Spring 2019

The Challenge: Magazine for The Center for Gifted Studies (No. 46, Spring 2019)

Center for Gifted Studies

Tracy Inman

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The World Conference Planned for This Summer

Plans are being finalized for the 23rd World Conference of the World Council for Gifted and Talented Children (WCGTC) that will be held July 24-28, 2019, in Nashville, TN. By mid-May, 600 individuals from 42 countries are registered. Presentations will include preconference sessions as well as keynotes, parallel sessions, and symposia. What a wonderful lineup of presenters and a special array of topics will be presented and discussed!

The conference dinner will be offered “Nashville style,” meaning it will be held at the Wildhorse Saloon in downtown Nashville, and the menu and the entertainment will be typical of what one would expect in Music City.

The highlight of a World Conference is the opportunity to network with others who care a great deal about gifted children, young people, and adults. It is a gathering of educators, researchers, and parents who want to share and learn about the needs of those who are gifted and talented and about strategies to address cognitive as well as social and emotional needs. Such networking occurs in sessions, at coffee breaks and meals, and after the sessions are finished for the day.

Past conferences for this world-wide membership organization have been held across the globe. Most recently, the biennial conferences were held in Sydney, Australia, and Odense, Denmark.

The international headquarters of the World Council have been at WKU since January, 2011, having moved from Winnipeg, Canada. Currently, Julia Roberts is serving a four-year term as president, and Tyler Clark is the Executive Administrator of the WCGTC.
Dear Friends of The Center for Gifted Studies,

Why does The Center for Gifted Studies offer programs for children and young people? Perhaps that question is best answered by alumni and a parent of an alumnus of those programs.

“As a kid I moved around a lot and never made friends easily, but I vividly remember the fun I had in my VAMPY astronomy class with people I’d only just met. In the math class, I met classmates who would go on to be my close friends even to this day. This past year I was diagnosed with ADHD. The fact I could meet other kids at VAMPY who were as excitable and distractible as me did worlds for my self-esteem, and I look back to those times as a reminder that there were communities that accepted all of me, even the differently-functioning parts.”

“You as Friends of The Center help these important programs continue by spreading the word about programs offered and by providing financial support. Until a child or young person knows about SCATS, VAMPY, Super Saturdays, Camp Explore, and Camp Innovate or about traveling with The Center, it isn’t a real opportunity. Likewise, it is financial assistance that allows some children to participate in programs. Thank you for talking with others about The Center’s programs and for your gifts that support the participation of qualified individuals who must have financial help to be involved in our programming.

The Center for Gifted Studies continues as one of the most comprehensive centers focused on gifted education in the United States and beyond. I am proud of our offerings and hope you are as well!

Sincerely,

Julia Link Roberts
Mahurin Professor for Gifted Studies
The Mission for The Center

We are committed to encouraging excellence by providing educational opportunities and resources to three populations: gifted and talented students, educators working with gifted students, and parents of gifted students.

The Vision for The Center

An internationally preeminent center, The Center for Gifted Studies envisions expanding services in five areas: (1) offering educational programs for gifted children and youth, (2) providing professional development opportunities for educators, (3) enhancing communication and advocacy for gifted children, (4) conducting research and developing curriculum to remove the learning ceiling, and (5) building a testing and counseling component for gifted children and their families.
“There is no typical Super Saturdays student,” says Gail Hiles, program coordinator. “Participants are children interested enough in a topic to spend four Saturday mornings learning about it.”

This past February marked the 27th year of Super Saturdays, an enrichment program for students in grades 1-8 that offers high-ability and high-interest students the opportunity to spend four Saturdays exploring and investigating ideas with other bright young people. Since 1992, The Center has offered classes where engaged and engaging teachers provide a minds-on, hands-on approach to learning as students explore and investigate such areas as math, art, science, history, writing, music, and performance.

The recent Fall and Winter Super Saturdays, which took place at WKU and at the Kentucky Science Center in Louisville, offered classes like Crazy for Coding; History Is Alive; Discovering Our Solar System; Express Yourself through Pop Art; Game Design and Strategy; and Laughing Matters, a class on theater improvisation.

Gail sees the ability of Super Saturdays to draw in a wide variety of students and just that students are learning how to make chemicals explode, but that they are learning with children outside of their normal playground experience.”

Todd Seguin of Bowling Green, KY, whose son Graham (Fall Super Saturdays 2012, 17, 18; Winter Super Saturdays 2013, 15, 16, 18, 19) has attended Super Saturdays since he was in first grade, agrees: “Graham gets to be with kids from the surrounding areas with common interests whom he might not ever meet otherwise.”

In addition to a community of learners, Super Saturdays students benefit from learning experiences different from what is available to them at school. Sara Spear, a fourth grade teacher at Alvaton Elementary in Warren County, taught her first Super Saturdays course in February, a science class called Spy Training Academy for second and third graders. She became interested in being involved in the program after her son, Trenton (Fall Super Saturdays 2018; Winter Super Saturdays 2019), took his first Super Saturdays class last fall: “Seeing my son’s excitement when he came home and told me about all the things he’d learned led to my interest in instructing other children.”

She passed on the excitement her son shared with her own Super Saturdays students: “I was able to provide opportunities for them to delve more deeply into some high-interest science concepts such as static electricity, energy transfer, and chemical reactions. We were able to examine these concepts from a different angle than what’s allowed for in their regular grade-level curriculum.” One highlight was a project where students used creativity and critical thinking to devise a method for sending a message across a wide gorge with a raging river, using only a balloon and Scotch tape: “I loved to see the various thought
processes that ensued despite those constraints. They were so creative in the solutions that they devised.”

Todd also sees Super Saturdays as a way for learning to go beyond what the regular school day allows, explaining, “Super Saturdays provides these really interesting ways of learning things that are effective and are often difficult to do in schools with the current parameters in which they operate.”

