We recognize that many parents reading this newsletter have elementary-aged children. However, it is not too early to start saving and planning for college!

When we talked with the Office of Admissions at Carnegie Mellon University, they told us one of the best places for parents to start is the website, www.finaid.org. This website includes worksheets and chatty articles designed to assist families working their way through the sometimes-confusing process of saving for college.

Tuition costs have gone up by about 8% per year for the last 20 years, which is higher than the rate of inflation. Tuition, room, board and other related expenses at a selective private school, such as Carnegie Mellon University, are over $55,000, while tuition at a state college, such as Penn State, is around $25,000 for in-state residents. It is easy to see how students graduating from college in the next few years might start their working life with debt over $100,000. Saving money and making plans now makes sense, so students aren’t stuck with that kind of debt even before they land their first job.

On the average, parents pay half to two-thirds of their children’s college costs through a combination of savings, current income, and loans. Government grants, grants from the college the student is attending, and private scholarships account for only about a third of total college costs, on average. Therefore, it makes sense for parents to start saving for their children’s education as soon as possible. The sooner you start saving for college, the more time your money will have to grow.

The FinAid website offers many basic hints. For example, it is usually best to save money in the parents’ names, rather than the student’s. This simple strategy is an advantage when calculations are made for how much a student can afford to pay.

There are tax benefits to saving in a section 529 college savings plan or prepaid tuition plan. Every dollar you save using those types of plans is one dollar less that you’ll need to borrow. However, you need to be careful to read the specific rules about the 529 plan you decide to use. For example, some plans require that the student attend college in a particular state.

A rather effortless way of saving money for college is the Upromise program (http://www.upromise.com). You sign up with this free service, which tracks your spending with Upromise partners. When you

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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 Scales Rheinfrank

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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 44 test sites in 23 Pennsylvania counties. We would especially like to thank the following schools for allowing us to use their facilities for testing:

Aquinas Academy (Greensburg)
Bangor Middle School (Bangor)
Berwick Middle School (Berwick)
Blessed Sacrament School (Erie)
Campus School of Carlow University (Pittsburgh)
Candlebrook Elem. School (King of Prussia)
Carnegie Mellon University (Pittsburgh)
C. F. Patton Middle School (Kennett Square)
Centre County Christian Academy
Cumberland Valley High School (Mechanicsburg)
East Union Intermediate Center (Russettlon)
Eden Christian Academy (Pittsburgh)
The Ellis School (Pittsburgh)
Fairfield Academy (Montoursville)
Fort Allen Elementary School (Greensburg)
Glenside Elementary Modular (Elkins Park)
Harristown Area Community College (Harrisburg)
Hillel Academy (Pittsburgh)
Holy Child Catholic School (Bridgeville)
Indian Valley Middle School (Harleysville)
Linton 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)
Penn 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)
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)

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, 2010. 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.
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 2010 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, CO 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 14 – July 16, 2010 (one- and two-week sessions)
- Financial Aid Available
- Grades: completed 3-8
- Cost: $190 - $410
- Application Deadline: April 14, 2010

Reminder to students taking the 2010 C-MITES EXPLORE:
You will receive EXPLORE scores at the end of March.

Professional Development for Teachers

C-MITES is continuing to offer its Professional Development series for teachers and administrators who work with gifted students. The sessions for the 2009-2010 school year will be held at Carnegie Mellon University. Check our website at 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.

The theme for this year’s workshops is: WORDS AND NUMBERS: Integrating Mathematics and Literature. Join us for a series of workshops being presented by Martha Hildebrandt, Ph.D. that will explore the connection between mathematics and language. Examine a broad range of literature as you look for numerical concepts embedded in the printed page. Reading will take on a whole new dimension and mathematics will come alive! Come prepared to learn new ways to motivate your students, energize your teaching, and bring excitement into the classroom. Participants may attend one or more sessions. Save the dates:

March 25, 2010
April 29, 2010

Be a Junior Scientist at a Research Institute!

C-MITES and the Windber Research Institute have teamed up to offer students in the Cambria/Somerset County area a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity! For one week this summer, students who have completed 5th through 7th grades will work in the same lab as professional scientists who conduct biomedical research. Students will participate in a typical C-MITES class, complete with hands-on experiments, projects, and last-day presentations to families. What is different about this new class is the opportunity to use state of the art equipment and to be working in an exciting research lab next to scientists representing eight different countries!

