



## The Chicago Gifted Community Center is here for you.

All of us on the board of CGCC knew there was a need in Chicago, we felt it ourselves; it's why we were moved to start CGCC. But we didn't know just how great the need was until we started providing services to gifted families. Until a mom came up to us after one of our lectures, eyes welling up, to say thank you. She was so relieved to find that she wasn't alone.

Until children found friends who are true peers and one said, "she understands me, I don't have to use smaller words."

We have been astounded at the pent-up needs of the gifted community and it is our honor to serve you.

What more can we do for you? What are you looking for, in terms of creating community and connecting with other families?

Please write to us, we always love to hear from members,  
Sincerely,

Elaine Luther  
Member at Large, Board of Directors,  
CGCC

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## Spring Newsletter

Volume 1, Issue 1

# 2013

The mission of the Chicago Gifted Community Center is to facilitate educational and emotional support for gifted children and their families.

**The Chicago Gifted Community Center is a 501(c)(3) non-profit organization.**



CHICAGO  
GIFTED  
COMMUNITY  
CENTER



## Youth Needed!

We are looking for gifted youth between 8 and 18 to form a Youth Advisory Board (YAB) for the Chicago Gifted Community Center. YAB members will be asked to provide feedback on existing programs and suggest ideas for possible new programs. We value your opinion! Much of the work will be done by email with occasional online meetings. If you have a gifted youth interested in participating, please contact: [lesliecontos@chicagogiftedcommunity.org](mailto:lesliecontos@chicagogiftedcommunity.org)



## Upcoming events with the CGCC

Many CGCC activities continue through spring. The [Parenting Gifted Series](#) continues on April 9, with a presentation and discussion on “[Strategies to Support Young Gifted Minds](#)” by Tara Lenga. Tara will be discussing ways to recognize, understand, and most importantly navigate around some common gifted behaviors in children. Our 2012/2013 Parenting Gifted Series includes two more sessions. In May, Sharon Collins will present Gifted: Communication and Relationships, and in June Cathy Risberg will present Emotional Safety and the Gifted. All sessions are free, but please register.

Parents don't forget to register also for the [Taste of a SENG Model Parent Group](#). This is being held on the evening of April 29 in conjunction with the SENG Model Parent Group Training. Come meet other parents of gifted children and see what these groups are all about – for free!

The final [Gifted Kid's Club](#) for the term will meet April 27. It is free, but please [register](#) as space is limited. You also can [register](#) to receive information for the fall term. The club will take a break for the summer.

Finally, save the date for our [second annual CGCC picnic](#) on July 28!

Our [calendars](#) also list many area activities that would be of interest for gifted children. You can view all activities in one calendar or just those for your geographical region. Please [share with us](#) any activities that you think would be of interest and we will add those to the calendar. Check the calendars often as they are updated frequently. Here is a sampling of upcoming activities.

Fermilab is full of fun this month. On the evening of April 10, it is having a [Science, Technology, Engineering, & Mathematics Career Expo](#) for high school students. The [Wonders of Science Show](#) on April 14 is for families with children ages 7 – 12. It is \$4 per person and pre-registration is required. The Show is a series of demonstrations on chemical and physical phenomena and includes a kit of materials that kids bring home to continue their science explorations. On select Sundays, Fermilab offers Ask-A-Scientist tours for ages 10 and older. The topic for the April 7th tour is “[Neutrons: Little Particles that Could](#)” and for the May 5th tour it is “[Energy: No Such Thing as a Free Lunch](#).”

Many local museums offer family activities for various ages on the weekends. Please check the details for each event. Most are free, but some require advance registration. During April, the Art Institute offers “Cubist Collage” on Saturdays and Sundays based on its new exhibition “Picasso and Chicago.”

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# events

If you have an idea for an event you'd like to create, please contact a board member. We'd love to assist you in any way possible.

Please see the CGCC website for the most up-to-date information about events, as well as times and locations.

