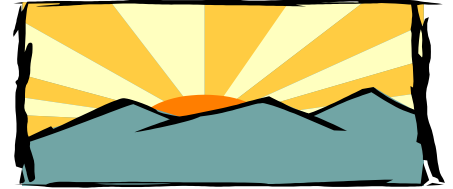


# On the HORIZON

## Special Interest Articles:

- Principal Missy Edgerton shares news from Lieder
- Annual HORIZONS Student Showcase
- Resources
- Celebrations!
- Looking Ahead- dates to remember

*Cypress-Fairbanks Gifted and Talented Department  
10300 Jones Road, Room 721  
Houston, TX 77065*



## Happy New Year!

What do dragons, barrels of tar, rakes, peach blossoms, and egg whites have in common? They are all important pieces of New Year's celebrations around the world! So many countries have varied and interesting customs and traditions, we could not possibly list them all. However, there is a friendly website that lists a great number of interesting facts that may start new traditions for your family: <http://www.fathertimes.net/traditions.htm>. Perhaps you'll find a fun new activity to help ring in the New Year or maybe you'll become inspired to create your own traditions!

If you have donuts for breakfast, you are celebrating a Dutch tradition of eating foods in the shape of a ring. It is believed that this brings good luck! You may choose to have black-eyed peas or cabbage or follow a Spanish custom of eating twelve grapes for more good fortune. Ecuadorians make a wish with each grape eaten before midnight!

You may simply choose to spend New Years Eve with family and friends. The folklore states that those people you spend the first minute of the New Year with are the ones you will spend most of the year with as well. Or you may sweep away the old to prepare for the new by having a thorough house-cleaning before the New Year.

Here in the United States, fireworks, ball-dropping in New York City, football, and parties are the most common ways to celebrate the passing of yet another year. We celebrate change, and new opportunities. We celebrate family, friendships, and love. We embrace new possibilities and find ways to make things better for our children, ourselves, and our communities for the coming months.

However you choose to celebrate the passing of another year, the HORIZONS Department wishes you a happy and wonderful 2009!



## **Equity at Lieder by Principal Missy Edgerton**

Equity issues in educating gifted and talented students are a growing concern. We have taken several steps to address this concern at Lieder. Our plan to improve identification of all student populations for the Horizons program includes several key components.

Our long-term plan begins with considering potential in our pre-kindergarten students. At the end of the year, our pre-kinder teachers and paraprofessionals consider characteristics based on *Removing the Mask: Giftedness in Poverty* by Paul Slocumb and Ruby Payne. This information is used when we create class lists for kindergarten. Students with potential are clustered together in kinder classrooms with GT certified teachers.

The kindergarten teachers working with students with potential are committed to increasing the emphasis on skills such as patterning and problem solving with the entire class. Teachers are also observant of student behaviors and performance that might indicate students to nominate for the GT program.

Several other important factors have emerged from analyzing at our current practices. Ongoing training for teachers in identifying characteristics of gifted and talented children is a necessary component. The ability to recognize GT characteristics in children, especially when academic skills may not reflect the capability to think creatively, is essential in correcting imbalances in GT identification. Our goal is for all teachers to take the training for GT certification.

Lieder Elementary has a large population of second language learners. We understand the developmental language level of children strongly impacts academic success. Finding ways to help teachers accelerate language development to an academic proficiency level will benefit all children, and is especially beneficial for gifted and talented children who may not be able to clearly articulate their thinking.

We also believe all children benefit from opportunities to solve problems and think at higher levels. We are working towards wider implementation of strategies developed by Sandra Kaplan and Quantum Learning in particular. As a LoTI (Levels of Teacher Innovation) campus, we are also working on incorporating more technology in daily activities. These activities also help identify our creative thinkers and children who get excited when solving problems.

We have learned that communicating with parents about the Horizons program in general will help their awareness of the purpose of the program and aid in determining if the program is appropriate for their child. We know that parents may be confused by nomination process, and many parents are reluctant to mark a high score when rating their child. Our school counselor and our teachers make every effort to contact parents individually to answer questions and discuss the strengths we see in their child.

We are committed to taking steps to improve the identification of gifted and talented students so that it more accurately reflects our school demographics, and we are pleased that we have seen growth in the number of students identified for Horizons. We are willing to provide support and training to better serve the needs of all our students, including those gifted and talented children who have not yet been identified.

