

The nominations for 2007-2008 officers are:

President: Melissa Amundsen
Vice-President/President-Elect: -Open-
Secretary: Carol Hartley
Treasurer: Ginny Amundson

2007-2008 Committee Chairs will be:

Membership Chair: Desiree Strom
Advocacy Chair: Margaret Pellegrini
Science Fair Co-Chair: Diane Hanson
Science Fair Co-Chair: Daksha Chhugani
Newsletter Chair: -Open-
Programs Chair: -Open-
Publicity & Communications Chair: -Open-

Professional Liaisons will be:

School District Liaison: To Be Announced
RCTC Liaison: Colleen Landherr Maddox
School Board Representative: Sandra Soltis

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District G/T Coordinator Jill Grunewald Retiring

Jill Grunewald, District Gifted and Talented Coordinator, has announced her early retirement from Rochester Public Schools. Jill has been a long time GATEway member, a past GATEway Board member, and a tireless advocate for G/T students. Jill received GATEway's Friend of the Gifted Award in February 2006. It is with great sadness that the GATEway Board bids Jill farewell and wishes her all the best in her future endeavors! Thank you, Jill!



New GATEway Fundraiser: Goodsearch.com

GATEway is participating in a new fundraising project using GoodSearch.com. This opportunity has the potential to add some extra money to our GATEway budget with very little extra effort. It's as simple as going to www.goodsearch.com for your internet searches instead of Google or your favorite search engine. GoodSearch is powered by the Yahoo search engine, so you still get mainstream search results, and GATEway earns a penny per search. It may not sound like much, but so far the money has added up quickly, earning approximately \$10 per month with just a few people using it. With more members using GoodSearch, we could



bring in several hundred dollars per year, which would be a large increase to GATEway's income.

Please consider using GoodSearch.com for your internet searches. When you visit the website for the first time, simply enter "GATEway MCGT" in the box that says "Who do you GoodSearch for?" The site will remember your selection and we will receive a credit each time you do a search on GoodSearch.com. Thank you for supporting GATEway with this fundraiser!

Legislative Update

Members of GATEway and MCGT have been active participants in the political process this session, advocating for legislation to improve G/T education in Minnesota. Members from many MCGT chapters across the state joined together to form an MCGT Legislative Committee which has been very busy researching issues, meeting with legislators, formulating language for additional potential bills, and more.

Several bills favoring G/T issues were introduced in both the House and the Senate, including a bill that was co-sponsored by Rochester's own State Representative, Kim Norton. Rep. Norton's bill, HF543, would have provided \$18 per pupil unit, an increase of \$9, to the dedicated G/T funding which was instituted two years ago. In February, GATEway president, Melissa Amundsen, testified at a House of Representatives committee hearing in favor of that bill. Many thanks are due to Rep. Norton for her support of G/T education!

Wording from HF543 was included in the House's omnibus education bill, HF6, at \$13 per pupil unit, a moderate increase of \$4. No Senate bill was introduced. At press time, a conference committee has been convened to reconcile the difference between the House and Senate omnibus bills. MCGT Legislative Committee members are working toward encouraging the conference committee to retain the wording from HF543 in the final omnibus bill.

Increased state funding for gifted education, as well as the other legislation being considered, would likely have a significant impact on the services offered to gifted students in Rochester Public Schools. If you would like to become involved in GATEway's legislative efforts, please contact one of the Rochester members of the MCGT Legislative Committee, Melissa Amundsen (289-3899) or Margaret Pellegrini (288-3201).

Check Your Address Label!

