

May 2010

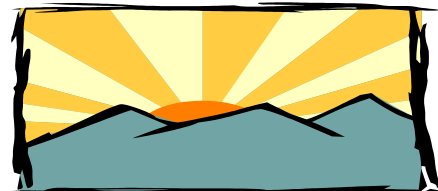
Volume 2, Issue 4

On the HORIZON

Special Interest Articles:

- Plans!
- Special Contributor Rachel Bhalla!
- Newsworthy
- Showcase photos
- Destination ImagiNation
- Looking ahead!

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



Oh, the best laid plans!

Sometimes things don't work out exactly the way we had planned! Despite our best intentions, our March edition of the newsletter fell to the backburner due to various projects that demanded our full attention. Between the spring testing cycle for the HORIZONS program, and our unparalleled success with Destination ImagiNation, along with our many other duties, to say that spring has been a bit hectic is a major understatement!

This spring, the HORIZONS department conducted testing for over 2500 students. We continue to strive to find ways to communicate information to our parents regarding appropriate testing, characteristics of gifted, and best approaches to gifted education.

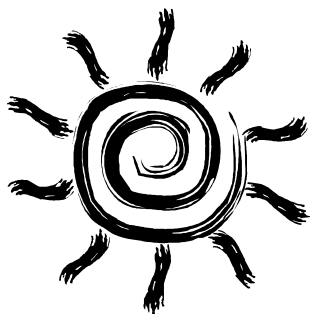
Although not a program strictly for gifted students, the Destination ImagiNation program here in CFISD is stronger than ever. Although some of their solutions did not go exactly as they planned, incredible lessons were learned and wonderful experiences were gained from their participation.

The HORIZONS Student Showcase continues its tradition of massive expansion! This year, we had more space and participants than ever before, and pardon the paraphrasing, but we "need a bigger boat!" Our students continue to inspire and amaze us with what they are able to create, learn, analyze, and produce!

We are gearing up to finish off projects started earlier in the year, and we must admit, things may not all get finished to our liking. We may have results that did not quite go as planned. However, we continue to strive for the ideal, pursue perfection, and work towards the goal. Our students do the same thing each day, and we learn as much from them as they do from us.

So celebrate the successes of the year. Learn from the disappointments, whether large or small. Aim for lofty goals but yet enjoy life as it comes. From even the unplanned events and outcomes we learn much. And learning does not always take place in the classroom.

Enjoy a wonderful summer and we look forward to seeing you in August!



Annual HORIZONS Student Showcase, 2010 by Debra Woolley

What can I say? The 2010 HORIZONS Student Showcase was awe inspiring. On the evening of March 23, 2010, more than 600 students arrived at the Berry Center Arena ready to share their knowledge and creativity. As parents, teachers and community members began to move around the arena, students were in the spot light. They proudly demonstrated what they had learned and the products that they had created. There was a magic show, students discussing the importance of the weather, students sharing essays and books that they wrote, interactive activities that the visitors could participate in, and original websites, blogs, and videos created by the students. Dr. Anthony was surrounded by students waiting for him to come see their product, parents and teachers were talking with students and when it was time for the showcase to end, students did not want to leave because they continued to share. One thing is certain – as Dr. Joseph Renzulli says on his website, renzullilearning.com, “Our goal is to challenge all young people [including the gifted] to stretch above their current comfort and agility level.”

The 2011 HORIZONS Student Showcase is scheduled for March 22, 2011 at the Berry Center. Mark your calendars today!

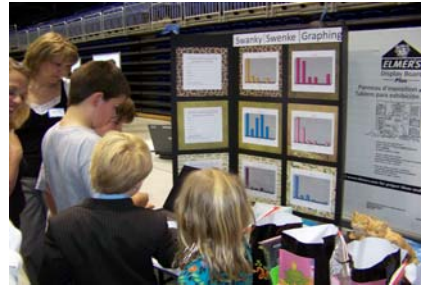
Recommended Reading

We all know that much success arises from the simple act of making mistakes. So it goes in the book [Mistakes that Worked](#) by Charlotte Foltz Jones. For example, Post-It Notes are what they are because the inventor failed to create a superstrong adhesive! Where would we be without them? And what do X-rays, Coca-Cola and Frisbees have in common? You got it! They were all inventions that came about from a mistake. This interesting book is great reading for kids and adults of all ages.

