

November 2007

Upcoming Events

- Friday, Nov. 2nd & Friday, Nov. 30th
9:30 a.m. Coffee at Panera:
Stop in and join us for coffee!
- Wednesday, Nov. 14th - 7:00 p.m.
"Winter Enrichment Programs
from The Center for Talent
Development" RMS, LRC
- December date TBA - 7:00 p.m.
Game Night for the kids, Parent
Discussion and Holiday Toys
Presentations, H.C. Storm

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Visit us on the web! www.bataviacando.org

Meet the Administrators CANDO October Program

Thanks to everyone who came out on a chilly, rainy night to engage in discussion about our Challenge program in Batavia. Dr. Jack Barshinger (Superintendent), Dr. Jan Wright (Assoc. Superintendent for Teaching and Learning), Alan McCloud (Asst. Superintendent for Elementary Education) and Elizabeth Selander (District Challenge Coordinator) joined a group of parents and Board of Education members to answer their questions and give an update on the progress of the Challenge evaluation committee.

Dr. Wright began the evening with a brief presentation of the results of the parent surveys filled out so diligently last spring. (See the related article: "Evaluation Committee Update").

We then moved on to the panelist question/answer session. Kate Chamirzadi presented the questions that were submitted by parents over the past few weeks. The panel was able to address at least 15 of the questions about such topics as clustering, high ability primary students, AP classes at the high school, how the Challenge program differs between schools, the ideal Challenge curriculum and discussion of the interdisciplinary program. Members of the panel agreed to address many of the remaining questions in upcoming editions of our CANDO newsletter so please look for the answers to questions that we simply did not have time to ask in future newsletters.

Highlights from the evening include:

- Dr. Barshinger and Dr. Wright affirmed the goal of a Challenge

program to help meet the needs of students whose needs are not being met in the regular classroom. They encourage clustering, but many times there are obstacles to obtaining the perfect balance within any given classroom.

- Liz Selander and Dr. Wright explained how the present Challenge math program is designed to not only accelerate math by one year, but to broaden the math curriculum as well.
- The classroom teachers have many resources available to them to broaden the reading and math curriculums for high ability students in their classrooms. A couple elementary schools have been experimenting with flexible grouping of all their students for math and reading.
- Dr. Wright is exploring the possibilities of a collaboration between a local college and the high school to offer dual credit classes. These classes would be offered at Batavia High School, and grant students joint credit at the college.
- Parents who have any questions or concerns about their student's education are always encouraged to speak to their Challenge teacher and their principal first. If parents are still finding their questions unanswered they are welcome to contact Liz Selander and Dr. Jan Wright.

The meeting confirmed that the district is committed to meeting the educational needs of all children within the district.

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Meet the Administrators Summary

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While the evening answered many questions about gifted education, parents are encouraged to continue this open dialogue in the future. All attendees, including administrators, parents and school board members are looking forward to the recommendation of an enhanced gifted education program at a school board meeting in early 2008.
- Maureen Mrenna

Summary of "Teaching Self-Discipline to the Gifted Child" Program

The parent organization GECO, Gifted Education Cooperative, of Hinsdale, Clarendon Hills, Burr Ridge and Oak Brook (District 181), hosted an evening program with Andy Mahoney, a Licensed Professional Counselor and Marriage Family Therapist at Hinsdale Middle School in October. GECO is a parent affiliate of IAGC. The program was much like the recent CANDO program in that questions were submitted ahead of time, but questions were also taken during the discussion.

Mahoney focused on the importance of the gifted child understanding who they are. As parents spoke, it became clear that the characteristics of gifted individuals often frustrate us as parents, but Mahoney pointed out that these characteristics are often just as frustrating, or more so, to the child who may not understand why they exhibit the behavior(s) or feel the way that they do. Mahoney recommends that parents sit down and talk with their child(ren) about what it means to be gifted. This can help our children understand why they feel the way they do, or react the way they do or work the way they do. This is a huge step in helping them to fulfill themselves. There are many books on

this subject, geared toward parents and children. Search your local library or contact us for more information.

Mahoney went on to explain that self-discipline and motivation come from a sense of purpose, and everyone has their *own* sense of purpose. If we want to motivate our children, we must tap into their interests. Discipline is about self-responsibility, self-monitoring and our children need our support as they navigate school and life with their own unique abilities and motivations.