Like Graham, many students return to the program again and again. Cade Howell (Fall Super Saturdays 2013-18; Winter Super Saturdays 2013-19; Summer Camp 2013-14; Camp Innovate 2015-16; SCATS 2017-18) of Slaughters, KY, attended his first of 13 Super Saturdays in 2013. His mother, Pam, says: “We’re in a very small rural district, and he doesn’t have tons of opportunities through the school system. Sometimes in regular class, he feels a little different — not everybody gets him, including his teachers, and that can be frustrating. At Super Saturdays, everybody’s very kind and considerate. He’s met a lot of people, and that’s been good for him. He also has a lot of interests, so he’s had opportunities to explore different ones.”

There is no question that Super Saturdays is an essential program. Gail notes, “Families wake up in the Eastern time zone and drive hours to get here. That dedication shows a desperate need for programs like this one. Super Saturdays is still as valid and needed as when it began.”

The next Super Saturdays will be held on November 2, 9, 16, and 23.
Travelers sign up to travel with The Center for Gifted Studies for the experience, fun, and learning. For some individuals it is the first time to travel overseas, while others have enjoyed traveling with The Center before so have signed up for additional opportunities to see the world. In April, 23 travelers embarked upon ten days together in Normandy, Paris, and the Loire Valley.

The time in France included visits to Normandy a few weeks before the 75th anniversary of the D-Day landings. Travelers toured Leonardo da Vinci’s home in Amboise where he lived during his last years and where he died 500 years ago. They walked in Monet’s gardens soon after his home and gardens opened for the 2019 season, and they enjoyed Monet’s art at the Orangerie (where the magnificent water lily paintings are beautifully displayed) and the Marmottan Museum (the largest collection of Monet’s art). Of course, the timing was such that the visit to Notre Dame will be remembered as a highlight as the visit was only a few days before the horrendous fire.

Travelers had favorite experiences as they traveled with The Center. For Ethan Tate (VAMPY 2016–18 and Travel), his top memories relate to “all of the amazing architecture. The Chateau de Chamborde has a beautiful exterior design on the roof in particular. It amazes me that they were able to construct such buildings so long ago without any of the technology we have today. Notre Dame started in 1163 and grew to be such a magnificent building throughout the years. The arches over the doorways and the stories the arches tell are quite amazing. One arch, in the middle, tells a story of the devil leading people down towards hell and an angel protecting the rest of the people.”

Emma Eleson (VAMPY 2018, Travel) a second-time traveler with The Center, stated, “I was able to explore places I’ve never dreamed of seeing like the Louvre, the Eiffel Tower, and Monet’s house. I was also able to see Monet’s water lilies and some of the magnificent diagrams for Leonardo da Vinci’s inventions.”

Christian Butterfield (VAMPY 2016–18) described his experience in these words: “Coming into the trip, I expected my favorite moments to be all grandiose and monumental. The Eiffel Tower, the Louvre, Notre Dame: monumental as in the largest of the literal monuments. However, as much appreciated as those places were, I found myself drawn more to the small and the cultural. Whether it be learning tidbits about the history of Parisian flooding, learning the ins and outs of the Metro system or even buying French gummy bears, getting to take a peek into the life and cultural norms of an average French person was enthralling. As a first-time international traveler, the ability to see people living their lives halfway across the world was groundbreaking. It instantly transformed how I view myself and my place in the world. I will remember the monuments I saw and the history I learned for a lifetime, and I will carry a newfound sense of worldliness for just as long. Seeing the small bits of culture on the streets of France has shaped who I am as a person, and that has been my favorite part of this entire experience.”

In the fall, The Center will travel from Venice to Vienna. Dates are October 4-13. You won’t want to miss this opportunity!
Scholarship News

Chalk art on the sidewalk by the Colonnade, teens constructing telescopes in the parking lot of the planetarium, and graduate students guiding middle schoolers though lessons in bridge building: During our summer camps, the mission of The Center for Gifted Studies to serve gifted students, their educators, and their families is on full display. We rely on friends of The Center to help make these camps affordable for as many students as possible. Therefore, we are grateful to announce the following scholarship news.

Qatar Scholarship Continues to Support Arabic at VAMPY

For the third year in a row, The Qatar Foundation International (QFI) will provide financial support for VAMPY campers to study Arabic. This year, $31,000 will help defray the costs of those who need financial assistance to participate. QFI, a member of the Qatar Foundation which is funded by the Qatari government, sponsors programs that promote Arabic education and culture in the the United States. This grant affords students the opportunity to learn the Arabic language and explore the strong cultural ties between Western and Arab cultures while they learn about the modern Arab world. Arabic has been taught at VAMPY since 2013.

The Doctors Mody Endow a Scholarship

Doctors Bharat and Bharati Mody of Glasgow have been friends of The Center since their daughters, Bhavana (SCATS 1991) and Bhavini (SCATS 1993-94), attended camp. Bharati also served on the Advisory Board for many years. Now the Mody family has helped secure a future for campers by endowing the Doctors Mody Scholarship. This award will provide $1,000 annually for students to attend VAMPY. Their generosity will perpetually fund this scholarship, which they have offered since 2001.

New in 2019: The Rhea P. Lazarus Scholars Scholarship

The Gheens Foundation of Louisville has funded the Rhea P. Lazarus Scholars, a one-year grant of $20,000 for young people from Jefferson County who need financial support to attend SCATS or VAMPY. Rhea Lazarus of Bowling Green, who died in 2018 and was a member of the Gheens family, was a WKU alumnus and worked at the university for 20 years as a teacher in the Education Department, Registrar, and assistant to President Dero G. Downing. The Gheens Foundation was established in 1957 to “improve the quality of life for all citizens and institutions of Metropolitan Louisville and Lafourche and Terrebonne Parishes in Louisiana by creative grant-making and philanthropic leadership to meet the present and emerging needs of our communities.”
Caitlyn Abell Bruns (Super Saturdays 1998; SCATS 2001), graduate of Western Kentucky University in 2009, completed a Master of Science in animal breeding and genetics with a minor in statistics in 2011 from Iowa State University. In 2013, she earned a PhD with co-majors in animal breeding and genetics and statistics. Caitlyn then joined the team at DNA Genetics after graduating and has been there ever since. Currently, she is in an MBA program through the University of Nebraska – Lincoln.

