Innovate! Issue 5: March/April 2019



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Innovate and Create!

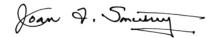
Welcome to the fifth issue of Innovate! Sponsored by the Center for Gifted, it offers four helpful articles by Janette Forman, Ellen Honeck and Robin Greene, Harry Roman, Kathryn Haydon, and Patti and Rick Shade—all outstanding contributors to the field of creativity. The authors' rich and varied history as parents, teachers, researchers, and innovators draws extensively from their daily work with gifted children and their families. We think you will find their ideas and suggestions a practical support for expanding your children's interests and talents.

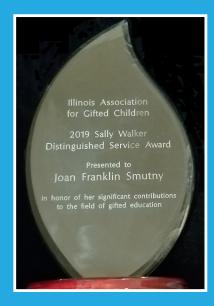
Taken together, the articles cover a range of family needs and interests and we hope you enjoy reading them. Harry Roman, an engineer and inventor, shares engaging ways parents can inspire entrepreneurial thinking in their children—turning their designs into real world solutions. Attorney Janette Forman describes how she gives her children opportunities to debate and "win" arguments in the home and how these experiences affect their creative and emotional lives. Researchers Ellen Honeck and Robin Greene present some

useful strategies for families and teachers to strengthen communication, build stronger relationships, and assist each other in addressing unique learning needs. Patti and Rick Shade, co-founders of the innovative Curiosita Teaching approach, explore the vital "curiosity-creativity link" in developing creative potential in both classroom and family life.

We treasure the privilege of continuing to offer *Innovate* as a platform for people to share ideas and practices that more effectively support the growth, joy, and well-being of gifted children and their families.

The Center for Gifted offers courses throughout the Chicago area in a variety of stimulating fields in the humanities, sciences, and arts. The creative outpouring of student compositions, explorations, and inventions each year is extraordinary and inspires teachers and families alike.

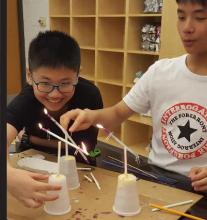




The first Sally Walker Distinguished Service Award of the Illinois Association for Gifted Children, was given to Joan Franklin Smutny on Thursday, January 31, at the Annual Meeting of IAGC. Joan has devoted her life to meeting the needs of the gifted of all ages and backgrounds and the award is a recognition of her outstanding service and contributions to the field. This includes her pioneer work in developing creative programming for thousands of gifted children and young people each year, her extensive writings (books and articles), editorship of the IAGC Journal, and publications she initiated through the Center for Gifted and Midwest Torrance Center for Creativity.







Joan Franklin Smutny

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Cover Image: Noor Abd.Al Hussain - Darkulaib, Bahrain 2018 International Torrance Award Winner

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Let Kids Win, So We All Win

by Janette M. Forman, J.D.

As parents and teachers, we can and should orchestrate more than just the curriculum and resources available for our children and students. We should also offer opportunities to win, even in areas that we don't normally consider. We naturally do this when children are small, such as in board games, just-right book difficulty, and large-piece puzzles. Yet, as kids grow older, we sometimes forget to offer opportunities for a "win." It is mutually beneficial for adults to engineer a win, if doing so encourages the development of something valuable for the child that the adult wants to promote, such as interest in a new subject, exploring an academic field, self-confidence to try something new, good habits, and other endeavors.

For instance, as an attorney, I can see through childish attempts at persuasion, spot flaws in logic, and can win arguments easily. The greater challenge is to promote critical thinking, logic, and persuasive speaking in my children and students. So, just like back in the days of teaching preschoolers to read, I celebrate and promote their small successes. I let them beat me sometimes. If they have risen to a level higher than they previously achieved, I consider it a "win" for them.

I might respond, "I see what you're doing, and I like it...so OK," to whatever the argument is. My own kids say things like, "Mom, remember when we took the garbage out last week without being asked? You want to promote that sort of thing, right? So please buy this book series that all four of us kids will read. Reading is educational, and it's hard to check out the book series in order since they are often checked out from the library. You should want to

buy us these books!"

Although this argument isn't completely compelling, I might agree because I want to reward them for thinking of what might be persuasive to their audience (me), rather than just saying "I want this!" Someday, they will exercise those same skills at their job to persuade a boss or colleague.