My motivation to attend this program came from my experiences with one of my children. Academics come easily to him, but he has very little motivation to complete schoolwork, participate in extracurriculars or, frankly do anything that doesn't seem interesting to him at that particular moment - coming into the kitchen for dinner, getting ready to go somewhere, or simply responding when spoken to. In addition, he exhibits a consistent lack of organization, an extreme inability to keep track of papers and folders, which I have viewed as a lack of caring or trying. These behaviors had become such a point of frustration and contention at home that I was desperate to hear what this presenter had to say on the subject. The magic words I learned are *executive functioning*. Turning in assignments; planning and carrying out a long term project; self initiating homework are all tasks related to our skill at executive functioning. Executive function is the part of the brain that works as the conductor or the central organizing force that allows an individual to be academically functional and organized in life. Tasks that involve planning, flexibility, organization, and self-monitoring are termed "executive" tasks.

I have often used the "absent-minded professor" stereo-type in reference to my son, thinking that the behavior would one day resolve itself, or perhaps not! My son's regular classroom teacher has shared with me that disorganization at this age is not uncommon (this patient-

teacher cleaned out my son's desk for him one week). Now, with the information that I received from Andy Mahoney, I have come to understand that some children have organizational problems that may not be a result of age or motivation level. This "characteristic" may in fact be the result of a hard wired lack of skill at executive functioning. Mahoney's recommendation as a first step - help the child. If the child cannot keep track of assignments, help in as many ways that we can. This insight into my child has helped considerably as I process that my son is not just being lazy, that in fact, everything does not come easily to this child of mine, and this is an area in which I need to give him extra support. I am working to develop new strategies for when he forgets to bring home the book report guidelines day after day, or when I want him to pick up the socks left strewn throughout the house!

Throughout the evening several authors were recommended:

- Carol Dweck - writes about goals & process, the process is the motivation for the gifted child.
- Susan Baum - writes about underachievement, tapping into the child's passions with a mentor.
- Mel Levine - *The Myth Of Laziness*
- Dee Loveky - *Different Minds*

Andy Mahoney was an incredible source of information. The GECO program was offered as an end to a day that Mr. Mahoney led for District 181 social workers to discuss the social and emotional needs of gifted children. This professional guidance for social workers and classroom teachers provides a meaningful link when working with gifted students, and the personal guidance for parents would make a wonderful evening event in District 101. We hope to share the information obtained from the session to identify whether the District and CANDO can engage such a resource in the near future.

- Caroline Baty-Barr

Volunteer Opportunities

- Resource Fair: The 3rd Annual Resource Fair: *Beyond the Classroom*, sponsored by the Kane County Regional Office of Education, will be held at Rotolo Middle School in February, 2008. Last year the event was hosted by Geneva Middle School North. Fifty vendors were on hand with information about their programs.

Volunteers are needed to assist with placing signage to direct vendors and attendees the night of the event, registration the night of the event, assisting vendors as they set up, offering water bottles to vendors and more!

If you are interested in working with the planning committee, please contact Lauren Mastrud at lsmauder@sbcglobal.net.

- School Liason: Is your school liason listed on the front of this newsletter? If not, perhaps you would step up! A school liason is simply a parent who helps CANDO organize programs at their school, acting as a point person for parent's questions, communicating dates/events with Challenge teacher and PTO communication, requesting meeting space as appropriate, and monthly newsletter distribution. All work can be done on your own time.

CANDO Announces Website!

www.candobatavia.org

What is CANDO?
CANDO (Challenge Advocacy Network Development Organization)
Our mission is to:
1) become a voice at the district and state level;
2) identify and arrange additional enrichment opportunities and a safe social environment for our children; and
3) provide educational programs for parents.
All Challenge parents are automatically members of CANDO and there are not any membership dues.
Why are we CANDO?
Illinois funding was eliminated from the state budget for gifted education in 2003, therefore reducing the District's program, prompting a greater need for outside resources and enrichment through a voluntary channel coordinated by parents with participation from the District Challenge coordinator. This group

News & Events
Monthly Program
14 November, 2007
URGENT
30 October, 2007
3rd Annual Resource Fair
26 February, 2008
[More news & events >](#)

Search

A great big thank you to Caroline and Bob Baty-Barr for their time and dedication to creating, maintaining, and sponsoring the CANDO website: www.bataviacando.org

The site is up and running, and will continue to develop over time.