Rebecca Colbert (Super Saturdays; SCATS 2000-01) recently completed a master’s degree in travel and tourism at Temple University. This degree follows a bachelor’s degree in hospitality management and tourism from the University of Kentucky. She currently works as sales coordinator for Cobb Galleria Centre in Atlanta, GA.

Catherine Kisling (SCATS 2008-09) graduated in 2017 with a degree in psychology from Eastern Kentucky University. She is a therapeutic foster care case manager at Uspiritus in Louisville.

Taylor Koczot (SCATS 2004-05; VAMPY 2006-08; Counselor; Co-Head Counselor) earned a BA in art history from Rhodes College in 2014. That degree coupled with an MS in museum education from Bank Street College in 2017 prepared her well for her career as a freelance museum educator. She works in multiple museums and cultural institutions in New York City, currently the Children’s Museum of the Arts, the New-York Historical Society, and the Museum of Chinese in America, teaching museum programs and after-school classes.

My experiences at The Center helped to give me confidence as a young person and helped me to discover my love for working with children and developing programming as an adult. I can confidently say that I would not be where I am today without the support of The Center and the opportunities it gave me.

Emily Peeler (Super Saturdays 2000-01; SCATS 2003; VAMPY 2004-06; Counselor) graduated in the first class of The Gatton Academy for Mathematics and Science in 2008. From there, she earned an undergraduate degree in social work from the University of Louisville, a Master’s in social work from Boston College, and a law degree from the University of Louisville. She lives and works in Washington, D.C., where she is a staff attorney for the American Bar Association Center on Children & the Law.

Jeremy Stratton (VAMPY 1992) earned Bachelor of Science and Doctor of Medicine degrees at the University of Louisville. Once a VAMPY Physics student, he is now a physician at Total Joint Specialists in Atlanta, GA.

Sebrand Warren (VAMPY 2008) was a 2015 graduate of Carnegie Mellon majoring in industrial design. He was a designer at Apple Inc. for several years. Currently, Sebrand is an experience designer at Thistle Company in California.

Chantal Weedman (SCATS 1984-85) is senior manager of Employee Communications at Sensus. An adjunct professor of English at North Carolina Wesleyan University, she is also currently writing a book about how candidates can identify and activate their own professional brand to propel their careers. She envisions starting a blog and social media channels this summer and plans to publish her book by late 2020.

The confidence I gained as a student in summer programs at The Center was absolutely essential to my academic success — in high school, undergraduate studies, and graduate school. I count those two summers as some of the best moments of my childhood.
Scottsdale, Arizona.
Orlando, Florida.
Asheville, North Carolina.
Dublin, Ireland.

These cities were among destinations to which Gatton Academy students traveled this school year to present their research findings at national—and international—meetings.

Each year The Gatton Academy brings in inquisitive new students who are eager to start research projects. These students are almost all brand new to research. How do they go from being research newbies to having national-level expertise within two years?

Sydney Wheeler (Super Saturdays 2008-09; SCATS 2013; VAMPY 2014-16; Gatton Academy 2019) traveled in November to the Psychonomic Society Meeting in New Orleans, LA, where she presented her WKU faculty-mentored research to a special group of tactile researchers.

“I was by far the youngest person there,” Sydney said.

Sydney’s WKU-faculty mentored research (Dr. Farley Norman, WKU Psychological Sciences) examined haptics. Simply put, Sydney investigated what features of shape are necessary for human recognition and discrimination between objects. She started research almost immediately after enrolling at The Gatton Academy. Within her first year, she had her own project and spent her summer interning as a full-time researcher. One year after she started research, as a senior in high school, she was ready for a national conference.

“At the conference, no one knew I was a high school student except my mentor. But I did mention it to one person over coffee. That person stood up and told everyone. People were very surprised. Afterwards, a lot of people came up and talked to me. They said, ‘That’s so cool. I thought you were a graduate student. How did you get into this?’”

Sydney’s experience is not unusual for a Gatton Academy student. The 2018-19 school year featured a record number of Gatton Academy students presenting their research findings at professional conferences. In one year alone, 170 presentations were given by current Gatton Academy students at conferences—mostly at state-level meetings in the Commonwealth.

But many students presented at the national level, too. Twenty-one Gatton Academy students took their work to
national conferences this year. These Gatton Academy students were presenting their research at the same major meetings where the nation’s brightest scholars met to exchange their new ideas and work.

**Ethan Volk** (Gatton Academy 2019) presented his research findings at the National Association of School Psychologists annual convention in Atlanta, GA, in February. Like most Gatton Academy students, Ethan was a first-time researcher when he enrolled at the school as a junior.

“I didn’t know anyone who had done research before. It seemed like an abstract concept to me. I pictured research as only taking place in a lab, with chemicals or something,” Ethan explained. “Gatton definitely helped me figure out how to do it—how to frame a question and set up a way to study it.”

Ethan’s WKU-faculty mentored research project (Dr. Thomas Gross, WKU Psychology) examined the effect of parenting on youth behavior leading to suspensions.

Ethan described the conference venue as huge and intimidating with thousands of school psychologists and administrators gathered from around the nation. “The program had hundreds of sessions in it,” he said.

“The moment I got comfortable was during my presentation. When more people came up, I got in the flow,” Ethan explained. “I described my research and had discussions with them about my project. I got comfortable with the whole experience.”