Sometimes a child's "win" requires a concession on the part of the adult. When playing with small children, adults tend to rig games so that the adult loses, or almost loses, so as not to discourage the child from playing (and thus losing out on future learning). As children grow older, games become more complex and harder to let the child win. The game may be a mental rather than physical game. Is it a mutual win if a child is bribed to do something beneficial for himself/herself that an adult wants to promote? My daughter was trying to persuade my son to try out for a school play, but it took the added inducement of a favorite food to get him to do it (and he enjoyed acting once he tried it). Of course, he would not have been persuaded by such a small treat if he were truly against trying out, but the little "win" gave him a nudge that promoted trying something new -- so I was happy to offer it. Similarly, my kids all know that if they request something (such as a cookie) in a foreign language, I am far more likely to grant the request than if they ask in English. It is a mutual win, since I like them practicing foreign languages and they like desserts!

In my mock trial, persuasive speaking, and debate classes, I tell students that they get points for creativity.

I'll respond, "Normally I'd say 'No,' but since you are thinking about

what is persuasive to your audience rather than yourself, I'll allow it."

I also let them discover mistakes of their own that I have "missed." Once a mock trial class understands the principles of courtroom argument, I don't jump in every time that a mistake is made. As the flow of argument rolls along, I let the students catch mistakes.

Someone will point out, "He can't ask the witness leading questions since this is direct, not cross-examination."

If they keep missing the same mistakes, then I step in and point it out, but usually it isn't necessary. Students learn more by catching the things that I "missed" than if I stepped in every time.

So look for opportunities where conceding a point, a win, an argument, or even a bribe might further the overarching goals that you want for your children and students. As adults, we probably can win all the time, but we shouldn't.

Janette M. Forman, J.D. is an attorney, mother, educator, and butterfly gardener.



Developing Authentic Family and School Relationships

by Ellen Honeck and Robin Greene

It is critical for teachers and families to build relationships, support open communication, and participate together in school activities to help identify and serve diverse gifted learners.

Parents possess a depth of knowledge and understanding about their children that few others do. Yet, parents can easily feel intimidated to talk with teachers about their children. Families come from all backgrounds, in and outside the education profession, service industries, business professions, as well as other industries.

Culturally Responsive Education and Teaching (CRT) practices highlight the mindsets needed for educators of students from a variety of backgrounds. While culturally responsive teaching is not a new phenomenon, it has become more urgent as teachers seek ways to acknowledge diverse learners and help them make relevant and meaningful connections with content and with the tasks they are asked to perform (Montgomery, 2001; Gay 2010).

Teachers of gifted children may not always recognize the importance of family and community within various cultural groups. Typically, western-dominated cultures emphasize individual accomplishments and contributions to societies. Students from traditionally underrepresented populations, however, often live in cultures centered more around family and community goals than individual needs or desires. This is seen in classrooms where students want to help each other rather than work alone, as knowledge of the group benefits each individual. Therefore, the difference between teachers' cultural values and those of families and children with whom they engage may create a cultural mismatch and cause unintended tension within and outside of the classroom. As classrooms grow more diverse, they need to more fully reflect the cultural values of the students in the school building.

In order to meet their children's learning needs, parents of gifted underrepresented communities can engage in practical discussions with teachers and other school personnel. In cases where families need practical support advocating for their children, they may need to reach out to bilingual interpreters, community members, and cultural organizations to assist. For parents, it is critical to gradually gain enough trust and confidence in communicating with schools to be able to approach difficult questions around race, ethnicity, as well as the barriers that may be the result of a cultural mismatch within a classroom. Without the family voice, educators cannot understand the lived experiences of students and their communities. Family voices need to help guide the creation of appropriate culturally responsive environment in which diverse gifted learners will thrive.

During a recent family discussion, host Dr. Joy Lawson Davis delivered a message of hope and inspiration to continue advocating for children. Throughout her positive message, the element that resonated the most was when the presentation slide displaying gifted education concepts and lingo was posted. Well over three quarters of the room took pictures of the terminology. This image had a significant impact and delivered a clear message: teachers can do more to provide families with the basic information they need to advocate for their children.

The power and clarity of this image and event will have lasting effects as educators listen (verbally and non-verbally) to what families share. Joint responsibility lies with both families and teachers to create open lines of communication. Students benefit most when adults jointly address difficult questions and the challenges children face by exploring personal perspectives, stories, and solutions. As families and children bring their knowledge and life

experiences to the table, teachers can develop more meaningful relationships. This, in turn can shift the mindset in schools to one that is more authentically engaged with parents, leading to longer term systematic change.

