

The Community Advisory Committee for Gifted and Talented Education

On January 26th, at 7:00 p.m., the IUSD Board will be holding an important public forum to discuss budget reductions at the IUSD Administration Center. Categorical Programs, including GATE, will be open for discussion at this meeting. If you are available, please plan on attending to provide input, show support for maintaining our GATE programs, and stay informed of important decisions. The regularly scheduled CAC-GATE meeting has been cancelled in order to allow the GATE parent community time to attend the January 26th Public Forum meeting. Your presence is important! Together, we can make a difference!

Sincerely,
Beth Andrews

COORDINATOR'S MESSAGE

It's a topsy-turvy time for gifted education in the state of California. As the economy has suffered, districts have shifted money away from gifted programs to help balance their budgets. With the State's approval, some districts have had to eliminate their GATE programs altogether, and, as you can imagine, this has caused a significant gap for gifted learners.

Irvine Unified has done everything in its power to maintain our excellent GATE programs; however, with additional budget cuts, we must now make some difficult decisions to further reduce spending, and one of those decisions may include our gifted programs. Funding once earmarked for categorical programs, known as "Tier 3" programs, can now be spent without restrictions. Gifted education is a categorical, Tier 3 program.


On January 26th, the scheduled CAC-GATE meeting will be postponed until February. The IUSD Board will hold an important public forum on January 26th to discuss budget reductions. If you are available, please plan on attending the meeting to provide input and stay informed of important decisions.

While we're hoping for the best, we're preparing for the worst. Two questions seem to be the recurring focus: *How will IUSD run a quality GATE program with limited or no funds?* and, *What is most important for our gifted learners?*

In order to address those questions, 25 district staff members have volunteered to serve on a GATE Planning Committee. The committee, consisting of administrators, curriculum coordinators, and teachers, met in November for our first meeting. The initial step was to draft an IUSD GATE Program mission statement to help our direction, "We believe that gifted education should be a qualitatively differentiated program provided as an integral part of the school day for every gifted child."

The GATE Planning Committee will continue to meet throughout the year to develop a plan for how we can provide a GATE program with limited funds. More information will be available in February.

Our last CAC-GATE meeting was attended by over 200 parents and educators! I believe that was a record for IUSD's CAC-GATE. Your presence delivered a clear message that you care about the GATE programs here in Irvine. Please continue to actively support gifted education by taking the time to attend the January 26th meeting and staying informed about the changes that lie before us. Together, we can make a difference!

Sincerely,

Beth L. Andrews

Advisor: Beth Andrews, IUSD GATE Coordinator.
The GATER is published quarterly by the Community Advisory Committee for Gifted and Talented Education (CAC-GATE).
Important information can be found at http://iUSD.org/parent_resources/gate/gate.htm.
If you have any questions, comments, suggestions or articles, please call GATE office at (949) 936-5120.

CAC-GATE Chairpersons' Message

By Terry Freedlander

With 2010 here, the GATE Community Advisory Committee looks to continue to support our parent community with timely information and relevant meetings and speakers in the area of gifted education. With the difficult budget situation that the State of California faces, we must be advocates for our children at the local, state, and national level.

There are many opportunities to be present in this discussion in person and in email or written form. Please do take advantage of those opportunities. IUSD has provided a rich heritage of programs for the GATE student population. We as parents need to continue to advocate for continuation of those programs. We also need to be creative in our advocacy and help to minimize costs where we can. To be part of the solution we need to understand the state budget situation. Please do get involved and get in touch with your local representatives, your Congressman, your Senators, and contact the Governor's office as well. We need all your support to help our representatives to understand how important the GATE program is.