## April

9

CGCC: Parenting Gifted Series: "Strategies to Support Young Gifted Minds"

27

CGCC: Final Gifted Kids' Club meeting for the term.

29

CGCC: Taste of a SENG Model Parent Group



## June

3-7, 10

Free admission to the Museum of Science and Industry

3-4, 10-11, 17-18

Discount Days at the Shedd Aquarium

May 15

CGCC: Parenting Gifted Series: "Gifted: Communication and Relationships" with Sharon Collins

## July

19-21

Supporting the Emotional Needs of the Gifted National Conference, Orlando, Florida

28

The Second Annual CGCC family picnic

## In Search of the Gifted Brain

by Catherine Gruener

I think of neuroscientists as looking out at the world and seeing people through the lens of neural structures and functions, as though we are all walking brains on electronically wired stick figures. And indeed, in the past, cognitive science has tried to simplify the process of understanding the brain through use of basic computer based and electronic circuitry models (I'm recalling the '80s). From two-step models to complex connectivity projects, our understanding, tools, and methods for mapping out the structures and functions of the brain has matured over the decades, complementing our understanding of the brain itself (NIH Human Connectome Project, 2013). Research and understanding of gifted children has also matured. And today, we have more research that combines neuroscience and gifted than we have in the past.

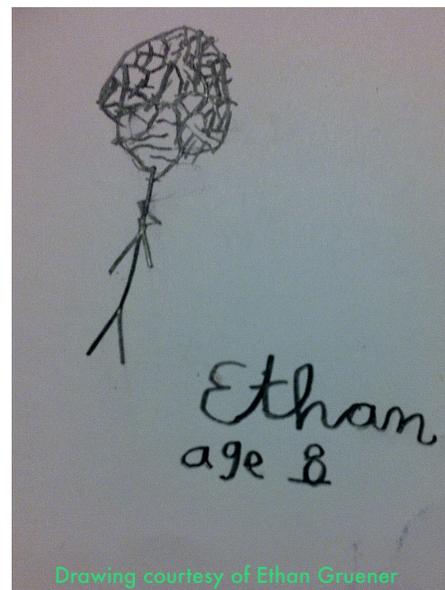
There is a population of people who share characteristics that congeal and congregate under the umbrella that we call gifted (Daniels & Piechowski, 2009; Morelock, 1992; NAGC, 2011; Silverman, 1993). And there is agreement within the gifted community on at least one characteristic, 'potential' and/or what many call ability (Morelock, 1992; NAGC, 2011;

Rhode Island State Advisory Committee on Gifted and Talented Education, n.d.; Ruf, 2009; Subotnik, Olszewski-Kubilius, & Worrell, 2012).

Subotnik, Olszewski-Kubilius and Worrell (2012) explain that this potential "implies an ability to perform at the extreme upper end of the distribution in a certain area" (p. 52). Research on gifted children has utilized tests and assessment to quantify this ability and performance, as well as understand human capabilities. If you are reading this and have a child under the gifted umbrella, you know that several types of tests are used to determine such potential, ranging from intellectual and academic tests to tests of creativity and demonstrated achievement within a particular subject area. The types of tests used and the promise of what an assessment offers, as well as the cut-off criteria utilized, varies drastically across programs and institutions.

The search for the gifted brain began long ago, and one theorist, Dabrowski, postulated that gifted individuals, as a whole, possess qualities different from the norm (Ackerman, 2009; Daniels & Piechowski, 2009).

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Drawing courtesy of Ethan Gruener

## Share the love

Please forward this newsletter to family, friends, colleagues, and anyone who might benefit from the services of the CGCC. We would love to see our membership grow!

## Gifted Brain, cont.

He defined these qualities as overexcitabilities or “superstimulability” such that “persons may require less stimulation to produce a response, as well as stronger and more lasting reactions to stimuli” across 5 broad domains: psychomotor, sensation, imagination, intellectual and emotional (Daniels & Piechowski, 2009, p. 8-9). Dabrowski, to me, seems to be describing neural pathways or systems.

