very day, parents ask us many questions about raising
gifted children and advocating for them within the
school system. The C-MITES website (www.cmu.edu/
cmites) contains many resources and links that parents of gifted
students will find helpful. Below is some more information
to help answer a few of the frequently-asked questions about
parenting gifted students.

How do I advocate for my child?
The first step is always to obtain objective information. Have
your child tested by the school psychologist in your district
or by a private psychologist. This objective information, in
combination with your own personal observations, grades in school,
standardized test scores, and teacher observations, will help you and
school personnel devise an appropriate program for your child. Read
as much as you possibly can about gifted students to become an
educated consumer. Keep good records. Save test records and other
important documents, but also keep copies of letters you have sent
to schools and some work samples (include the date) completed by
your child.

Keep the lines of communication with school personnel open.
Volunteer in school, visit your child’s classroom, attend open house
events, and go to parent conferences. Try always to stay positive with
school personnel. Try to remember that you're on the same team –
you're all trying to make sure your child is appropriately challenged
in school.

For more information about advocacy, see the “Hoagies” website,
http://www.hoagiesgifted.org/advocacy.htm. We highly recommend
joining the Pennsylvania Association for Gifted Education (PAGE).
Their website (http://www.penngifted.org/) contains detailed in-
formation about Chapter 16, which regulates gifted education in
Pennsylvania.

How do I know if my child is being appropriately
challenged in school?
Is your child able to complete all homework on the bus on the way
home? Does your child constantly complain of being bored in school?
Does your child get straight A’s with no effort? Does your child’s
teacher state that he or she has nothing new to teach your child? Is
your child asked repeatedly to tutor other students in class, because
he has already learned the material being presented? If you answered
Continued on page 4

C-MITES Spring and Summer Calendar

January       24, 25: EXPLORE test
February      21: EXPLORE test
March          EXPLORE scores mailed
               Weekend Workshops
April            Weekend Workshops
May                Weekend Workshops
June          Summer Program Session I
July            Summer Program Session II
August                 Steppingstones Workshops

“...and spring!!! Thank you for all the wonderful
courses you were able to offer her. I know her
horizons were widened, her eyes were opened
up, and her socialization skills were enhanced
by being there. CMU gave my daughter an
exceptional educational experience. Thanks
again.”

~ a C-MITES parent
C-MITES NEWS

C-MITES News is published by the Carnegie Mellon Institute for Talented Elementary and Secondary Students. C-MITES sponsors a talent search for 3rd-6th graders as well as summer and weekend programs for K-9th graders throughout Pennsylvania.

- Director: Dr. Ann Lupkowski Shoplik
- Program Coordinator: Pamela J. Piskurich
- Web Designer: Raymond T. Budd
- C-MITES Program Assistant: Barbara J. Dunn
- C-MITES Assistant: Elizabeth Rheinfrank

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The Student Page

Have you written a short story or poem you would like to share with other C-MITES students? Do you have a favorite puzzle or brain teaser you would like our readers to try to solve? Have you always wanted to be published? Well, here’s your chance! In each issue of the C-MITES NEWS, we will have a new section called “The Student Page” that will be devoted exclusively to C-MITES students.

We are looking for original work by our students, including, but not limited to, poetry, short stories, mind benders, brain teasers or puzzles. To be considered for the next issue of the C-MITES NEWS, submissions must reach our office by May 1, 2009. Submissions are best sent in a Word document or in the body of an email. Emails of your work should be sent to Ray Budd at budd@andrew.cmu.edu. If you do not have access to a computer, you may mail a hard copy to:

Ray Budd, Web Designer
C-MITES, Carnegie Mellon University
5136 Margaret Morrison St., MMP30
Pittsburgh, PA, 15213

Any work submitted is subject to the approval of the editor and must include contact information for the person submitting the work. We reserve the right to reject any submissions that are inappropriate for our readers.

Thanks to the ESTS Test Centers!

