

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

## Sandra Kaplan, Ed.D.

*(Associate Clinical Professor for Learning and Instruction at the University of California)*

### Topic: Developing Intellectualism

**Thursday, May 28, 2009, 6:30 p.m.**

*Location: I.U.S.D. Administration Center, 5050 Barranca Parkway, Irvine*

Sandra Kaplan, Ed.D., is associate clinical professor for learning and instruction at the University of Southern California. She has served as the lead consultant for the Carnegie Middle Schools Project, Texas Education Agency, from 1993 to present. Dr. Kaplan is a past president of the National Association for Gifted Children (NAGC), of which she has been a member of since 1982. She is also a past president of the California Association for the Gifted. One of the world's foremost authorities in the field of gifted education, she has made presentations at the World Congress on Gifted and NAGC and TAGT conferences. Recent honors include the Award of Achievement from the California Association for the Gifted and the Distinguished Service Award from NAGC.

## COORDINATOR'S MESSAGE

The end of the school year seems to bring about a rush of excitement and energy as we finalize the last ten months of the academic process. Part of the steps of ending a school year is evaluating current programs and preparing for the following academic year. Students and parents have completed the GATE surveys, which we'll review the data and make plans for next year.

In helping our teachers prepare their curriculum over the summer, the GATE Department is sponsoring a day on May 28th for IUSD staff to work with Dr. Sandra Kaplan, Ed.D., associate clinical professor for learning and instruction at the University of Southern California. For almost four decades, Dr. Kaplan's work has positively influenced gifted education, earning her tremendous respect nationally and internationally in the arena of gifted education. Throughout the day, teachers will work with Dr. Kaplan on curriculum and instruction, while the evening has been reserved for information on gifted education pertaining to the parents' perspectives.

You may have noticed a change in the GATE Department. Wendy Bennett, formerly known as Wendy Pokorski, with whom many of you have had contact with either over the phone or via email, is

now Superintendent Gwen Gross's Confidential Administrative Assistant. While we're excited for her, we will definitely miss Wendy's expertise and dedication in the GATE Department.

Jocelyn Jazwiec is the new voice and face in the GATE Department. Jocelyn was born and raised in Anaheim, graduated from California State University Fullerton, and has a strong commitment to education. We're thrilled to be working with Jocelyn. She likes to stay busy, so the GATE Department should be an excellent match!

You might be interested in a free, month-long "Gifted & Talented Education Online Mini-Series"; sponsored by UCI and designed specifically for teachers, administrators, and parents. The first part of the series scheduled for Wednesday, May 6th, from 8-9 P.M., is entitled How to Relate Successfully with Your Gifted Youngsters. The following week, Wednesday, May 13th, 8-9 P.M., will offer What Differentiation Should Look Like. On Wednesday, May 20th, 8-9 P.M., the topic will be Building the Parent-Teacher Connection. Closing the series, on May 27th, 8-9 P.M., the topic will be Understanding IQ Testing and Special Programming for Advanced and Gifted Learners. More information at [www.occgate.org](http://www.occgate.org). *(Continued on next page)*

## CAC-GATE Chairpersons' Message

By Terry Freedlander

As my second year as Chair of the GATE CAC comes to a close, I would like to note our newly instituted email communication system for GATE parents. Working with IUSD, we worked our way through to a process that allows for timely communication via email on our GATE CAC speakers, on conferences, on educational programs and the like. We hope that this has been helpful for each of you.

We also had a significant change in staffing with the move of Wendy Bennett, GATE Secretary, to Confidential Secretary to Gwen Gross, IUSD Superintendent. Wendy has provided such energy and insights in her role within the GATE program. She nearly single-handedly put together the GATE Day that we hold in the Fall each year. We will miss her and wish her much success in her new role. Our new GATE Department Administrative Assistant is Jocelyn Jazwiec. Jocelyn comes to IUSD from the title insurance industry. We welcome her in her new role and look forward to working with her.

During this past year, the GATE CAC board was able to provide IUSD teachers 11 mini-grants to assist them with innovative curriculum. In addition the October '08 GATE Day was a success with over 120 students participating in fun workshops in sports, origami, legos, and science.

We encourage your feedback and ideas to help our group grow to be a useful resource to all in the parent community.

