



The **Eagle's View**

A Newsletter of the Nazareth Area School District

Spring 2006

Enhancing the NASD Gifted Education Program

Following the recommendation of the Gifted Task Force which met in the fall of 2005, the Gifted Support Program is making some changes. The mission of the Gifted Education Program of the Nazareth Area School District is committed to providing the mentally gifted students with a flexible and comprehensive program that allows students to develop knowledge and skills to the highest possible level. All district personnel will provide an instructional environment that challenges and supports the cognitive, academic, creative, social, and emotional needs of gifted students to become life-long learners and leaders. The vision of the Gifted Program promotes critical thinking, problem-solving, and research skills which facilitate creative processes to prepare students to be successful leaders in their communities.

Referral for screening/evaluation in the program can come from the student, parent, or teacher. Global screening of student performance occurs in every building to identify students who should be screened. School counselors will be screening students on multiple criteria using a brief measure of cognitive functioning, a standardized gifted rating scale completed by the teacher, and teacher and parent input. Students who score high enough on the screening will meet with the school psychologist who considers the information obtained at the screening level and administers a measure of cognitive functioning, standardized reading and math achievement measures, and additional teacher input.

Through the gifted program, at all levels in the Nazareth Area School District, students are offered a variety of activities that program problem solving, critical thinking, self-selected research, creativity,

opportunities for leadership, and analysis and synthesis of information, with a strong emphasis on evaluating learning material. The gifted program will offer different levels of services, types of enrichment activities, and accelerated curriculum to meet the abilities, interests, and learning styles of identified students; challenge students to translate potential into performance; promote academic excellence and creative production by recognizing and nurturing the gifts of all students; and provide gifted education training for staff members.

At the elementary level, the teacher of the gifted support program facilitates exploration of various topics for the production of creative projects and presentations. In addition to independent learning, students have the opportunity to participate in cooperative groups and enhance leadership skills. All students engage in discussion groups using the shared inquiry method and higher level thinking skills.

The Middle School gifted program will be delivered through a gifted education class, inclusionary practices, and self-selected Activity period activities. In the gifted class, students will complete some activities as a group, but the primary focus of the class will be for the student to research topics of interest. In addition, the gifted education teacher will work at times with the academic subject area teachers in their classrooms to assist in the facilitation of extension activities. These curriculum extensions focus on the development of higher thinking and problem solving skills. Students also have the option of participating in gifted activity period.

The high school will be offering courses for gifted students for the 2006-2007 school year. The



goals of the high school gifted program include: implementing thematic units to encourage discussion and exploration of a variety of disciplines; incorporating differentiated instruction, problem based learning, and performance based assessments to enrich the curriculum for each individual student's interests; and integrating technologies allowing students to explore current global issues and help prepare them for the future. The program provides each individual with opportunities to explore his/her own personal interests in relation to the curriculum.

Communication and cooperation between home and school are important factors in helping gifted students use and develop their abilities. District staff will communicate with parents in many different ways. Parental conferences can be arranged during the school year. Teachers will include information on gifted education in the school monthly newsletters. Quarterly parent meetings will be scheduled by the Director of Pupil Services. For more information contact Rosemary A. Mentesana, Director of Pupil Services, at rmentesana@nazarethasd.org.

Nazareth Area Blue Eagle Education Foundation Enriches Our Community

In 2002, the Board of School Directors of the Nazareth Area School District voted to authorize the creation of an independent Educational Foundation. The Nazareth Area Blue Eagle Education Foundation is a non-profit, community-based organization governed by a board of trustees who represents a broad diversity from within the Nazareth Community.

PURPOSE

To develop, promote, and finance programs which supplement and enhance the quality of education and provide the community with extended educational opportunities within the Nazareth Area School District.

MISSION

- To support learning programs for the children of our schools and adults of our district by funding activities and cultural enriching programs, community events, scholarships, and academic awards
- To heighten a life long quest for learning, self-improvement, and knowledge.
- To make a positive difference in educational opportunities and the quality of life.
- To encourage participation and support in the Foundation's mission from individuals, families, civic groups, alumni, industries, and businesses.

For more information, visit the Foundation's web site at <http://www.nabe-edufoundation.org/>.