**Emma Poole** (Super Saturdays 2008-12, SCATS 2013-14, VAMPY 2015-17; volunteer; Gatton Academy 2019) is the only Gatton Academy student who presented at an international conference this year. She was one of only nine US scientists to attend a global gathering of UNESCO Man and the Biosphere partners. The UNESCO Euro Man and the Biosphere conference brought together UNESCO-designated biosphere scientists in April in Dublin, Ireland.

Emma described her WKU-mentored research experience (Dr. Chris Groves, WKU Geography and Geology) as one that started small and snowballed into many bigger opportunities. “Our research started out educating people about Mammoth Cave, planning out road signs that would say, ‘You’re passing over Mammoth Cave,’ so people would know how long it is. Then, it turned into a more extensive study helping people understand water contaminants, so people throughout central Kentucky would be aware of what they were putting into the ground,” Emma explained.

“Finally, it got bigger. We got hooked into UNESCO’s Man and the Biosphere as a link to our project,” she said. “Now we are making an interactive website mapping every global UNESCO biosphere where users will be able to interact with the area, the climate, and how they all relate on a live basis.”

Emma presented her work both as a talk and as a poster at the meeting.

Sydney, Ethan, and Emma all had fast starts moving from research newbies to young experts. Now, they are in various stages of continuing research careers, with interests ranging from pursuing the MD-PhD degree to publishing their research this summer to accelerating their current project to its next level.

They also advise more young students to give research a try.

“You only have to find the right professor and something you’re passionate about,” Emma said. “It won’t seem hard because you’ll be doing something you enjoy.”
The Truman Scholarship Program, according to its website, is considered “the premier graduate fellowship in the United States for those pursuing careers as public service leaders.” Scholars receive funding (in 2018, the amount was $30,000) for a graduate program, a fully-paid summer internship in Washington, D.C., and professional development opportunities to prepare for a career in public service. We spoke to two alumni of The Center for Gifted Studies who were named Truman Scholars to see how the award has affected them and how their time at The Center’s summer camps helped them on their path to success.

Andi Dahmer (SCATS 2009, VAMPY 2010-13, Counselor 2016)

Andi Dahmer of Fisherville was named a Truman Scholar in April 2018, one of 59 students out of a pool of 756 applicants. Andi, who graduated from WKU in December 2018, had an exemplary undergraduate career, studying economics, international affairs, Spanish, and Asian religions and cultures. Among her accomplishments are serving as president of the Student Government Association, studying abroad in seven countries, serving on the Campus Committee for Diversity and Inclusion, and co-publishing three articles on East Asian studies. She has spent the spring of 2019 teaching English in Alicante, Spain, and will begin her work at the Truman Summer Institute in Washington, D.C., this summer.

The Center has been a steadfast part of Andi’s life since she was 11 years old. She says, “I credit The Center for Gifted Studies as the most formative part of my adolescence. It is through SCATS and VAMPY that I learned to truly be myself, to embrace my intellect, and to celebrate my uniqueness.”

The value of camp came not only from the classes but from the friendships she formed: “I absolutely loved bonding with the other girls on my hall as a camper. I always made a point of dragging this very heavy, very old microwave into the dorms for the duration of camp. Then, a few times a week, I would make popcorn or s’mores for all of the girls on my hall. We would sit around laughing and talking. Those conversations are some that I will treasure always. I was also very fortunate to have some of the most amazing counselors and roommates during my time as a camper. When I served as a counselor myself, I worked with fellow campers and even my own former counselor. That sort of tradition and continuity makes camp very special.”

Andi sees a clear connection between her experiences at The Center and her academic success: “In many ways, I attribute my successful transition in middle
school and high school to the confidence I developed while a camper.” She also sees commonalities between her times at camp and what she is gaining from the Truman program: “The support and encouragement of the VAMPY community parallels that which I currently experience with the Truman community. In both places, I feel as though I am a part of a larger family and a tradition of making the world a better place.”

Lee Branstetter (SCATS 1983)

1989 Truman Scholar Lee Branstetter, originally from Glasgow, earned a BA from Northwestern and a PhD in economics from Harvard. He is currently a professor of economics and public policy at Carnegie Mellon University, a nonresident senior fellow of the Peterson Institute for International Economics in Washington, D.C., and a research associate of the National Bureau of Economic Research in Cambridge, MA. He also served on the staff of the Council of Economic Advisers during the presidency of Barack Obama.

For Lee, the value of the scholarship is clear: “My family was not wealthy, and the scholarship went a long way toward relieving the financial burden that my university tuition was placing on them. Beyond the monetary benefits, the prestige associated with the award was probably a factor in my attaining quality internships during college and getting into good graduate programs afterwards. Additionally, I have used the Truman Scholar network to search for jobs, internships, and data.”

He considers his experience as a SCATS camper as a formative one, because “I got a taste for what university life could be like, both intellectually and socially, and began to imagine how a university education could transform my life, taking me to places far beyond the boundaries of Glasgow, Kentucky. I was able to interact with experts whose knowledge base went far beyond that of my teachers at school, and with some of the brightest students in the region. Starting with that experience, I began to take the college admissions process seriously. I loved university life so much that I really never left it.”

His experience as a Truman Scholar as well proved life-changing: “Nearly 30 years after the awards ceremony, I still recall the inspiring speech given to us by a young official of the Department of Justice. At a time of rising cynicism about the importance and competence of government, the speaker encouraged all of us to look beyond ourselves to the challenges facing the nation, and to commit ourselves to meaningful careers of public service. My entire professional life has been spent in the nonprofit sector, at a series of public and private universities, and I see myself as engaged in public service. To this day, I retain my belief in the power of science and knowledge to offer better solutions to the challenges facing our nation and the broader community of nations. The Truman Scholarship surely made me more inclined to choose the path of public service – the road less traveled, if you will. And it has indeed made all the difference. At this point in my career, I am actively engaged in trying to build closer ties between government and academia, believing that better informed officials will make better decisions.”
“If the decisions that we are making now are actively determining the future, then how do we make more informed and intentional decisions so that we are creating the future we want to see?” This question from Louisville activist and artist Brianna Harlan kicked off the speaker sessions in Van Meter Auditorium at the sixth annual IdeaFestival Bowling Green, held February 13 at WKU. With the theme of

The Future Is Now, the festival attracted almost 750 participants from more than 30 middle and high schools across 18 school districts in Kentucky and Tennessee.