Students will study topics including: DNA forensics, microscopy, pathology, and molecular biology. They will conduct experiments on DNA isolation and amplification, molecular fingerprinting, and tissue staining.

Due to a generous donation from the Windber Research Institute, many C-MITES student participants will receive full or partial scholarships for the class. Although the scholarships are based on financial need, the generosity of the WRI allows C-MITES to award scholarships to students from middle income as well as low income families. We encourage all students taking this class to apply for a scholarship.

The class will meet all day (9 a.m. to 4 p.m.) for one week. The dates will be announced in the C-MITES Summer Program brochure, which will be mailed in early February.

We would like to thank the staff of the Windber Research Institute for offering our students such an opportunity!

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 2010 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, 2010, 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, 2010. 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.
Financing a College Education

Continued from page 1

make a purchase with a partner, a portion of your spending is credited back to you in the form of college savings. According to the Upromise website, over 10 million people have joined Upromise.

Parents and students will be eager to learn about the many college scholarships. The FastWeb Scholarship Search (www.fastweb.com) is the largest, most accurate and most popular free scholarship search site. This site is frequently updated and provides automatic email notification of new scholarships that match the student’s profile. Other scholarship search websites are listed on the FinAid website.

Everyone should apply for financial aid; don’t assume you make too much money to be eligible. First, complete the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) form. This is used to calculate your Expected Family Contribution, which is the amount of money they say you can afford to put toward college costs for the next school year. This also establishes whether you’re eligible for any federal programs, including subsidized loans. You can submit the form any time starting January 1st during your child’s senior year in high school. Earlier is better, since grant money is generally given out first-come, first-served. It’s also best to file electronically.

Non-need-based financial aid is also offered every year to students. These awards are frequently merit-based and go to academically talented students. There are many other awards for athletic ability, artistic and musical talent, and other areas. Check with the college’s financial aid office about any special scholarships for which your child might be eligible and be on the lookout for scholarships for students from your geographic area.

More than half of all financial aid comes in the form of loans. Federal loans have low interest rates and payments are deferred until after graduation. Loans are also available from banks and other private sources.

Students who qualify for the Federal Work-Study Program can get a part-time job on campus. Of course, your son or daughter can always earn money at an off-campus job to help pay for college.

Some students are eligible for free tuition at a specific college or university because a parent is a faculty or staff member there. Some institutions are part of a consortium that provides tuition benefits if the child of an employee attends one of several consortium schools. Before you rush out and apply for a job at your local college, be sure to read the fine print about this tuition benefit. Carnegie Mellon, for example, requires that staff members be employed full time for five years before their children are eligible for free tuition.

If grandparents want to help pay for a child’s college education, it would be best for them to give the money after aid has been determined at the college the student will be attending. If they would like to make the gift earlier, they could transfer the funds to an account in your child’s name under the Uniform Transfers to Minors Act. Certain tax rules apply to this program, so make sure you understand this before setting up a UTMA account.

Your son or daughter doesn’t have to attend Carnegie Mellon or Harvard to get a first-rate education. To find out about some “Bang for the Buck” schools, check out America’s Best Value Colleges, 2007 (Princeton Review). You might also think about having your student enroll at a community college for the first two years, then transfer to his or her dream school.

Compare different schools’ financial aid packages. Certain colleges are making a special effort to help students below a certain income level graduate debt-free by providing tuition through a combination of scholarships, grants, and work-study. Study each school’s website carefully, and make follow-up phone calls to the school’s financial aid department if you have more questions.

If there has been any change to your family’s financial situation, be sure to inform your school. These changes might include the death of a wage earner, divorce, or major medical expenses since you filed the FAFSA form. The school may be able to offer you more aid.

Follow up on different financial aid packages. If your child receives a much better package from a competing university, speak with a financial aid officer about the discrepancy; he or she may be able to offer more aid to match the higher offer.