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Deerfield School APAAS Program



By Kathy Larson, Linda Heath, and Cheryl Yoon

Deerfield APAAS Team

The APAAS Students at Deerfield are off to a flying start this 2009-2010 school year! Deerfield fourth grade APAAS students have adjusted well to a more rigorous academic program. They have learned to schedule their time and organize their lives to meet deadlines. Deerfield fourth grade APAAS students have been learning to write a multi-paragraph essay, as well as write narratives, responses to literature, expository essays, poems, and informational reports. These students have learned to cite sources and to use a variety of materials as an aid to their writing. Each student has already researched and reported on a California Native American tribe and on a California mission.

We will begin an exciting unit on the California Gold Rush, which will culminate with Gold Rush Day, scheduled for March 2010. Through the use of simulations, arts and crafts, writing activities, and multiple resources, California history comes alive for each student.

Deerfield's fourth grade APAAS students are learning about the genres of realistic fiction, mystery, poetry, fantasy, folklore, fables, historical fiction, and biographies. Each student will be studying books and stories in these genres with depth and complexity. As they read, they are looking for common themes and literary devices throughout the literature. Students are working on writing their own book, complete with illustrations. These books will be bound and ready in May.

Every Deerfield fourth grade APAAS student has extensive exposure to computer use which includes Internet research, cyberhunts and simulations, Power Point, Excel, Publisher, and Geo Buddies (via email) with

Eastshore's fourth grade APAAS class. The students are very excited about our class blog! Student poems, creative writing, and essays are continuously posted to the class blog. Fourth grade APAAS students are invited to read each piece of work and then post their comments. Our class also has their own wiki on the Internet. From home, individual students are able contribute their work to the wiki as part of a group assignment. They are then able to edit and improve their group's work to create a final product.

Every fourth and fifth grade APAAS student has created his/her own invention, with each fifth grader giving a "sales pitch" speech to the class to convince classmates of their need for this astounding product. Twelve of these inventions were selected to compete in the Astounding Inventions of the Future Program, held at Irvine Valley College January 30, 2010.

The Deerfield fifth grade APAAS class has completed the first trimester and is already working hard in the second trimester. They are fully adjusted to our schedule and new methods of classroom organization, and have become involved in the various activities that are helping them grow as individuals.

Language arts is a multifaceted program in the Deerfield APAAS class. Every week there are writing centers where students enhance their skills, study and write in various writing styles, and practice editing skills. First trimester, although all styles were addressed, we concentrated on narrative forms of writing. During the second period we are honing our argument skills by writing and speaking persuasively. Everyone seems interested in identifying and developing issues while writing convincingly about their point of view. The third trimester will find students combining reading with writing and developing skills needed to write responses for our current literature selection. Students have been working in reading comprehension to develop the ability to read and understand author's intent. They then set about learning to correctly write about their understanding. Reading will involve students in whole class novels and literature circles. The novels they read help them explore human nature, moral dilemmas, American history and the issues, conflicts, and personal struggles of earlier times. Vocabulary and grammar are also areas of concentration throughout the school year.

The fifth grade framework in social studies has students studying America from Native American habitation through the westward movement. Deerfield's fifth grade APAAS class studied the tribes of North America through a group interactive exploration report. They investigated tribes within regions and reported on their habitats, beliefs, government structure, arts, and crafts. Each group completed projects that would help their fellow classmates understand and appreciate America's native citizens. Their next study is of the explorers involved in opening North America to the rest of the world. Included in this project are computer generated timelines and maps, as well as a narrative writing about a single moment in the life of an explorer. Next they will be studying, investigating and reporting on colonists. All fifth graders will go through Colonial Day where they visit six simulations that give them an understanding of the type of activities children would have been involved in during colonial times. After creating a brochure about individual colonies and simulating products of the period they will present their findings to their classmates through an oral presentation. Study of the American Revolution will include sharing their knowledge through the writing of a Revolutionary newspaper which includes editorials, political cartoons, and news articles. Their final project will involve drama as they perform mini plays about the different historical events studied throughout the year.

Other events during the year will include a visit to a planetarium, "A Walk Through the American Revolution," an American history simulation, square dancing, and attendance at various musical performances.