We would like to thank all of the schools that participated in the Elementary Student Talent Search this year by sharing information about our testing program with their students. Students in grades 3-6 took the EXPLORE test in January and February of this year at 60 test sites in 26 Pennsylvania counties. We would especially like to thank the following schools for allowing us to use their facilities for testing:

Aquinas Academy (Greensburg)
Berwick Middle School (Berwick)
Blessed Sacrament School (Erie)
Campus School of Carlow University (Pittsburgh)
Candelbrook Elem. School (King of Prussia)
Carnegie Mellon University (Pittsburgh)
C. F. Patton Middle School (Kennett Square)
Cumberland Valley High School (Mechanicsburg)
Delahunty Middle School (Hermitage)
East Union Intermediate Center (Russelton)
 Eden Christian Academy (Pittsburgh)
The Ellis School (Pittsburgh)
Fairfield Academy (Montoursville)
Fort Allen Elementary School (Greensburg)
Glenside Elementary School (Glenzide)
Glenwood Elementary School (Media)
Harrisburg Area Community College (Harrisburg)
Hillel Academy (Pittsburgh)
Holy Child Catholic School (Bridgeville)
Indian Valley Middle School (Harleysville)
Linntown Elementary School (Lewisburg)
Linton Middle School (Pittsburgh)
Marshall Middle School (Wexford)
McDowell High School (Erie)
Moon Area High School (Moon Township)
New Castle Christian Academy (New Castle)
New Covenant Christian School (Lebanon)
Penn View Christian Academy (Butler)
Penn-Mont Academy (Hollidaysburg)
Reading High School (Reading)
Sacred Heart Elementary School (Pittsburgh)
Saint Frances Cabrini School (Fairless Hills)
Saint Luke School (Erie)
Saint Philip School (Pittsburgh)
Saints Peter and Paul School (Beaver)
Scranton High School (Scranton)
South Lebanon Elementary School (Lebanon)
Torah Academy of Greater Philadelphia (Ardmore)
Trinity High School (Washington)
United Hebrew Institute (Kingston)
Valley School of Ligonier (Ligonier)
Waynesburg Central Elementary School (Waynesburg)
Westmont Hilltop Elementary School (Johnstown)
Wexford Elementary School (Wexford)
The Wyndcroft School (Pottstown)
Wyoming Seminary Lower School (Forty Fort)
C-MITES Summer Program

One- and two-week summer programs are offered throughout Pennsylvania for academically talented students in mathematics, science, and humanities. The tentative 2009 locations include: Abington/Philadelphia Area, Erie, Greensburg, Harleysville, Pittsburgh, Pottstown, Sidman/Johnstown Area, Trafford, Washington and Wexford. C-MITES courses offer students a hands-on approach to math, science, and humanities.

C-MITES summer courses include: Advertising Edge, Amusement Park Physics, CO2 Dragsters, eMissions, Explorations in Science, Forensics Science, Geo-Pardy!, Harry Potter’s Science Adventure, Informal Geometry, Green Engineering, Math Counts, Math Mania, Programming Using Alice, Roaming Ancient Rome, Robotics Programming and Design, Solar System Astronomy, and Solve a Murder Mystery. For more information about the C-MITES programs, send email to cmites@cmu.edu, or call (412) 268–1629 or visit www.cmu.edu/cmites. Selection is competitive.

- Commuter program weekdays full-day and half-day sessions
- Some sites offer optional afternoon programs.
- June 15 – July 17, 2009 (one- and two-week sessions)
- Financial Aid Available
- Grades: completed 3-8
- Cost: $190 - $410
- Application Deadline: April 14, 2009

Reminder to students taking the 2009 C-MITES EXPLORE: You will receive EXPLORE scores at the end of March.

Professional Development for Teachers

C-MITES will again be offering opportunities for professional development in the 2008-2009 school year. If you are interested in attending the following workshops, please check our website (www.cmu.edu/cmites) for a registration form. You are also welcome to provide this information to a teacher who might be interested. C-MITES awards ACT 48 credit for participation in these workshops.


MEET THE DIRECTOR:

AN INTERVIEW WITH

DR. ANN LUPKOWSKI SHOPLIK

By Elizabeth Scales Rheinfrank

I recently sat down with Dr. Ann Lupkowski Shoplik, the director of C-MITES. Dr. Shoplik started the program in 1992 to serve the academic needs of Pennsylvania’s intellectually talented students in kindergarten through 9th grade; approximately 5,000 students participate in the program every year.

ESR: Why did you decide to pursue a career in gifted education?