Upcoming Dates

Apr. 21, 22, 23, 28, 29, 30 - HS Spring Musical
Apr. 27 - No school for students
May 2-31 - Eagle's Nest AP Art Exhibit
May 5, 6, 7 - MS Spring Musical
May 9 - HS/MS Strings Concert
May 10 - BES Chorus Concert
May 11 - LNES Spring Concert
May 17 - HS/MS Chorus Concert
May 17, 18, 19 - District Arts Festival
May 18 - HS/MS Band Concert
May 19 - HS Early Dismissal / Prom
May 23 - Combined Elementary Strings Concert
May 24 - HS/MS Jazz & Small Ensemble Concert
May 29 - Memorial Day / Schools Closed
Jun. 7 - Graduation
Jun. 8 - Last day for students

Shafer Students Participate in 24 Challenge Competition

Students from Nazareth schools have a history of competing in the 24 Challenge. Here is a look at Shafer's participation this year.

On Friday, February 24, 2006, students at the Floyd R. Shafer Elementary School were thinking 24! Two representatives from each fourth and fifth classroom participated in a 24-challenge competition. The tournament was organized by Jim Pilla, the building Math Specialist and was proctored by a group of teachers. In fifth grade, our finalists were Griffin Schwab and Greg Kaminski, both from Mrs. Stump's class, with Griffin narrowly taking the fifth grade championship. For fourth grade, the finalists were Emily Donohue and Madison Mohn, both from Miss Banko's class, with Emily taking the title. Our two grade level winners then competed for the overall Shafer title. Fourth grader Emily Donohue was declared F.R. Shafer Elementary School's 24 challenge champion. Congratulations to all of the mathematical geniuses that participated in

Shafer's 24 Challenge competition.

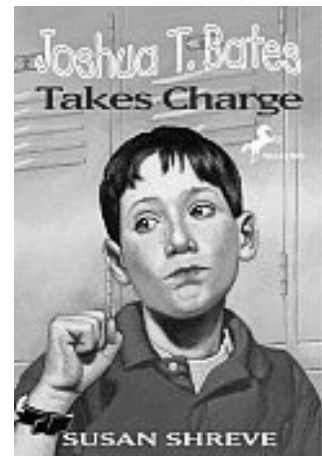
Robert Sun developed the 24 Challenge Math Program and is the founder of Suntex Industries, which is located in Easton, Pennsylvania. The game is designed to build strong skills in problem solving, mental math, and reasoning. Students around the world look forward to playing 24 Challenge on a daily basis. The object of the game is to make 24 from a card that has been put into play. Each card has four numbers. You can add, subtract, multiply, and divide. You must use all four numbers on a card but can only use each number once. For example if the numbers on a card were 3, 4, 5, and 7, one possible solution is $5+3=8$, $7-4=3$, and $8 \times 3=24$. For more information, you can access the Web site at www.math24.com. The site is filled with 24 Challenge fun for parents, teachers, and students.

Once again, congratulations to Emily Donohue and Griffin Schwab and all of the students at Shafer who participated in the preliminary rounds of competition.

Lower Nazareth Students Connect With Favorite Author

For at least 10 years, the students in Mrs. Strechay's second and third grade classes have enjoyed reading *Joshua T. Bates Takes Charge*, a book by Susan Shreve. Mrs. Strechay has been trying to contact the author for many years, and finally this year the two connected.

Ms. Shreve said she is "amazed and happy" that students so young are able to read a "Joshua" book, and she sent several signed copies of the book to Mrs. Strechay, inscribed "to all my wonderful readers." The experience was an exciting one for both Mrs. Strechay and her students.



Shafer Garden Club Eat Worms

The March meeting of the Shafer Garden Club was well attended. Perhaps it was due to the "advertising" posters students made and hung in the hallways. But then again, maybe students just wanted to see if they were really going to be asked to eat dirt and real worms. It wasn't like some of the TV shows where contestants DO eat real bugs and things. The participants swallowed some gummy worms and ate "dirt" made of pudding and crushed up chocolate cookies. Hopefully, everyone learned a little something about worms along the way.

The focus of the meeting was "Worms: Gardeners' Helpers." Students started by measuring the "as is" length of our gummy worms in inches and centimeters. Before eating them, they stretched the worms, just like real worms to see how long they could get. Later during our "Worm Scavenger Hunt" on the internet, one of the facts students learned was real earthworms can be 8" or longer. Our stretched gummy worms came pretty close to that measurement.