Deerfield's fourth, fifth, and sixth grade APAAS classes have been challenging themselves to become better mathematical thinkers. In addition to acceleration of content, students are learning in-depth mathematical thinking through investigations, as well as becoming better problem-solvers using Math Olympiad contest problems, AMC8 practice problems, and Singapore math problem-solving techniques. The sixth grade math students kicked off the year by answering the question: "When will we ever use this?" They interviewed professionals, ranging from businesspeople to engineers, who used math in their job and then presented the information to their classmates. The sixth grade APAAS math class participated in the American Mathematics Contest 8 (AMC8) in November, and Deerfield received recognition on the School Merit Roll for receiving a team score in the top 2% -5% of all participating schools. Problem-solving is reinforced by participation in the Mathematical Olympiads for Elementary and Middle Schools which is given five times throughout the year. In the spring, the sixth grade students will participate in The Stock Market Game. Math, as well as

consideration of trends and risk, come into play as the sixth grade students make cooperative decisions about which companies' stock to purchase. Students will learn about business structures, diversification and other financial concepts as their "investment committees" create and manage stock portfolios.

In language arts, the students are involved in novel studies incorporating higher-level thinking skills. The students' analysis of the concepts of friendship in *The View From Saturday* were informed by the ideas of Aristotle, and the students extended their thinking by comparing and contrasting these ideas with their individual friendship novel. The class is currently discussing how the two characters in *The Red Pony* and *Young Fu of the Upper Yangtze*, who come from two very different times and settings, mature into young adults. The students are "thinking like disciplinarians" and analyzing the text from the varying perspectives of historians, sociologists, philosophers, and psychologists using the elements of depth and complexity. Through these novel studies, students are learning to think critically about text, while gaining an understanding of how symbolism, allusions, motifs, flashbacks, and other literary techniques are used to convey the author's message. Students also will work on a poetry unit that will integrate the reading and writing of poetry. In poetry theatre performance groups, students will interpret and present poems of various forms and historical periods that relate to a central theme. Group debates are the focus for our unit on persuasion and propaganda. As students research their debate topic, they will be learning to evaluate sources for reliability, critically examine evidence, and prepare persuasive arguments and effective counter-arguments.

In the writing domain, the class has been working on various writing projects and with the six traits of writing. Students participated in the Letters about Literature essay contest and are enhancing their own writing skills through writer's workshop. With the objective of developing into students who "read as writers and write as readers," the students are gathering examples of, and studying, great writing. As an example, students examined the literary and rhetorical devices used in Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.'s "I Have a Dream" speech and incorporated similar literary devices in their own writing. By examining great writing, students are learning to become better writers themselves.

This year promises to provide Deerfield APAAS students with curriculum that not only guides students in mastering information, ideas and fundamental skills, but one that will also help them tackle complex issues and problems.

Eastshore is Writing

By Patricia Goheen



Have you heard the clicking of keyboards coming from Eastshore lately? If you have, it is because our students have been deeply engaged in the process of writing. From persuasive essays to narratives to responding to literature our GATE and APAAS students have made the adage, *writing is thinking*, come to life.

Beginning with the foundation of fictional and nonfictional summary writing, our fourth grade students moved into developing analytical/expository reports about California native tribes and missions. Not only did they focus on organizing information, but they also took a close look at creating fluent work that includes transitions within and between paragraphs. Accessing the artist within each of them, these talented writers created original legends told from the perspective of the native tribes they imagined for another science-related project. Through the use of similes and metaphors vivid images came to life.

Working just as diligently, our fifth grade writers have been thinking deeply, while responding to literature. Using class novels and Junior Great Book selections as a springboard, they have practiced employing carefully chosen evidence from the text to support their ideas. Content, organization and conventions are becoming much more polished, but they are still conquering the greater challenge of establishing voice. Personal narratives, the next frontier, will provide an ideal situation through which voice can emerge.

