



GAPAGT

Garland Area Parent Association for Gifted and Talented Newsletter

November 2009

INSIDE THIS ISSUE

- 1 [President's Message](#)
- 2 [GAPAGT Members Tour Old Red Museum](#)
- 2 [Calling for Members!](#)
- 3 [High School Night at Austin Academy](#)
- 3 [Ten Ways to Jump-Start College Planning](#)
- 4 [Upcoming Programs!](#)
- 5 [How to Take Great Notes - High School and Beyond](#)
- 6 [Get Your Writing Contest Entries in!](#)
- 6 [Inquiring Minds Want to Know - What's the Scoop?](#)
- 6 [Important GT Events and Deadlines](#)
- 7 [SENG Webinar: Individual Assessment of Gifted Children & Teens](#)
- 8 [TAGT Honors Excellence in Publishing for GT](#)
- 8 [Book Review for GT Parents and Teachers](#)
- 9 [TAGT Announcement](#)
- 9 [Davidson Institute Co-Founder to Present at TAGT Conference](#)
- 9 [2010 Davidson Fellows Scholarship Applications Available](#)

President's Message

Linda Williamson, President, gapagt@gapagt.org



Hello Parents of Gifted and Talented!

Our college planning program in October was excellent. Sharon Vann from UNT talked about the college application process, scholarships and financial aid. The bonus was that she knew as much about funding and admissions for private colleges as she did about state schools. As I listened to the program, I realized that high school students would have benefitted from attending this program with their parents. I'm sorry if you missed it. We hope to have her speak again in 2010.

Here are a few tips from Ms. Vann:

1. Get a copy of your transcript and check it for accuracy.
2. Get a copy of the application and read through the questions and directions completely before you begin to complete it.
3. Make checklists and use them – deadlines, parts of applications, supplements, etc.
4. Be sure to use correct e-mail and snail mail (USPS) addresses and phone numbers.
5. Give your counselors and recommenders a complete list of the schools to which you are applying – with the deadlines. Be sure to also give them any necessary forms and addressed, stamped envelopes.
6. Sign and date the application and get any parent and/or counselor signatures where needed.
7. Observe, keep and FOLLOW deadlines. Be early – being late is often the same as never doing it at all.
8. Pay attention to and follow word limits "No more than...", "About...", "At least...", etc. If they give you a number, they mean it.
9. Write personal essays. In an essay question, the most important word is "you." In the answer, the most important word is "I." Consider a rule of 1/3 about the person, experience, etc. and 2/3 about you – how you viewed it, how you have changed, and where you are now.
10. For electronic applications, click carefully on selection lists – do you know how many students indicate they are from Afghanistan because it usually comes right under US on the list?

We have more fun and relevant programs planned. Keep up with our emails and website so that you won't miss out!

Linda

GAPAGT Members Tour Old Red Museum

Diana Cooley, Programs dcooley@gapagt.org



A group of GAPAGT members met early on Saturday, November 7, at the DART train station in downtown Garland to ride to the West End in Dallas for a tour of the Old Red Museum.

In addition to touring the four galleries of the museum, which provided a unique look into the history of Dallas county, we were also treated to a special Inventions lab. We had several stations to explore Dallas area inventions such as the TI integrated circuit, 7-Eleven's Slurpee, Frito-Lay chips, and Fletcher's Corny Dog. We also tried to imagine our own extreme gift for the Neiman-Marcus Christmas catalog and examined marketing techniques from Dallas-based Southwest Airlines for tips on how to reach a target audience. We all enjoyed trying to come up with our own flavor for a new Slurpee or Frito-Lay chip.

After the lab, we explored all the galleries on the second floor with over 1,000 artifacts dating back to the mid-1800's, ending in the Children's interactive Education Center with a look at a "day in the life" of a Dallas County child.

We had so much fun that many families chose to extend the time exploring and caught a later train home. Look for more exciting places to visit in the spring. Be sure to send in your membership dues to be included in the next GAPAGT museum tour opportunity.



Calling for Members!

Jennifer Smitherman, Membership jennifer.smitherman@gmail.com

Wow! GAPAGT has fifty-five families with active memberships!