As schools become more responsive and create family events for their community, they may or may not always work well. Events need to be engaging and authentic and as schools work to plan these, they may wish to share the following tips for teachers and parents.

- Find community partners or allies who will work with you/your school and assist in community outreach/sharing of the event
- Ensure that the event and its purpose are in keeping with expressed interests and concerns
- Ask if the families will be engaged and involved. Why or why not?
- Ask who will be doing the majority of talking? The families should be in control of the conversation and dialogue
- If families/community members feel reluctant to express themselves, examine the sources of this reluctance (past experiences, lack of clarity about the purpose of the event, language problems, cultural values vis-à-vis teachers and schools)
- Determine if there are barriers to attending the event (food, transportation, childcare, time, etc.) and problem solve with community members
- Come with humility and remember that the educator is a participant in a conversation with families.

Creating a school environment where the families and communities of underrepresented populations feel at home is critical to the success of all our students. Events, activities, and discussions need to be relevant in order to find and benefit students from underrepresented populations. Families and schools can begin by listening to one another, finding opportunities for genuine partnerships, acknowledging any biases that exist, and creating authentic plans with the community for moving forward!

References

Gay, G. (2010). *Culturally responsive teaching: Theory, research, and practice.* (2nd ed.) New York: Teachers College Press.

Montgomery, W. (2001). Creating culturally responsive, inclusive classrooms. *Teaching Exceptional Children*, 33(4), 4-9.

Ellen Honeck is Dean of the Gifted and Talented Academy at Laurel Springs School and Director of Curriculum and Instruction at The Knox School of Santa Barbara in California.

Robin Greene is a gifted and talented specialist in Denver who coordinates the Advanced Kindergarten Program and has been a classroom teacher and GT Coordinator.



2019

Applications Available April 1, 2019
Submissions Accepted April 1 - June 30, 2019
www.centerforgifted.org/torrance.html

International Torrance Creativity Awards

Sponsored by:

National Association for Gifted Children (NAGC)
Creativity Network, NAGC
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Future Problem Solving Program International
Great Plains Center for Gifted Studies, Emporia State University
Center for Creative Learning
and

Midwest Torrance Center for Creativity/The Center for Gifted

Creative Writing | Visual Arts | Music Composition | Inventions







Empower Your Gifted Child to Innovate - a Sample Format for Parents to Promote Entrepreneurial Thinking

by Harry T. Roman

Empower your gifted children to go past STEM, to take the next step....to innovation.

Innovation is invention plus marketing, or in our context here, STEM plus marketing. In doing STEM, we often prize creative solutions; but success in the marketplace for any creative approach is its potential to actually be sold or implemented. This is the province of the entrepreneur, a multi-dimensional and multi-disciplinary thinker, planner, and master project manager with keen insights to examine and resolve a complex (and often interdependent) matrix of concerns.

Grasping the brass ring of success in the work-a-day world is being able to see how new ideas and products impact the entire panorama of civilization. Gifted children already tend to be broad thinkers, growing ever aware of the connections between subject matter and society; and hence would be receptive to this project manager --like thinking. Here is where your parental guidance can motivate your child to see the next step after STEM. Turn your gifted "STEM-meister" into a gifted entrepreneur, an innovator, someone who can change the world!

As an example, let's examine the popular electric vehicle field, identifying and assessing the realities of implementing an electric vehicle invention. The most important way to elicit project manager style thinking is to guide your gifted child through a logical thinking paradigm, in our sample case here, a matrix format that identifies topics needing to be evaluated to make electric vehicles marketable. I suggest the simplified main topical areas of concern listed below; however, you can make the matrix format as large as you deem necessary or as the problem being considered warrants----or allow it to be guided by the age of your gifted child:

- Economics
- Technological
- Environmental
- Safety
- Regulatory/Governmental

What are some of the implementation concerns within this simplified matrix that can be used to prompt your gifted children to think deeper as they consider innovation/implementation? Let's flesh out some representative (but not exhaustive) areas of concern.

Gifted Identification & Psycho-Educational Evaluation

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Economics

- How will electric vehicles compete economically compared to conventional vehicles?
- -Will tax incentives be needed to stimulate the purchase of electric vehicles?
- -How will tax incentive funds be generated?
- -How long will the vehicle batteries last before replacement?

Technological

- -Are there competitors to electric vehicles--like hydrogen powered cars, or improved combustion engine machines?
- -Materials for the batteries for an electric vehicle could be limited... where will those materials come from?
- -How fast can manufacturers make the electric vehicles?
- -How will the electric vehicles impact daily utility electricity demand when the batteries are charging?