"Reading with pen in hand," has been the motto in sixth grade. Regular, interactive note taking while reading has allowed our students a depth of understanding that has led them to thoughtfully respond to literature. Why, they have even summarized sections of novels from the perspective of nonliving elements! Creating an essay relating the theme of Kipling's "If," to a class novel was the true test of thought and they passed with flying colors. Ready to take a stand, our sixth grade writers also sent persuasive letters to government officials, calling for action about various issues, and the responses are still rolling in.

Keep listening. Eastshore's keyboards haven't cooled off yet.....

GATE at Greentree

By Peggy Walsh



As we complete the first trimester of the 2009-2010 school year at Greentree Elementary, Greentree GATE students are being engaged and challenged with enrichment activities and curriculum. GATE students are clustered in the 4th, 5th, and 6th grades classes. Within these classes, GATE students are given challenging and fun in-depth assignments and projects.

Leadership is an important skill that is emphasized in our Greentree GATE program. Students have opportunities within the classroom, in GATE clusters and across grade levels to develop leadership and teamwork skills.

Greentree students participate in the GIDM (Greentree's Instructional Delivery Model) reading program. The 4th grade GIDM program has GATE 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.

4th grade GATE students have recently completed in-depth and complexity assignments after reading stories in their student anthology. Students were asked to create a "Web of Information" on their research of Japan. In addition, GATE students researched the life of Louis Braille, and wrote a one-page biography on this very important inventor, identifying the important contributions this man made to society by inventing the Braille system of tactile reading and writing.

In math, 4th grade GATE students are working on challenge math packets and assignments that incorporate Singapore math concepts. Singapore math is a program that provides students with the ability to readily formulate, apply and solve problems. Key math concepts are introduced and built upon to reinforce various mathematical ideas and principles.

In the coming trimester, 4th grade GATE students will be busy producing an individual documentary about themselves called, "*All About Me*." The projects are being produced using Photo Story 3, resulting in a voice over narration. GATE students have recently begun learning how to use this new software.

In Social Studies, our 5th grade GATE students take part in a Historical American Leader Research and Presentation Project. Students are assigned a complex research question comparing fictional and non-fictional story accounts of their assigned Colonial leader. On presentation day students, dressed as their famous person, lead their group by dramatically reading their findings to an audience of students and parents.

In Language Arts, our 5th grade GATE students are working in peer groups to discuss and share thoughts and opinions about their anthology readings. Students choose from a variety of challenging follow-up assignments to show their grasp and understanding of the selections. They will soon be starting Literature Circle groups to read and discuss novels with their peers.

Technological competency is vital in today's world, and is incorporated throughout all subjects in upper grades. Differentiation for GATE students is built into the program through the use of power point presentations, which focus on topics including math, language arts, social studies, and science research.

Our 6th grade GATE students work together during the last 15-minutes of each math class on more challenging concepts for an enriched curriculum in mathematics. Problem solving strategies are stressed. In the second trimester, our 6th grade GATE students will be offered a pre-Algebra course one day each week to prepare them for next year's transition to middle school.



Lakeside Middle School Choices & Challenges

By Sarah Armstrong and Beth Zamke

Middle school is a time of transition. Both students and parents are transforming from the closeness of a single classroom in elementary school to the high stakes atmosphere of the high school. This raises the question, what does a regular day look like for a Lakeside student?

That answer varies from day to day and from student to student, but the heart of the answer remains the same. Every classroom is driven by the desire to instill creativity and curiosity in our students. On any given day, you may run into George and Martha Washington, Ulysses S. Grant or Louisa May Alcott as the 8th grade students explore historical figures

in American society. Next door, the 7th grade students may be experiencing the bonds of serfdom in feudal Europe or learning how to live by the Code of Chivalry. Sometimes, the students must act out these roles, at other times, they travel through time via literature and discussion. All of our Language Arts and Social Studies classrooms have a cluster of 6 to 8 GATE students and all teachers create lessons that display depth and complexity to expand the learning experience for the high achiever. The depth and complexity allows the student and the teacher to focus on quality of thought and responses rather than on quantity. The GATE student is not burdened with additional worksheets, but is expected to complete assignments with quality.