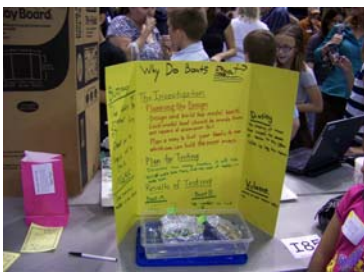
If your curiosity is never satisfied, perhaps the books [How Do They Do That?](#) and [More How Do They Do That?](#) are for you. Authored by Caroline Sutton, these books claim to explain the “wonders of the modern world.” Questions like “How do they get the lead in a pencil?” and how Nobel Prize winners are selected are answered in this entertaining pair of books. These could be great for those summer road trips!

Author Judith Viorst is no stranger to childrens books with her series of “Alexander” books, and branching out into adult titles as well. Her book of poetry designed for children and their parents [If I Were In Charge of the World](#) helps us realize we are not alone in our worries. While the book and it’s poems are short and sweet, we can imagine they would help by creating wonderful talking points with your children.

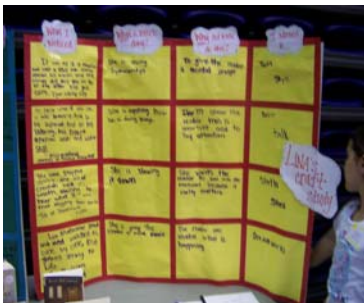
Have a favorite title or author you wish to share? Please send your information for possible inclusion in our next newsletter beginning in August to Sandra.Stocks@cfisd.net.



HORIZONS STUDENT SHOWCASE 2010



of students:
565



of teachers:
322



Destination ImagiNation

120 teams competing at the Regional Tournament, 21 selected to advance to the State Tournament, and a whopping 7 teams headed to Global Tournament!! What more can we say? CFISD teams had such great success with the Destination ImagiNation program this spring!

Focusing on strategies for creative problem solving, this program issues challenges to teams of up to 7 students. Solutions engage their skills in teamwork, creativity, artistry, logic, and even engineering. Not only do teams work on their Central Challenge, but at each tournament are given an Instant Challenge, a task they know nothing about until they get there, are presented with the information, and a small assembly of odd bits. Straws, paper towel rolls, labels, sheets of paper, and other assorted items have all been known to be included as material for these Instant Challenges.

Does this sound difficult? You bet! Did our CFISD students step up to the plate and knock these challenges out of the park? You know it! Will we do it again? Oh yes! Just listen to some of the quotes we received from parents and students:

“Avery, Rene, and Stephen have been best buddies since first grade. This is their 3rd year to do DI together and they’re looking forward to continuing their DI careers!”

“The DI Joes have been together for the last two years as a team. Last year, they came in 4th in their flight, and they were determined to come back this year and go all the way!...These kids would practice every day if we let them and they actually do give up their recesses to practice at school without the coaches. The team gets along so well and has amazing teamwork. They truly are what DI is all about!”

Beginning in August, 2010, more information will be presented regarding the opportunities for teams to get started for the next season of Destination ImagiNation. A parent informational meeting will be planned and posted on the HORIZONS website so that we can get even more teams of students involved in this wonderful adventure and mind-expanding opportunity! If you want to find out more about DI before then, you will find terrific information at www.idodi.org.

In the meantime, please join us in congratulating all teams that worked towards the solutions all year, as well as wishing luck and safe travels to our teams heading to Globals May 26th-29th, 2010!

FROM ONE WHO HAS DONE DI...

First time team manager Melissa Broad gave us this wonderful account of her personal experience being involved with Destination ImagiNation.