We sang a silly song about eating worms (to humor our advisor) and handled some REAL worms while completing some sensory experiments. Some students named their worms, while others thought they were going to be sick just looking at them move. Students formed hypotheses about their experiments but were surprised by some of the results. Everyone in attendance seemed to have some fun while learning about worms.



Countries and Cultures from around the World Celebrated at Bushkill

During the month of December, Bushkill Elementary School students were involved in a multi-cultural awareness unit. Parents, college students, community members, and staff all participated in bringing awareness to our students about today's many cultures. Traditionally, fourth and fifth grade students learned about the many cultures and customs associated with the school's "Yule Log" celebration. This unit was designed to give the rest of the school an opportunity to participate in a cultural awareness celebration. It truly was an enlightening experience for all.

Two school based events highlighted this unit. Inca Son Music and Dance of the Andes, which has performed on Good Morning America and MTV, visited the school and provided an exciting and educational performance. They dressed in authentic Inca attire and shared insights to the sounds and culture

of ancient Peru and Latin America. The other school-based event was our "Walk-Around the World" day. With the aid of Lehigh University's International Students and Scholars program, international students provided insights to their world to our wide-eyed students. Bushkill students rotated through a myriad of presentations and learned many facts about the culture and history of each country and culture represented.

In addition to the school based events, each grade level and specialty teachers became involved in sharing more information about the cultures and countries they were studying. In art, the students created flags of the different countries. In music, they sang and listened to songs. And, in physical educations, they played games representative of the different countries and cultures. Kindergarten studied Australia. Some of their activities

included the creation of an animal booklet, watching a National Geographic video, making Australian medallions, designing boomerangs, creating cave art, making ornaments, and decorating an Australian Christmas Tree. First grade studied North America. Some of their activities included the exploration of North America, identifying the different countries on the map and globe, reading stories, comparing and contrasting life styles and clothing, and created a variety of cultural symbols. Second grade studied Asia. Some of their activities included creating windsocks representing the different Asian nations, listening to audio books of stories from Asia, making holiday crafts, listening to selected literature and music, making paper fans, trying Chinese calligraphy, and making food representative of different Asian countries. Third grade studied Africa. Some of their activities included discussing economic problems of African countries, identifying the various climates and animals, discussing important celebrations and why they were important to the people, discussing symbolism related to the celebrations, creating African masks and bookmarks, and a student sharing their stories from a trip they took to Zimbabwe.

A lot of work and effort went into the creation and delivery of this unit. This proves that when you have parents, staff, and community members working together for a common goal, amazing things can happen. With time, we hope to make this great event even better.



Lower Nazareth Elementary Students Bringing Books to Life

What would you do if you were stranded on a deserted island or lost in the woods? Could you live off the land? Could you find shelter? Could you survive? Author Jean Craighead George answered these questions and more for some 4th graders at Lower Nazareth Elementary School recently when they read her book [My Side of the Mountain](#).

Mr. Kelley's class decided to see just how difficult it would be to live off the land. Using a large box donated by one of the parents, the class recreated a shelter very similar to the one Sam Gribble created in

the story. By digging out a large hemlock tree six feet in diameter, Sam had all of the comforts of home. He added a bed made of ash slats with deerskin covers and even a fireplace with a pipe leading out of one of the knotholes in the tree. Sam Gribble left his busy and crowded apartment in New York City for a life of fishing and trapping, sleeping in a tree, and living off both the land and his own ingenuity.

Using their own ingenuity, the students made a model representation of Sam Gribble's tree home and even spent time reading and creating activities in their

"tree." Each student handled a different aspect of the project and brought in props to make the tree more realistic. The activity provided the students with a sense of what it may have really been like to live off the land as the character in their book did. Their work was definitely the talk of the school for anyone who strolled down their hallway. The recreations by their peers helped bring the book to life for the other LNES students and peaked the curiosity of those who had not yet read [My Side of the Mountain](#).



Nazareth Students Participate in PMEA Region Festivals

In December of each school year, approximately 1,000 student musicians from over 70 School Districts take part in auditions for Pennsylvania Music Educators Association (PMEA) District Band, Chorus and Orchestra Festivals. These 3 day Festivals are hosted by high schools from the Reading area to the Poconos. From these PMEA District Festivals, student musicians are selected to participate in PMEA Region V Festivals through another audition.