---

*“We also believe all children benefit from opportunities to solve problems and think at higher levels.”*

## Annual HORIZONS Student Showcase, 2009

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*

In the spring of 2008, more than 450 students and 230 teachers participated in the showcase. Dr. Anthony opened the showcase with the remark that we had outgrown the Berry Center Conference area. There was a great diversity of products exhibited ranging from the water cycle to the importance of recycling, the comparison of government to an electric guitar and a demonstration of heat lamps on food products.

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 2009 HORIZONS Student Showcase will be held in the Berry Center's Arena on March 24, 2009 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.

---

## Check out these books of interest!

- ☞ Gifted Grownups, the Mixed Blessings of Extraordinary Potential by Marylou Kelly Streznewski
- ☞ Mellow Out, They Say. If I Only Could: Intensities and Sensitivities of the Young and Bright by Michael M. Piechowski

Or if websurfing is more your style, check out hundreds of articles available through the National Association of Gifted Children. From their website, you can access ERIC Digests, an archive of educational articles from the Education Resources Information Center. Simply go to <http://www.nagc.org/index.aspx?id=364> and browse the many offerings listed covering topics from A to Z.

## **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 28, 2009. 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 31, 2009, 9:00 am to noon, Quail Valley Middle School, 3019 FM 1092, Missouri City, Texas, Fort Bend ISD
  - February 7, 2009, 9:00 am to noon, Cypress-Springs High School, 7909 Fry Road, Cypress, Texas, Cypress-Fairbanks ISD
  - February 10, 2009, 6:30 – 9:30 pm, Educational Support Center, 6301 S. Stadium Lane, Katy, Texas, Katy ISD
- available from 7:00 am to about 4:00 pm on February 28, 2009.
- 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](mailto: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 [cassandra.johnson@cfisd.net](mailto:cassandra.johnson@cfisd.net).

---

# Celebrations!



In our last issue, we focused some 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. No editing is involved during the month of November as it simply is for free writing. The NaNoWriMo website does have a Young Writer's Challenge and we shared that information in our last issue. We have a success story to brag about! Miss **Nicole Schilhab**, a 4<sup>th</sup> grader at Owens Elementary took this challenge to heart! She completed her challenge of 6,000 words and surpassed her goal even, finishing with 6,139 words! She had a productive use of time using dad's laptop on a car trip to DisneyWorld in order to finish! Way to go, Nicole! We'll look for your name on the bestseller's list someday! :)

After turning in a culminating project to her HORIZONS teacher, Labay 6<sup>th</sup> grader **Tashrima Hossain** created a webpage and blog based on that project and information learned. It is an impressive and thought-provoking site and we'd like to share this with you, courtesy of her teacher Rebecca Demski. Donna Pahmiyer, Technology Integration Helping Teacher for Social Studies says "This is a perfect example of a student taking knowledge from the classroom and applying it to real life. This is also a great example of how the 21<sup>st</sup> century student can use technology in a powerful way. I especially think the design of culminating activities in the HORIZONS program are a perfect way for students to develop those skills that will be important to both the student and the community." Thanks for sharing such great news! And Congratulations for Tashrima Hossain for such hard work and dedication! Please visit <http://savethetrees.weebly.com/index.html> to view her creation!

---

## Destination ImagiNation Scholarship

Destination ImagiNation Support Committee (DISC) will be offering up to \$10,000 in scholarship monies to deserving candidates in the 2008-2009 academic year. Funds will be awarded for the 2009-2010 academic year. Winners will be announced in April, 2009.

To be eligible, Scholarship Applicants must:

- ◆ Be pursuing a post High School degree in a Trade School, Community College or University in the 2009-2010 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](http://www.idodi.org).

**Dates to Remember**

(All events to be held at the Berry Center. Watch for more information on [www.cfid.net](http://www.cfid.net)):

**January 22<sup>nd</sup>-Summer Camp Expo, Berry Center**

**February 28<sup>th</sup>- Destination ImagiNation Regional Tournament**

**March 24<sup>th</sup>-HORIZONS Student Showcase**

**April 4<sup>th</sup>- Destination ImagiNation State Tournament**

---

*"Learning is something students do, NOT something done to students."-Alfie Kohn*

**Fun Websites for home use:**

If you are looking for some fun activities to do at home that can help further your child's interests in a specific subject area, we have found a few websites with some terrific inspiration! For science experiments you can do at home with everyday items, visit: <http://members.ozemail.com.au/~macinnis@ozemail.com.au/scifun/miniexp.htm> Or check out: [http://www.funsci.com/texts/indez\\_en.htm](http://www.funsci.com/texts/indez_en.htm). If math is what makes you happy, this website has some cool math activities: [www.mathcantakeyouplaces.org/parents.lasso](http://www.mathcantakeyouplaces.org/parents.lasso). We have even located a website for fun social studies activities: <http://www.mrnussbaum.com/circumcode.htm>. Finally, a website that encompasses all subject areas, visit <http://www.apples4theteacher.com>. Please let us know your favorites! Email us at [Sandra.Stocks@cfisd.net](mailto:Sandra.Stocks@cfisd.net)!