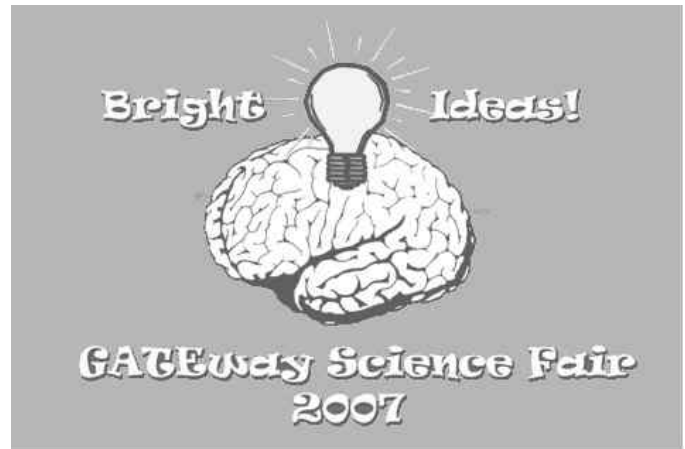
If you're a GATEway member, check your address label for an expiration date. If your membership has expired, please consider renewing using the form in this newsletter or on our website.

GATEway Science Fair 2007 – Another Terrific Year!

Over 300 people attended this year's GATEway Science Fair, held on Friday, February 16th, filling the 3rd Floor Cafeteria at RCTC's Main Campus! Turn-out was again higher this year than last with 110 students, a 20% increase, presenting their projects to reviewers and the general public. The students, who are in second through sixth grade, came from public and private schools all over the Rochester area.

Projects ranged from an experiment to see which food guinea pigs liked best, to a study of the relationship between TV watching and eating before bedtime and having bad dreams, to the effects of lubricants and weights on Pinewood Derby cars. Each student received a T-shirt, a certificate of participation, and feedback and encouragement from three of the scientific professionals who volunteered their time to review the projects. The evening finished with a packed house of students, families, and interested community members in the Hill Theatre for the "Explain Your Brain" presentation by the Science Museum of Minnesota.

GATEway wishes to thank RCTC for allowing us the use of the 3rd Floor Cafeteria and the Hill Theatre when the Heintz Center became unavailable due to a maintenance project. We are grateful to Colleen Landherr Maddox, our excellent RCTC liaison and the emcee for the fair, for making the substitute arrangement before we even knew we had a problem!



Our wonderful volunteers also deserve praise. Sixty-four scientific professionals volunteered their time to review projects. High school students from Century were an enormous help with registration, ushering, and food sales. Special thanks to Shalon McPhee for the brain-maze T-shirt design, the RCTC maintenance staff who arranged the facilities, and all the parents and GATEway members who pitched in with planning and running the fair. All of these operations were expertly managed by our Science Fair Chairperson, Diane Hanson, who once again did a fabulous job.

Our very generous sponsors were: Rochester Community and Technical College, Think Credit Union, Superior Screeners, Mayo Foundation Chapter of Sigma Xi, Hitachi Global Storage Technologies, Yaggy Colby Associates, Pemstar, Mayo Clinic, and Rochester Community Education. Please thank these businesses for supporting the science fair.

RCTC College For Kids



RCTC is again offering a summer program for gifted and talented youth in grades 3-8.

FULL-DAY PROGRAM

Grades 3,4&5 - July 30-Aug 3, 2007

8:15 AM to 4:00 PM at Century High School

Science, Computer/Math, and Foreign Language Camps

HALF-DAY PROGRAMS

Aug 6-10, 2007 on the UCR Campus

Grades 6,7&8 - 8:15 AM to Noon

Grades 3,4&5 - 8:15 AM to Noon or 12:15 PM to 4:00 PM

Class offerings include: Word Juggling: Perform, Poetry, Play; Nature Journaling; Discoveries in Astronomy; Harry Potter - The Final Chapters; Mysterious Math Mania; Step Into Spanish; World Drumming; Philosophy for Children; What? Why Didn't I Think of That?

For more information, contact Colleen Landherr Maddox, RCTC Community & Youth Program Director, at colleen.landherr@roch.edu or 280-3113. The complete catalog is on-line at: www.rctc.edu/community/youth/cfk.html.