If we look through the neuroscientist lens at ‘potential’ as the performance of the gifted child through the theoretical concept of overexcitabilities, we can begin to ask, what is it that makes the gifted child’s brain different? And, is the gifted child’s brain different?

Studies using a scale that quantify overexcitabilities have found differences in the presence and level of overexcitabilities between children identified as gifted and those who are not (Ackerman & Paulus, 1997). Gifted children displayed and scored high on intellectual and emotional overexcitabilities as compared to those who were not identified as gifted (Ackerman & Paulus, 1997).

Gifted children also evidence anatomical and physiological neuronal differences (Geake, 2008). Those who score higher on tests and assessments differ in the biological make-up of their brains (Cole, Yarkoni, Repovš, Anticevic, & Braver, 2012; Geake, 2008; Koch et al., 2012; Mitchell, 2007; Takeuchi et al., 2011).

Geake (2008) suggests that the current research supports gifted individuals as possessing “more efficacious working memory with an enhanced executive function, focused attention, delayed closure, and evaluation selection.” The frontal lobe is the ‘executive’ functioning portion of our brains. It is the manager. It breaks down complex problems, sequences, and oversees how problems are solved. Studies have found differences in the frontal lobe of those with higher intellectual abilities, finding higher volumes of grey matter and more rapid growth in the thickness of the cortex associated with those who have higher abilities (Cole et al., 2012; Geake, 2008).

Other studies suggest that people with higher abilities utilize their brain more efficiently due to greater neural synchronization in the brain (Geake, 2008; Koch et al., 2012). Synchronicity is the ongoing conversations and relay of information across brain areas and this connectivity gives rise to cognitive functions (Koch et al., 2012).

High ability performers have brain anatomical and physiological differences (Cole et al., 2012; Geake, 2008; Koch et al., 2012; Mitchell, 2007; Takeuchi et al., 2011). We call these high performers or high ability children, gifted children. And the research suggests that gifted children may process information faster and “more richly,” just like Dabrowski postulated, due in part to structural brain differences (Daniels & Piechowski, 2009; Hanscombe et al., 2012). These brain differences and greater connectivity/synchronicity do “combine to create inner experiences and awareness that are qualitatively different from the norm” (Geake, 2008; Morelock, 1992). These differences result in unique ways of perceiving the world and require unique approaches in education, parenting, and psycho-social development (Morelock, 1992; NAGC, 2011; Webb et al., 2005).

To me, these findings suggest that gifted children have special needs that cannot be accounted for by environmental influences alone. Yes, environment does play a role in enrichment of potential, but there is evidence that those who possess higher abilities have different brain structures than those who do not possess those abilities. And this, in and of itself, cannot be denied or overlooked.

Have we found the gifted brain? No, but we have begun the journey, and there is great hope with the advent of the Connectome Project and advances in science and technology (NIH Human Connectome Project, 2013).

Catherine Gruener is the founder and owner of Gruener Consulting, LLC, an education program provider offering solutions to both parents and educators. Through its unique workshops and services

for gifted children, and positive discipline parent classes and seminars, Ms. Gruener offers insight and tools for parents and teachers in large group seminars, online courses, and private consultations.

Ms. Gruener holds a Master’s degree in neuropsychology and a second Master’s degree in professional counseling from the Adler School of Professional Psychology. She is certified in Positive Discipline, as a Positive Discipline Trainer Candidate (PDTTC). She is a Licensed Professional Counselor candidate in the state of Illinois.

Ms. Gruener has served 16 plus years in the mental health field contributing to neuropsychology, psychological research, community counseling, and special needs advocacy in the United States and in the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands. She has been an active member of the Illinois Association for Gifted Children since 2009, serving on the Social and Emotional Committee, and holds memberships in several professional organizations: American Psychological Association, American Counseling Association, Positive Discipline Association, Illinois Association for Gifted Children, and the National Association for Gifted Children.