If you don’t want to spend all your time searching for information on the Internet, there are several excellent books you can read. Some recommended books for parents of undergraduate students include:


Center for Gifted Education, IUP

The Indiana University of Pennsylvania Center for Gifted Education serves high achieving/gifted/talented students, their families, and their schools. Center services include educator training, child and family counseling, assessment, consultation, information and referral. The Center also seeks to enhance community awareness of the needs of gifted children and youth, to provide easy access to relevant educational materials for parents and educators, to facilitate the training of pre-service educators regarding gifted education, and to contribute to the body of scholarly literature related to the educational, social, and emotional strengths and needs of gifted children and youth. For further information or to learn about gifted education courses available at Indiana University of Pennsylvania, contact the Center at 724-357-2300 or the Center director, Dr. Victoria Damiani at 724-357-3783.
Meet the C-MITES Program Assistant:

An Interview with Barb Dunn
By Elizabeth Scales Rheinfrank

I recently had the opportunity to speak with C-MITES program assistant, Barb Dunn, who coordinates the Weekend Workshops at Lower Merion High School in Ardmore, Pennsylvania, in addition to handling many other responsibilities in the C-MITES office. She is often the person whose friendly voice you hear over the phone or who assists you at the check-in table at the Weekend Workshops.

ESR: When did you first become involved with the C-MITES Program?

BD: After I received a Masters of Elementary Education from California University of Pennsylvania in 1997, I taught at Camp Invention and then worked as a teaching assistant for a C-MITES math summer camp in Upper St. Clair. Ann Shoplik, the C-MITES director, asked me if I would be interested in being a teacher at a satellite site and after that, I taught some Weekend Workshops and started working part-time in the office.

Over the years, the C-MITES program has really grown and we have expanded the Weekend Workshop program into the Philadelphia area. I am currently coordinating that program and hiring new teachers. I am always looking for enthusiastic teachers who are excited about teaching hands-on classes for gifted students and who have new ideas for interesting classes.

ESR: What is your favorite part of the job?

BD: When I see kids who are really excited after a Weekend Workshop or a summer class, I feel that all the hard work we are doing has really paid off. It is wonderful seeing students so excited to learn.

ESR: What are some activities you enjoy outside the office?

Barb Dunn: C-MITES Program Assistant

Date Saver:

PAGE Conference
April 22 - 24, 2010
Mars, Pennsylvania

Teacher Feature

The teacher featured in this issue of the C-MITES Newsletter began her career with the program as a teaching assistant in the fall of 2004. Now, six years later, Mrs. Amanda Laskey has created and rewritten several math and science courses to make them more enjoyable for all of the students who participate. In case you do not recognize Amanda's last name from our old brochures, it is because she is listed in those brochures as Amanda Herold. The old Amanda Herold became the new Amanda Laskey this past July. Congratulations to Amanda and her new husband, Brandon!

Amanda has participated in all of the programs that C-MITES conducts. She is active in the summer program and has assisted in several classes. In the weekend program and Steppingstones program Amanda has developed workshops for our younger students. The courses she teaches include: Scientifically Speaking, Eye on the Sky, Math Parade and What’s Up, Outer Space. Yes, we keep Amanda very busy on campus throughout the entire year!

In her astronomy classes, students eat their way through the moon phases while munching on Oreo cookies. The end product is a cookie display representing the eight phases of the moon. It is rumored that the students like the new moon the best! They also learn about stars and some constellations and then they name and create their very own constellation.

Amanda is a certified Early Childhood (N-3), Elementary (K-6), Special Education (K-12) and English (7-12) teacher having graduated from Seton Hill University. She currently teaches at Mt. Pleasant Area Jr. & Sr. High School where she is a Learning Support English teacher. Amanda lives with her husband and energetic yellow Labrador Retriever, Easton. In her free time she enjoys coaching and playing soccer, traveling, and going to hockey games to cheer on her favorite team, the Pittsburgh Penguins!

Amanda is truly an outstanding C-MITES teacher and we are very thankful to have her as an instructor in our program. Next time you are on campus, if you’re not in Amanda’s class, look for her, because she’s probably just down the hall!

Barb Dunn: C-MITES Program Assistant

Amanda and Brandon in Charleston.

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Meet the Program Assistant:

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BD: I enjoy spending time with my husband, Christopher, and family and friends. My husband’s family has a cabin in West Virginia, and we like to spend time there. We also enjoy spending the winter holiday at my mother’s home in Florida. My favorite activities include reading, going to movies, walking and yoga. I volunteer one day per week at the Himalayan Institute of Pittsburgh, a yoga center in Mt. Lebanon. I also love to travel.