GATEway Volunteers Offer Exploratory Algebra Class



For five afternoons during Spring Break, eleven aspiring mathematicians in grades 3-7 could be found arranging and rearranging small green, yellow, and orange blocks on mats and crossbars, and then jotting down numbers on paper. What were they doing? Algebra!

GATEway volunteers offered special hands-on Algebra and Pre-Algebra classes to GATEway members and associates. Using Algeblocks® materials, students explored concepts such as multiplying variables and factoring polynomial equations, and were even introduced to quadratic functions. Algeblocks® manipulatives help students to visualize abstract mathematical concepts in concrete ways, preparing them to more fully understand Algebra and Pre-Algebra concepts long before these classes are traditionally offered in school.

While some of the students were initially reluctant to spend their Spring Break doing math, by the end of the week, the class was overwhelmingly voted “Awesome!” by the participants! GATEway hopes to offer more opportunities like this in the future.

Special thanks to Margaret Pellegrini for coordinating and leading this offering! If you would be interested in future opportunities such as this one, please contact Margaret at 288-3201 or pelsteen@magnaspeed.net.

Park Gatherings - Summer 2007

We invite the families of gifted children in preschool through middle school to gather in parks each week during the school vacation. We will meet each Tuesday at 10 AM in a Rochester park. The children can play together while the adults discuss a variety of issues. Last summer, the kids enjoyed swinging and climbing on the playground equipment, playing chess, comparing trading card collections, creating elaborate imaginative games and dramas, and building massive structures out of sand. The children attending last year played happily for hours with minimal adult involvement.

Dates and locations:

June 12, 19, 26 at Essex Park
(off 55th St NW on Essex Parkway)
July 3, 10, 17, 24, 31 at Cooke Park (7th St NW)
August 7, 14, 21, 28 at Bear Creek Park
(12th St and Marion Rd SE)

All of these parks have restrooms and shelters with tables. Come even in the rain, if it's not storming! Feel free to bring toys, games, or sports equipment to share with the other kids. Bring a picnic lunch if you wish. Invite a friend!

On most dates at least one GATEway Board member will be present to greet families, but please do not be discouraged if we are unable to coordinate our schedules to ensure coverage for some dates. Just come and introduce yourself to whoever is there! Contact Margaret Pellegrini at pelsteen@magnaspeed.net with any questions.

Thank You, Kaki!

One of our treasured Board members, Kaki Kolasa, will be leaving us soon to relocate to the east coast. Kaki has served GATEway this year as our Publicity Chair and helped extensively with the Science Fair in several roles, including Donor Correspondent, Speaker Contact Person, and Chief Table Washer. We will miss her friendly smile and her cheerful, relaxed manner at our Board meetings!

Thank you, Kaki, for all of the time and effort you contributed to GATEway! Good luck to you and your family in all of your future endeavors!

Top 12 Reasons to Join the GATEway Board

12. Learn more about gifted and talented education and the characteristics and needs of gifted students.
11. Meet new friends who have similar interests and concerns.
10. Save a stamp! Pay your dues in person!
9. Contribute to organizing the family programs your family enjoys as well as those you wish GATEway would offer.
8. Keep up-to-date on the current happenings in the district G/T department.
7. Move from hoping for changes in the Rochester gifted and talented program to actively advocating for them.
6. Join with other active advocates to show the district and the community that your concerns are not the unique concerns of a single individual but representative of the needs of many gifted and talented families.
5. Treats at the Board meetings!
4. Collaborate with others to hone complete and practical suggestions to present to the district.
3. Contribute your voice, ideas, feedback, and input, bringing the issues you find most important to the forefront of our advocacy.
2. Take your turn advocating for your children's generation as parents of older children move on to new challenges.
1. Initiate the processes **now** that will help to establish the programs you hope will be in place a couple of years down the road.

The Board is the engine of GATEway's advocacy. We can only accomplish as many tasks as we have volunteers for. You are invited to join even if you do not wish to hold an official position or can only participate in a limited fashion. Your input will be valued and your assistance sought to move our advocacy forward and to create programs of value to our membership.