In addition to Brianna, the first speaker session, titled “Art and Advocacy: Creating a Space for the Future,” featured Aria L. Byrd, Ph.D. candidate in the Department of Toxicology and Cancer Biology at the University of Kentucky, and Paige Halpin Smith, director of development at Fayette Alliance, an advocacy group for sustainable growth. Aria touched a chord in many participants by talking about how her route through school had taken her to unexpected places: “When I look back, I see that these stop signs, speed bumps, and detours prepared me for where I am right now and what I want to do today.” Paige,
meanwhile, emphasized the importance of collaboration: “It can be really hard to build consensus, to bring people together, to really listen to each other. There has to be vulnerability, there has to be trust, and there has to be mutual respect.”

After a musical performance by the Red River Fiddlers, a group of school-age musicians from the Bowling Green area, the second speaker session focused on “Entrepreneurship: Imagining the Future.” Sarah Bellos, president and founder of Stony Creek Colors, explained how her business was transforming the clothing industry by working with farmers to grow indigo plants that Stony Creek transforms into eco-friendly dyes for clothing companies. She stressed that in entrepreneurship “it’s important that we look outside of ourselves and a narrow view of one solution for a problem.” Robert Bowden III, WKU student and founder and CEO of Spartan 4x4 which customizes off-road vehicles, inspired a new crop of entrepreneurs by stating, “With the ability to dream, you create. With the ability to create, you innovate. And with the ability to innovate, you change the world.” Finally,
Josiah Nelson, co-founder of clean energy company Trolysisis, talked about how “doing cool stuff” now prepares you for tomorrow: “Play with a 3-D printer or an Arduino. Build a robot or a race car. You’ll be learning while you do it, which is the strongest foundation for entrepreneurship because eventually you’ll find a solution to a problem, and you’ll be equipped to execute your idea.”

The second half of the festival took place at the Downing Student Union, where the third floor was filled with activities. Many stations stressed creativity and problem-solving: soldering, movie sound effects, letterpress and block printing, poetry, mural painting, improv comedy, Lego design, building a smartphone microscope, and dance. Other stations introduced new concepts like 3-D printing pens, a tactile display for the sight-impaired, conservation and recycling activities, beekeeping, animal anatomy, video game design, and a multi-axis trainer modeled after one used by astronauts. In addition, entrepreneurship activities exposed participants to sharing business ideas, economics, and building prototypes.

Brianna created an interactive art installation called Thread House, based on responses participants had written down during her talk. Festival-goers visited the space to read their peers’ responses, reply, or plan to take action on the shared ideas.

Reactions to the festival were positive: A student from Breckinridge County observed, “I liked that I was able to meet other people who have the same interests as me,” while a Russellville student commented, “It was insanely inspirational.” A student at Meade County’s Stuart Pepper Middle School expressed a common feeling by saying, “I hope I can go again next year!”

A very special thank you goes to our generous sponsors of the festival including Vid Monster Productions, AT&T, the Bowling Green Area Chamber of Commerce, The Gatton Academy, and the WKU Center for Entrepreneurship and Innovation.

To see highlights, including videos, or to sign up for the festival mailing list, visit The Center’s website. The next festival will take place on February 11, 2020.
Longtime friend of The Center Jody Richards was awarded the 2018 David W. Belin Advocacy Award by the National Association for Gifted Children at its convention last November in Minneapolis, MN. Jody served in the Kentucky House of Representatives from 1976-2018, including 13 years as the Speaker of the House. “Jody has been a champion of gifted education in the General Assembly for four decades,” said Julia Roberts. “We couldn’t have had a greater advocate than he has been. He was involved in the first funding for gifted education programs in the 1970s, instrumental in the inclusion of gifted education in the Kentucky Education Reform Act of 1990, and a champion for what became The Gatton Academy.”

He has also been a member of The Center’s Advisory Board since its inception and was presented with a 2002 Challenge Award by The Center in recognition of his impact on gifted education.

The Belin Award includes $500 for the recipient to designate to the charity of his or her choice; we are honored and grateful that Jody has chosen to donate his funds to The Center.

The David W. Belin Advocacy Award is given annually to an individual or group that has successfully advocated at the state or federal level to incorporate gifted education in a significant and meaningful way into state or federal education policy.

The award is presented by the Belin-Blank Center at The University of Iowa. Our own Julia Roberts was presented with the inaugural award in 2001, and Lynette Baldwin, executive director of the Kentucky Association for Gifted Education, which is housed at The Center, received the award in 2015.
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<td>Leah Hughes (Super Saturdays 2002-05; SCATS 2006; VAMPY 2007-09; Counselor)</td>
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Twice-Exceptional Learners: Definition, Identification, and Support

LOIS BALDWIN AND DAPHNE PERELES

Over the course of the last several decades, educators have become increasingly more aware of a group of gifted learners whose needs are difficult to identify and address. These gifted learners are those who also have a disability and/or learning or emotional issue that interferes with their giftedness being recognized and their ability to meet their true potential. This subset of gifted learners is called twice exceptional.