For additional information please visit

[www.positivedisciplineparenting.com](http://www.positivedisciplineparenting.com).

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## Gifted Websites

These websites can help you find what you need.

### 1. [Hoogies Gifted](#)

The “all things gifted” page. Full of resources, articles, books, and links. A portal to the gifted world.

### 2. [Supporting the Emotional Needs of the Gifted](#)

The SENG website is full of articles on the emotional needs of the gifted, parenting, and special populations.

### 3. [Illinois Association for Gifted Children](#)

IAGC is an organization dedicated to the education and development of gifted children in Illinois.

### 4. [Center for Talent Development](#)

The CTD, housed at Northwestern University, is a learning center serving gifted children and their families through enrichment classes and parent seminars.

### 5. [The Center for Gifted](#)

Partnered with Northern Illinois University, the Center for Gifted provides weekend enrichment classes and a variety of quality summer camps.



## The new CGCC-sponsored Hacker Scouts by Elaine Luther

At a library meeting room on Sunday afternoons, kids are getting together, shooting off catapults they’ve built, and learning what an oscilloscope does. The kids are part of the Hacker Scouts–Near West Crew, and the boys and girls are earning badges on science and electronics topics.

Organizers Elaine Luther and Jay Kinzie were surprised at the interest in this idea and the group quickly reached capacity. Elaine is an area mom who wanted to start the group to help kids find potential friends with similar interests. Jay is a First Lego League coach who enjoys teaching kids about electronics.

Jay planned a semester of activities for the kids, culminating in working with [Arduinos](#), a type of micro-controller. He felt that they should have a good basis in understanding the underlying concepts before they work with the Arduino, so one of the first badges the kids earned was the Oscilloscope badge.



In this picture, Hacker Scout Dad Jay Harris works with a “Spark,” as the Hacker Scout Crew members are known, as the Spark tests out his musical instrument on the oscilloscope. First Jay led the kids in a conversation about sound waves, building on what they knew already and helping them to understand what those waves look like on the oscilloscope and what that means.

To cement this learning, the kids built their own instruments with rubber bands and boxes, and then played them near the microphone that was connected to the oscilloscope. In their first meeting as a Crew, the kids built catapults of their own design after seeing a few samples built in different styles. Jay Kinzie and parent volunteers talked with the kids about stored energy and how to put more of that stored, or kinetic energy, into their catapults.

At the end of that meeting, each child shot off their catapult (multiple times!) toward a target on the wall. The discussion was about which catapults were more effective than others, with an emphasis on learning and observation, not competition. The activities at Hacker Scouts are very much about the process, not the product.

The first two Hacker Scout meetings had extra help from young tween and teen volunteers that will soon be lost as those girls become a part of their own Hacker Scouts Tween/Teen–Near West that will meet at Green Line Wheels.

By the end of the semester, the girls and boys of the Hacker Scouts Crew will have learned to program their Arduinos and shot off compressed air rockets!

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## Want to get involved?

The CGCC Board of Directors is searching for a Far West Coordinator. If you live far west of the city and are interested in helping guide the organization, please contact board president Leslie Contos at [lesliecontos@chicagogiftedcommunity.org](mailto:lesliecontos@chicagogiftedcommunity.org)

## Hacker Scouts, cont.

Meanwhile, just blocks away, the Hacker Scouts Tween/Teen crew, led by member Miriam de Castelnau, busily built mouse trap cars with CDs for their back wheels. Kids built cars of their own design, powered by a mouse or rat trap. Upcoming projects include learning to solder and learning to program a [Raspberry Pi](#), a type of micro-controller.

In Buffalo Grove, the Hacker Scouts Northwest crew led by member Tara Lenga has been busy too. They shared their collections from home as a way to introduce themselves, they learned about Newton's Laws of Motion when they built Da Vinci style catapults, and most recently they explored QR codes. In the next few weeks they will delve into robotics.

