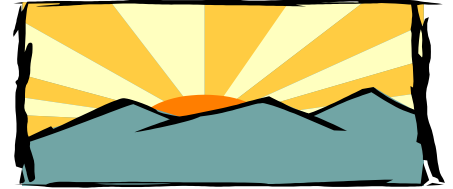


On the HORIZON

Special Interest Articles:

- Motivation!
- Editorial: "The Gifted Label"
- Showcase!
- Destination ImagiNation Appraisers needed!
- Celebrations!
- Looking Ahead- dates to remember

*Cypress-Fairbanks Gifted and Talented Department
10300 Jones Road, Room 721
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Motivation!

According to the website www.SuperSonicSuccess.com, there are 5 steps to success. They are to first decide what you want, figure out who you are, know that you are in control, be compassionate, and finally be yourself. As we all face our New Year's Resolutions, parents and students alike can use these steps to achieve their goals.

First, find out what the goal is! If we have clear cut goals, such as wanting to lose those last 10 pounds, they are easier to achieve versus the old standby "I want to lose weight!" If our students have clear cut goals, they are more apt to succeed as well. Merely wanting to be a better student is harder for students to conceptualize rather than a more concrete goal of improving their grade by 5 points by the next report card.

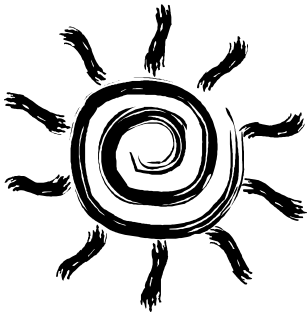
Second, figuring out who you are can go a long way toward helping you achieve your goals. If you know that you tend to procrastinate, you can work your goals around those imagined "obstacles". If you know what can befall you, you have a better chance to overcome those issues on the road to success. Students can learn to work those "faults" into a plan just as we do!

Third, knowing we are in control can give us all a feeling of empowerment! If we feel distracted and discouraged, that small bit of knowledge can turn an adverse situation into a goal-achieving possibility.

Fourth, with compassion, we learn to forgive ourselves for past failures and motivation-busting attitudes. Letting go of the feelings of failure, all the while learning from them, can be incredibly enabling. Compassion in this case is not necessarily something reserved for others, but can be appreciated for ourselves as well.

Finally, we always tell our children to be themselves! If they maintain their own personal integrity on the way to their goals, they will not question themselves once they reach that achievement. As adults, we also aim to stay true to ourselves and by setting that example, we can help lead our children along a positive path.

Whatever your goals for 2010, we wish you success! May they all be realized in this wonderful New Year!



A Benefit to the “Label”, Part 1 in a 3 part series

Back in the day, my itty bitty school district did not have a gifted program. Considering that only 87 students were in my graduating class, considerably smaller than any of the campuses within CyFair ISD, we were fortunate to have had what we did. But I do remember 4th grade as the year that many of my friends and I were placed into a class we were told “was created especially for us.” Maybe we were blissfully ignorant, but we didn’t care. We had a new teacher, and many new experiences that were quite interesting and worthwhile. Because all my “cohorts” and I were still together in class, we really didn’t think much about being different.

Now that I’m older, and hopefully wiser, I look back on my school experiences and think of how having “the label of gifted” could have changed my life. I recall in Kindergarten receiving many report cards with teacher comments such as “her crying spells are getting much better!” alongside comments about my ability to read 4th grade level books. In high school, one of my English teachers often remarked about my moods. Apparently, I was quite a moody, sensitive teenager. (I recall being a perfect angel!) I joined every activity I could get my mind wrapped around, and was not content unless I was incredibly busy. That didn’t stop when the school year paused for summer break. Our high school years and beyond were filled with such promise. We were constantly told that our class was going to change the world. We could cure cancer, write the great American novels, and somehow make a difference.

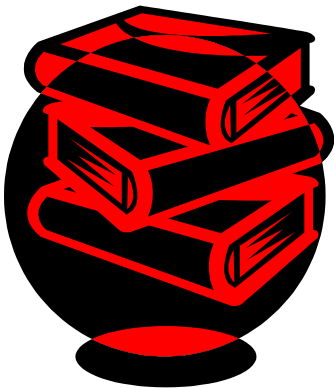
It is many years later now, and hindsight truly is 20/20. My classmates and I all know what our IQ scores were and how we came to be placed in that class with Mrs. Manning. From my reading over the last few years, I understand so much more about why I am the way I am. Had I had that knowledge from high school on, I believe I would have felt more secure about myself, my capabilities, and the setbacks I could face as a “gifted adult.” I have always felt different, but now I understand why. I have always believed I could do anything I set my mind to, and have had varied interests as far as a career goes. Multi-potentiality explains my hesitance to choose ONE career over others. My empathy for people I have never met was always a strange thing to others, but makes perfect sense to me now.