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## COORDINATOR'S MESSAGE

*(Continued from page 1)*

If you're interested in a new, free web site designed to help parents of gifted learners check out Such A Smart Mom at <http://suchasmartmom.com>. Ruth McKinnie Braun, a former reporter and editor with The San Diego Union-Tribune and mother of two gifted students, started Such A Smart Mom to "help smart parents raise smart kids." You'll find tips on bringing out a child's inner scientist, preparing for the SAT, parenting gifted children, and a variety of other interesting information.

Before we say goodbye to this school year, I want to take this opportunity to thank the people who contribute so much to IUSD. First, thanks to all of you as members of the CAC-GATE community, you and your children are why we do what we do. I want to thank our outstanding CAC-GATE board: Terry Freedlander, Wendy Bokota, Larry Kaplan, and Senthamil R. Selvan, who volunteer countless hours with helping IUSD reach some difficult goals for our GATE and APAAS programs. Last, but definitely not least, I want to thank the IUSD GATE and APAAS teachers who on a daily basis demonstrate their commitment to excellence and provide an excellent academic environment for our gifted learners. In working together, we touch the future.

Sincerely,



Beth L. Andrews

## Canyon View News

by Ariel Kidder, IRC Program Coordinator



At Canyon View, gifted students receive three levels of support:

- Cluster grouping within their classrooms
- RTI participation (one hour daily)
- IRC Challenge (one session each week)

The **IRC Challenge Program** provides information/media literacy, critical thinking, and problem-solving activities in our school's Information Resource Center. Developing information awareness, managing data, and evaluating data are essential skills for 21st Century learners. When GATE students work, the IRC becomes their own Thinking Lab with multiple resources for research. Students have many opportunities to develop skills as leaders and collaborators.

The theme of this year's 4th-6th grade program is "**Question the Question.**" Learning to ask good questions helps the learner focus on important ideas, and make connections to others. Understanding the strategies needed to respond to higher level questions, leads to clarity of thinking and more in-depth responses.

### 4th Grade

- Working in groups, our fourth graders are writing questions and evaluating them for effectiveness at the higher thinking levels. Their goal is to design their own research plan of action, and monitor their own progress.

### 5th Grade

- Using Inspiration software to create mind maps showing their research process, our fifth graders are developing expertise as researchers. Summarizing information gathered and linking ideas together helps them make decisions as they work to create, and answer their own essential questions.

### 6th Grade

- Our sixth graders are asking questions about how they learn and discovering strategies needed to become more effective learners and thinkers. They have analyzed their personal data to determine dominant and secondary learning styles. This information serves as a guide to work more effectively both independently and collaboratively.
- Their media literacy project focuses on the power of images to communicate and influence. Nonverbal stimuli can exert a powerful influence on the formation of opinions - on both the cognitive and the affective level. Learning to use Windows Movie Maker and PowerPoint, students create a presentation with a specific message in mind. Students match learning styles with tasks (Tactile-Texter, Visual-Viewer and Auditory-Analyzer) to maximize productivity. Using images to keep the viewer's attention and communicate messages clearly, students experience the power of multi-media presentations.

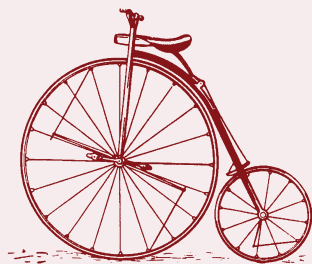
## Northwood Elementary GATE News

Northwood's Fourth graders have their work cut out for them. We have finished studying the California Mission period. While other students are writing a mission report on a single mission, the GATE students were given the opportunity to work together on a different project. Students were placed into small groups and each child selected a mission to research from the Northern, Central, and Southern regions of California. Currently they are developing a power point presentation that compares and contrasts the three missions. Next, they will evaluate and determine where in California a 22nd mission should be built based on their findings from researching the 3 missions they selected. Finally, they will present a persuasive argument for the location and establishment of a 22nd mission.

Northwood's Fifth graders have also been busy this trimester. We have finished reading the novel, *The Sign of the Beaver* by Elizabeth George Speare. While we read, we analyzed the many conflicts and charted the rising action of each conflict. We made a conflict quilt which illustrates the different conflicts in the novel. We also wrote "Found Poems" by choosing key phrases from the novel and re-organizing them to create a new poem reflecting the mood of the story. We will also complete a character analysis of the two main characters in the novel and chart their development and changes throughout the novel.