Environmental

- -How much pollution will be avoided with electric vehicles?
- -Where will the electricity to charge the batteries come from?
- -How will electric vehicles and their batteries be recycled at the end of their useful service?
- -Does the manufacture of the batteries impose environmental concerns?

Jasmine Kim- Seoul, Republic of Korea 2018 International Torrance Award Winners

Safety

- -How can battery fires with electric vehicles be minimized?
- -How will car occupants be safe from injuries to battery packs?
- -What safety measures will be enacted to make it safe to re-charge electric vehicles in one's home?
- -Electric vehicles are heavier and may cause problems with collisions with smaller, lighter cars.... how to resolve this?

Regulatory / Governmental

- -Will insurance companies be willing to insure electric vehicles like they do today's cars?
- -Will there be special codes and manufacturing standards?
- -How have other countries handled electric vehicles in their traditional car populations?
- -Traditional gasoline cars pay fuel taxes to fund road repairs; how would electric vehicles contribute?

This investigative paradigm is all about promoting critical and integrated thinking, evaluating innovation through the eyes of the entire panorama of civilization. This simplified format above can be adapted with any kind of innovation being contemplated. Remember also, you can make this format as complicated as you feel necessary.

Encourage the research necessary to respond to identified concerns; and stress how important the use of math will be to quantify impacts and provide perspective. Integrating the curriculum is an essential part of this format—use all the subject matter. By all means, discuss this with your child's gifted and talented teacher(s) as well.

Harry T. Roman is engineer, educator, inventor, and author.

Grants? PTA funds?

Let us provide the programming! Bring the excellence, innovation, and creativity of Center courses to your school through in-school field trips, STEM festivals, holidays, and teacher in-service days.

For more information, contact Vickie Kiamco, Program Coordinator, at vkiamco@centerforgifted.org or call 847-902-0188.





Grace Lee - Lexington, MA 2018 International Torrance Award Winners



Ivana del Pielago - Savannah, GA 2018 International Torrance Award Winners



Claire Goodowens - Winter Park, FL 2018 International Torrance Award Winners

Screwdrivers to Magic Carpet Rides

by Patti Garrett Shade & Dr. Rick Shade

"Discovery (creativity) consists of looking at the same thing as everyone else and thinking something different." Albert Szent-Gyorgyi

Grandpa was in the garage working on building a dollhouse when eightyear-old granddaughter

Ella walked in and asked, "Can I help?"

"Sure," he replied. "Why don't you hand me a screwdriver?"

She paused for a moment, her eyes sparkled, and she asked, "Do you want the "plus or minus?"

Grandpa got a puzzled look on his face and then broke into a big grin and said, "Oh, I get it – please pass the "Plus" screwdriver!"

Ella said, "See, this one looks like the plus sign we use when we are doing addition in school and the other one reminds me of the minus sign we use for subtraction."

Grandpa's eyes sparkled and he said, "Wow, Ella that's really fun thinking - from now on that's what we'll call the Phillips and Flat head screwdrivers!"

Ella's association of the screwdrivers with the mathematical symbols of minus (-) and plus (+) represents an individual level of creative thinking. What's important to realize is that every time a child, anywhere around the globe, has the same "aha" moment with screwdrivers, they are demonstrating the same individual level of creatively. Perhaps you might wonder if this is a novel or unique way of thinking. You can test it out by asking a group of adults how many have made the plus and minus association with screwdrivers. Prepare to be surprised!

As children continue to make creative connections, their individual expressions of creativity may rub off on family members or classmates. Team or group levels of creativity may then possibly lead to innovations in organizations, countries, and even beyond the world. As you can see, there is an "exponential potential" in recognizing and finding value in creativity at all levels (Kaufman & Beghetto, 2009) formally identify four developmental levels of creativity:

Mini-c - Any time one attempts a new task, a level of creativity is involved. What one creates is not revolutionary, but new and meaningful to them. Example: Your first time sketching a picture. You feel pretty good about it – perhaps some degree of satisfaction.

Little-c - Improvements are made in skill and content that make the creation of more value to others. Example: You share your sketch with others who encourage you through feedback.

Pro-c- The ability to be creative at a professional level develops through many years of practice and training. Example: You take classes and enter works in juried shows. Eventually your works hang in galleries and you are recognized by art experts and critics as being creative.