"This was my first year to be a Team Manager and boy, have I learned a lot. You know that old saying, "Everything I needed to know, I learned in Kindergarten?" Well, I learned everything I needed to know being a Team Manager!

I remember that first meeting Mrs. Cummings held in the library at Swenke. Our kids were so excited and I had NO CLUE what Destination Imagination was even about. All I knew is that my daughter wanted to do it and was very excited about it. She apparently already had a team formed and just needed a Manager. I thought, "Well, sure...why not?" I'm all for supporting my children and helping where I can. I had other moms come to me from the team that were teachers and they kept saying, "ARE YOU SURE?!". I thought, "Well, how hard can it be?"....boy...did I ever eat those words. Little did I know how much time and effort would go into DI. But little did I know how much enjoyment and fulfillment that would come as well.

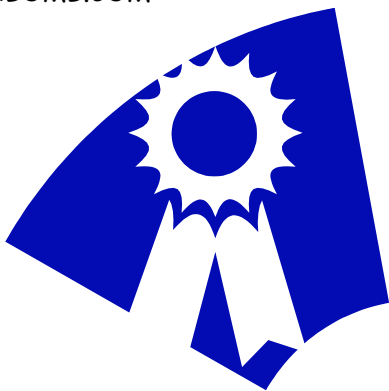
Our first meeting, my co-manager had given our new team an Instant Challenge just to see how they would work together. Wow! They completed building the bridge and worked great together. We knew our team was special the first meeting! We learned so much together as a team and coach. I will walk away with so many fond memories of this first year team. I am still overjoyed and shocked at all their accomplishments....1st place at Regionals and 5th at State, we couldn't be happier!

So, some of the things that I have learned being a first year DI coach that you might want to pass along to those newbies for next year:

- * Whoever invented duct tape is a genius.
- * Pizza and cookie cake calm the beasts and will guarantee work.
- * Sometimes you think your ideas are so great and you want to share, have no fear...they ALWAYS come up with something far better than what you were thinking anyway!
- * Shopping with DI kids is pretty much like trying to herd cats.
- * They all become YOUR children, and will sometimes act like brothers and sisters.
- * Listening to each other is key, being heard is better.
- * Laughter solves pretty much any solution.
- * It always comes together in the end!

Thank you again for implementing a wonderful program for our schools. I will miss those kids that will not be moving onto middle school with us. But, I will forever hold those memories of this past year so dear to my heart.

Melissa Broad
Manager of DABOMB.COM"





Destination ImagiNation 2009-2010

Saving Our Home

By: Rachel Bhalla, 7th grade, Goodson Middle School

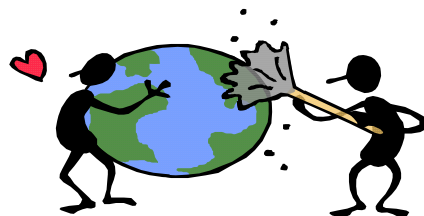
We live in a beautiful, but fragile world. So many people in the next generation and the adults of the current time take it so much for granted. Many teenagers out there just assume that Mother Nature will always be out there for us, or at least our life times. I used to think that too until last year when my 6th grade class did a project on scientists who made differences in the world or changed our lives. I hadn't a clue who any of the scientists that were listed (well, except for Albert Einstein). But then one scientist caught my eye, Rachel Carson. All that described her was that she was a woman environmentalist in the mid-1900s. I quickly snatched her name up and within minutes was engrossed in information about this interesting and independent woman. Soon I'd realized that all of Earth's beauty that Miss Carson had worked to keep for many millennia was being wasted against her dearest wishes by our own generation. I soon found that with just a few baby steps our wonderful planet could thrive for so much longer with just minimal more care. I decided to help preserve Rachel Carson's work, even in the slightest, so I came up with just a few ways that kids can make a difference on Earth.

