

# GT Family e-News

**August 31, 2012**

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## **Welcome Back**

Welcome to the 2012-2013 school year! This is our first eNews of the new school year. These e-newsletters are intended to provide information regarding enrichment opportunities for your family, parent support and advocacy details, dates and times for events and deadlines of interest to our gifted community, resource reviews and availability, and a glimpse into the world of gifted education in the Thompson School District.

Our eNews is sent to families on our GT Communications list (inclusion at your request) roughly two times per month.

If you have news you would like included in future editions of the GT Family eNews, please send me an email with the details.

If your child has graduated and/or you no longer wish to receive the eNews, please let me know.

Have a wonderful school year!

### **Meet the Enrichment Programs**

Our district GT office coordinates six enrichment programs throughout the school year. If you have interest in coaching and/or getting your child involved, please contact your GT teacher for more information or let me know of your interest.

**CHESS** (for grades K-12): This program encourages students to engage in logical-mathematical and critical/creative thinking as they play chess during the school year. Chess clubs are available at many of our schools. The TSD Chess League provides interschool competition during the spring semester. A state-qualifying chess tournament is held in the early spring, and a culminating free chess tournament is held in the late spring. Tournament participation is open to all district students (regardless of involvement in a chess club or Chess League). Volunteers are needed to coach students.

**MATHCOUNTS** (for grades 6-8): This program enhances problem solving skills of middle school students who are interested in mathematics.~New problem solving techniques and tricks are discovered, taught and practiced (visit <http://mathcounts.org/>). Coaching materials are available. School competition usually takes place in January, with a regional competition in February, and a state competition in March.~Volunteers are needed to coach and to help during weekly practices and at school competitions.

**ROBOTICS** (for grades 3-12): Both First Leagues and VEX teams are available in the district. Math, science, and technology are integrated through exciting robotic challenges. Students can engage in hands-on, standards-based activities to build teamwork and problem-solving skills. Interested teams can also compete in robotic challenges (visit <http://www.usfirst.org/>, <http://www.vexrobotics.com/>, or <http://action-works.org/event/>). A TSD Robotics Expo is held in the fall.

Volunteers are essential in running the program within school sites to assist teachers and students and to assist at the local tournaments.

**ODYSSEY OF THE MIND** (for grades K-12): OM is a challenging program utilizing long term and spontaneous problems to teach students how to engage in creative problem-solving, to learn new divergent thinking skills, and to explore “outside-the-box” creativity. Teams of 5-7 students can participate in regional and state competitions. Top scoring teams are invited to attend the World Finals. Teams form throughout the school year and the competition season begins in the spring (visit <http://www.odysseyofthemind.com/>). Volunteers are needed to coach students, assist during the regional and state competitions, judge, etc.

**SHADOWS IN THE ARTS** (for grades 5-12): Specially selected artistic students are offered the opportunity to work directly with local artists and learn about their techniques, media, experiences, and creations in the SITA program, typically held in the spring. Elementary students meet for one-half day, while middle and high school students meet for a full day at local school sites. Artists and host teachers are needed.

**SPELLING BEE** (for grades K-8): Spelling teams are formed in different ways from school to school and meet to prepare for the district spelling bee in January. Study lists are offered at no cost to students who would like to participate in the District Bee. The top six spellers are invited to participate in the state spelling bee held in March. Volunteers are essential to coach students and help during the local competition.

### **The MathCounts Opportunity**

As mentioned above, MathCounts is a wonderful program for middle school students interested in training their brains to take mathematical thinking and problem solving to another level.

Teams cannot exist without coaches. If you have interest in coaching, co-coaching, or supporting a MathCounts team at one of the middle schools (a faculty sponsor is also required), please contact me or Cheryl Gillpatrick, the MathCounts coordinator for the district: 203-0955 or [cgillpat@msn.com](mailto:cgillpat@msn.com).

**Welcome, Melissa! Thank you, Sue!**

Our district's Odyssey of the Mind coordinator, Sue Teumer, has stepped down from this position. She has poured countless hours into the program over the past few years, and provided significant leadership for OM in TSD. Thank you, Sue!

We want to introduce all of you to Melissa Sellers, our new OM coordinator. Melissa has been involved with OM (and other district enrichment programs) as a parent. She brings strong organizational skills, enthusiasm, and leadership to her new role. Please help us in welcoming Melissa: msellers@lpbroadband.net.

### **To Be or Not to Be Sponsored . . .**

The district has asked individual teams to declare whether they wish to continue to be district sponsored or if they would prefer to be community-based teams. The reasons for this decision and the discussion around the pros and cons of sponsorship or support are located at the Northern Colorado GT Parent Wiki-Space at <http://northerncoloradogtparents.wikispaces.com/>.

All teams must submit the Sponsorship or Support Agreement form before meeting with students. This form is also located on the wiki-space.

For those teams that intend to be district sponsored: you must send all volunteers to a mandatory training. For teams ready to roll up their sleeves and get to work, volunteers should come to the training on either **Thursday, September 6, from 6:30-7:30 PM** or on **Monday, September 17, from 12-1 PM**. Please **RSVP** to me for location and other details. If your volunteers are not yet recruited, additional trainings will be made available later this fall.