This year in our 6th grade classroom, we have been learning many things and our class is looking forward to many adventures. One of the activities we have done this year is reading a book called *The Golden Goblet* by Eloise Jarvis McGraw. Our class also learned many interesting facts about the ancient Egyptians such as mummification, the building of pyramids, and the writings of the ancient Egyptians called hieroglyphics. In math, with our "new and improved" math textbooks, we have been learning a lot about analyzing data, looking at graphs, and our class feels much more responsible now being able to be use calculators. Lastly, our class has been writing plenty of papers. Many kids in our class had trouble with the compare and contrast papers, but Mrs. Levy has made it a lot easier with step up to writing. We hope that the rest of the year would be productive so that we will be able to handle middle school easily next year.

Sixth Grade Writers:  
Samantha Lee  
Jessica Kim  
Tyler Duong



## Brywood Elementary School

By Nancy Williams



One of the highlights in Mrs. Williams and Miss Nguyen's 4th grade APAAS class this year has been our election unit. The students eagerly followed the candidates and the issues through the election process and then watched the Inauguration of our 44th President of the United States. After listening to the inaugural address, the students wished to have their voices heard and wrote letters to President Obama. Here are some of their wishes for our new leader.



*Dear President Obama,*

*My name is Shilpa Rajagopal, and I'm a fourth grade student at Brywood Elementary School in Irvine, CA. I'd like to congratulate you on becoming the 44th President of the United States.*

*I'm writing to request that you consider improving education standards at elementary schools. Education is one of the building blocks of life. I believe that schools should focus more on math and science skills because they are very important for our country's future.*

*I think you should address this issue by having schools allocate more teaching time in these two subjects. This can be accomplished by having after-school programs and summer programs for all children. I also think that schools should have more resources in math and science.*

*Thank you for reading my letter, and I hope you will consider my suggestions for improving schools.*

*Yours truly,  
Shilpa Rajagopal*



*Dear President Obama,*

*Hi! I'm Stephen Chen from Brywood Elementary School. I'm writing this letter because first, I want to congratulate you on being our nation's 44th president. Second, the economy is bad, so do you have any good solutions to help our economy get better?*

*I've read newspapers and watched TV and know that people are losing their jobs. When people lose their jobs, they don't have enough money to support their families. This may affect the children's lives. Do you have any plans, ideas, or solutions? How about creating more jobs? You can cut down on taxes so the people can have more money in their hands to spend on other things. This may help the economy.*

*Thank you for reading my letter, and I hope you will have a great time in the White House.*

*Sincerely,  
Stephen Chen*

## Meadow Park News

By Kristen Jackson and Linda Price

The staff and students at Meadow Park take pride in exploring a myriad of opportunities for our gifted and high achieving students. Our goal is to continually challenge them and to expand and enhance their studies. Students are cluster grouped with teachers who have been trained in applying instructional strategies that meet the learning needs of children with high potential. Lessons that incorporate depth, complexity, novelty, and acceleration are provided to ensure that our students become responsible thinkers, wise consumers of ideas, and innovative contributors to society.

One school wide system that allows for substantial differentiation is the Response to Instruction program that has been implemented at all grade levels. Students are formally assessed and placed in homogeneous groupings to facilitate the use of appropriate instructional strategies and materials in Language Arts. Assessment occurs frequently, and groupings are flexible to ensure that students are always working with a comparable group of learners. High achievers are taught grade level standards at an accelerated level, challenging activities and extensions are incorporated into their lessons, and a variety of materials, including Junior Great Books and novels are utilized. Inferential and textual comprehension, literary analysis, vocabulary enhancement, and exploration of literary themes are all a part of the program for our gifted learners.

GATE and high achieving students are also regularly offered special opportunities for learning. Astounding Inventions, Science Fair projects, California Mission Projects, and Young Writer's Faire compositions are just some of the enrichment activities and projects available to our most successful learners.

Sixth grade has started a Math Olympiads group that takes the skills and standards learned in the classrooms and goes deeper into the concepts, exploring ways to expand knowledge. During instructional time, GATE and high achieving students often work with other students and are provided with challenge problems and more complex problem solving activities. They are also challenged to create their own problems. These problems are later used with the rest of the class as warm up activities.