Encourage your friends to join our association – let's try to reach a membership goal of fifty-five families by December 1, 2009. Remember, Family Game Night in late spring is lots of fun, but is a **member's only** event.

If you are already a member, thank you! If not, please join today. Print and complete the [membership form](#) and send with your payment to: GAPAGT PO Box 474 Rowlett, TX 75030

High School Night at Austin Academy

Parents with children at Austin Academy may be interested in attending this event! Read on for ways to jump-start college planning for your middle schooler.

When: Tuesday, November 17 at 6:30 p.m.

**Where: Austin Academy Cafeteria
1125 Beverly Drive**

Ruby Armstrong, the GISD Director of Guidance and Counseling, will present "Middle School and Beyond." Come find out how the high schools differ, what courses are required for graduation, how to earn high school credits while at Austin, and much more. There will be a question and answer time after her presentation.

Ten Ways to Jump-Start College Planning

Help your child take the right steps in middle school to prepare for college

See <http://www.greatschools.net> for more information

Decisions your child makes as early as eighth grade can have a huge effect on his college career. They might affect how soon your child will go to college, what type of college he attends, and even whether he will go to college at all.

As a result, there can be a lot of pressure on students to do the necessary work to get into the college of their choice. As a parent, your support will be crucial through this time to help your child make decisions that will lead to the college and career path that's most suitable for him. Below are some things that your child will need to do to get ready for his college planning — and some ways for you to help.

Get involved. Getting ready for college isn't all work. Your child should find something she really likes doing, then dive into it. She will develop skills and be more appealing to colleges. Colleges like to have a diverse and motivated student body. Involvement in activities indicates your child has shown a commitment and taken on responsibility.

Do the work. If your child expects to go to college later, he should expect to study and work hard now, and throughout his four years of high school.

Take challenging courses. Colleges look at your child's grades, but also at how difficult her courses are. They want to see that she has challenged herself. Plus, if your child pursues advanced courses, such as AP or IB, she may be able to get college credit.

Get help. Is your child having trouble in a class? Many schools have peer tutors, students in upper grades, who will assist for free. Your child should talk to his teachers or counselors and let them know he wants extra help.

Continued on page 4

Jump-Start College Planning, cont.

Read. Your child should read at least 30 minutes every day, beyond study and homework. It's best for her to read what interests her — magazines, novels, etc. Your child's strength in reading will be essential when she takes the PSAT and SAT tests.

Don't delay. Students take the PSAT in the junior year (or even in the sophomore year). So your child should take the most challenging schedule he can before high school. He should talk to his counselor to make sure he is taking the solid math and other courses that will get him ready.

Get the college-bound facts. How will your child know all the right moves to get into college? She should ask someone who's done it. Your child should get to know her counselors. She may also want to ask a career planner at a local college or a trusted teacher. Doing Web research can also be helpful.

Provide family support. If you haven't been to college yourself, you may think you can't help your child. That's not true. You can talk to his counselors and help him stay on the right path. Your support will be important as he begins to make important decisions about his future.

Seek mentors. Even though you are supportive of your child's ambitions, the encouragement of other adults who can lend their enthusiasm will help make sure your child succeeds. She might look to a counselor, a teacher or someone else she trusts to help her develop her interests in a particular area.

Confront personal roadblocks. High school can be a stressful time for students. If you child has a problem that's really getting in the way of schoolwork, try to sort it out together. Keep an open mind and a listening ear at the ready. Your child's counselor may also be able to help with advice, or simply to point your child to resources at school or in the community that can help.

Upcoming Programs!

Diana Cooley, Programs dcooley@gapagt.org

Mark your calendars for these exciting programs coming up this year from the Garland Area Parent Association for Gifted and Talented:

Thursday, January 28 (2010) - "Guiding the Gifted Child: Social and Emotional Challenges" with Teri Holamon, GISD School Counselor, 7:00 PM, S. Garland Library.

Spring 2010 – Family Game Night (members only)

Also coming this year -- A **Saturday Co-Op (Sco-op)** providing enrichment activities for our children, a writing contest for all ages, and local museum/factory tours (for members only). Join now and be part of the fun! [See article in this issue for more information.](#)



How to Take Great Notes – High School and Beyond

Taking good notes requires students to evaluate, organize and summarize information. It's a key survival skill your child will need through high school and beyond.