Given the history of twice-exceptional, it became clear that to best serve this population of learners, a shared vision and common language would be necessary. A group of educators, which included the two authors of this article, recognized that the professionals working with the 2e population are a specific subset of many aspects of education. This group of educators, parents, support personnel, and others consisting of 26 organizations convened over the course of a year and developed a comprehensive definition that could be used across all fields of education. The idea was to develop a definition that provided some consistency in identification and support for this unique group of learners.
The 2e CoP national definition is as follows:

Twice exceptional (2e) individuals evidence exceptional ability and disability, which results in a unique set of circumstances. Their exceptional ability may dominate, hiding their disability; their disability may dominate, hiding their exceptional ability; each may mask the other so that neither is recognized or addressed.

2e students, who may perform below, at or above grade level, require the following:

- Specialized methods of identification that consider the possible interaction of the exceptionalities.
- Enriched/advanced educational opportunities that develop the child’s interests, gifts, and talents while also meeting the child's learning needs.
- Simultaneous supports that ensure the child’s academic success and social-emotional well-being, such as accommodations, therapeutic interventions, and specialized instruction.

Working successfully with this unique population requires specialized academic training and ongoing professional development.

One of the best ways to understand twice-exceptionality is to examine each element of the definition separately. The first paragraph of the definition describes that there are typically three circumstances to consider in identifying a twice-exceptional individual. The individual’s exceptional ability or giftedness may be recognized early because the child might be very verbal, curious, and quick to learn advanced concepts. This giftedness may hide the child’s disability, so parents and teachers might think that the child is being lazy or not trying hard enough. The second is when the disability is noticed to the detriment of the gift. Educators and parents may focus on “fixing” the problem without ever addressing the gift. The third is when the gift masks the disability, and the disability masks the gift, so the student gets by in school as an average student.

An awareness of how to recognize and identify these unique gifted students is necessary in order to assist them. The Comparisons of Characteristics chart is a list of some of the characteristics of gifted
The Twice-Exceptional Students Seminar was presented last fall by Lois Baldwin, Ed.D., and Daphne Pereles, M.S., national experts on gifted young people with one or more disabilities. They conducted a two-part workshop on finding, understanding, and nurturing twice-exceptional students on November 1–2, 2018. The event was open to parents, teachers, students, and school administrators.

The next Twice-Exceptional Students Seminar will be held September 18th with presenter Dr. Susan Baum.
Harvey Johnston, a Bowling Green attorney, his wife Sarah, and Emmanuel Wardi from Menerbes, France, have made a gift of art by Joseph Dudley Downing to The Gatton Academy of Mathematics and Science in Kentucky. These works of art are hanging in the lobby and Great Hall of Florence Schneider Hall as well as in the office area. Gatton Academy students will enjoy the art of this internationally known artist who grew up in and around south central Kentucky though he lived his adult life in Paris and Menerbes, France.

We asked Harvey about his generous gift.

**What prompted you to ask if we would like art for The Gatton Academy?**

One, I thought it was important for young people studying math and science to be exposed to the arts. Two, the fact that I had assisted students going to an arts experience at the Speed in Louisville last year let me know that they loved the arts. Three, I knew Julia Roberts, and she is so appreciative.

**What do you want others to know about Joe Downing?**

I want others to know what a spectacular artist he was and that his roots are from Horse Cave and this part of Kentucky. I also want them to know that he was an internationally known artist. Joe would have loved for his art to be in venues that could be seen by young people. All of the young people in Menerbes, France, loved him. Having an influence on young people would have pleased him.

You have said that we now have some of Joe Downing’s earliest art. **What about that art stands out to you?**

His earliest art was so simple and reflected his work as he began. You can see the influence of Picasso in these works. Picasso attended Joe’s first one-man show and said “well done” as he left. That inspired Joe!

You also have said that we have some of Joe Downing’s latest art. **What characterizes the later pieces?**

The very latest art work that Joe did was on wooden boards. Those paintings were inspired by a request from Bowling Green for him to paint on a violin for a fund raising event. He said, “A violin is too beautiful to paint on, but I will.” He hung the violin from a board, and often after that he painted on boards.

**What else would you like for readers to know about Joe Downing and his art?**

Joe’s works of art always radiate a kindness and gentleness which is so reflective of the artist himself. He was such a kind and gentle man.

Thank you, Harvey and Sarah, and **merci beaucoup**, Emmanuel for your gift of art which will bring joy to so many!
Focusing on a cross-discipline skill like literacy is an excellent way to educate a range of teachers about how to challenge high-ability students in the classroom. Julia Roberts and Tracy Inman recently conducted a series of workshops on challenging advanced readers for the Warren County Public Schools through the Striving Readers Comprehensive Literacy Discretionary Grant Program, awarded to the Kentucky Department of Education by the U.S. Department of Education.

Teacher-leaders in a variety of subjects were selected from the district’s elementary, middle, and high schools for three workshops that highlighted preassessment and differentiation. The workshops focused on the importance of challenging all students but particularly advanced students with the theme of “appropriate challenge for all.”

Colton Isaacs, a biology teacher at Warren Central High School, said, “The program was phenomenal. Tracy and Julia modeled methods for preassessment and differentiation in an interactive way that made it easy to immediately transfer the ideas to the classroom.”

Participants were given copies of Julia and Tracy’s books Assessing Differentiated Students Products: A Protocol for Development and Evaluation (Prufrock, 2015) and Strategies for Differentiation Instruction: Best Practices for the Classroom (Prufrock, 2015). The first session introduced preassessment strategies, and the second and third focused on a variety of differentiation tools. In between sessions, the teachers implemented what they had learned and shared the results online and in workshop discussions.

One common result for the participants was a better understanding of what students knew coming into a unit. Jenny Bryant, a third grade teacher at Natcher Elementary, said that by using preassessment, “I started finding students who had already received the instruction or mastered the content, so I created engaging activities for them to do such as working on fourth grade skills. A lot of times with our teaching, we’re just following the standards. This program opened my eyes up to the idea that there are students who already know the material and don’t need to sit through the instruction.”