Across campus, students are actively engaged in creating the skeletal system or creating and recording chemical reactions in order to predict what would happen when similar chemicals are mixed. With the advancement of technology, any dangerous experiments can be simulated, of course! The predictions and patterns explored in science lead to the rich curricula in mathematics that moves the middle school GATE and high achieving student from the rules of arithmetic to the structure of Algebra. The focus on structure, patterns, predictions and vocabulary development come from the training on depth and complexity for the GATE and high achieving student. As with the Language Arts and Social Studies programs, the teachers do not assign extra work to the GATE student, but instead expect a deeper level of understanding demonstrated by the student.

At Lakeside, our philosophy has always been to challenge all students, and at the same time, offer choices. GATE and high achieving students are actively engaged in the rich elective program offered at Lakeside. Students can choose from courses like Home Arts, Visual Arts, Video Production, Performing Arts, including drama and music, speech and debate, journalism or a foreign language.

Choices at Lakeside are not limited to the electives. We want our GATE students to have the opportunity to explore many rich and different activities without forcing them to participate in an activity that holds no interest. This is our "Choices and Challenges" program.

Below are some of the programs that Lakeside has participated in recently. We continue to look for new and exciting ways to challenge and excite the minds of our bright young learners.

National History Day: 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 winners for the best art and writing in Southern California.

AMC 8: Students recently competed in this competition. We had several students earn commendations.

Academic Pentathlon: Each year we field a team of 7th graders and a team of 8th graders for this challenging and fun endeavor. Lakeside has a rich history of placing near the top on a consistent basis.

Partnerships with UCI such as Career Day and Engineering Week.

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. The discussion circles are entirely led by student leaders.

Math Club: Founded in 2009, Math Club meets every week to explore rich problems in mathematics that span beyond the standards based curriculum offered in class.

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. Students learn how to think like scientists and carryout the scientific inquiry process.

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 afternoon homework help sessions.

Honors Music Festival: Our musicians earned the distinction of Unanimous Superior.

Rancho San Joaquin Middle School Adventures in Learning

SPOTLIGHT ON RANCHO'S HUMANITIES 8TH GATE

Rancho's energetic and dedicated GATE team have developed, and continue to develop, a curriculum that is both challenging and rewarding in order to prepare our students for their high school careers. Our curriculum concentrates on a thorough exploration and integration of the California Language Arts and History/Social Science content standards. Also emphasized are higher-level writing abilities, enriched vocabulary skills, critical thinking, and developing presentation techniques.

Using the vehicle of United States history, our students explore not only what happened, but why. Rebellions, revolution, development of governmental systems, citizenship, exploration, industrialization, immigration, interaction with other cultures – all are vital facets of the developing nation. 8th grade students also participate in the National History Day research and media project, continuing in a second year, the important skills of researching, writing and demonstrating understanding of history and making connections.

Through literature and both written and oral communication, students enhance their ability to think creatively and responsibly and then to relate their conclusions and idea to others via writing and presentations. Novels to be read this year include: *Rise to Rebellion*, *Animal Farm*, *The Killer Angels*, and *Anne Frank: Diary of a Young Girl*.

All instruction is student focused to encourage a love of learning as well as excellent work and study habits. To be a part of the development of our next generation of thinkers, dreamers, and leaders is both a privilege and an honor.