District 10 Band – Whitehall High School (January 19-21, 2006)

Participants: Sarah Strouse, Robin Sustak, Lauren Hilborn, Eric Kowalski, Craig Albert

District 10 Orchestra – Brandywine Heights High School (January 5-7, 2006)

Participants: Seth Kerner, Robin Sustak

District 10 Chorus – Muhlenberg High School (February 2-4, 2006)

Participants: Kayla Mormak, Laura Romano, Josh Kern, Jon Meixsell

Region V Band – Central York High School (March 2-4, 2006)

Participants: Sarah Strouse, Robin Sustak, Eric Kowalski

Region V Orchestra – Saucon Valley High School (February 16-18, 2006)

Participants: Robin Sustak

Region V Chorus – Kennard-Dale High School (March 16-18, 2006)

Participants: Kayla Mormak, Josh Kern, Laura Romano

Helping Children Use the Internet Responsibly

The Internet has dramatically changed our world and the way we interact with it. It provides faster communication, advanced research techniques, up-to-the-minute news, entertainment, online shopping, and financial management. It is a resource that our children are using on a regular basis, and Nazareth Area School District is taking steps to ensure that students use the Internet responsibly by implementing an Internet safety curriculum in all schools, and working with parent groups to foster a better understanding of Internet safety issues.

Based on a recent survey of 40,000 students conducted by I-Safe, a non-profit organization devoted to protecting the online experiences of youth:

- 30% of students spend at least one hour per week on the Internet
- 12% of students say that they spend more time on the Internet than with friends
- 30% of students say e-mail, chat rooms, or instant messaging is the main way they stay in contact with their friends
- 38% of students feel freer to do what they want on the Internet
- 31% of students say it is easier to talk with people on the Internet than in real life
- 55% of students admitted giving their personal information (name, gender, age, etc.) over the Internet
- 25% of students believed there was nothing wrong with chatting with strangers online
- 10% of students had met someone face-to-face that they previously met online

Blogging, a form of online journalism or web log, has become increasingly popular. It can be an excellent tool for communication, but students should be careful of the personal identifying information that they post in a blog or in the user profile they create when setting up a blog account. Some popular blog sites include myspace.com and xanga.com. As a parent, it is easy to



check if your child has established a blog account by visiting one of these sites and searching for the child's full name in quotes.

Here are some other tips for parents to help their children use the Internet responsibly:

1. Keep the computer in a location where everyone sees the screen.
2. Don't post your personal information and beware of requests for your personal information online.
3. Teach your child how to recognize and avoid cyber predators.
4. Report strangers who solicit meetings with any child.
5. Report cyber bullying and threats.
6. Install and operate updated security software.
7. Establish open lines of communication with your child and have frequent discussions regarding your child's online experiences.

More information regarding online safety can be found online at the I-Safe web site, www.isafe.org. Additional resources to assist parents with Internet education can be found on the district web site at www.nazarethasd.k12.pa.us/onlinesafety.

Nazareth Area School District Early Intervention Services

The Nazareth Area School District and the Colonial Intermediate Unit, in compliance with Special Education Regulations, provides the following information on Special Education – Early Intervention services for preschool special needs children, ages 3-5. The purpose of this notice is to inform the public of the available services, eligibility, and referral process.

Parents who have questions regarding their child's sight, hearing, learning, talking, movement, manipulation of objects, understanding, showing of emotions, getting along with others, playing with toys, taking care of himself/herself, should telephone Colonial Intermediate Unit 20 Early Intervention Program. The Early Intervention Program can provide information, screening, evaluation, program, therapy, parent involvement, and referral to community agencies at no cost to the parent. The times/location for screening/evaluation will be convenient to the parent and will assess the strengths and needs of the child.

If you have concerns about your child's development and are interested in a screening/evaluation, please call 1-800-343-6348 or 610-252-5550 to make the referral.

The Colonial Intermediate Unit recognizes the need to protect the confidentiality of personally identifiable information in the education records of exceptional children. The Intermediate Unit policy incorporates provisions from the Regulations of the State Board of Education on Pupil Records, Commonwealth of Pennsylvania Chapter 14, Department of Education Chapter 342, Special Education Services and Programs 342.68, Family Education and Privacy Act (the "Buckley Amendment") as codified in 20USC 1232g. All information gathered through the screening/evaluation process is considered confidential under section 438 of the General Education Provisions Act.