Colton used a tool designed by Tracy and Julia called a TWH Graphic Orga-
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nizer for preassessment. This tool asks students three questions at the beginning of a unit: What do you think about the topic? What do you want to know about the topic? and How do you want to learn about it? Colton says, “It’s great to have the ability to look at something besides multiple choice to preassess students — on activities like the graphic organizer, they have to think through what they know.”

Utilizing preassessment also allowed teachers to tailor instruction to their students’ interests, with positive results. Alana Poston, a social studies teacher at Warren Central, said, “In two of my classes, the students were very interested in learning about Native American culture, so we did brochures on different Great Plains tribes. They were engaged the whole time — they loved doing the work. On our post-test, all the students in those two classes got all the questions on Native Americans correct, whereas in my other classes (who had traditional learning), I had several that missed those questions.”

Colton found providing students with options on how to demonstrate their knowledge increased interest and the quality of work as well: “In my marine biology class, I gave them a choice of final product for our unit on crustaceans. Since we live ten hours from an ocean, most students wanted to do something visual. Many of them ended up doing an infographic on the crustacean of their choice.”

Alana used a differentiation chart for a unit on the Progressive Era: “It differentiated by level and by end product. For each level, students could choose from two different products to show they understood the different types of reforms from that time period. They also could choose from two to three different levels to work at. They did a really good job and liked having those choices.”

Additionally, teachers learned that student input through preassessment and differentiation enabled them to instruct at a higher level. Jenny Bryant created a choice board to use as an assessment tool and tiered the board based on the students’ reading levels. Students chose from various activities at their level or one step above their level if they wanted to challenge themselves. She anticipates using other activities as well: “The program showed me how to use higher-order thinking. I’m looking forward to trying a RAFT (Role, Audience, Format, Topic) writing activity for grammar skills. For instance, a student could take the role of a period and explain to the exclamation point — the audience — why it thinks it’s the better type of punctuation. The students will have to think and justify their reasoning.”

After the workshop, teachers were expected to return to their schools and share their new tools with their colleagues, who have been very receptive. Alana Poston comments, “I showed my departmental colleagues the differentiation chart. They loved it, so we’re going to use it for different units.” Colton Isaacs has taught the concepts to colleagues in history, English, and social studies. Jenny Bryant reports that her entire third grade “has already started incorporating some of the materials.”

Tracy is very pleased with the results of the program: “We planted seeds, and the teachers are cultivating rich gardens with a variety of plants.”

She and Julia will provide the same professional learning for a second cohort next year. This year’s cohort will explore differentiation in content areas in the fall.
Berta Seminar Speaker Shares Practical Tips on Emotionally Empowering Gifted Students

Noted author, teacher, and mother of gifted children, Lisa Van Gemert presented at the 2018 Berta Seminar on identifying and addressing the social and emotional needs of gifted students on November 9 at WKU. Thanks to a generous gift from Kathleen and Vince Berta, this event was free to attend and open to the public.

Lisa is the author of Perfectionism: A Practical Guide to Managing “Never Good Enough” (Great Potential Press, 2017) and the author of the website Gifted Guru. At the seminar, Lisa explored how one can identify and meet the social and emotional needs of the gifted effectively and successfully and shared practical strategies to help gifted students thrive.

Siobhan Abel of Owensboro, parent of David (Super Saturdays 2014-19; SCATS 2017-18, VAMPY 2017-19), Logan (Super Saturdays 2014, 18; SCATS 2018) and Anna (Super Saturdays 2016-18), attended the seminar and says, “Lisa highlighted a lot of great points about perfectionism that really struck me. I was grateful that she opened that box for me because now I can look at my kids and say, ‘Hmm, is that a constructive way to be using your talent, or is it a destructive way? Is perfectionism hindering your development?’”

Beth Patrick, Director of Gifted Education for Pulaski County Schools, appreciated that the seminar provided “takeaways that you could use immediately. She used a lot of personal stories and gave us many practical things that we could use easily — the strategies are applicable, and they work with students or your own children.”

One of the techniques Lisa discussed involved helping students to put their worries in perspective. Explains Beth, “A lot of gifted students, if they get a bad grade, will say, ‘This is the worst thing that’s ever happened in the whole wide world!’ But you can say, ‘On a scale from one to five, how bad is it?’”

Beth also found the technique of walking students through their difficulties by asking questions to be very helpful: “You keep asking, ‘And what now?’ about the situation they are in. They answer, and you keep repeating the question. Questioning and listening are important because students need to be empowered to become problem solvers instead of having you step in and solve all the problems.”

Beth appreciated the fact that Lisa talked about using the questioning method on her own children. Siobhan, too, found Lisa’s use of personal experience to be a strength of the seminar: “Lisa is an educator who talks from experience with her own kids and her own giftedness. It’s really important to know that there are professionals out there who have their own experiences that they have built on. The Center is so good at bringing in people who convey their passion toward helping this special group of people and helping them to understand that being gifted is a big part of who they are and they should not deny that part of themselves.”

In addition to her presentation, Lisa generously shared many resources with participants which can be found on her website giftedguru.com. For information on past seminars, visit the Berta Seminar page on The Center’s website. The next seminar will be held October 25 with a parent night on October 24, and will be led by Dr. Sylvia Rimm.
In 2016, The Center received a three-year Javits grant, partnering with the Kentucky Department of Education, Jefferson County Public Schools (JCPS), and the University of Louisville to create Project RAP (Reaching Academic Potential). The project had two main goals in addressing the Excellence Gap, which is the disparity at the highest levels of achievement between students who are in lower socioeconomic groups, English language learners, twice-exceptional, and/or African-American and Hispanic, and those who are not. The first goal was to identify and serve these underrepresented populations, and the second was to disseminate information about the Excellence Gap so that educators and policy makers could work to reduce it. To conclude the project, we provided professional learning experiences on sustaining the vision of RAP, encouraging educators to ask, “What do we do now?”