Instead of believing I was abnormal in so many ways, I understand more about the qualities that I do exhibit. That understanding has done positive things in my life. Self-acceptance can help produce a better life. My classmates and I have had many discussions about the directions our lives have taken. So far, we have not cured cancer, and felt that we failed. So far, we have not written the great American novel, and felt that we failed. So far, we have not done the “great things” that were expected, and felt that we failed. That we are not failures for not achieving these accomplishments is a difficult lesson to fully understand. But we try. We also continue to hope that the actualization of these potentials can be realized.

In my opinion, if we do nothing more for our gifted children than to let them know that what they feel, what they think, and what they experience is perfectly okay, then we have done an amazing thing. We need to arm ourselves with strategies, ideas, and plans to keep their heads above water emotionally, and academically. A little knowledge about the pitfalls could go a long way towards a gifted child’s self-esteem.

Would the label of “gifted” change who I am now? Would it change my perspective? Where would I be now had I understood more about myself? It does not help to speculate, but with all things, we can always move forward. We can take our newly gained knowledge and make better choices for the future. We must want that for our gifted children as well. It is not enough to simply have the label, but to comprehend all that the gifted label indicates can lead to better life decisions.

-Sandra Stocks



Annual HORIZONS Student Showcase, 2010

Beginning in the spring of 2004, students participating in the HORIZONS program were selected and allowed the opportunity to participate in the HORIZONS Student Showcase. The brainchild of Laurie Westphal (former HORIZONS Helping Teacher), the showcase was designed to celebrate and recognize the accomplishments of HORIZONS teachers and students as well as to meet the state recommendation for sharing student advanced-level products and/or performances with the community.

“Students who participate in services designed for gifted students will demonstrate skills in self-directed learning, thinking, research, and communication as evidenced by the development of innovative products and performances that reflect individuality and creativity and are advanced in relation to student of similar age, experience, or environment. High school graduates who have participated in services for gifted students will have produced products and performances of professional quality as part of their program services.” State Goal for Services for Gifted Students – from the Texas State Plan

Products are the outcomes of instruction that consolidate learning and communicate ideas. Advanced products should...

- Possess characteristics that are professional in nature.
- Address real problems, audiences, and concerns.
- Synthesize rather than summarize information.
- Include a self-evaluation component.

The 2010 HORIZONS Student Showcase will be held in the Berry Center on March 23, 2010 from 6:30 pm. – 8:00 pm. Please join us as our students share their products and performances with the community. It is a wonderful opportunity to experience the critical and creative thinking of our gifted students.



Recommended Reading

If you have a student or child that can come up with a multitude of questions that are likely to send you in search of a nice quiet place, “The Imponderables Books” by David Feldman may be just the thing! Available through the Mindware company, this series of 7 books covers every question from “Why is the color purple associated with royalty?” to “Why does gum get hard when you drink water while chewing?” Curious children, and adults!, can find answers to questions they never knew they had!

One out of print recommendation that may be available through used book sellers is titled Kid Stories: Biographies of 20 Young People You’d Like to Know by Jim Delisle, Ph.D. Printed by Free Spirit Press in 1991, this is a “collective biography that features short sketches about young people ranging in age from 8 to 19. Entries are grouped into five categories according to theme: being accepted by peers, taking responsibility for learning, overcoming adversity, getting involved in social issues, and developing a philosophy of life. Each section includes questions to assist in reflection and discussion and resources to find out more about the concerns addressed. The profiles are presented in a clear, straightforward manner, interspersed with quotes by and a black-and-white photograph of the individual.”-excerpt from School Library Journal

Although published in 1991, the stories Dr. Delisle included in this book are relevant today. It may not be best to read this book straight through, but rather use the stories as learning moments as the stories tend to begin to blur.

Destination ImagiNation

Are you looking for a fun way to volunteer with Destination ImagiNation? Not only do you receive the accolades and gratitude of all involved, but you get firsthand experience of what DI can do for students! And do we have an opportunity for you! For Destination ImagiNation regional and state tournaments, there is always a great demand for appraisers.

How Can You Help?

Appraisers

Structures will break, machines will cooperate, animals will communicate, the hidden will be revealed, and literature will go platinum on February 20, 2010. These challenges are being met and will be presented by kindergarteners to high school seniors at the Gulf Coast Regional Destination ImagiNation Tournament.

