

The Community Advisory Committee for Gifted and Talented Education  
cordially invites you to attend our bimonthly meeting featuring

# APAAS ORIENTATION MEETING

*Thursday, March 15, 2007, 6:00 p.m.*

*Location: Oak Creek Elementary School, 1 Dove Creek, Irvine*

## COORDINATOR'S MESSAGE

"It's our choices, Harry, that show what we truly are, far more than our abilities." Albus Dumbledore, Headmaster Hogwarts School, *Harry Potter*.

An important message, especially for our gifted children, can be learned from Dumbledore, a wise figure in the moral development of the book's title character. Our choices define us; our choices make the difference between being a person and being a great person.

Through the research of others (Seligman, Csikszentmihalyi), we have learned that when our choices lead us to helping others, our lives will be more enriched and meaningful. Joseph Renzulli, a national leader in gifted education research, has recently developed a project entitled Operation Houndstooth. In coupling Seligman and Csikszentmihalyi's research with gifted education, Operation Houndstooth serves as a guide for gifted students to become more altruistic. Check it out at <http://www.gifted.uconn.edu/sem/expandgt.html>.

You may ask why altruism is so important for our gifted students to learn? In looking at the positive impact of individuals such as Mother Teresa, Martin Luther King Jr., and Mahatma Gandhi, it is clear that one individual can bring about significant, positive change to our world. In extreme contrast, note the devastation individuals such as Adolph Hitler, Saddam Hussein, Mao Tse-tung, and Joseph Stalin can wrought. It is critical we guide our brightest and best toward using their strengths to help others and make the world a better place for all. In a time fraught with the materialistic goals of many, it is our duty to guide our children to use their talents altruistically, rather than just for self-serving purposes. When we provide children with the opportunities to help others, we add meaning to their lives. We empower them with the knowledge that they have and can make a difference.

Christina Ho, a former Northwood High student and currently a freshman at Stanford University, is an outstanding example of a gifted young person who understands the value of altruism. Last year, Christina took it upon herself to help the "Invisible Children"

of Uganda. Using her gifts of music, leadership, and compassion, Christina pioneered a school-wide talent show to inform others about, and raise funds for, this humanitarian cause. While one cannot be certain how this one event will ultimately impact the hundreds of high school students and their parents in attendance, Christina's humanitarian efforts have made a difference. Even if only a handful of students take this experience one step further by leading their own mission in helping others, Christina's action can increase exponentially.

Ironically, when I contacted Ms. Ho to ask permission to include her story in this GATER message, she shared a college essay that she had recently written on this very topic and has allowed us to publish her essay on our web site at ([http://www.iusd.org/parent\\_resources/gate/gate.htm](http://www.iusd.org/parent_resources/gate/gate.htm)). After I shared Christina's essay with Barbara Reynolds, an El Camino Real fifth/sixth grade teacher, she used the essay to develop a reading lesson for her students which will help them to understand how one person can make a difference. (Mrs. Reynolds' student questions are also included on the GATE web site.)

Next I ask you to take a minute to reflect on what you as a parent of a gifted child can do to teach him or her to understand altruism and its importance. Think about how you can provide the means for altruism to be practiced by your family. In Ms. Ho's essay she writes about social justice classes. Should the high schools do more than just require community service? Should all high schools institute social justice classes as Ms. Ho advocates? In closing, I encourage you to read the essay and let me know what you think.

Sincerely,



Beth L. Andrews

## CAC-GATE CHAIRPERSONS' MESSAGE

By Martha Biemann

As parents, we are our children's greatest advocates. While not wanting to come across as demanding or pushy, many parents of gifted children agonize over the responsibility of making sure their child is adequately challenged and stimulated. In order to maximize our affect on their education without the feeling of being pushy, we need to educate ourselves as much as possible with regards to their options and rights.

One of the best ways for the parents of GATE and APAAS students to be strong advocates is to get involved. I would like to encourage all parents to consider participating with the Gifted and Talented Education Community Advisory Committee (GATE-CAC). Parents with children in all levels of education; elementary, middle and high schools are welcome. By becoming involved, you will have the opportunity to hear wonderful speakers, be made aware of very worthwhile seminars and events, and be part of a network of parents with similar challenges and concerns.