Working with gifted students is a passion of mine. I became interested in working with gifted students as a freshman psychology major at the University of Scranton. I went on to receive my Masters and Ph.D. from Texas A&M and pursued a postdoctoral fellowship at Johns Hopkins University, where I worked with Dr. Julian Stanley, well-known in the field of educational psychology as an advocate of accelerated education for academically gifted children. Dr. Stanley founded the John Hopkins Center for Talented Youth (CTY), and established the talent search model when he began the Study of Mathematically Precocious Youth in 1971. He found that the SAT [Scholastic Aptitude Test], given as an above-level test to seventh graders, was effective in determining the true abilities of exceptionally gifted students.

Dr. Stanley specialized in working with students in seventh grade and older, and he would ask me to respond to the calls from parents of fifth graders, who were frustrated because their children were not being challenged enough in math. The problem was that around fifth or sixth grade math becomes very repetitive. Mathematically-talented students are ready for algebra but are not allowed to take it. Susan Assouline, another post-doc, and I spent hours answering calls and letters from parents and working with schools. We decided to write a book about what we had learned. The book, Jane and Johnny Love Math, evolved into Developing Math Talent.

ESR: How did C-MITES come about?

I was working at the University of North Texas in the College of Education as an assistant professor, running a talent search for third through fifth graders when I met Mike Shoplik. It made sense for us to move to Pennsylvania since we both had family here. Around the same time, Carnegie Mellon University had just opened the Center for University Outreach. I proposed the idea of a gifted program to the University’s director, Ted Fenton. It was perfect timing because the Center wanted to start programs for the community. I transferred my grant from the University of North Texas and used the $11,000 that was left to start the C-MITES program.

ESR: How has the organization changed over the years?

When I first came to Carnegie Mellon 17 years ago, I worked part-time for free for the first couple of months and shared an office with Ted’s secretary, Lucille Kandrack. We shared a phone and a computer. It’s funny because her grandson recently took his first C-MITES

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Parenting Gifted Students ...

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"yes" to many of those questions, then you have reason to be concerned about the level of challenge in school.

If your child isn't being challenged, the first step is to discuss your concerns with your child's teacher. Bring examples of advanced work your child has done and other specific information (such as test scores) so the teacher can see both the level of your child's ability and samples of the types of things your child has already learned. If your child is already in the school's gifted program, the gifted coordinator or teacher can be an advocate to help you devise more challenges for your child in the regular classroom.

Options for challenging gifted students include:
- Enrichment within the regular classroom (more in-depth work on the topics being studied by the other students).
- Differentiation within the regular classroom (this is teacher-directed and may involve eliminating some of the easier material so there is more time to study advanced topics).
- Grouping with other gifted students for all or part of the day. This may be done in one subject or in several subjects.
- Acceleration (grade-skipping).
- Taking advanced classes with other gifted students.
- Studying a subject, such as mathematics, through a distance learning program.
- Independent study projects, such as completing a science fair project either during school time or outside of school.
- Mentorships, in which a student meets with a community or school mentor on a regular basis to study advanced topics.

Is distance learning a good option?
Distance learning is an excellent option for gifted students in rural areas and elsewhere. Distance learning provides students the opportunity to study material at an appropriate level and pace, regardless of their placement in school or where they live. A teacher or mentor in the local area is not essential for success in a distance-learning program. The Center for Talented Youth at Johns Hopkins University provides distance learning for students in kindergarten through 12th grade: http://cty.jhu.edu/cde/. Stanford University's Education Program for Gifted Youth (http://epgy.stanford.edu/) offers online courses year-round from kindergarten through advanced undergraduate level.

What are some good resources about gifted children?


The National Research Center on the Gifted and Talented, located at the University of Connecticut, provides a detailed website about research on gifted students (http://www.gifted.uconn.edu/nrcgt/). The Center's website also includes information written specifically for parents. See (http://www.gifted.uconn.edu/nrcgt/resource.html#parent).

The Davidson Institute for Talent Development (www.ditd.org) provides an exceptionally thorough website containing information for parents and teachers of gifted students. Their guidebook, Advocating for Exceptionally Gifted Young People, is available on the site and should be required reading for parents of gifted students.