Teams have worked since September to create unusual and diverse solutions that will tickle your fancy, stimulate your mind, and give you hope for the future. Appraisers have the best seat in the house, get a t-shirt that is sure to delight and cause envy, are fed breakfast and lunch, and have a free ticket to the finest show in town.

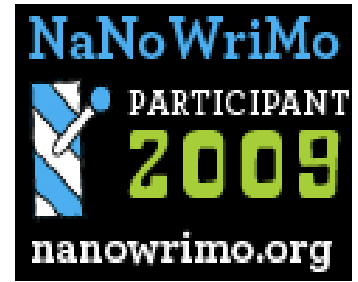
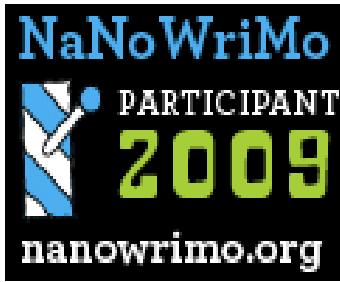
To qualify, a person must be:

- at least 18 years of age and a high school graduate.
- available for one of three appraiser trainings.
 - January 30, 2010, 9:00 am to noon, Hopper Middle School, 7811 Fry Road, Cypress, Texas, Cypress-Fairbanks ISD
 - February 6, 2010, 9:00 am to noon, Nolan Ryan Jr. High, 11500 Shadow Creek Parkway, Pearland, 77584, Alvin ISD
 - February 8, 2010, 6:30 – 9:30 pm, Katy ISD Educational Support Complex, 6301 S. Stadium Lane, Katy, Texas, Katy ISD
- available from 7:00 am to about 4:00 pm on February 20, 2010.
- able to maintain an enthusiastic, positive, and encouraging attitude with all team members and adults on tournament day.

For more information, contact Kristine Ashmead at kristine.ashmead@cfisd.net.

Volunteers

If it bounces, squeaks, lights up, pins on, or looks like bling-gone-wild, we need volunteers on tournament day to sell the goods to team members who want to be seen and heard during awards ceremony. If you have two hours to give on tournament day, please contact Cassie Johnson at ch.johnson@sbcglobal.net.



Celebrations!

In our last issue, we focused attention on a national program called NaNoWriMo, which stands for National Novel Writing Month. Occurring every November, it is a special challenge to all who are interested to see if they can write a complete novel in one month's time. We have an incredible story to share! It seems that an entire 3rd grade class dedicated themselves to completing NaNoWriMo! Mrs. Barnes at Wilson Elementary coordinated the efforts of her students, playing Bach and Beethoven music in the background during the 20 minutes of writing time each day. These students were so entranced by the project that they asked to bring home their stories to work on over the Thanksgiving break!

When we met this class, the children were eager to share their stories with us. They even scoured their novels for favorite lines they had written. While hearing about what happens when Santa Claus met Santa Ana, and a student that fell from Mars into a bowl of fried chicken, we all knew these students had tapped in their most creative veins! Not only were they able to show their creative sides, but Mrs. Barnes was able to see each student's sense of humor and imagination through their writing. For example, one favorite novel line was "When I got back from Mars to Earth, I discovered I had landed in a bowl of fried chicken!"

Each student has now accomplished something their siblings have not done- they have written a novel at the ripe old age of 8 or 9 years old! Many are working on their second novel in their free time! Now that is something to celebrate!

Also, last year's CFISD participant, Nicole Shilhab from Owens Elementary was bitten by the bug for another year! Nicole has now finished a second novel, exceeding her projected word count for the second consecutive year. Watch out NY Times Bestseller List...Nicole may soon be on her way there!

Destination ImagiNation Scholarship

Destination ImagiNation Support Committee (DISC) will be offering up to \$10,000 in scholarship monies to deserving candidates in the 2009-2010 academic year. Funds will be awarded for the 2010-2011 academic year. Winners will be announced in April, 2010.

To be eligible, Scholarship Applicants must:

- ◆ Be pursuing a post High School degree in a Trade School, Community College or University in the 2010-2011 school year.
- ◆ Must have participated in at least one of the creative problem solving programs that Destination ImagiNation has sponsored, as a team member and/or in a volunteer capacity.
- ◆ If applying while pursuing post High School graduation, the applicant should be actively continuing his or her involvement in Destination ImagiNation in some capacity – either as a team member or as a volunteer.

For more details, please visit www.idodi.org.