Your child may be able to type "CUL8R" faster than any of his text-messaging friends, but that doesn't mean he understands the process and purpose of taking notes.

As he moves through middle and high school, he'll need to develop the ability to take good notes — from class lectures, reading assignments and research materials. That's where parents can help, says author and California high school teacher Jim Burke.

"Sometimes you have to sit down and say, here's this whole chapter. How do you decide what's important? What are you going to use these notes for? To take a test? To write a paper?" said Burke, whose *The Reader's Handbook* explains reading strategies and tools for high school students. "Students who don't take notes well, don't use them," he says. "They lose faith in the process."

Burke prefers to use the term "note-making" — making meaning from information — to the more passive "note-taking." Note-making, he says, is "manipulating information to make it sticky." Some students can make information "stick" by making outlines. For other more visual learners, colors might work better. Burke gives the example of one student who went back over her science notes using red highlighter to indicate blood and blue for oxygen.

Taking notes in class

Writing at the speed of speech can be daunting even for an adult. These tips may help your student as he develops his own system:

Start a new page for each new class each day. Date it. Leave space between topics or ideas so you can scan the page more easily later.

Take down key words and concepts, not sentences. Develop your own system of abbreviations or symbols (such as w/ for "with" or math symbols such as > or =) to take down key points.

Listen for word clues from the teacher. Teachers often signal what's important to note, using phrases such as "the three incidents that led to the War of 1812 were..."

Review notes after class to make sure they're accurate and complete. Doing this just before starting homework in a particular subject can help a student focus on the topic at hand.

Taking notes from reading

Many experts advise students to pre-read a textbook chapter to get an idea about what it is about, rather than simply wading in. Students can grasp the main themes by first reading the introduction text, subheads, graphics, photo captions, summary paragraphs and study questions at the end.

Continued on page 9

Get Your Writing Contest Entries in by December 1!



GAPAGT is sponsoring a writing contest for GT students in grades 3 – 12. Categories will include Fiction, Non-Fiction, Poetry, and Graphic Novel. Entries will be due December 1st and winners will be announced at our meeting in January. The best entries will be published and released at a book party in the spring. Look for more details on our website at www.gapagt.org.

Inquiring Minds Want to Know – What's the Scoop?

Diana Cooley, Programs dcooley@gapagt.org

Enrichment activities for gifted kids are a great way to keep active minds learning and growing, but it's not always easy to find good programs or teachers willing to put in more time outside the classroom. Sometimes, it doesn't take an expensive program or an experienced teacher to enrich a child's curiosity. Think about how much you can teach a child about chemistry in the kitchen, or about how things work by taking things apart, or about problem-solving from chess. But what if your child is curious about building a rocket to the moon and you don't know the first thing about rocket science, or they want to learn about bugs and nature and you're allergic to the outdoors? Do you curb your child's enthusiasm to fit your comfort zone, or do you find some way to help them learn what they want to know? GAPAGT wants to help you.

SCOOP is a Saturday Co-op enrichment fair. Co-op means we work together to put it on for our kids. What you may know or are passionate about may be just the thing my child is curious about, and what I know or can teach may be just the thing that gets your child headed on a new adventure in learning. **We are looking for at least 25 parents and community members to be presenters for SCOOP and lead a class of elementary students in a one-hour class on a Saturday afternoon in late April or early May.** Some possible suggestions are Lego robotics, computers, rocketry, chess, fashion design, chemistry in the kitchen, and geo-caching. If you would like to lead one of these classes or suggest one of your own, please contact me. We want to provide O.P.T.I.O.N.S. (Outstanding Programs That Inspire Our Next-Gen Students).