Big-C - You and your body of work are now remembered in history books. Example: Your works hang in famous galleries and are regularly discussed by experts. Decades from now, you may be considered one of the greatest artists of all time.

Although well intentioned, viewing all interactions as "teachable moments" derails creative exploration. The moment Ella picked up the screwdriver, Grandpa could have said, "Now Ella, we call that a Phillips head screwdriver." The conversation, the thinking, and the creativity would have ended right there – a sure fire method to weaken the curiosity-creativity link. So, the next time you are about to provide your child with a "correct answer" question, stop and consider these alternatives:

- Would it be possible . . .?
- Have you explored . . .?
- What if . . .?
- How else might . . .?
- I wonder . . .?
- Wouldn't it be funny if . . .?
- What other . . .?
- Can you imagine . . .?

The conversations that spin off from these provocative questions strengthen the curiosity-creativity link - opening doorways to wonder and exploration. Here's one you *might* try with your child, "How many ways *might* you come to school?" Note the word *might*. What a difference in excitement and engagement levels when the word might is emphasized! It affords the freedom, yes, even the permission, to think creatively. Our favorite response so far – *a magic carpet ride!*

Creativity often begins when simple observations meet up with child-like curiosity. This open-mindedness, coupled with a desire to learn more about the world, changes the way children interact with their environment and each other. Encouraging comments like the ones Grandpa shared with Ella nurture and support the development of future "curiosity-creativity links." Grandpa's modeling of his own creativity in his "doll-house" workshop will forever be imprinted in Ella's memories as a fun and engaging moment. And even more importantly, when Ella enters the world of work in 2030, she will have practice using the *mindsets* and *skillsets* needed to be creatively productive and successful.

Reference

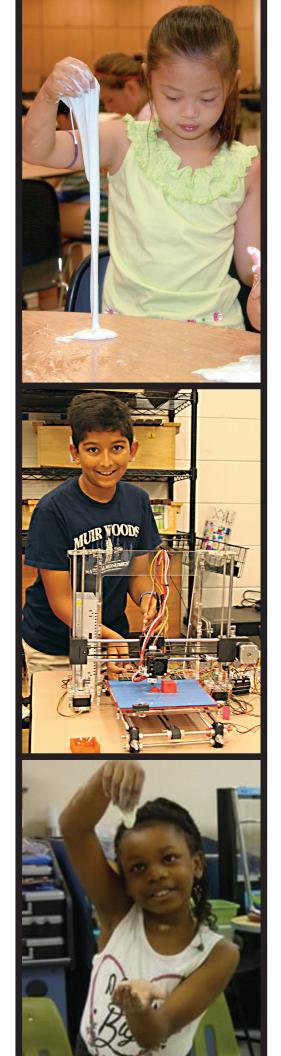
Kaufman, J.C. & Beghetto, R.A. (2009, March). Beyond big and little: The four c model of creativity. *Review of General Psychology*, 13(1), 1-12.



Patti Garrett Shade, co-founder of Curiosita Teaching and award-winning author, has a diverse background in K-12 international teaching and leadership experiences.

Dr. Rick Shade, co-founder of Curiosita Teaching and professor with *Outstanding Educator* awards at two universities, is an internationally known author and speaker.

Jerry Xiao - Collierville, TN 2018 International Torrance Award Winners



How Poetry Helped Me Get Better Behavior Grades

by Kathryn P. Haydon

When I was in early elementary school, I received poor marks in two areas. This is the exact wording from my report cards, they are so ingrained in my mind:

- "is courteous and considerate"
- "uses self control"

After quickly mastering class work, I created my own diversions. Though I loved learning, in third grade I didn't feel like there was much to learn at school and begged my parents to let me drop out.

My mother talked with the teacher, who gave me a set of "challenge cards" to do after my work was completed. It was really just more of the same to keep me busy.

A Special Opportunity

But the summer after fourth grade it was as if every fiber of my being was engaged in math, science, and creative writing enrichment classes. I attended the Center for Gifted's Worlds of Wisdom and Wonder program.

Christopher Freeman's math classes were fascinating and sparked my mind.

Joan Franklin Smutny's creative writing classes opened the world of free verse poetry to me. Suddenly I had a means of self-expression. I had a channel into which I could pour my continuous thoughts!

It is no accident that in fifth grade I finally was able to earn perfect marks in behavior. That unbridled mental energy could flow into writing instead of being spouted in the middle of class.

In Center for Gifted classes, my creative thinking had been valued and utilized.