We are pleased to share that one way JCPS has chosen to sustain the vision is to extend the strategies used in the project to five more elementary schools beyond the initial five schools involved. The Center is providing training for the new group of educators on cluster grouping, increasing challenge levels, and differentiation.

Additionally, Lindsay Dotterweich, a teacher at Gilmore Lane, was invited to be part of the elementary showcase at KAGE, “Best Practices for Serving Gifted Learners in Elementary School,” to share how her teaching has grown through the project and to spread the ideas of Project RAP throughout Kentucky.

Furthermore, The Center is partnering with JCPS to help the district work toward compliance with Kentucky’s Regulation in Gifted and Talented Education. This task includes building the capacity of JCPS to find students with high potential in all five areas of giftedness K-12, and including students from currently underrepresented groups, as well as providing multiple service options, including learning opportunities matched to students’ interests, learning preferences, and levels of readiness so that they can make continuous progress.

**JCPS Extends the Work of Project RAP**
Roberts and Inman Win Legacy Book Award

Julia Roberts and Tracy Inman as well as Dr. Jennifer Robins of Baylor University were honored with the 2018 Texas Association for the Gifted and Talented (TAGT) Legacy Book Award in the Scholar category for their work editing the textbook *Introduction to Gifted Education*. The Scholar category honors books that guide graduate students or advanced educators to understand and expand upon the latest research on giftedness and gifted and talented education.

The TAGT Legacy Book Awards honor outstanding books published in the United States that have long-term potential for positively influencing the lives of gifted individuals and contribute to the understanding, well-being, education, and success of gifted and talented students. Books are nominated for this award by their publishers, and submitted entries are sent out for review to readers across the country. The highest ranking book in each category is selected.

“Recognition for this award is shared by my colleagues who edited the book as well as those who wrote chapters. We are honored to receive the 2018 Legacy Book Award in the Scholar category,” said Julia.

When asked about the honor, Tracy said, “I am so grateful for our 35 authors who provided the rich, objective, and inclusive content that makes this book innovative.”

Julia and Tracy also won The Legacy Award for the Outstanding Book for Educators in Gifted Education for their first book together in 2009, *Strategies for Differentiating Instruction: Best Practices for the Classroom*. Tracy has also received two additional Legacy Awards, both for the Outstanding Book for Parents in Gifted Education: in 2011 for *Parenting Gifted Children: The Authoritative Guide From the National Association for Gifted Children* along with co-editors Dr. Don Treffinger, Dr. Jennifer Jolly, and Dr. Joan Smutny; and in 2017 for *Parenting Gifted Children 101: An Introduction to Gifted Kids and Their Needs* along with co-author Dr. Jana Kirchner. All of their books are available at prufrock.com.
On April 6, 1979, during the Kentucky Council for Exceptional Children Conference, interested parties met to establish tentative directions for a state organization to promote gifted and talented education whose purpose would be to educate parents, professions, and citizens and to act as advocates for gifted education. Additional meetings during the rest of the year developed a steering committee, planned strategies and direction for the 1980 legislative session, drafted articles of incorporation (incorporated January 1980), proposed officers, and came up with a name — Kentucky Association for Gifted Education (KAGE). Lounette Steenrod was the first president and also served on the legislative committee — the KAGE Flash of April 1982 notes that she “has been at the capitol nearly every day in March.” Doris Mills, who ran the organization out of her basement for many years, served as the second president, became business officer in 1983, and was KAGE’s first executive director from 1984-1990.

Milestones from the first decade of KAGE include the following:

- Funding for gifted education began in 1976 at $1.5 million annually. For 1982-83, appropriations were $2,131,000 for gifted education and that funding increased to $5,087,000 for 1983-84.
- The first KAGE Conference was held in Owensboro in 1981.
- The first KAGE Workshop was held in Louisville in 1982.
- The KAGE Foundation was established in 1984, thanks to the vision of Dr. Bill Price.
- The Distinguished Service Award was initiated in 1986.
- As ideas for education reform were percolating, three members of KAGE went before the Task Force on Education Reform to identify the needs of gifted students.

Plan to come to the 40th KAGE Conference February 24-25, 2020, to celebrate the accomplishments of the first four decades and plan for the next one.
No other university in Kentucky offers the opportunities for graduate work in gifted education and talent development that Western Kentucky University (WKU) does. The offerings include the gifted endorsement (12 graduate hours) as well as the M.A.E. and the Ed.S. in Gifted Education and Talent Development. The 30-hour master’s degree has two pathways – one for teacher leaders and one with a research focus. The specialist degree is a 30-hour program beyond a master’s degree. In addition, WKU is an institution where the Ed.D. can be earned with a gifted concentration.

Graduate courses are offered online with the exception of the practicum which is a two-week summer experience on campus (i.e., SCATS). The practicum is the opportunity to demonstrate what has been learned in the coursework. The gifted endorsement can be requested to be offered on site to a cohort of educators.

WKU is an exceptional place to pursue graduate work in gifted education due to multiple initiatives and programs available on campus. WKU is the home for The Center for Gifted Studies, The Gatton Academy of Mathematics and Science in Kentucky, and the Mahurin Honors College. The office of the Kentucky Association for Gifted Education and the international headquarters of the World Council for Gifted and Talented Children are located on campus.
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Kentucky Recognition Ceremony for Duke TIP
May 22

National STEM Scholar Program
June 2-8

Camp Explore
June 3-7

SCATS
June 9-21

VAMPY
June 23 – July 13

Advanced Placement Summer Institute
June 24-28

Camp Innovate
July 8-12

WCGTC 23rd World Conference (Nashville)
July 24-28

Twice-Exceptional Learners Seminar with Dr. Susan Baum
September 18

Fall Travel: From Venice to Vienna
October 4-13

Berta Seminar with Dr. Sylvia Rimm
October 24-25

Fall Super Saturdays
November 2, 9, 16, & 23