### **Parent Technology Night**

Due to popular demand, the Parent Technology Night that was offered last fall by GT specialist Diane McInturff will have an encore performance on **Monday, September 24, at 6:30 pm**, at the Administration Building. Whether you attended or you missed last October's interactive evening of online parenting tools, things you need to know to keep your child safe in an online world, and sites of importance for gifted families, save the date for the 2012 version. This is important (and fun) information for parents of children at all age levels!

### **2012-2013 Brown Bag Lunches & 2e Lunches**

The GT Brown Bag Lunches are designed for parents to have the opportunity to gather and share their experiences, provide feedback to the district, and garner support for the job of parenting GT kids. These informal monthly gatherings will resume in September. We are currently setting up our schedule for the new school years and looking for host schools throughout the district.

- Our **first Brown Bag Lunch will be held on Wednesday, September 19**, from 12-12:45 at Ivy Stockwell Elementary. Regardless of the school your child attends or his/her grade level (elementary or secondary), this informal lunch is for you.

If you have a topic you'd like to discuss as a group or have a time/date suggestion, please send me an email: [Jennifer.Solt@thompsonschoools.org](mailto:Jennifer.Solt@thompsonschoools.org).

A second lunch group, focused on discussion around the needs of twice-exceptional (2e) students (students who are both gifted and/or talented and who also have a learning, emotional, communication or physical disability) will also begin in September. If you are interested in participating in this group and would like more information, please send me an email:

[Jennifer.Solt@thompsonschoools.org](mailto:Jennifer.Solt@thompsonschoools.org).

- Our **first 2e Lunch Bunch will be held on Tuesday, September 25**, from 11:30-12:30. This meeting will be held in the Aspen Room at the TSD Administration Building. Stop by the front desk to check in and receive directions to the room.

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### **NoCo Gifted Family Night and Community Meeting**

You won't want to miss the upcoming NoCo Gifted Community Family Night coming to Loveland High School on Monday night, September 17, from 6-7:45 PM. The evening features breakout sessions for parents (see the list below), information booths, robotics demonstrations, chess and board games, read alouds, and more for the whole family.

Sessions offered throughout the evening: large group welcome with information about the NoCo Gifted Community and Colorado Association for Gifted and Talented affiliation status; breakouts in "My Child Has Been Identified, Now What?" "What Kind of Learner Is My Child? Visual or What?" "WATTS: Meeting GT Children's Needs for New Experiences," "Experiences of a College Parent with GT Students & College Planning," "GT Advocacy/Funding Forum (with local school

board members)," and "What Are the Best Strategies for Gifted Students' Growth?"

**First Meeting of the New School Year:** Come join this parent-led group to focus on advocacy and support for GT students and their families. The first meeting of the school year is scheduled for Thursday, October 4, from 6:30-7:30 PM at the TSD Administration Building's Aspen Room. Park in the visitor spaces by the main entrance on the south side of the building. An outside entrance to the room will be marked.

### **Parent Day at the NAGC Convention**

- You won't want to miss the registration for this excellent event on Saturday, November 17, 2012. The National Association for Gifted Children's 59th Annual Convention is in DENVER this year at the downtown Hyatt Regency. This is an opportunity that will shape your understanding of parenting the gifted. We'd love to have a large parent contingency represent Loveland. Please go online to <http://www.coloradogifted.org/> for more information and to register.
- If you are planning to attend Parent Day and are willing to carpool, please send me a quick email with your contact information and whether you can drive or want to ride with someone else. I will attempt to help you connect with others interested in carpooling to this event.

### **Don't Forget to Wiki!**

The Northern Colorado GT Parents' Wiki-space is a great place to get gifted education information, including regional opportunities on the calendar. If you've missed past editions of the e-News, are looking for "TIPS Interactive Family Assignments" on giftedness, or want to participate in discussions with others in the GT community, click the link below.

<http://northerncoloradogtparents.wikispaces.com/>.

### **Save the Date**

- 2012 Thompson Robotics Expo: Saturday, October 27, 2012
- National Association for Gifted Children's 59<sup>th</sup> Annual Convention **IN DENVER:** November 15-18, 2012 (Parent Day is Saturday, November 17, 2012—you don't want to miss this opportunity)
- District Spelling Bee: Saturday, February 2, 2013

- Thompson Chess Tournament: Saturday, May 4, 2013

### **Contacts**

- Your school's Gifted and Talented teacher is your primary resource. If you don't know who that is or how to reach that individual, please contact me...
- Jennifer Solt, Parent Liaison and Enrichment Coordinator:  
[jennifer.solt@thompsonschoools.org](mailto:jennifer.solt@thompsonschoools.org), (970) 613-5057. Or, you may wish to speak to...

Carol Swalley, District GT Coordinator: [carol.swalley@thompsonschoools.org](mailto:carol.swalley@thompsonschoools.org), (970) 613-5058.