What is KLFNMNQZX? My story by Ryan Rebagay, Cy Falls 10th grader

I recently received my letterman jacket with KLFNMNQZX (right spelling) embroidered on the back. It has received much attention and has greatly spread the knowledge of my word. I came up with the word itself in seventh grade. My brother was in kindergarten at the time and every day after school, my mom had him and his friend put a "Word of the Day" on a chalk board. They were just learning about how words needed vowels and I was set out to prove them wrong. I put some consonants together and KLFNMNQZX went on the "Word of the Day" board and stayed there for many weeks. I then came up with the following rules:

1. KLFNMNQZX may be used to replace any word in the English language **except** for meatloaf, for meatloaf is so KLFNMNQZX already that calling it KLFNMNQZX would be too redundant. (i.e. "I ran home" could be "KLFNMNQZX ran home" or "I KLFNMNQZX home" or "I ran KLFNMNQZX")
2. KLFNMNQZX may be abbreviated as klf.
3. When used twice in a sentence, KLFNMNQZX assumes the same meaning both times.
4. The suffix -NMNQZX may be added to the end of a verb or adjective to make it a noun (i.e. flynmqzx or bluenmqzx) when the whole of KLFNMNQZX is not desired.

With the help of my sister, KLFNMNQZX spread to other people and was surprisingly accepted more by her friends than mine. One of her teachers even had it on her board for several weeks during the school year. I began to use it more and more (due to its versatility and ability to describe what other words can't) and my mother eventually banned it for a while because I called my brother a KLFNMNQZX one too many times; however, klf lived on. I ran into trouble recently when the letterman jacket company would not put it on my jacket; however several phone calls and a week-long controversy ended in a green jacket with KLFNMNQZX embroidered under my name.

I would also like to point out that it was in no way inspired by the band KLF or Mary Poppins' Supercalifragilisticexpialidocious.



Dates to Remember

(Look for more information on www.cfisd.net):

January 14th- Summer Camp Expo, Berry Center

February 13th- TAGT Parent Conference

February 20th- Destination ImagiNation Regional Tournament

March 23rd- HORIZONS Student Showcase

April 16th- Destination ImagiNation State Tournament, Carrollton

TAGT Parent Conference

Good news if you've wanted to find a one-stop shop for all issues relating to the parenting of gifted children! The Texas Association for the Gifted and Talented (TAGT) will be holding their annual Parent Conference in Houston on February 13, 2010.

Keynote speaker will be Dr. Rosina Gallagher, president of Supporting the Emotional Needs of the Gifted (SENG). While we do not have all the details yet, you may wish to bookmark their website at www.txgifted.org and check back periodically for more information! TAGT is a wonderful resource and we will be quite fortunate to have them in our backyard for this event!

Think About It, Talk About It, Tell Us About It!

Last month, we asked our readers to share with us their child's response to the following question:

If you were going to have a weird and unusual pet, what would it be and why?

Kristina Bates from Aragon, 13, indicated she'd have "a mongoose! Because they are very protective, curious, loving, and devoted to their owner!"
Thanks, Kristina, for sharing!



Our next question for January and February is this:

"If you could be invisible for one day, what would you do?"

Please feel free to share your answers with us by emailing them to Sandra.Stocks@cfisd.net for consideration of publication in our next newsletter!



Coordinator's Column by Carla Butler

Welcome back to a new year! We have several exciting upcoming events for your children. Don't miss the Summer Camp Exposition that will be held on January 14th at the Berry Center. The exposition provides children and parents an opportunity to view summer camps that would appropriately challenge advanced and gifted students. We will also have different TAGT Scholarship presentations available for parents. TAGT provides a variety of scholarships for parents and students to provide funds for college and for summer camps.

If you are unable to attend the exposition, you may also view a variety of camps posted on the TAGT website. Look for Insights 2009 for information regarding the scholarships. Deadlines for submitting scholarships will occur on March 1.

We also encourage you to attend the TAGT Parent Conference in February. New information will be posted soon about that upcoming event. Additional spring events include the Gulf Coast Regional Destination ImagiNation competition in February, the state DI competition in April and HORIZONS showcase in March. We hope that you will be able to attend these events as we continue to celebrate student success.

On December 4th I had the privilege of observing students from CFISD sharing their products with people from across the state of Texas at the TAGT Conference held at the George R. Brown Convention Center. The students and their parents braved the snow to venture downtown to allow their children an opportunity to share their learning experiences and products they had previously shared at the HORIZONS Showcase last year.