**First Lego League**

This global program was created to get kids ages 9-14 excited about science and technology. First Lego League uses theme-based challenges to engage kids in research, problem-solving, and engineering. If your student is interested in learning more about this program, please visit [www.firstlegoleague.org](http://www.firstlegoleague.org) for more information on team formation, challenges, and competitions involved with this program. We have a team that has formed at Post Elementary and we wish them great success! We also hope to hear of additional schools and teams from our district and the inevitable success that can come with program participation!

**Free Family Fun in Houston**

Now that the holidays are over, we may all be feeling the pinch of the last two months and our children have become bored with the post-holiday letdown. What's a Houston family to do? The good news is PLENTY! We are fortunate to live near such a diverse city that has numerous offerings throughout the year. Here are a few of our favorites:

**Museum district - free Thursdays, 4-7PM**  
([www.houstonmuseumdistrict.org](http://www.houstonmuseumdistrict.org))

**Harris County Public Library- many free programs all year long!**  
([www.hcpl.net](http://www.hcpl.net))

**Houston Zoo Free Days:**  
January 1<sup>st</sup>  
January 19<sup>th</sup>  
February 16<sup>th</sup>  
([www.houstonzoo.org](http://www.houstonzoo.org))

**Moore Nature Sanctuary**  
([www.houstonaudubon.org](http://www.houstonaudubon.org))

**Houston Parks and Recreation Department**  
([www.houstonparks.org](http://www.houstonparks.org))

**Harris County Historical Markers**  
[www.historicmarkers.com/Texas/Harris\\_County\\_Texas/](http://www.historicmarkers.com/Texas/Harris_County_Texas/)




---

*"A master can tell you what he expects of you. A teacher, though, awakens your own expectations."-Patricia Neal*



## Coordinator's Column by Carla Butler

Welcome back! I hope that all of you had an enjoyable and relaxing holiday season. We have many exciting events coming to the CyFair community to celebrate student success. We are very fortunate to be hosting the Regional and State competitions of Destination ImagiNation (DI) this year. It is so exciting to see the creative development and critical thinking of our students as they work together to create a structure that could hold 600 pounds or more, conduct research on a variety of topics and create a skit incorporating that research. Students participating in the DI program engage in many activities that build important skills such as collaboration, leadership, and problem solving. We look forward to a successful year of growth with our students in the DI program and invite you to get involved as appraisers. Let us know if you are interested in participating. We are looking forward to a great show!

I am always excited to see the wonderful opportunities available to our students in CFISD. I want to encourage teachers to share with us those spectacular learning experiences and resulting classroom products that occur on a daily basis in the classrooms across the district that demonstrate the incredible talent of our students. We want to use this newsletter as an vehicle to share those success stories with other students, parents and teachers in CFISD. Send your information to [Sandra.stocks@cfisd.net](mailto:Sandra.stocks@cfisd.net).

### **HORIZONS** **Department Staff**

*Carla Butler,  
Coordinator*

*Debra Woolley, GT  
Helping Teacher*

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

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

*Allison Tucker,  
Office Assistant*

### **Be "In the Know"!**

This newsletter can be found on the [www.cfisd.net](http://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](mailto:Sandra.Stocks@cfisd.net). We'll keep you connected!



### **Links to Linger Over:**

[www.vocabulary.com/toptoughwords.html](http://www.vocabulary.com/toptoughwords.html)

[www.fathertimes.net/traditions.htm](http://www.fathertimes.net/traditions.htm)

Harris County Public Library:  
<http://www.hcpl.net/index.htm>

## HORIZONS Department Mission Statement:

The Cypress-Fairbanks ISD HORIZONS Department, along with parents, teachers, and administrators, will recognize and support the unique academic, social, and emotional needs of the gifted to enable HORIZONS students to develop their talents and gifts to their greatest potential in the classroom and community.