ESR: Tell us about an interesting place you have visited.

BD: We spent 16 days in Italy. We started in Palermo, Sicily, where my grandfather lived until he was fifteen and immigrated to the United States. From there we traveled all over the country, seeing Naples, Pompeii, Rome and Venice. Rome and Venice were my two favorite places, because of the interesting history, and Venice was a great way to end the trip. More recently, my husband and I have traveled to California, San Antonio, Texas, Boston and New York.

ESR: It’s wonderful that you have had the opportunity to see so many fantastic places. Thanks for talking with me today, Barb. I am sure our C-MITES families have enjoyed the opportunity to learn more about you.

BD: You’re welcome, Elizabeth.

Look What’s Happening in Lower Merion

C-MITES continues to grow its weekend workshop program at Lower Merion High School in Ardmore, PA. In November, C-MITES offered 20 classes for students in grades 1-9, and 340 students attended. There were six new classes offered this fall: The Human Body: What Makes Me?, Money Matters, Robot Race Cars, Digital Story Telling, Build Your Own Computer, and The Science Behind Food. Thank you to all of the students, teachers, teaching assistants, volunteers, Ramaa Nathan, and Dr. Ellen Braffman for making the Fall 2009 C-MITES Weekend Workshops such a success!

This spring we are planning another exciting series of weekend workshops. C-MITES is always looking for new energetic teachers and teaching assistants to join our weekend workshop team. If you are interested in teaching and creating a new hands-on, academically challenging course for gifted students, please contact the C-MITES office at 412-268-1629 or go to the employment section of our website at www.cmu.edu/cmites.

Thank You to Our Donors!

Mr. Mark Gelfand, a graduate of Carnegie Mellon University, generously donated $42,000 to C-MITES in support of our programs for academically talented students. We appreciate very much the interest Mark has shown in C-MITES. He has told us how he was inspired by his uncle, who shared with him the excitement of hands-on learning when he was a boy. Mark has made many generous donations to C-MITES over the years in support of our hands-on science, math, and technology classes. We couldn’t offer the variety of programs we have without his support. Thank you!

We were delighted to open the mail one day this fall and discover a letter from the Grable Foundation informing us we had received $15,000 grant to support our programs for gifted children. We are very grateful for this support. The grant will enable us to offer scholarships to low-income students as well as support the development of new classes. The Grable Foundation has been a generous donor to C-MITES for many years, and we truly appreciate their assistance! C-MITES would also like to thank the Rosedale Technical Institute for being a generous supporter of C-MITES. In addition, many anonymous C-MITES families and friends have made donations from $5 to $250 over the past year. These donations totaled over $2,200 this year, and they have made a great addition to our scholarship fund. Thank you!

Thanks for Sharing Your Time and Talent

We are developing a wonderful team of volunteers in the eastern part of the state. Ramaa Nathan volunteers as the site coordinator for the Lower Merion Weekend Workshops held each May and November. She works many hours to make sure these classes are successful. We couldn’t do it without you, Ramaa. Thank you! Bela Banker has also generously volunteered her time to identify additional locations for our classes as well as additional volunteers at the Lower Merion site. You might see her volunteering at the registration table or assisting in a class at Lower Merion High School. Thanks, Bela!

James Bright has been helping us develop a sophisticated electronic newsletter -- coming soon to your email inbox! In addition, James has worked to secure donations of laptops for use in C-MITES classes. Another project for James is the creation of online surveys for families to complete after their students participate in our classes. We are very grateful for this support. The grant will enable us to offer scholarships to low-income students as well as support the development of new classes. We are delighted James is sharing his expertise with us! Thank you!

If you’re interested in volunteering for C-MITES, please contact Dr. Shoplik at annshoplik@cmu.edu. Thank you!

“You should be commended for the excellent program you have. It’s a unique educational experience that we are very grateful our son got to experience last year. We look forward to another opportunity for our son at C-MITES this coming summer.”

~ Parents of a student in Geo-Pardy!
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.” 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
Your Child’s Name on a C-MITES T-Shirt

Surprise your child! Have your family name listed on the C-MITES 2010 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, 2010. 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!