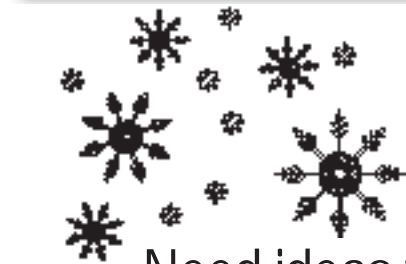
Please visit the site often for CANDO contact information, valuable enrichment resources, a list of book titles related to

gifted children, resources for gifted kids, and of course, our upcoming CANDO activities. Also note that our current and prior monthly CANDO newsletters are also posted to the site -- so if you're fearful that yours is not making it home through the backpack distribution channel each month, you can count on finding a copy on the first week of each month.

What is CANDO?

The mission of the Challenge Advocacy Network Development Organization (CANDO) is to:

- 1) *become a voice at the district and state level;*
- 2) *identify and arrange additional enrichment opportunities and a safe social environment for our children; and*
- 3) *provide educational programs for parents.*



Need ideas for meaningful holiday teacher gifts?

Make a donation to Batavia Foundation for Educational Excellence on behalf of your children's teachers. Indicate that you would like this money to be used for projects that directly impact the Challenge program. Your teacher, and CANDO, will be eternally grateful!

Evaluation Committee

Summary of October 4, 2007

The Challenge committee is a group of Batavia teachers, administrators and parents working to evaluate the district's current gifted education (Challenge) program. We are updating you monthly on the committee.

Recently, the Challenge committee met to review comments attached to many of the parent and teacher surveys turned in last spring. They also heard the results of interviews with a focus group of 40 high school students who went through the Challenge program in elementary school.

The committee looked for common themes in the comments both parents and teachers attached to their surveys. Themes common to both groups were requests for better communication, greater knowledge for exit/entrance procedures, teacher qualifications, and for more Challenge programming, particularly in the interdisciplinary areas.

In upcoming meetings the district committee will examine the gifted services offered at Batavia's "benchmark" districts. The committee will also look at achievement data comparing Batavia students enrolled in the Challenge program to other high-achieving Batavia students not enrolled in the program.

Dr. Jan Wright will present the committee's conclusions and recommendations to the Board of Education in early 2008. Parents are encouraged to attend that board meeting and we'll notify parents once the date is confirmed. Gwen Seeley-Joosse and Maureen Mrenna are the parent representatives on the Challenge Committee and welcome parents with questions or comments to contact them directly. - Maureen Mrenna

Resource Review

This month's resources are focused on gifts for our children and ways our children can give to others.

- Salvation Army Red Kettle Drive, Nov. 16 – Dec 24. Ring a bell for an hour.
 - www.satricity.org - Click on volunteer, click on the red kettle to see available shifts or call Tammy Gundlach 630-377-2769

- Lazarus House is a community home in St. Charles serving homeless or at risk individuals. Their mission is to provide hospitality, food, safe shelter and support services to persons connected to our community who are homeless or in need.
 - www.lazarushouseonline.com - Click on How You Can Help
At the end of the Needs List are other organizations that accept donations that they do not.
 - To join their Thanksgiving family style sit down supper, bring a dish to pass and enjoy fellowship with others. For more information call 630-587-2144.

- www.northernilfoodbank.org - For volunteer opportunities call 630-443-6910 or email hunger@northernilfoodbank.org

- www.hoagiesgifted.org - Click on Shopping Guide
Toys, software, books, music, movies featuring gifted characteristics & more.

- www.nagc.org - Scroll down and click on Parenting for High Potential's 2007 Holiday Toylist. Games and toys for ages 3 to adult.

- www.giftedkids.about.com
Left side of screen under Buyer's Guide, click on Toys for Gifted Children
At the end of the "Top 10" list are more top 10 lists (books, etc)

Please send any resource information to ismarder@sbcglobal.net or caroline@baty-barr.com



Did You Know? Illinois has a 529 College Tuition Program

Enrollment Dates:

October 29, 2007 - April 29, 2008 ■ www.collegeillinois.com

College Illinois! is a 529 Prepaid Tuition Program that allows parents and grandparents to pay for tuition today, which stops tuition inflation.

Prepaid tuition benefits can be used at any college or university across the country. Plus, there are some great tax incentives.

New participant enrollment dates are Oct. 29 - April 29, 2008.

Visit the website for more information.