Students are always encouraged to take initiative and go above and beyond the expected tasks and learning. One current sixth grade GATE student has taken on the task of assigning current events to other students in the class. Each week, a group of children are asked to research different topics from sports, the local, national or world news, and present the information they found to the class. This helps students become aware of what is going on outside of Irvine and helps students to develop a more global perspective!



## Westpark GATE

Westpark GATE students have options regarding their curricular enrichment. Some GATE learners belong to cluster groups within the regular classroom setting. Assignments become more in-depth and complex to extend and stretch these minds. Other Westpark GATE students participate in the APAAS program, where high achievers engage in high level activities with their intellectual peers. All are engaging learning environments that make for an exciting education.

Mr. McNatt's fifth graders are natural leaders in weekly debates. They select issues, such as school uniforms, and form strong reasons to support their point of view. Then, after hearing an opponent's position, must create a well developed rebuttal. This activity creates stronger minds and develops critical thinking skills geared towards persuasive writing.

Mrs. Farnsworth's fourth grade APAAS class recently completed a Gold Rush simulation, allowing students to experience life and adventure of a frontier mining camp. With critical thinking skills honed, students used a different perspective to overcome common obstacles miners faced while making group decisions. Accompanying this was a journal, written in the point of view as Jack Flagg, the main character in the novel *By the Great Horn Spoon*. Students' writing skills are refined in several genres (summaries, response to literature, informational reports, essays, etc.). Soon students will research, compile, and organize data about a California county. Their minds are stretched through writing since writing is a strong component of the APAAS academic program.

Mrs. Haboian and Mrs. Yee's fifth grade APAAS class incorporate collaborative, high level Book Clubs into their language arts program. As students read novels, they discuss issues, justify conclusions, prioritize details, and see an underlying theme to be gleaned. Afterwards, students create skits and posters that highlight their interpretations. Creativity is emphasized so students tap into all modalities of thinking. Quite a few students were recognized for their unique creations in the countywide Astounding Inventions contest. Their writing skills were improved while editors of an American Revolution newspaper. This class is filled with scholars who are busy learning and having fun in the process.

Ms. Maguire's sixth grade APAAS class has worked on a myriad of projects to develop higher level thinking. In math they explored probability by analyzing the experimental and theoretical probability of different situations, taking math beyond their four classroom walls. As a fun aside, Pi day (March 14th; since  $\pi \approx 3.14...$ ) was celebrated in honor of a favorite irrational number. In addition, they began training for Math Field Day, a countywide competition held in the spring. A recent classroom highlight was guest speaker, Superintendent Dr. Gross, who engaged the class in a thought provoking discussion on "Lincoln and Leadership." This spurred many learners to become more involved in the school's "Green Team" and take leadership positions for Westpark's recycling program. From high tea time, which culminated the novel *The View From Saturday*, or assessing architectural Greek contributions, Mrs. Maguire's class is a source of thought provoking experiences.

On a final note, RTI is in full swing. For GATE students, this means delving deeper into stories with peers who share their high language skills. Westpark keeps its GATE students engaged, productive, and enthusiastic about what's to come.



## Culverdale Elementary School

Culverdale Elementary School continues to uphold the highest level of commitment to each student. Our dedicated staff provides an enriched curriculum, differentiated with depth, novelty, and acceleration for our GATE community, as evidenced by the myriad activities in every classroom. Culverdale is one of many elementary schools in Irvine to participate in a program called Response to Instruction. Each student's reading ability is assessed, and then students are grouped together and placed with a teacher for one hour of reading instruction a day. The goal for RtI is to maximize reading growth and potential. GATE students are matched with "challenge" level students, expediting the teacher's ability to differentiate curriculum. Acceleration is an effective method in this setting, and our GATE students enrich their reading curriculum with many creative projects.

Culverdale **fourth grade** students are solving challenging problems from Math Olympiad, Singapore Math and the activities in their fourth grade math text. They will work with Hands-On-Algebra, a concrete representation of algebraic equations. In social studies, students will study and explore the history and geography of California, the California Missions and the Gold Rush. We will visit San Juan Capistrano Mission in March. Students enjoy the Word Master Challenge which is a stimulating word study of new vocabulary using analogies. Our fourth grade team scores were an impressive 48 points higher than the national median team scores. In language arts, students select projects from a menu. The projects are aligned to the current story and skills focused around the theme. Students are also reading from the Junior Great Books, an interpretive discussion program that moves students toward excellence in reading comprehension and critical thinking. Students also participate in a book club three times a year, sharing thoughts about our selected book. Students, teachers and parents enjoy the discussions.