One of the best websites in the field of gifted education is the Hoagies site, www.hoagiesgifted.org. You'll find an enormous amount of helpful information there!

Ann Lupkowski-Shoplik is the founder and director of C-MITES. She completed a Ph.D. in Educational Psychology at Texas A&M and a postdoctoral fellowship with the Study of Mathematically Precocious Youth. Her research interests include identifying math talented students and developing appropriate programs for them. She is a co-author of the Iowa Acceleration Scale and Developing Math Talent: A Guide for Educating Gifted and Advanced Learners in Math.

Davidson Fellow Scholarships

Davidson Institute Seeks Extraordinary Achievers to Receive $50,000, $25,000, and $10,000 Scholarships

The Davidson Institute for Talent Development is offering high achieving young people across the country the opportunity to be named as 2009 Davidson Fellows, an honor accompanied by a $50,000, $25,000 or $10,000 scholarship in recognition of a significant piece of work in Science, Technology, Mathematics, Music, Literature, Philosophy or Outside the Box.

To be eligible, applicants must be under the age of 18 as of Oct. 1, 2009, and a U.S. citizen or permanent U.S. resident residing in the United States. There is no minimum age for eligibility. The deadline to apply is March 4, 2009. Applicants must submit an original piece of work recognized by experts in the field as significant and it must have the potential to make a positive contribution to society. The scholarship must be used at an accredited institute of learning. For more information on the Davidson Fellows scholarship, or to download an application, please visit www.DavidsonFellows.org.
Teacher Feature

The teacher featured in this issue of the C-MITES Newsletter began his involvement with the program in the summer of 2003. Mr. Matthew Sespico began assisting in the Observational Astronomy class. We were so impressed with his enthusiasm and passion for science and education we hired Matt to be an instructor in the program. Now, six years later, Mr. Sespico has developed several courses to make them more enjoyable for all of his students.

Over the years, Matt has taught the following courses and workshops: Observational Astronomy, Science on the Internet, Tale of Nine Planets, Solar System Astronomy, GPS Systems: Pirates of Carnegie Mellon, and Design a Dragster. All of his courses are hands-on and packed with activities that get his students interested in learning and excited about science!

In Matt’s summer class, Solar System Astronomy, students learn about the solar system and each of its members including the very latest planetary discoveries. They create a multimedia presentation on the planet of their choice using the internet and astronomy related software. Other in-class activities include launching rockets, creating a planet, and viewing the sun through a telescope. His homework often involves locating planets among the stars!

Teachers and assistants who worked with Matt commented on his dedication, enthusiasm and passion for teaching science and encouraging his students into the field. One teacher even said, “Matt really is excellent! He interjects with great content and he knows the technology inside and out. His rapport with the student is excellent and he’s a darn nice guy!”

Matt graduated from the University of Pittsburgh and received his teaching certificate through California University of Pennsylvania. He teaches Earth and Space Science in the Highlands School District located in Allegheny County. His hobbies include coaching and playing soccer, photography, geocaching, and, of course, stargazing. He and his wife, Stacie, have four children that he also considers his all time favorite hobby.

We are very lucky to have Mr. Sespico in our program. He’s a wonderful teacher and a truly great guy!
Meet the Director:

Continued from page 3

class. Now, we have two full-time and three part-time staff members and 400-500 teachers and student assistants. During the first year of the program, 145 students participated in the talent search, and 20 students participated in the summer program. There was only one class that first summer, Probability and Statistics, for 3rd through 5th graders. In 2008, 31 classes were available, including 16 math classes, to the 480 students participating in the summer program at 16 sites across Pennsylvania. Thirteen hundred students participated in the talent search, and 3,600 students participated in our Weekend Workshops or one-day Steppingstones classes last year.

ESR: What do you think C-MITES does best?

C-MITES provides an environment for bright kids to come together with teachers who want to challenge them and enjoy working with gifted students. I was bored in elementary and high school—that's what drives me. I sought to create a program that challenges gifted students. Parents know that C-MITES classes are more of a challenge than their children would typically get in school.

ESR: What advice do you have for families whose children are not being challenged enough at school?

Be an advocate for your child. Do not assume that the school will take care of it.

ESR: What is your biggest challenge as the director?