Elaine Luther is a CGCC board member and mom who believes children with intellectual giftedness should be given the same support and encouragement as children who are gifted in sports. She has helped to found two other not-for-profit organizations and has worked with young people for the past 16 years.



- Lack of user sophistication
  - Assessment
- Among the commonly mentioned benefits of mobile technology are its:
- Cost effectiveness
  - Conductiveness to enabling or building and sustaining a one-to-one computer program
  - Ability to meet students where they are in their lives outside the classroom, through texting, gaming, and social networking
  - Role as a connector of learners

### ADVANCING POTENTIAL BY PERSONALIZING LEARNING

Research demonstrates that putting the child in the middle of the learning equation results in a dramatic increase in motivation. It is this sense of motivation that moves the child closer to reaching his or her potential as a learner. In my consulting I use the definition of potential provided by Carol Dweck in her book *Mindset*. According to Dweck, who focuses on the research behind a growth mindset versus a fixed mindset, potential is "the capacity to develop skills over time with effort." This definition is a particularly helpful one for parents to consider and teach to their children.

One example of personalized learning comes from New York City's School of One. There, according to Joel Rose, the founder of the School of One's math program, "a learner's needs, abilities, aptitudes, motivations, interests, skill levels, and most successful learning situations combine to provide a 360-degree view that reveals his or her best pathway for success."

Most parents would face challenges in finding a school that could provide such a tailor-made gifted program for each child, a program similar to what the School of One offers as part of its established policy. To address that challenge, parents can learn as much as possible about developing their own home-based program of personalized learning.

Here is what I see as the essential mindset and core strategies needed to create a personalized learning environment at home and at school:

- Remember to be supportive, calm, and focused on your relationship with the child.
- Ask the learner: What is it that interests you?
- Take a child-centric view, focused on hopes and dreams.
- Demonstrate a flexible approach that targets the child's strengths.
- Accept differences and remove obstacles.
- Consider the child's interests, learning styles, and performance preferences.
- Understand that kids learn with all their senses.
- Link formal and informal learning.
- Use distributed resources, blended learning, and learning across life settings.
- Include on-going or periodic assessments that include reflection as well as portfolios in various formats.
- Make use of technology-based tools.
- Incorporate a sense of play and fun.

### 21ST CENTURY SKILLS: GIFTED CURRICULUM OF THE HOME

Parents need a specific and manageable curriculum framework to structure the personalized gifted home-based program. The framework I suggest is based on the recommendations of the Partnership for 21st Century Skills. This national organization promotes merging the 3 Rs with the skills needed to "participate, achieve, and compete" in a global society. Primary among these skills are communication, collaboration, creativity/innovation, and critical thinking/problem solving.

Visitors to the P21's website ([www.p21.org](http://www.p21.org)) will find a two-page summary that illustrates the framework and includes:

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## Personalized Gifted Education in Every Parent's Pocket: mLearning Is Here

By Cathy Risberg, M.A.

This article first appeared in the January, 2012, issue of [2e: Twice-Exceptional Newsletter](#) and is used here with the author's permission.

We all know how assistive technology can help twice-exceptional children reach their potential. One technology many parents fail to consider as they personalize their child's gifted education is that of mobile learning devices. Leveraging technology to promote self-direction and self-reliance can help advance potential and transform our homes and classrooms into 21st Century learning environments. Mobile technology – mLearning – is one way to do that.

### MLEARNING: DEFINITION, BARRIERS, AND BENEFITS

As it's generally defined, mLearning involves learning across contexts that include the school, home, and museums. It's a means of learning with mobile devices while on the go 24/7 in our very mobile society.

In 2001, I took part in an early adoption of emerging mobile technology. A parent, a university professor, and I collaborated to write and implement a Palm Education Pioneer grant for mobile technology in my third-grade classroom at Quest Academy, a school for gifted children in Palatine, Illinois. That experience, along with current studies and my first-hand experience with mobile technology, has shown me the importance of examining both the barriers to and benefits of using mobile learning devices at home and at school.