Along with the math enrichment, GATE students in the **fifth grade** are presented an additional opportunity to broaden their learning across the curriculum. At the beginning of each month an Extensions Menu is planned for them. The purpose of this Menu is to expand the curriculum so the students can explore and make connections on a deeper level. Several activities are listed on the menu for each curriculum area. These activities align with the core curriculum but go into depth and novelty within each activity. Students have the option of selecting as many extensions as they would like to complete during any given month.

In our RtI fifth grade, students extend their core curriculum through novel and in depth projects such as completing research on the Internet and then participating in cooperative groups to consolidate, synthesize and present material.

Further enrichment is found in the Social Studies curriculum. Student created Big Books are used for the study on Native Americans, Explorers, and Colonial Craftsmen. Within this cooperative group setting, students have the opportunity to excel in leadership and enhance interpersonal communication skills. While studying the U.S. presidents, Power point presentations are utilized to enhance the learning experience and "Fireside Chats" enliven the oral reports for the Presidents. During the study of the 50 states, students create a tri-fold state technology brochure.

**Sixth graders** have a wealth of material to explore each month across their curriculum. Students are challenged through novelty, depth, and acceleration as they master the sixth grade standards. RTI gives the students a unique daily opportunity to have their Language Arts needs met. The students have weekly required reading involving distinctive genre and challenging novels, along with free reading choices. WordMasters and Wordly Wise continue to enrich vocabulary for our GATE students. Sixth grade research and projects, tailored to appeal to everyone's taste, offers a mixture of unique topics to enhance the learning experience. Samplings of Social Studies projects include Indian Palm Leaf books, Egyptian ABC books and Books of the Dead, virtual tours, and Big Books for ancient civilizations. Math is differentiated with enrichment packets, and daily and weekly challenge problems. The district *Primary Mathematics Challenging Word Problems* series is used to polish the students thinking skills and encourages students to use creative problem solving strategies. Other novelty aspects include News Quiz, a GATE current events program, which is both enjoyable and competitive.

All three grade levels avail themselves to Neufeld Math, a site-based computer-accessed curriculum which allows students to work at their own pace and ability. Our students have the opportunity to utilize the Culverdale Website for updates to current assignments. As you tour Culverdale, plan to be impressed by the students' work displayed throughout the building! Providing a challenging and differentiated program that serves all of our learners at Culverdale continues to be a priority with each and every teacher at Culverdale Elementary. Our commitment is to excellence!





## Choices and Challenges at Lakeside Middle School



Ever since being founded in 1978, Lakeside Middle School has earned a stellar academic record. Part of this success is due to the fact that we think it's best to challenge all kids. We offer many enrichment opportunities within our regular school day as well as at lunch and after school. It's all part of living by our unofficial school motto, which is "**Doing What's Best for Kids.**" For us that means not treating all students alike, but rather offering choices.

### Enrichment Opportunities at Lakeside Middle School:

Creativity and curiosity are two hallmarks of the middle school student. For many students the middle school years are the last chance to sample areas of interest before moving on to the rigorous college prep track followed by students aiming for the best universities. Lakeside Middle School offers students chances to explore and develop their special interests and talents. Offerings include such things as:

- **Participation in National History Day.** We have close to 100 students participating. We have an outstanding record at the county and state level, and have had the honor of sending students on to compete at the national level.
- **Additional writing and art challenges such as Red Ribbon Week and the Holocaust Writing and Art Contest sponsored by Chapman University.** Our students have had the privilege to learn of history first-hand through meeting survivors of the Holocaust. We have had many finalists and five winners of \$500 prizes for the best art and writing in Southern California.
- **Academic Pentathlon.** Each year we field a team of 7th graders and a team of 8th graders for this challenging and fun endeavor. Students are coached by faculty volunteers and put in many hours preparing for the March competition. They compete in the areas of science, history, essay, literature and mathematics.
- **Extracurricular monthly book clubs and in-class literature circles.** Lakeside Book Club leaders choose six books each year. Students meet monthly to take a quiz and to discuss the themes of the works. Voluntary participation ranges from sixty to over one hundred students each month. The discussion circles are entirely led by student leaders.
- **Science Fair, Astounding Inventions, Toshiba Exploravision and the Sally Ride conference.** High achieving students are encouraged to participate in these events, which serve to prepare them for the challenges of the high school honors programs.
- **Instrumental and choral music classes.** We offer a full-range of music classes (including jazz band) and are well-represented in the district honors groups.
- **Partnerships with UCI** such as Career Day and Engineering Week.
- The opportunity to take high school classes (Spanish I and Geometry, with teacher recommendation) while in the 8th grade.
- **A full elective program** (with classes such as drama, art, ceramics, home arts, public speech and debate, media literacy, year-book, journalism, law and society and film and literature) enables students to investigate their unique interests and talents.
- Providing extra service to the school while **exploring possible future careers** by serving as media aides, office aides, special education classroom aides and teacher assistants.
- **Leadership** class enables students to develop confidence and to serve the school through planning events such as dances, trivia bowl, elections and spirit competitions.