Funding. We are grateful to foundations and individuals who have given us money and helped us keep going. Fifteen percent of our budget comes from donations or grants. A lot of that money is used for scholarships. Each year we provide about $40,000 worth of scholarships for financially needy students. It’s really important for us to offer the opportunity to deserving students who otherwise would not be able to participate.

A lot of people mistakenly believe that we receive funding from the government or from Carnegie Mellon. The reality is there is very little public money available for gifted programs. That’s why donations from foundations and individuals are critical to the success of our program.

ESR: What is your favorite part of the job?

I enjoy talking with parents. One family contacted me when their son was three or four years old. They discovered he could read because one day in the tub he started listing the ingredients off the back of a shampoo bottle. Shortly after that, he started to add and tell time. Over the years, I worked with the family and the school on the types of things they could do to help the student. I enjoy connecting with families and helping guide them through the process. It’s also fun to watch C-MITES kids grow up and to hear about all the exciting things they are doing with their lives. I love it when Carnegie Mellon students drop by the check-in table at Wean Hall and say, “Hey, I took classes at C-MITES when I was a kid!”
Order your C-MITES apparel today!

Order your very own tie-dye C-MITES t-shirt, sweatshirt and/or backpack and be the envy of all your friends! Simply fill out the order form and return it to our office with your check made payable to “Carnegie Mellon University.”

* The C-MITES tie-dye t-shirt has white lettering saying “C-MITES Carnegie Mellon.” Youth sizes are rainbow colors. Adult sizes are red, white and blue. Cost is $17.

* The C-MITES sweatshirts are forest green. They have a hood and zipper and feature the Carnegie Mellon C-MITES logo. Cost is $27.

* The C-MITES backpack is a black string backpack with a red and white C-MITES logo. Cost is $17.

* Proceeds from these sales go to the C-MITES scholarship fund.

Make check payable to Carnegie Mellon University

Send to:
C-MITES
5136 Margaret Morrison St., MMP30
Carnegie Mellon University
Pittsburgh, PA 15213

Name: _______________________________  
Address: ________________________________________________________________  
City: __________ State: _____ Zip: ______  
Telephone: ____________________________________________________________________  

T-shirts Quantity:  
_____ youth size M  _____ adult size M  
_____ youth size L  _____ adult size L  
_____ adult size S  _____ adult size XL

Sweatshirts Quantity:  
_____ youth size M  _____ adult size M  
_____ youth size L  _____ adult size L  
_____ adult size S  _____ adult size XL

Number of t-shirts X $17 =$__________  
Number of sweatshirts X $27 =$__________  
Number of backpacks X $17 =$__________  
TOTAL ENCLOSED =$____________

(Shipping & handling included in prices)
Your Child’s Name on a C-MITES T-Shirt

Surprise your child! Have your family name listed on the C-MITES 2009 Summer Program t-shirt! For a $100 donation, we will list your name as a “Friend of C-MITES” on the back of the t-shirt. You might list your child’s name or your family name (for example, The Smith Family).

You could also have your company’s logo included on the back of the t-shirt. The cost of the logo is $1,000. Logos will be approximately 6” to 8” wide and several logos will be displayed on the shirt. Logos should be sent in a jpeg, pdf or Photoshop file to the C-MITES email address, cmites@cmu.edu.

Donations must be received by March 1, 2009. Donations are tax-deductible. Make checks payable to Carnegie Mellon University. Thank you for considering this!

C-MITES reserves the right to limit advertisements on our t-shirts.

Name: _____________________________________________________

Address: ___________________________________________________

City, State, Zip: ______________________________________________

Telephone number: ___________________________________________

$100 enclosed. Name as we would like it to appear on the t-shirt (please limit to 25 characters and print clearly): ____________________________________________

$1,000 enclosed. Company name to be included in the logo: _______________________

Email the logo to cmites@cmu.edu in a jpeg, pdf or photoshop format.

$50 donation. Name as you would like it to appear on the ‘thank you’ page of our newsletter: __________________________

$25 donation. Name as you would like it to appear on the ‘thank you’ page of our newsletter: __________________________

Other donation enclosed: ________________ C-MITES welcomes donations such as grocery store or craft store gift certificates to be used for purchasing classroom supplies.

Thank you!