### South Lake Middle School

#### Gifted and Talented Education and Honors Program

The South Lake Middle School Gifted and Talented and Honors Program is designed to meet the needs of our most academically promising students. Along with a rigorous approach to our core academic subjects, we also strive to foster the development of a student's intellectual, artistic, and ethical leadership. Our most capable students are expected to perform at an exemplary level and demonstrate achievement beyond grade level standards.

#### HUMANITIES

At the beginning of the seventh grade school year, GATE-identified and Honors-recommended students will be placed into cluster groups within Humanities blocks. Throughout the school year, students participate in differentiated curricular activities and challenge opportunities. Work performance in the seventh grade cluster will determine placement in the eighth grade honors program in English and History.

Enrollment in eighth grade Honors History and English is based on the recommendations of seventh grade Humanities teachers. The criteria used to determine placement includes: a consistent grade of A or B+, exemplary work habits, quality work, advanced literary analysis skills, and a score of proficient or above on the California Standards Test (CST) in Language Arts.

In addition to these classroom expectations and activities, our honors students are also invited to participate in National History Day, Academic Pentathlon, Yearbook, and a variety of writing competitions.

#### MATH AND SCIENCE

Seventh grade pre-algebra and eighth grade algebra inherently denotes an honors level course. In addition, a few of our most advanced mathematics students may test into algebra in the seventh grade and honors geometry in the eighth grade. Entry into honors level math classes is determined by district-level placement tests and teacher recommendation. Students in our honors math courses are also invited to participate in a variety of state and national math competitions, such as Academic Pentathlon, Math Counts, Math Olympiad, Continental Math League, American Mathematics Competition and the California Mathematics Competition.

As at other IUSD middle schools, students are heterogeneously grouped in science classes where a rigorous curriculum, including a wide variety of hands-on lab experiments, allows gifted students to explore science concepts and skills with greater depth and complexity. Students are invited to attend the UCI Science Career Options Conference held in December, where they explore a variety of science related careers as well as participation in the Outstanding Inventions Competitions held at Irvine Valley College in January, our district Science Fair, and Academic Pentathlon.

#### SPANISH

Student placement in Spanish 1 is based upon seventh grade Humanities recommendations. The criteria used to determine placement includes: a consistent grade of A or B+, exemplary work habits and quality work. Even though taught at the middle school level, Spanish 1, is a high school level course with high school level expectations. Students must maintain an 85% or higher in the class for placement into Spanish II as a freshman in high school.

#### PERFORMING ARTS AND PHYSICAL EDUCATION

Students gifted in the area of music may audition to participate in Honors Orchestra and Honors Choir. Outstanding student athletes may compete in the Harvest Cup soccer tournament, Irvine Junior Games, lunchtime tournaments, and the South Lake Miler Club.

#### ADDITIONAL OPPORTUNITIES:

Students at South Lake now have the outstanding opportunity to pursue membership in the National Junior Honor Society. Membership in the society is one of the highest honors that can be awarded to a middle school student. Student selection is based upon careful consideration of his or her scholarship, leadership, citizenship and character. The standards used for selection are: achievement of a 4.0 for two consecutive trimesters as well as receiving all Outstanding and/or Satisfactory marks for citizenship and work habits. This opportunity is open to both seventh and eighth grade students. Students who join the National Junior Honor Society are also expected to participate in community service activities.

South Lake students are also invited to participate in additional opportunities provided through school, university, and city sponsored programs. Such programs include: the John Hopkins University Talent Search, the University of California Academic Talent Search, and the Hermosillo and Japan Foreign Exchange Programs.