An online blogger for The Training Journal, Martin Addison, has identified these barriers for mobile technology use:

- Lack of relevant, non-linear, and engaging content
- Screen size
- Organizational culture

- Core subjects and 21st-century themes
- Learning and innovation skills
- Information, media, and technology skills
- Life and career skills

The site provides additional detail as well, stressing the importance of five support systems critical to underlying this framework.

## THERE'S AN APP FOR THAT: HARNESSING STRENGTHS AND OVERCOMING OBSTACLES

When it comes to using mLearning at home to implement a gifted curriculum, I offer the advice of popular ed tech blogger David Warlick. He states that "learning is about the experience, not about the tools...The only thing we should be concerned with is equitable access to rigorous, relevant, and irresistible learning experiences that reflect and harness the times, the environment, and the ultimate goals of learning."

It is the ability of mobile learning devices to provide not only access to learning but also acceleration of the curriculum. An explosion of mobile apps for smartphones, e-readers, tablets, and game systems has taken place, and the following list represents just the highlights of an extensive mobile app and resource list that I have compiled [and which is posted on the 2e: Twice-Exceptional Newsletter website].

### Communication/Collaboration

1. [Broadcastr](#) – helps create immersive experiences tied to a particular location
2. [Diigo](#) – social bookmarking site that helps you organize and share your bookmarked sites
3. [Google Docs](#) – allows you to create, share, and access documents and presentations from anywhere
4. [Mixbook](#) – versatile program for creating photo scrapbooks and calendars
5. [PicLits](#) – creative writing site with key words that can be added to pictures

### Creativity/Critical Thinking

1. [Animoto](#) – video slideshow service that turns photos and videos into professional looking videos
2. [Drawing Pad](#) – allows you to draw, write, or use stamps and gets rave reviews from users
3. [Mindomo](#) – mindmaps to solve problems and think creatively
4. [Popplet](#) – for creating timelines and flowcharts that can be shared and completed through collaboration
5. [SimpleMind](#) – helps with brainstorming, collecting ideas, and structuring thinking

## A FRAMEWORK FOR ADVOCACY

I encourage parents to become advocates for the use of mobile learning devices at home and at school as tools for exploration, discovery, access, and acceleration for their children and for all learners. My framework for advocacy includes these steps:

1. Begin at home by examining the barriers and benefits of mobile learning for your child.
2. Document and reflect on your experience of personalizing learning with mobile learning devices.
3. Research mLearning in education and how it is facilitating the acquisition of 21st century skills.
4. Share your discoveries and network in person and online with other parents and educators.
5. Ask a question and start a conversation in your school to find out just how mLearning might be incorporated as a tool to help personalize the curriculum for all students, including every uniquely gifted learner.

## FOR MORE INFORMATION

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October CGCC event at C&A Robot Factory in Libertyville. Participants built, programmed, and tested Lego creations.

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#### Websites

• <http://www.educause.edu/Resources/Browse/MobileLearning/17505> Here is a tremendous help for anyone interested in mobile learning – a list of 134 resources.

• <http://www.globalschoolnet.org/gsnpr/> This not-for profit links kids and promotes content driven online problem-solving and global collaboration.

• <http://www.p21.org/> The Partnership for 21st Century Skills advocates for 21st century readiness by merging the 3Rs with communication, collaboration, creativity/innovation and critical thinking/problem solving.

• <http://www.timeandlearning.org/> This not-for-profit is dedicated to improving student achievement, with a focus on students living in poverty.

• [www.web2teachingtool.com](http://www.web2teachingtool.com) A site designed to help teachers provide learning opportunities for students that will develop 21st Century learning through the use of Web 2.0 tools, such as Wordle and Glogster.