- **National Junior Honor Society** provides opportunities for leadership and service, such as tutoring in our lunchtime and afternoon homework help sessions.

In core curriculum Lakeside places students in interdisciplinary language arts/social science classes. The goal is for teachers to keep their students for two years. In addition, students are assigned in such a way that the classes can meet for an extended "double-block" of time whenever desired. All students will write four "anchor essays" in English and three in history during the course of the year. Clusters of GATE/high achievers are placed in each block. Students will be regrouped according to ability to participate in special units such as literature lab. During "lit lab" a third teacher works with the teams to create smaller classes for the study of high-interest novels or short stories. Our goal is not only to develop the skills of literary analysis, but also to promote the love of reading.

The ability to take classes such as Algebra, Geometry and Spanish I puts our students in a perfect position to get on board with high school Honors and Advanced Placement courses. Math classes are grouped according to test results so that students' needs are met.

Our science program is highly interactive and challenges students to be independent thinkers and questioners. The team of five teachers works together to plan a comprehensive program that addresses all standards over a two-year period. Students are encouraged to become scientists, not just to read about science. Labs, hands-on projects and PowerPoint presentations are all part of the science experience at Lakeside Middle School.

Other arenas offer challenge as well. For example, our physical education teachers have developed units focused on twenty different sports/activities. Each year students experience ten. By the time the students leave Lakeside they will have had the opportunity to learn Frisbee golf and ping-pong and many other activities, as well as the more traditional sports. The PE program places great emphasis on personal fitness and healthy choices.

Lakeside also has implemented an electronic learning program called SuccessMaker from Pearson Digital Education Technologies. Although this program is aimed at struggling students, we sometimes find high-achieving students with "holes" in their basic skills. We are working to help our students remedy such deficits. We also offer an after school drop-in homework help program. Students receive help from high school and honor society tutors. A certificated staff member is also available to provide help.

The middle school years are truly a bridge between the more sheltered haven of elementary school and the bigger world of high school. Here at Lakeside we do our very best to always stay focused on our students as individuals. We challenge our students, but we also give them choices.

Although we are proud of our academic standing, we are more proud of the confident, happy and enthusiastic students we send on to high school. Our alumni look back with great fondness on their Lakeside Middle School years. Wonderful parents, awesome students and dedicated staff members who go the extra mile in "Doing What's Best for Kids" are the true ingredients of our success.

## Sierra Vista Middle School's 7th and 8th Humanities

By Barbara Vreeland

Whether participating in an authentic Japanese Tea Ceremony in 7th grade or reenacting a famous Supreme Court case in 8th grade, Sierra Vista's GATE teachers help make history come alive in the classroom. GATE teachers at Sierra Vista strive to create a rich environment for their students using differentiated methods of instruction such as acceleration, depth, complexity, and novelty. Over the course of two years, students are not only taught the California Content Standards for Language Arts and Social Science, but are exposed to higher-level pieces of literature, vocabulary, concepts, and ideas.



By October, students are being coached by their Language Arts teachers Christina Ralston, Cathy Turner, and Barbara Vreeland, to participate in the Word Masters Challenge. Word Masters is a "national language arts competition entered by approximately 230,000 students annually, which consists of

three separate meets held at intervals during the school year." In order to do well, students must not only know each word's various definitions, but they must also understand the words in context and how the words change parts of speech. Direct teaching strategies, analogy practice, and review games are just a few of the methods these coaches use. After all that hard work, in January, SVMS 7th graders tied for third place out of 179 schools and 8th grade tied for first in the nation!