We invite and encourage all current GATEway members, as well as those people interested in learning more about membership, to attend Board meetings at any time. Our next Board meeting date will be Friday, May 11, at noon in Room 26 of the Edison building. Summer meetings will be held on June 15, July 20, and August 17 at 12:30 PM in the same location. Children are welcome at our meetings if they read or play quietly.

We Need You!

GATEway is currently seeking individuals to fill vacant positions on the Board of Directors. We need individuals to fill the Vice President, Publicity & Communications, Newsletter, and Family Programs positions. These positions can be shared with another person. Board members should attend one or two monthly meetings, most often on Fridays in the early afternoon.

We are also recruiting Science Fair committee members. Serving on the Science Fair committee involves attending one or two meetings approaching the time of the Science Fair in February 2008 and completing additional tasks as your schedule allows.

If you are interested in joining the Board or serving on a committee, please contact Melissa Amundsen at 289-3899 or gateroch@yahoo.com for more information.

GATEway Board Members 2006-2007

Melissa Amundsen, President
289-3899 mjha225@yahoo.com

Carol Hartley, Secretary
281-5271 hartmait@aol.com

Ginny Amundson, Treasurer
289-2357 ginny_amundson@charter.net

Desiree Strom, Membership Chair
281-0497 dsstrom@charter.net

Diane Hanson, Science Fair Chair
281-1498 dianembh@yahoo.com

Margaret Pellegrini, Advocacy and Legislative Chair
288-3201 pelsteen@magnaspeed.net

Kaki Kolasa, Publicity and Communications
288-5031 kakimark@charter.net

Colleen Landherr Maddox, RCTC Liaison
280-3113 colleen.landherr@roch.edu

Jill Grunewald, District G/T Representative
328-4275 jigrunewald@rochester.k12.mn.us

“Debunking” the Myths!

Misconceptions about the “typical” gifted child abound. These myths are damaging in that they keep the public – including legislators and school officials – from understanding why it is essential to provide special programs for these children.

One of the first steps in advocating for the gifted is to dispel the myths that surround them.

Gifted children have it made. This is probably the most common myth. Though the onlooker may see life as a “breeze” for the gifted student, in most schools being different makes life more difficult. There is an anti-intellectual attitude in some schools; the bright child who enjoys studying is often ridiculed and resented by peers.

Gifted students always get good grades and are enthusiastic about school. Although many gifted students do earn good grades, others become underachievers, or behavior problems, or drop out of school. Studies of high school dropouts have revealed that as many as 30 percent of all dropouts are gifted.

Gifted students are easily identified by teachers. Not true. Teachers without any special training in the area of gifted education may have difficulty identifying students; often these students hide their abilities in an attempt to “fit in” with others. Studies indicate that parents and peers are often better at identifying giftedness.

Gifted students will be successful whether or not they receive special attention. This is perhaps the most damaging myth, and it is an argument that school officials sometimes use in justifying the lack of programs for gifted students. Many people assume that because a child is gifted, he is “smart enough to make it on his own” without special help – if not, he isn’t really gifted. But gifted students, like all students, learn better in programs tailored to meet their needs. Unfortunately, we cannot measure the talent loss of students who could have developed more of their potential if they had been given the opportunity.

Gifted students are primarily from middle and upper class homes. Gifted students come from all ethnic and socio-economic backgrounds. They are also found among physically handicapped and learning disabled children.

All gifted children are alike. Though gifted children share some common characteristics, they vary widely in their specific talents. In one child the gift may be academic, in another it may be aesthetic, and in another, creative.

Students gifted in one area are gifted in all areas. As with the general population, gifted children have strengths and weaknesses in varying areas. One child may be exceptionally bright in math but a poor writer, or example.

Gifted children have no emotional problems. The feeling of being somehow different from the rest of his peers can cause emotional problems for the gifted child. Special attention is often needed to help these children develop positive self esteem.