Paras Gupta, Chris Mariotti and Hugo Sacalxot from Lamkin Elementary each created their own version of a hurricane proof home. Each were able to provide a strong rationale to support how their construction would withstand the strong winds of a hurricane. The students were even able to speak with professional architects during this experience. When questioned about the event Paras Gupta said, "It was fun talking to all the architects and other professionals who visited with us and appreciated our creative designs. The most interesting part about this project was researching the different building materials that could be used to make a hurricane proof home. I loved designing the home on paper and then creating a model that reflected the design." Hugo added, "The most important thing that I got out of my research is that hurricane storm surges can be up to twenty-two feet high; therefore, my model had to include pillars that would elevate my house a minimum of twenty-two feet above sea level." Chris stated, "We learned a lot of interesting information about hurricanes. But what I thought was very interesting was that the size of the hurricane can be up to 700 miles across. I also thought it was cool that wind speed goes up to 200 mph! As well, I found that storm surges can be up to 24 feet high. These things I thought were amazing!" Their models were spectacular!

Sadie Call and Allie Hinnaman attended from Sampson Elementary. Both girls chose to conduct their research on food items. Allie shared, "When I was in first grade last year, my class did a mini-economics unit called, 'Tough Times; Savvy Shoppers'. My product was a study about how my family could save money at the grocery store. A lot of our family's budget goes for food. Aside from the increased costs of food, I have to deal with lactose and gluten intolerance. Special foods are frequently more expensive. I chose five of my favorite foods from my pantry and compared the prices. I found that the special bagels were the most expensive. If I gave up that particular food, I could save our family food budget over \$400 dollars a year! I now know how important it is to 'shop smart'."

Sadi added, "Last year in first grade, I did an activity to learn about saving money at the grocery store. We have a family of five, so we spend a lot of money at the grocery store. I shopped with my parents at several of the

area grocery stores. I not only compared the price of favorite food items among the different stores, I compared the store brands and the name brands by cost and taste. Of course, all of my family got involved in the 'taste tests'. I found that the store brand items tasted about the same and some were even better! The store brands were definitely cheaper. So, I decided my mom should buy more store brand." Both students did an exceptional job and delivered the information in a very professional manner.

Caleb Hardin, a third grader from Copeland Elementary shared his research on George Herman. He was very knowledgeable about his topic and created a "Living Wax Museum on George Herman". Aeriana Cartegena, Seri Dresslar, Graham Lakin and Joshua Schoonover all from Farney Elementary created a commercial, display board, poster and brochures with fabulous tips on going green. Each shared their research and provided great lessons to all visitors about how each could become more environmentally conservative. All students were phenomenal!

Rachel Bhalla from Goodson Middle School attended and shared her project and the project of her fellow classmates, Emily Kelly and Rebecca Webb. In their absence Rachel shared the research and products entitled, "Tops of the Trees to the Bottom of the Ocean". Included in the presentation was a display board and multi-media display. Rachel was very passionate and knowledgeable about environmental conservation.

Robyn Dardar and Diamond Wakim from Hopper Middle School shared their separate multi-media presentation on "Texas Under Construction". Each researched Texas history and shared their individually selected topics with great composure and information equal to any individual standing in front of a professional organization. Allison Brown and Haleigh Thornley from Watkins Middle School had chosen to conduct their research regarding stem cells entitled, "Fish in a Bowl: Stem Cell Edition". Each were able to discuss the very difficult concept with clarity and sophistication.

I am extremely impressed with each of the students, their commitment to the task, their effective communication skills and their extensive knowledge shared about their selected topics. Each of them represented Cypress Fairbanks well. Thanks to all for your hard work!

HORIZONS **Department Staff**

Carla Butler, Coordinator

*Debra Woolley, GT
Specialist*

*Sandra Stocks, Secretary &
Editor, On the HORIZON*

*Sandra Beehner, Special
Programs Assistant.
GT Focus, BIL-ESL
Records/Assessments*

*Allison Tucker,
Office Assistant*

*Translations provided by
Maria Meehan, CFISD*

Be "In the Know"!

This newsletter can be found on the www.cfisd.net website through the following pathway: Departments, Curriculum & Instruction, then scroll down to Special Programs and click the link titled Gifted and Talented. On this portion of our website, you will find both parent and teacher resources and we will use that space to help keep our parents, teachers, and community informed!

Also, we want to inform you that we are accepting submissions for possible future newsletter inclusions! Please share your insights into special programs, activities and student successes. All submissions are subject to review and will be included at our discretion. If you have an item for us, please email Sandra.Stocks@cfisd.net. We'll keep you connected!



Links to Linger Over

<http://www.collegeboard.com/student/plan/boost-your-skills/23628.html>

<http://www.davidsongifted.org/youngschools/>

<http://www.kn.pacbell.com/wired/fil/pages/listgiftedme.html>