This article is based on content presented by Cathy Risberg, M.A., at the 2011 NAGC convention. Risberg consults with parents, students, teachers, and administrators to identify and provide strength-based strategies to help all students, especially those who are gifted and twice-exceptional, reach their full potential. Find more information at her website [Minds that Soar](http://MindsThatSoar.com).

## Why you'll love being a CGCC member

This organization exists for the benefit of gifted kids and their families.

### 1. Events

As the CGCC gets larger and assists with more events in the Chicagoland area, members will get first dibs on registration.

### 2. Kid connection

Our kids are unique, and sometimes have a hard time finding others like themselves. There's a greater likelihood junior will run into another 8-year-old Minecraft-obsessed Neil deGrasse Tyson fan in this organization.

### 3. The [forums](#)

Help us grow this fantastic resource. Parents reaching out to parents. We all need each other.

### 4. [Professional Member Directory](#)

Gifted kids can be a challenge, and sometimes you just need a little help. Our professional member directory is a valuable resource for parents.

The communications committee is looking for book reviews, articles, and pictures for the fall newsletter. If you're interested in contributing, please contact newsletter editor Jen Merrill at [jenmerrill@Chicagogiftedcommunity.org](mailto:jenmerrill@Chicagogiftedcommunity.org). We appreciate your contribution!



# Chicago Gifted Community Center Board of Directors

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## Upcoming events, continued

Every second Saturday of the month, the Museum of Contemporary Art has a family day. April's theme is "[Deconstruction](#)" inspired by artists in their exhibition "Destroy the Picture: Painting the Void." The new Reva and David Logan Center for the Arts at the University of Chicago has [Family Saturdays on April 27 and May 4](#). These offer a variety of workshops for all ages such as Lego animation, dance and improv. The Oriental Institute of the University of Chicago also offers family programs. Birds is the theme this month. On April 20, the Oriental Institute teams up with the Illinois Department of Natural Resources for "[Urban Birds](#)" which presents how some of the same birds that were found in ancient Egypt have adapted to become Chicago-dwelling urban birds. The "[Super Bird](#)" program on April 28 features a theatrical storytelling of an authentic ancient Egyptian folktale.

Every month there are an amazing number of mostly free activities happening in the Forest Preserves of Cook County. The events usually are posted on the first of the month on the Forest Preserve calendar at: <http://fpdcc.com/events> and several are featured on the CGCC calendar shortly thereafter.

Tickets for this year's Chicago Humanities Festival Stages, Sights and Sounds festival are now on sale. This year's festival takes on fairy tales. Six companies from around the world are coming to Chicago to tell treasured stories to delight both children and adults. See their website: [www.chicagohumanities.org](http://www.chicagohumanities.org) for the complete festival schedule which runs from May 7-19.

Have fun!

## SENG facilitator training

My life changed the day I met a group of parents whose young children could use a hundred adjectives to describe the agony caused by the tags in their shirts, whose

children could read Harry Potter in Kindergarten and preferred that than to play with their classmates, whose children cried for starving people and could not understand their parent's inability to fix the world. I realized then that there were others whose parenting experience was not so very different from my own. This is the experience that SENG Model Parent Groups (SMPGs) are designed to achieve and it is why I always recommend participation in such a group to parents raising gifted children. If you are interested in participating in such a group, please [email me](#). As the Illinois SENG liaison, I maintain a list of interested parents and try to connect parents with facilitators.

Unfortunately, SMPGs are few and far between, due to a lack of trained facilitators. SENG, Supporting the Emotional Needs of the Gifted, is a national, not for profit organization promoting, among other things, parent learning, understanding, and support of gifted children. In addition to designing the SENG Model Parent Group, SENG trains and certifies facilitators. The Chicago Gifted Community Center, in conjunction with SENG, is offering SMPG facilitator training April 29-30 here in Chicago for the first time. I'd like to encourage anyone interested in leading groups of gifted parents to join us for this training. To [register or for more information](#), see the CGCC web site.