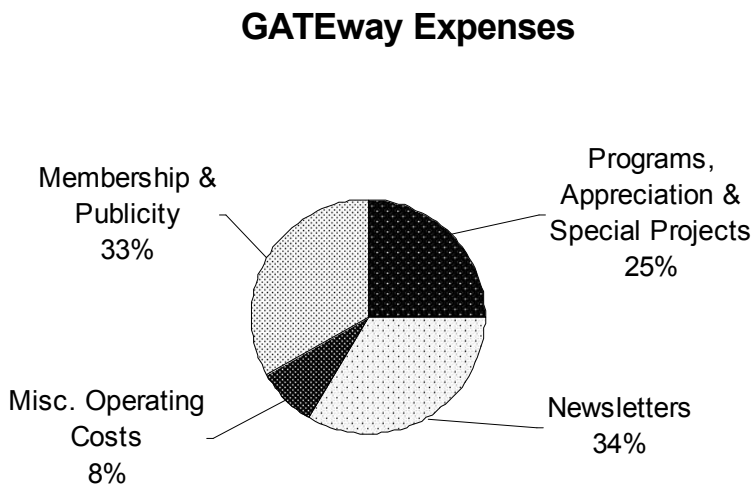
Gifted children must perform well at everything. While gifted children may have abilities in many areas, they often put undue pressure on themselves to achieve at all things.

Teachers like gifted children and are eager to have them in class. While gifted children can often be an asset to a class, teachers may also find the gifted child difficult to work with. They may be considered a bother in class – inundating teachers with “whys”, challenging “the right” answers, finishing work well ahead of others, etc.

Source: South Washington County MN “Gifted & Talented Parent Guide”. Used with permission.

How Are Your Membership Dollars Spent?

The annual fee for GATEway and MCGT membership is \$35. MCGT receives \$19 of that amount and GATEway retains \$16. MCGT uses its portion mainly to rent and staff a central office and produce *Outlook*, the MCGT newsletter. GATEway membership dollars are utilized according to the chart below:



Expense Categories:

Programs, Appreciation & Special Projects: Fees for facility usage and speakers, tokens of appreciation for district staff, Friend of the Gifted Award, etc.

Newsletters: Distributed both to GATEway members and to district staff, legislators, media, etc.

Membership and Publicity: Includes duplication costs of a letter and calendar that goes out to all elementary families in the district in the fall, brochures, and postage for renewal letters

Misc. Operating Costs: Includes our Post Office Box and other operating costs

Percentages are based on budgeted expenses and on a relatively conservative estimate of membership of around 75 families. As membership numbers grow, GATEway will have more funds available for programs and appreciation, which are areas the Board would like to see increased. Our new GoodSearch.com fundraiser (see page 2) should also contribute to that category.

The GATEway Board would like to thank each member for the annual contribution that allows us to continue our advocacy and support of GATEway families and students. If you have questions, please feel free to contact any Board member.

Membership Form

Parent Name(s) _____

Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____ Phone _____

Email _____

School(s) children attend _____ Grade(s) _____

Membership fee: \$35 for one year, \$65 for two years ~ Check: New Member Renewal

GATEway is a 501(c)(3) organization; your dues are tax deductible.

Mail form and fee to: GATEway, Attn: Membership Chair, P.O. Box 1453, Rochester, MN 55903

GATEway General Membership Meeting and Olmsted County History Center Family Program Saturday, May 12, 2007, 5:00 – 7:30 PM

Kick off the evening with family social time while enjoying pizza or a picnic dinner. At 6:00, adults will meet to elect officers for next year while students attend History Center programs and activities. Pre-registration required.

See page 1 inside for more details!

Please Check Your Address Label!

If you're a GATEway member, check your address label for an expiration date. If your membership has expired, please consider renewing using the form in this newsletter or on our website.

P O Box 1453 • Rochester, MN 55903

Rochester Chapter
Minnesota Council for the
Gifted and Talented



GATEway NEWS