-Shannon Van Dam, Dee McKay and Christine Alfonso



RANCHO'S HUMANITIES 7TH GATE HIGHLIGHTS

What could be more adventurous than battling the elements to cross a desert, trying to survive the plague and creating your own Utopia on an imaginary island off of New Zealand based on the teachings of Sir Thomas More, 7th grade GATE classes at Rancho have the rare opportunity to travel back in time to the 500's, moving towards the late 1700's. Reading historical novels such, as *Shadow Spinner*, *Anna of Byzantium* and *Jackaroo* just to name three, complement this year of study, and help to engage students with the literature and history through a variety of art activities and simulations: the Black Death or Plague; the always stimulating Warlords of Japan; forming of Guilds of the Middle Ages; Medieval journalists practicing interviewing, editorializing and producing a newspaper; and the "Meeting of the (Great Medieval/ Renaissance) Minds." The round table medieval banquet allows students to dress in costume for the famous personage about whom they researched and share the information over a feast of foods from around the world. The Black Death simulations allowed students to physically see through a secret plague victim how the epidemic could be spread throughout the community.

Students also participate in an intense, long term, research project called National History Day in which Rancho students' research then produce media projects demonstrating their understanding of the yearly theme. Each year Rancho students excel at the county level and many go on to represent the school at state. Writing is an important focus for the 7th grade, helping students to transition to higher and more difficult levels of writing, research and essays. There are three 7th grade benchmarks essays that all 7th graders are required to complete, edit, and revise just to name a few of the many writing opportunities.

Last year, Rancho's 7th and 8th grade Gold WordMaster teams won high honors in the nationwide analogy program. Five teams and individuals represented Rancho in Sacramento at the National History State Competition.

All activities and classroom instruction are geared towards exciting the students about the curriculum, re-enforcing good work habits, outlining, study strategies, time management, and organization, while expanding essay writing and research skills.

- Kay Gee, David Kingsbury and Kate Leavey

6th Grade APAAS at Santiago Hills

By Beth Andrews



A FOCUS ON NOVEL STUDIES

The 6th grade students in Mrs. Manchester's and Mrs. Andrews' class have been taking their reading to new levels through *Independent Novel Studies*.

The beginning of the year provided the first layer for students to analyze and interpret literature through a more intellectual approach by understanding what questions need to be asked. "*The answers you get from literature depend on the questions you pose.*" Margaret Atwood.

Students designed questions from five different categories requiring thought-provoking responses. Each of the five categories served a purpose for helping the reader to connect on a more personal level that would take him/her deeper with the big ideas.

What does Mr. Frisby mean when he says, "All doors are hard to unlock until you have the key?" Explain your answer with detailed reasoning and give specific examples to support your ideas. (Jamie L., Category 4, Understanding the Ideas)

The next layer was developed through understanding how the elements of *depth* and *complexity* added a scholarly perspective to the study. Through comprehending the elements (*Big Ideas, Language of the Discipline, Details, Rules, Patterns, Trends, Ethics, Unanswered Questions, Relate Over Time, Multiple Perspectives, and Across the Disciplines*), students were able to begin their first Independent Novel Study.

Each student selected a novel matching his/her interests and reading abilities for further study. The novels spanned every literary genre and reflected a range of diverse topics. The daily literature time began with students asking questions. Some questions were about clarification of specific ideas, while others were directed to further understand how the concepts related to individual novels. The students met in small groups to allow for more in-depth discussions sharing how particular elements tied into their novel. This group-time provided students opportunities to collaborate and develop a deeper interaction that was thoughtful and meaningful.

The final product was an in-depth novel study that focused on literary elements and questions that went beyond comprehending the story and more toward understanding how they connected in some way to the bigger ideas of the story.

The next Novel Study encompassed all the ideas learned so far, along with two additional layers, **Content Imperatives** and **Thinking Like a Disciplinarian** or TLAD.

Much like **depth and complexity**, **Content Imperatives** are thinking tools designed to dig deeper into content. Content Imperatives supply students with the needle and thread to sew all the components of the literary experience together. There are five Content

Imperatives: Origin, Convergence, Contribution, Parallel, and Paradox. Students integrated these engagement-enhancing thinking tools through responding to questions that focused on

- the **origins** of the conflict
- the factors that **converged** to solve the problem
- the events that **contributed** to the change in a major character's perspectives
- the **parallels** that occurred between the protagonist's and the antagonist's story
- and the **paradoxes** demonstrated in a character's actions and thoughts

With the thinking tools (Literary Elements, Depth & Complexity, and Content Imperatives) stored in each student's "treasure chest of knowledge," they were now ready to embark on the most exciting part of reading to learn: TLAD (**Thinking Like a Disciplinarian**).