### Eastshore Elementary APAAS Program

The APAAS students at Eastshore are continuing to work on applying higher level/critical thinking skills into all of their work. Mrs. Naramore's fourth grade class has spent a great deal of time preparing for their California History musical. Additionally, her students have had the opportunity to showcase their artistic talents in all areas of the fine arts in class showcases throughout the year. Mrs. Rhoads' fifth grade class is participating in *We the People: Project Citizen*, a program in civic education for the second straight year. Students are observing problems in the community, and will select one public policy to investigate. The entire process will require students to identify a problem to study, gather information, examine alternative policies, propose and develop their own public policy, and then develop an action plan. The fifth graders will conduct their own research papers, as well as work collaboratively to develop a class portfolio to present to the school, judges, and the district showcase. The possible topics are:

- Smoking in public areas
- Internet safety-chat rooms and MySpace
- Drug abuse and adults who influence kids
- Wasting water
- Cyber bullying
- Making recycling trashcans at school
- Limiting the production of styrofoam
- Offering healthy and tastier foods at school
- Preventing tobacco companies from influencing kids
- Disrespectful behavior from different groups of people

The sixth grade APAAS students in Mrs. deMontesquiou's class are using the depth and complexity icons, specifically focusing on details, multiple perspectives and big ideas/themes in their monthly book club genres, their novel study of the Bronze Bow and their weekly literature readings in our McDougal Littel book to apply higher level thinking into their language arts study. In Social Science, the sixth graders are using enrichment activities and the icons, focusing on ethics, multiple perspectives, and past/present/future, to go deeper into learning about each civilization and the civilizations' contributions and mistakes. Mrs. deMontesquiou's student are currently working on incorporating complex grammar and writing skills, such as connotation, into their theme of expository writing.



## Deerfield School APAAS Program

By Kathy Larson, Linda Heath, and Cheryl Yoon

The APAAS Students at Deerfield are off to a flying start this 2006-2007 school year! Deerfield fourth grade APAAS students have adjusted well to a more rigorous academic program. They have learned to schedule their time and organize their lives to meet deadlines. Deerfield fourth grade APAAS students have been learning to write a multi-paragraph essay, as well as write narratives, responses to literature, expository essays, poems, and informational reports. These students have learned to cite sources and use a variety of materials as an aid to their writing. Each student has already researched and reported on a California Native American tribe and on a California mission.

We will begin an exciting unit on the California Gold Rush, which will culminate with Gold Rush Night, scheduled for April 2007. Through the use of simulations, arts and crafts, writing activities, and multiple resources, California history comes alive for each student.

Deerfield's fourth grade APAAS students are learning about the genres of realistic fiction, mystery, poetry, fantasy, folklore, fables, historical fiction, and biography. Each student will be studying books and stories in these genres with depth and complexity. As they read, they are looking for common themes and literary devices throughout the literature. Students are working on writing their own book, complete with illustrations. These books will be bound and ready in May.

Every Deerfield fourth grade APAAS student will have extensive exposure to computer use which includes Internet research, cyberhunts and simulations, Power Point, Excel, Publisher, and Geo Buddies (via email) with Eastshore's fourth grade APAAS class. The students are very excited about our class blog! Student poems, creative writing, and essays are continuously posted to the class blog. Fourth grade APAAS students are invited to read each piece of work and then post their comments.

In June, Deerfield's fourth and fifth grade APAAS students will hold Box City. This economic unit provides real life, hands-on experience in planning and running a business. All Deerfield classes will be invited to visit and shop in the "city." Box City culminates with a parent and family night.

The Deerfield fifth grade APAAS class has completed their first trimester. They have gotten off to a fast start and have been working hard already in the second trimester. They have adjusted to new scheduling, new methods of addressing classroom organization, and become involved in the various activities that will help them grow as individuals.

One method for personal growth that was introduced at the beginning of the year was the study of manners. Students began by learning about proper introductions which included rules for hand shakes. Each of these were practiced in the community and signed off by parents as having been successfully done. Students also composed thank you notes and learned about proper telephone etiquette. A culminating event for our manners study was at our Thanksgiving feast where students were able to example what they had learned. Gentlemen held chairs for ladies, and few elbows were seen on tables. All of this information helped develop in our fifth graders a confidence in themselves no matter what the situation.