I felt a sense of growth and satisfaction having had the opportunity to do academic work that also engaged my creativity.

This one Center for Gifted summer program helped sustain me through many years of less interesting classes. It also planted the seed for a lifelong goal that I accomplished last year.

Becoming a Poet

Inspired by the Center for Gifted creative writing course, I have continued to write free verse poetry. Joan Smutny was that special teacher who kept encouraging my work from the moment she taught me to write creatively in her classes.

Last year I published a book of poetry, What Do Birds Say to the Moon? Joan edited the collection. The introductory page to the book reads, in part, as follows:

In the summer of 1987, Joan Franklin Smutny taught me, then a young elementary student, to write free verse poetry in her Worlds of Wisdom and Wonder summer creative writing class. I have been writing poetry ever since. It has long been my dream to publish a collection of poems edited by Joan. This dream has now come true.

This story is not about me and my poetry collection. It is about a teacher giving a child an opportunity to use her highest form of thinking: creative thinking. It is about a teacher providing an avenue for original thought and self-expression. Even one such experience can change a child's life, and it changed mine.

Kathryn P. Haydon is the founder of Sparkitivity (https://sparkitivity.com/). She co-authored *Discovering and Developing Talents in Spanish Speaking Students* (Corwin, 2012), as well as *Creativity for Everybody* (Sparkitivity, LLC, 2015).



The Center for Gifted and Midwest Torrance Center for Creativity:

A View by the Founder and Director

Thousands of gifted children will come out of traditional classrooms this spring, enthusiastic to experience new learning, exploring, and expression in creative settings. Many of these students will discover, perhaps for the first time, their own treasures of thought throughout the summer. How important then that the creative dimensions for gifted students—how vital to their work around them—is the world of invention, intuition, and artistic sensitivity. How may we best respond to their emotional, artistic, and intellectual talents and needs through activities that encourage more alive learning? Do we offer opportunities that encourage and stimulate their curiosity and desire for challenges and innovation in the summer months?

For almost 40 years the summer programs of the Center for Gifted have offered subjects that stimulate and motivate bright students in pre-kindergarten through 12th grades. They are encouraged to choose from many exciting learning adventures to inspire their anticipation, participation, and learning experiences through great numbers of topics, courses, and participatory activities.

The importance of originality and innovation in education is more evident than ever before. Creativity is alive and well in the lives of countless children and young people. Students of The Center for Gifted find our programs to be innovative and imaginative, igniting fresh curiosity and serendipitous discovery. Our outstanding teachers and their inventive participatory methods inspire students to respond to their everyday schools—whether public, private, or homeschool—with a greater enthusiasm and appreciation for learning.

I know that participating in programs of the Center for Gifted /Midwest Torrance Center for Creativity will give your children immense opportunity for this kind of experience and that they will treasure it, not just for the summer but throughout the year.

Qualities and Characteristics

We recognize and discern the great variety of talents and abilities that children express. The ideal candidate typically:

- □ Expresses curiosity and creativity
- Enjoys challenges
- Asks thoughtful questions
- □ Has unique problem-solving abilities
- □ Is keenly observant
- □ Has a well-developed imagination
- Demonstrates talent in art, music, writing, or drama
- Acts independently and with initiative
- □ Creates and/or tells stories
- □ Exhibits wit and humor

Summer Wonders

Buffalo Grove

Aprtakisic Junior High School 1231 Weiland Road

Session I: June 10-14 Session II: June 17-21 Session III: June 24-28

Cary

Briargate Elementary, 100 Wulff Street

Session I: June 17-21 Session II: June 24-28

Lincolnshire

Half Day School 239 Olde Half Day Road

Session I: July 1-5 (no class on July 4)

Session II: July 8-12 Session III: July 15-26

Glenview - Innovation Creation Lab

The Center for Gifted 1926 Waukegan Road

Session I: July 15-19 Session II: July 22-26 Session III: July 29-Aug 2 Session IV: Aug 5-Aug 9 Session V: Aug 12-Aug 16

Worlds of Wisdom and Wonder

Elmhurst

Sandburg Middle School 345 E. St. Charles Road

Session I: June 17-21 Session II: June 24-28

■ Project '19

Elmhurst College 190 S. Prospect Avenue, Elmhurst

July 8-26

■ Tinker-a-Thon

Elmhurst College 190 S. Prospect Avenue, Elmhurst

Session I: July 8-12 Session II: July 15-19 Session III: July 22-26







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