Students researched a variety of disciplines (such as sociologist, psychologist, historian, philosopher, etc.) and focused on how an *ologist* would observe, infer, analyze, and evaluate information to help with the overall understanding of certain elements that create conflict, change, relationships of big ideas.

As a disciplinarian, each student selected a novel, matched according to readiness and interest, and extended his/her understanding through applying the skills and ideas similar to those of a professional in that discipline.

The goal of TLAD is to allow students to engage in the work of

professionals through becoming a practitioner of a discipline and actually work and think in the discipline much as an expert would.

Throughout the process of independent novel studies, students learn how to think about big ideas that are intellectually stimulating through multiple perspectives. The cool part is that, since they were able to decide which novel to read, each student enjoys the book he/she is reading. Enjoyable activities "are not natural; they demand an effort that initially one is reluctant to make. But once the interaction starts to provide feedback to the person's skills, it usually begins to be intrinsically rewarding" — Csikszentmihalyi, 1990

If reading is about mind JOURNEYS, teaching reading is about outfitting the travelers, modeling how to use the map, demonstrating how to use the key and legend until, ultimately, it's the child and the map together and they are off on their own. Mind Journeys, Mosaic of Thought, Susan Zimmermann and Ellin Oliver Keene

A Glimpse of GATE at Venado

By Abraham Angel

Because we are dedicated to providing an educational experience rich in both quality curriculum and enriching opportunities, the GATE staff at Venado works diligently to develop curricula that meet the special needs of our bright, gifted students. Recognizing the importance of the California state standards, we have designed standards-based language arts and social science classes to offer the acceleration, depth, complexity and novelty so necessary for a practical and dynamic GATE program. The mission of Venado's GATE program is to have our students experience positive, accelerated academic growth in a nurturing environment and to facilitate an easy transition from the middle school gifted program into the high school honors classes. Venado's GATE program consists of homogeneously grouped students who participate in an integrated, two-year program taught by teachers who display passion for their subject areas as well as a genuine interest in providing new and enriching experiences for their students.

In the 7th grade, Abraham Angel, language arts, and Trish Wimbrow-Dwyer, social studies, lead the students in an exciting year focused on world history and literature. Mr. Angel begins the year with studies of the classical literature of the Greeks and Romans, interwoven with a creative writing project, Fall Frolics, in order to teach figurative language and literary elements. From there the students read Lois Lowry's *The Giver* and examine the difference between utopia and dystopia. This is a favorite for the students as they get the opportunity to really explore and analyze their first novel and craft an insightful character analysis. Following winter break, the scene changes to merry old England and the medieval world of ballads and tales of King Arthur. Students illustrate a family coat of arms like those of the gallant knights and elucidate their drawings in an expository essay. An in-depth study of Orwell's classic *Animal Farm* allows students to continue exploring the ideas of utopia and dystopia, while focusing on the foundations of setting up an effective government. The year ends with yet another rich culture as Haugaard's *The Samurai's Tale* is read and analyzed through essay writing and an illustrated timeline. Equally important are the in-depth grammar discussions and review as well as the detailed process of effective essay and narrative writing. When it comes to Mrs. Wimbrow-Dwyer, the students are willing and eager to take part in her class each and every day. Her enthusiasm and energy permeate the classroom as she excites her students by cleverly incorporating a variety of enrichment activities with the state standards to promote interest and to provide maximum learning opportunities. Students participate in a "bead" economy, which integrates the life skills of earning salaries and paying rent, utilities, and taxes into classroom management. Cultural universals are woven into curriculum through the studies of the Middle East, Africa, the Far East, and Europe to connect the commonalities. During their journeys through the various sections of the world, students engage in role-playing, mind mapping, simulations, research, group presentations, and art to accelerate further learning and to provide that needed novelty and complexity. Together, Mr. Angel and Mrs. Wimbrow-Dwyer complement each other's personality and passion to provide a well-balanced and enriched experience for all their students.