The concentration in language arts has been in reading comprehension and response to literature. Students have been working to develop their ability to read and understand author's intent. They then set about learning to write about their understanding in the correct format. Although narrative and report writing were also addressed during the first trimester, the emphasis was on response to literature. Throughout the year students will be involved in whole class novels and literature circles. The novels they read will help them explore human nature and moral dilemmas. Novels will be read that deal with American history and the issues, conflicts and personal struggles of earlier times.

The fifth grade framework in social studies has students studying America from Native American habitation through the twentieth century. Deerfield's fifth grade APAAS class studied the tribes of North America through a group interactive exploration report. They investigated tribes within regions and reported on their habitats, arts and crafts, beliefs and government structure. Each group completed projects that would help their fellow classmates understand and appreciate America's native citizens. At this time they are researching those explorers involved in opening North America to the rest of the world. Included in this project are computer generated timelines and maps, as well as a narrative writing about a moment in the life of the explorer. They will be studying,

investigating and reporting on colonists and revolutionaries throughout the rest of the year. In an effort to view how this history impacts their lives now, students are involved with Project Citizen which asks that they identify an issue that is part of the public policy domain. They are researching the current status of these issues and choosing one they believe they can impact by taking an active role. It promises an opportunity for growth in reasoning, persuasiveness and developing a plan of action.

In March, all fifth graders at Deerfield participate in Colonial Day where they experience activities that replicate the colonial period. They will be tin punching, cross stitching, stenciling, cooking, and weaving, among other activities. To apply their historic knowledge APAAS fifth graders will also complete a quilt square of each of the historic units they study as well as create a carousel book.

Deerfield's sixth grade APAAS class had a busy and fast-paced first trimester, with projects and activities designed to encourage students to extend and apply their learning. In math, students kicked off the year by answering the question "When will we ever use this?" They interviewed professionals, ranging from real estate agents to chemists and aerospace engineers, who used math in their job and then presented the information to their classmates. Students learned how math was used in the real world and gained valuable advice. On a daily basis, students are extending their understanding of math concepts with their interactive math notebook. By writing songs and poems, drawing Venn diagrams and comics, creating mnemonic devices, and even telling jokes about the math concept learned, students reinforce their understanding and creatively apply their mathematical thinking.

Math, as well as consideration of trends and risk, came into play as students made cooperative decisions about which companies' stock to buy in The Stock Market Game. Students have been learning about business structures, dividends, diversification and other financial concepts as their "investment committees" create and manage stock portfolios. In connection with The Stock Market Game, the class participated in the national InvestWrite essay contest. In their essays, the students took the position of a private company CEO and argued whether or not their company should remain privately held or go public. Even with such a difficult topic, the students effectively synthesized their business knowledge as well as developed their persuasive writing skills.

In language arts, the students have been involved so far in novel studies dealing with the challenges and triumphs of coming-of-age. Using *The Red Pony* and *The View From Saturday*, the class has discussed the role of responsibility, kindness, and friendship on the journey to maturity. During the rest of the year, the class will work in literature circles and explore novels related to the sixth graders' study of ancient civilizations. In the writing domain, the class has been working on various writing projects and with the six traits of writing. As part of their weekly reading log assignment, students are required to pick passages that exemplify good writing and to analyze them for the writing traits. As their most recent writing project, students wrote a speech modeled after Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.'s "I Have a Dream" speech. Students viewed a video of Dr. King delivering the speech, examined the literary and rhetorical devices used by Dr. King, and did research on a social problem that they wanted to write about. By examining the craft of great writers, students are learning to become better writers themselves.

This 2006-2007 school year promises to provide Deerfield APAAS students with curriculum that not only guides students in mastering information, ideas and fundamental skills, but one that will also help them tackle complex issues and problems in the real world.

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## GATE News from University Park Elementary



By Barbora Stejskalova


All educators want to look upon their class and see the faces of their students show interest, thinking, and engagement in the curriculum. We often ask ourselves, "how can I teach this and get kids excited about learning?" When we consider what behooves our GATE population, we are often led to what benefits all our students. It is of interest, therefore, to take stock of what and how we are teaching these students.