Important GT Events and Deadlines



- November 20 **IB applications** due to school counselors for 8th graders interested in the International Baccalaureate program at Garland High School. You can attend GHS without being in the IB program, but you may not be eligible for bus transportation.
- November 20 **PAE applications** due to school counselors for 8th graders interested in the Performing Arts Endorsement program at Garland High School. You can attend GHS without being in either IB or PAE, but you may not qualify for bus transportation.
- December 1 Entries due for **GAPAGT Writing Contest**. Entries must be turned in by 12:00 noon to the designated teacher at your campus. A list of designated teachers is on our web site, www.gapagt.org.
- December 3-4 **TAGT Professional Development Conference** at George R. Brown Convention Center in Houston. Includes 25 different courses over the two days for parents of gifted and talented children. Visit www.txgifted.org for more information.
- December 7 **GT Parent Meeting** at Kimberlin Academy, 7:00 pm. For new parents interested in learning about the testing and application process for GISD's gifted and talented program. The program will be repeated at the other academies the following week.

Important GT Events and Deadlines, cont.

- December 14 **GT Parent Meeting** at Walnut Glen Academy, 7:00 pm. For new parents interested in learning about the testing and application process for GISD's gifted and talented program.
- December 15 **GT Parent Meeting** at Hillside Academy, 7:00 pm. For new parents interested in learning about the testing and application process for GISD's gifted and talented program.
- January 8 **GT applications** due to GT office, 501 S. Jupiter in Garland.
- January 23 **GT Test Date** for students entering Kindergarten and 1st grade
- January 28 **GAPAGT Program**, "Guiding the Gifted Child: Social and Emotional Challenges", 7:00 pm, South Garland Branch Library
- February 5 **GT Test Date** for students entering 2nd - 5th grade, and auditions for art and music students.

SENG Webinar: Individual Assessment of Gifted Children & Teens

Individualized assessment, including intellectual, academic and behavioral testing, is commonly used as part of evaluations for identification of special education populations like learning disabled students. This type of testing provides a wealth of information about strengths and weaknesses as well as learning styles. Even though this type of evaluation can be a valuable tool for educational planning for gifted students, school resources are often not available to provide this type of individualized assessment of a gifted child's strengths and weaknesses.

The presentation will cover assessment issues in general, and some of the specific information that can be gained from assessment and the implications for educational planning. The discussion includes instruments such as the Stanford-Binet, the Wechsler Scales, the Woodcock-Johnson Tests of Achievement and behavioral measures.



90-Minute Webinar Presentation

Presented by Edward Amend, Psy.D.

Date: November 19, 2009

Time: 6:30 PM Central

[Sign Up Today!](#)

For more information on this topic please visit: www.amendpsych.com.

Edward R. Amend, Psy.D., is a practicing clinical psychologist at Amend Psychological Services, P.S.C., in Lexington, Kentucky with a satellite office in Cincinnati, Ohio. In his practice, Dr. Amend focuses on the social, emotional, and educational needs of gifted and talented youth, adults, and their families. He provides evaluations and therapy, facilitates child and parent discussion groups, and offers consultation and training for school personnel. Dr. Amend is co-author of two award-winning books: A Parent's Guide to Gifted Children; and Misdiagnosis and Dual Diagnoses of Gifted Children and Adults: ADHD, Bipolar, OCD, Asperger's, Depression, and Other Disorders. As a strong advocate for the gifted population, Dr. Amend's service has included the Board of Directors of SENG - Supporting Emotional Needs of the Gifted; President of the Kentucky Association for Gifted Education; Chair for the National Association for Gifted Children Counseling and Guidance; and consultant to the Davidson Institute for Talent Development.

TAGT Honors Excellence in Publishing for GT

National Award Honors Excellence in Publishing for the Gifted and Talented

The Texas Association for the Gifted and Talented (TAGT) is pleased to announce the 2009 Legacy Book™ Awards, nationally recognized awards that honor outstanding literature related to gifted children and their education. TAGT distributes nominated books to a nationwide panel of reviewers who evaluate the books according to their long-term potential for improving the lives of gifted youth, categorized by audience:

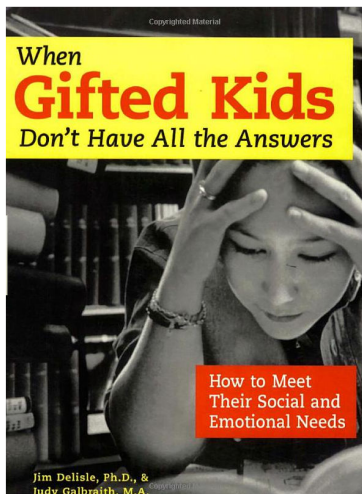
For Educators – *Strategies for Differentiating Instruction: Best Practices for the Classroom*, by Julia L. Roberts and Tracy F. Inman (Prufrock Press)

For Parents – *Raising a Gifted Child: A Parenting Success Handbook*, by Carol Fertig (Prufrock Press)
– This book was used in our GAPAGT Spring 2009 study!