So many people I know leave a room with all the lights left on. Not only does leaving lights on waste power but it also cost money on family's electric bill. At this current state of the economy, everyone can use all the extra pennies they can get and so turning lights off not only helps the environment but saves you money. This one is pretty basic but, when you are leaving the room or brushing your teeth make sure to turn off the water in the faucet. Did you know that when you leave your faucets on and they drip you are not only wasting water, but it ruins your sink and tap? And after a while it will add up (especially if it's hot water) and it will cost you money too. Also, even though Texas isn't very cold, running your water in the shower to wait for it to warm up wastes water. To save water, in the winter you can wrap a thermal blanket around your water heater to warm up the icy water (this works with most all water heaters). Another thing you can do is **recycle!** If your neighborhood doesn't offer recycling pickups, there are still other ways to. Most schools and churches have both recycling and trash dumpsters. You can create cans for recycling in your garage and when they're full of recyclable goods you can run over to your school or church and put the stuff in its bin. It will take all of five minutes of your day but will make you feel great inside. It works for me.

After my friends, that also were working on the project, started to really pay attention to what was happening they realized too that we should continuously try to help. My good friend Rebecca did Jacques Cousteau who was an activist in keeping the ocean a safe, clean, and beautiful underwater world. Rebecca also has considered being a Marine Biologist so when I asked her some questions on what she thought.

What did you learn about life from our scientist project? "Although our scientists often had setbacks, they continued to do the things that they loved and, they helped our understanding of the environment at the same time." Rebecca told me. I also asked her what she and her friend can do to help the environment and what she does to help the environment and she had said, "As well as obvious things like recycling, and using less resources, we can also be like the scientists, and help other people understand the value of the world and the importance of protecting it. I already do things such as recycling and cutting down on using electricity when possible." Rebecca now respects Jacques Cousteau and likes to tell people what he taught her about persistence. "Jacques had to overcome a lot to become a marine scientist, and now he is [probably] the most famous marine scientist ever." Rebecca also made sure to add in something that she thought was very special. "People should, and hopefully will work harder to protect the world when they get a chance to understand how wonderful it is, for example, protecting whales, sharks, dolphins, etc. from being hunted."

I was touched when I learned that I wasn't the only to care so dearly about helping the environment and the work all these amazing scientist did to help too. I only hope that reading this makes at least one teenager or student help the environment because while only one of us can't do it, the more people try the longer our Earth will be around. Everybody needs to wake up to what's happening and help even the slightest because this is our world, and I'm planning on saving it. Are you? The world can't wait, why should you?



Newsworthy!

An Unusual Case of Age Discrimination

Yahoo News online contains an interesting story about a young student and his pursuit of advanced academics. 13 year old Colin Carlson enrolled at UConn at the ripe old age of 12, having exhausted his high school course options taken online. As part of his chosen major in Environmental Studies and Evolutionary Biology, Colin wished to spend time studying abroad in South Africa. Due to his young age, and despite having parental consent, he was denied this opportunity. To read more about his story, visit <http://www.newuniversity.org/2010/04/news/university-application-age-discrimination-or-lack-thereof/>.

Lone Star Leadership Academy!

Kristina Bates, 7th grader at Aragon Middle School, was selected and attended the Lone Star Leadership Academy in Austin. Not content to wait until summer, Kristina chose Spring Break to take advantage of this opportunity! According to mom, Kristina learned all about Texas history, met Representatives while visiting the Capital, and made many new friends. Be on the lookout when Kristina attends the Houston/Galveston Leadership Academy next year!

Honor Student Magazine

A good friend shared the following information and it is certainly worthy of passing to our CFISD students:

“Parents with high school honors students, check this out! Honor Student Magazine profiles high school students in each issue and also gives away scholarship money to boot! And beginning in April, they are going to profile a select group of honor students every other month. Why didn't they have this when I was graduating high school? It would have looked AWESOME on my college application, way back...uh..when. Everyone should read this: parents, students, guidance counselors, since in every issue, experts provide “Prepare for College” content, including Q & A with college students, and college/university spotlights! “

Visit www.honorstudentmagazine.com and enjoy exploring this publication!