At University Park fourth, fifth and sixth grade teachers differentiate for GATE and high achieving students similarly in the core curricular areas of Math and Language Arts. In math, generally, at the beginning of a unit a pretest indicates which students are close to mastering the upcoming concepts, earning the opportunity to work more independently,

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MARCH, 2007

GATE News from U.P. *(continued from previous page)*

on complex and/or novel application of grade level material. Oftentimes working quicker than other students, a cluster of early finishers is allowed to challenge themselves with pre-selected brain teasers and math challenges on the internet or on paper. Many times this group works together, challenging each other by creating math problems for each other, or studying in a small group with a mathematically talented parent volunteer or instructional assistant to move at a more accelerated pace or to investigate the theories behind mathematics.

Similarly, in Language Arts, while our GATE students might read the same material as other students, they are challenged to answer higher level questions, and apply their comprehension to other, related areas. Students are encouraged to research topics correlated with the author's purpose or setting. Sometimes they work independently, while other times they work together in a "challenge" group which might be pushed to think more critically or analytically about the literature at hand.

Fifth grade is engaged in several projects this year which will benefit our GATE population. We are very excited to participate in Project Citizen, a whole class, student driven project that deals with a public issue of student choice, which they investigate in depth, research alternate policies to better solve the issue, and present their project and their findings to a panel of judges. This project is in its infancy, but we are very enthusiastic about its unfolding.

Additionally, at the fifth grade level, we carry out several Social Science units naturally differentiated for GATE and high achieving students. One example is our unit on the Age of Exploration, when all students are assigned an Explorer/Conquistador/Missionary according to their ability level. After research of multiple sources, writing of report and citation of sources are completed, all students dress up as their explorer and are called to the "royal courts of Spain and England" where they are interviewed by Queens Isabella and Elizabeth I, who debriefing their respective subjects about their journeys, their findings, their successes and failures, to ascertain if the Explorers are worthy of staging another expedition – a walking field trip to Turtle Rock and beyond. We do a similar role playing exercise as we study the Westward Expansion and find that our students truly get into character and find the process very rewarding.

At the sixth grade level our GATE students have an opportunity to really challenge themselves in Academic Pentathlon and Math Field Day. Last year our sixth grade team placed 1st overall in Southern Orange County Academic Pentathlon winning over 20 medals for the individual

participants. This competition is often called "Olympics for the brain" as its participants compete in Math, Literature, Writing, Social Science and Science. Students practice after school two times per week for several months before the competition. In addition to our dedicated staff teaching after school sessions, teachers who are experts in their fields return from retirement, to coach our Olympic athletes for this demanding event!

Another excellent opportunity for all upper grade GATE and mathematically gifted students is Math Field Day, another extracurricular competition. This event requires student teams to cooperate and communicate together while solving challenging, thought-provoking math problems.

We do our best at University Park to make sure our curriculum is exciting and stimulating to all our students, and challenge our gifted and talented students to rise to the occasion.

**CALENDAR FOR 2006-2007**



- March 2-4 **CAG** (California Association for Gifted) 45th Conference, Santa Clara
- March 7 **District Science Fair** – University High School, All Day (Grades 6-12)
- March 10 **SAT test only** – register by February 2, 2007
- March 13 **Honors Concert - Vocal** 7:30 p.m. - Calvary Church of Santa Ana
- March 15 **APAAS Orientation** for parents, Oak Creek Elementary, 6 – 8 p.m.
- March 20 **Honors Chorus - Instrumental** 7:30 p.m. - Calvary Church of Santa Ana
- March 30 **Carol Smith Memorial Scholarship** – 2007 application deadline
- April 6 **APAAS application deadline** – no exceptions
- April 23 **Community Advisory Committee (CAC-GATE) Meeting** – Administration Center, 5050 Barranca, Irvine, 6:30 p.m. – presenter, Dr. Lori Flint
- May 5 **SAT and subject tests** – register by April 3, 2007
- June 2 **SAT and subject tests** – register by April 27, 2007
- July 2 – 27 **GATE Summer School** – Grades 3-6

*All Dates Are Not Confirmed and Subject to Change.*