I have found leading SENG Model Parent Groups to be a rewarding experience. Even though I have led groups for nearly ten years, I never fail to learn something myself from every group, plus I meet so many interesting people and know that my efforts have helped many gifted children to be understood. For these reasons, I encourage you to consider becoming a certified SENG Model Parent Group facilitator.

Newenka DuMont is a Chicago Gifted Community Center board member, SENG Illinois Liaison and long-time SENG Model Parent Group facilitator. She lives in Hinsdale.

## Areas served:

Because Chicago and its surrounding suburban areas are so large, it is difficult to organize events for gifted children and families that everyone in our region can attend easily. An event might sound great to you, but if it is 50 miles away, or getting there or home will trap you in rush hour traffic, then you're not likely to go. It's a problem we've all encountered. To solve this, CGCC divided the area into six functional regions:

- North Suburban
- Northwest Suburban
- City of Chicago
- Near West Suburban
- Far West Suburban
- South Suburban



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## SENG – Supporting Emotional Needs of the Gifted

### WORKSHOP: **SENG Model Parent Group (SMPG) Facilitator Training**

**WHERE:** DePaul University O’Hare Campus  
8770 W Bryn Mawr Avenue, Chicago, IL 60631  
Just off the Kennedy (190) and Tri-State (294) Expressways

**WHEN:** April 29-30, 2013  
Monday: Session I: 8:30 am to 12:30 pm - Lunch on Your Own  
Session II: 1:30 pm to 5:45 pm - Dinner on Your Own  
Session III: 7:00 pm to 9:00 pm - Practice with Parent Group  
Tuesday: Session IV: 9:00 am to 12:30 pm - Evaluation & Action Plan

**REGISTER ONLINE:** Chicago Gifted Community Center website: [ChicagoGiftedCommunity.org](http://ChicagoGiftedCommunity.org)  
Space is limited, so please register early!

**COST:** \$250 per person includes the book: *Gifted Parent Groups: The SENG Model*, 2<sup>nd</sup> Ed

**QUESTIONS?** Contact: Newenka DuMont ([Newenka@ArvaMont.com](mailto:Newenka@ArvaMont.com))

The facilitator training prepares and certifies individuals knowledgeable about giftedness in children to facilitate groups of parents sharing experiences about their gifted and talented children. These groups typically consist of 10 to 20 parents coming together to discuss topics like motivation, peer relationships, discipline and stress management. The co-facilitators, although knowledgeable about issues impacting gifted and talented children, do not advise families. Their facilitation provides a non-judgmental, nurturing atmosphere where parents are themselves a rich source of ideas, information and experience. Discussions are centered on ideas and principles from the book, *A Parent’s Guide to Gifted Children* by Webb, Gore, Amend, and DeVries. The groups typically meet once a week for 8 to 10 sessions.

Participants are expected to have read *A Parent’s Guide to Gifted Children* prior to the sessions. Some content will be reviewed during the training. The facilitator training includes:

- Objectives of SENG Model Parent Groups, SMPG
- Characteristics of Parents in SMPG
- The Role of SMPG Facilitators
- Group Facilitation Techniques
- Content Learning of Session Topic Areas
- Practice of Facilitation Techniques
- Potential Problems and Solutions in SMPG
- Developing an Action Plan for Local SMPG

Rosina Gallagher, Ph.D., will lead the workshop. She is a certified SMPG facilitator and trainer, and has 30 years experience in education as a school psychologist, coordinator of special education, and administrator of gifted programs in a large urban public school district. An active member in several professional organizations, Dr. Gallagher is past president of SENG and adjunct faculty in gifted education at Northeastern Illinois University in Chicago.

Workshop co-facilitator Newenka DuMont is the parent of two gifted teenage daughters, whose needs have prompted her to become knowledgeable and active in the field. Founding president of the Gifted Education Cooperative and on the board of the Chicago Gifted Community Center, Newenka is the Illinois SENG Liaison and a certified SMPG facilitator, leading groups in the Chicago area since 2003.