As part of their exciting journey back in time, 7th grade students in Jon Millers and Barbara Vreeland's classrooms recreate pieces of history. Kabuki Dramas, Shakespearean plays, and DaVinci Diaries are just a few examples. Recently, students engaged in a traditional Japanese Tea Ceremony by imagining themselves as guests in a tea house. The authentic scrolls on the classroom walls, calligraphy, aroma of green tea, and yummy treats made everyone feel like honored guests.



As a culminating activity for their unit on the Constitution, Mr. Clark's 8th grade Gate U.S. History classes were divided into pairs to assume the role of a legal team responsible for arguing one side of a Landmark Supreme Court Case. Each team was required

to thoroughly research their case, paying close attention to the various constitutional arguments brought forth as it made its way through each level of the appellate system. After carefully preparing their case, which included an opening and closing statement, basic arguments derived from the Constitution and lower court opinions, and responses to the anticipated arguments of their opponents, they were ready to persuade the Court (their classmates).

Between the Word Masters Challenge, experiential activities, and a focus on essential skills, Sierra Vista's GATE team enjoys the challenge of providing students with a unique learning experience.

## GATE at Greentree

By Peggy Walsh



Teachers at Greentree Elementary firmly believe in the importance of challenging our GATE students to go 'above and beyond' the normal curriculum with engaging and enriching activities and curriculum.

Greentree is one of several elementary schools in Irvine that has actively implemented the RTI program. This program addresses the reading comprehension ability of all students. After testing, students are cluster-grouped based on their respective abilities. GATE students and high level achieving students are placed in an environment where they are asked to explore the literature with a greater emphasis on the interpretive meaning and intent of the author.

The RTI program at 4th grade has students engaged in reading and interpreting stories from the Junior Great Book series. These enriching stories require the students to engage in class discussions to interpret the meaning of the story and the message the author was attempting to present.

In social studies, 4th grade GATE students are also busy producing an individual documentary comparing and contrasting the explorations of two explorers from Spain and England. The individual documentaries are being produced using Photo Story 3, resulting in a voice-over presentation. In order to complete this project, 4th grade GATE students have learned this new application and are excited about presenting their next GATE project utilizing this software.

In addition, 4th grade GATE students are working on the 4th grade GATE newsletter that is published for Open House. The students have done various interviews and are writing articles for their publication.

GATE 5th grade students are also very busy with a differentiated program. The RTI program at 5th grade incorporates literature circles, which give students the opportunity to explore story ideas in greater depth and complexity. Follow up projects include Power Point presentations and creative advertisements.

Each week 5th grade GATE students are given a weekly question about the anthology selection. Students have the opportunity to share their opinions and impressions about the story and the characters in small discussion groups. Students are encouraged to take notes during the reading and share the ideas and questions they develop during their independent and/or paired reading periods.

In social studies, 5th grade GATE students participate in the annual Historical American Leader presentation (HAL). Students research an important American colonial leader and present their findings, before their peers, while dressed in historical period clothing. The presentation focuses on the life and contributions of that important American.

Our 6th grade GATE students, and other high achievers in math, attend a weekly Pre-Algebra class to prepare them for the next year's transition to middle school. Those students participating have demonstrated excellent aptitude for mathematics, and are excited to participate in a middle school preparatory class.

GATE students in the 6th grade are also reading *The Golden Goblet* and making a quadrarama, which highlights the story elements, symbolism, and theme. In addition, GATE students are studying ancient India, which incorporates the primary source for the teachings of Buddha.



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MAY, 2009

Community Advisory Committee for Gifted and Talented Education  
I.U.S.D., 5050 Barranca Parkway, Irvine, CA 92604, (949) 936-5120

## CALENDAR FOR 2008-2009

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|-----------------|--|
| May 28          | <b><i>Community Advisory Committee (CAC-GATE) Meeting</i></b><br>Administration Center, 5050 Barranca, Irvine, 6:30 p.m.<br><b>Guest Speaker – Dr. Sandra Kaplan</b> |
| June 6          | <b><i>SAT and subject tests – register by May 5, 2009</i></b>  |
| June 22, 24, 26 | Professional Development Program – Teaching<br>High-Ability Learners   |
| June 29–July 24 | Summer School – Grades K-8   |

*All Dates Are Not Confirmed and Subject to Change*