Michelle Wist is heading to Iowa!

Hamilton Middle School's 6th grader Michelle Wist applied and was selected to attend the Foreign Language Summer Institute at the University of Iowa. This is a two-week residential program for 20 selected 6th-8th grade students nationwide! Congratulations to Michelle!



Coordinator's Column by Carla Butler

It certainly has been an exciting year. I have been very privileged to witness the growth of students in CFISD in many different areas. Thanks to the support of parents, teachers and campus administrators I watched as 21 teams from CFISD competed at the Gulf Coast Regional Destination ImagiNation competition in Katy ISD. Students worked together collaboratively to solve a variety of problem solving scenarios, researched to imbed new information learned, and presented with confidence to an audience of their peers, parents and complete strangers.

Of those 21 teams competing at the regional competition, 11 teams were selected to represent the Gulf Coast at the State Destination Imagination competition in Carrollton, Texas. The students continued to work together to refine their skills and prepare their presentation for a larger audience at the state level. As a result of their hard work, seven teams from CFISD were selected to represent Texas at the Destination Imagination Global competition in Knoxville, Tennessee in May. Congratulations to all students, parents, teachers and campus administrators who made all of these experiences possible for these students.

I am very proud to be a part of a district where parents, teachers, campus and district personnel work tirelessly to provide an opportunity for these students to realize the potential they possess. I would like to thank the CFISD Board of Trustees for their continued support of these students. I would like to thank all of the parents, teachers, campus and district personnel for their hard work to make this program a great success. I would like to thank Sandy Stocks, our district DI consultant, for her hard work in making the DI program a great success and for all that she does to make the HORIZONS program effective!

In addition to the success from our DI teams, I was blown away by the incredible talents of students as they represented CFISD at the TAGT conference in Houston in December, the HORIZONS Student Showcase at the Berry Center in March and at the Lee Elementary HORIZONS Student Showcase in May. In each case, students proudly showcased products they created as a result of research, analysis of data, development of a variety of presentation vehicles, and the development of effective communication skills in presenting their product to an audience of their peers and adults from the school and district community. Students spoke with confidence and clarity as they discussed what they learned, how they will use the information and why the experience was important.

I would like to thank all of the teachers and administrators who supported students at the campus and district events that allowed students to showcase their hard work and marvelous products. I would like to thank our HORIZONS liaisons at the elementary campus level for working with teachers, students and parents of gifted students as we continue to implement appropriate challenge for all students. I would like to thank Debra Woolley for her hard work in making the HORIZONS Showcase a spectacular event. I would like to thank Cynthia Taylor at Lee for hosting a campus HORIZONS Showcase and look forward to many more opportunities for students to showcase their hard work. I would also like to thank Sandy Beehner, who works tirelessly communicating with teachers regarding appropriate training. Last, but not least, thanks to Allison Tucker for her hard work and brilliant mind.

Have a safe, productive and relaxing summer vacation. Challenge yourself to read a few good books, explore new opportunities to learn and enjoy the adventure. We are lucky to share this journey together!

WHAT TO DO UNTIL THE NEXT NANOWRIMO?

We had so many success stories over the years with our CFISD students enjoying participating in NaNoWriMo, but they remain hungry for more opportunities to showcase their writing skills! We have researched and found additional sites that might feed that need and we wish our students continued success in their writing endeavors!

www.teenink.com

www.youngvoicesfoundation.org

www.scriptfrenzy.org

www.youngwriterssociety.com

www.planet.eon.net/~bplaroach/index.html

www.empoweringwriters.com

Please don't forget to share your young writer's successes! We'd love to hear about them!

**Mission of the Cypress-Fairbanks I.S.D.
HORIZONS Department**

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.

**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

www.honorstudentmagazine.com

www.teenink.com

<http://challenging-gifted-children.suite101.com/>

Have a wonderful Summer! From your friends in
the Gifted Education Department!