The classrooms of Julie Campbell, 8th grade language arts, and Roger Walden, 8th grade social science, are also places where learning and enthusiasm can be observed on a regular basis. Language arts centers on an analysis and appreciation of American literature from its early beginnings through the late 19th Century. The year begins with writers of the Colonial Period and study of the English language. Each time period in American history is linked to literary units incorporating



JANUARY, 2010

OLSAT testing dates coming up are:

February 17 at Alderwood (2:00-3:00 p.m., and 3:30-4:30 p.m.)
February 24 at Canyon View (2:00-3:00 p.m., and 3:30-4:30 p.m.)

You can send in your application to the GATE office,
or check regarding availability at (949) 936-5120.

(Applications can be downloaded from the IUSD web site,
under "Parent Resources-Gifted and Talented Education")

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

A Glimpse of GATE

(Continued from previous page)

works by famous American authors and statesmen with the various genre of writing. Students explore, analyze, and discuss the popular works of Franklin, Paine, Irving, Emerson, Thoreau, Lincoln, Twain, and O. Henry. In addition, students are exposed to the timeless poetic skills of Poe, Longfellow, Whitman, and Dickenson and read a variety of classic American novels leading to research projects and response to literature. Of course, heavy doses of grammar and vocabulary development are essential to round out our GATE language arts program. In social science, Mr. Walden begins his year with a review of the American Revolution and a deeper understanding of how it set things in motion for the newly developed United States. An in-depth study of our constitution provides students with a rich understanding of our early government and how this document is still successfully functioning today. Moving on to the Industrial Revolution, students research and develop a plan to build their own factories, learning valuable information about how to obtain and use labor and other necessary resources, as well as calculate costs. Later, as the Civil War study begins, students take part in the trial of John Brown and enlist in the Confederate or Union army in a simulated war activity. A variety of primary source documents are used, and as students reenact the Civil War struggle, this energy-packed unit of study brings history to life. Finally, the year ends with the VOTES simulation, especially significant this year. Mr. Walden places students into four political parties and sets up a truly thrilling simulation that allows students to become familiar with the election process as they debate the issues, write position papers, perform rallies, and encourage the whole student body to take part in the election process.

In addition to the rigorous curriculum and enriching opportunities, the GATE teachers at Venado complete the daily experience with compassion, humor, and support. We are so proud of our students who daily demonstrate a genuine interest for learning and give us so many reasons to smile and laugh each day. We consider ourselves fortunate to be able to teach such outstanding students.

CALENDAR FOR 2009-2010

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| January 23 | <i>SAT and subject tests</i> - register by December 15, 2009 |
| January 30 | <i>Astounding Inventions of the Future</i> - Irvine Valley College (Grades K-8) |
| February 2 | <i>APAAS Parent Orientation</i> - Oak Creek Elementary 6:00-7:00 p.m. |
| March 3 | <i>District Science Fair</i> - Northwood High School (Grades 6-12) |
| March 5-7 | <i>CAG (California Association for Gifted) Annual Conference</i> - Sacramento |
| May 1 | <i>SAT and subject tests</i> - register by March 25, 2010 |
| April 27 | <i>Honors Vocal and Instrumental Concert</i> - Renee and Henry Segerstrom Concert Hall; 7:00 p.m. |
| May 25 | <i>Community Advisory Committee (CAC-GATE) Meeting</i> - Administration Center, 5050 Barranca, Irvine, 6:30 p.m. - Guest Speaker: TBA |
| June 5 | <i>SAT and subject tests</i> - register by April 29, 2010 |
| June 28- July 23 | <i>Summer School</i> - Grades K-8 |

** All dates are not confirmed and are subject to change **