For Scholars – *Social-Emotional Curriculum with Gifted and Talented Students*, edited by Joyce VanTassel-Baska, Ed.D., Tracy L. Cross, Ph.D., and F. Richard Olenchak, Ph.D. (Prufrock Press)

TAGT will recognize the Legacy Book™ Award honorees during the First General Session of the annual TAGT Professional Development Conference: Growing their Gifts on Thursday, December 3, 2009 at the George R. Brown Convention Center in Houston, Texas. In addition, TAGT has invited the authors to present breakout sessions during the conference, at which they will receive their awards. For more information, contact TAGT at 512-499-8248 or on the web at www.txgifted.org.

Book Reviews for GT Parents and Teachers



“When Gifted Kids Don’t Have All the Answers”

By James R. Delisle, Ph.D. and Judy Galbraith, M.A.

Most teachers and parents focus on the intellectual needs of gifted students without addressing their ability to handle social situations, academic pressure, teasing, and fear of failure. Though gifted students often appear to be well integrated, a closer look reveals that they frequently experience feelings of isolation, boredom, and even depression.

After a significant section devoted to identifying the gifted and the need for specialized education programs for this population, this work delves into the emotional dimensions of giftedness and how to understand gifted kids from the "inside out" through first-person stories, classroom-tested activities, guided discussions, and up-to-date resources.

The authors also provide useful strategies for helping gifted underachievers and perfectionists. Although this book is written mainly for classroom teachers and educators of the gifted, anyone interested in helping gifted students gain insights into their social and emotional health will find this volume helpful.

TAGT Announcement:

Texas Continues to Make Gains in Providing Support for Gifted Students



According to the latest report from the National Association for Gifted Children (NAGC), Texas is a bright spot in a rather dim national picture. This is good news, but we still have work to do. Read the full press release below, and pass it on!

Here is a link to the printable PDF: http://txgifted.org/files/2009/2009-NAGC-State_of_the_States_Report.pdf

Davidson Institute Co-Founder Jan Davidson to Present at TAGT Conference

Jan Davidson will provide the keynote address, *Thinking Big About Gifted Education*, at the [Texas Association for the Gifted & Talented Conference](#), Dec. 2 through Dec. 4 in Houston. The conference will help attendees learn how to meet the unique needs of gifted and talented children, as well as network and exchange ideas. View the general session schedule and location information at www.txgifted.org.

2010 Davidson Fellows Scholarship Applications Available



Applications for the 2010 [Davidson Fellows](#) scholarships are available [online](#).

Young people under the age of 18 have the opportunity to win a \$50,000, \$25,000 or \$10,000 scholarship in recognition of a significant piece of work in the categories of Science, Technology, Mathematics, Music, Literature and Philosophy, or a project that represents Outside the Box thinking.

The application deadline is **March 3, 2010**. For more information, visit http://www.davidsongifted.org/fellows/Article/Davidson_Fellows_Download_Applications_361.aspx.

Take Great Notes, cont.

Getting an overview will help your child get focused on what's important as she starts to take notes, rather than getting mired in the details.

Accuracy and attribution are essential skills journalists learn in preparing their stories. These skills are equally important to your student when she is preparing to write a research paper or take a test.

Help her learn to summarize information in her own words, rather than copying the textbook. This will ensure that she understands what she has read and help her learn it. Help her get in the habit of putting quotation marks around passages that are direct quotes from an author so she can attribute words that aren't her own.

Finally, if your child is struggling, she may be having trouble reading. Ask her to explain a chapter she's read. If you can see that her comprehension is a problem, make an appointment to talk to the teacher or her counselor so you can get her the help she may need.