

# Our GT Advocate

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## HMS GT Opera Performance

The Academically Gifted and Talented students from all the Livingston Elementary Schools were recently treated to performances that transported them back to the Middle Ages through opera.

*A Journey Back to Medieval Times through Opera* was the HMS GT Theatre Cluster students' original opera, which was specially written as the culminating activity for the fall Elementary GT Middle Ages unit of study. The Heritage students were responsible for the



composition, preparation, and presentation of the opera.

They prepared for this challenging undertaking by sampling videos and live performances of the opera format, collaborating and combining their individual visions of what the performance should look like, and participating in acting warm-ups. This enabled them to experience the skills necessary to produce a full opera performance, including music and scenery.

This year instead of just watching a performance, the elementary students were invited to participate in a theatre workshop style environment. HMS students discussed and rehearsed their songs and choreography with the younger students, involving them in the presentation. A fun and educational time was had by all.



GT students practice songs during the workshop session.

## Our GT Advocate

**Our GT Advocate** is produced through the efforts of the Livingston School District's Gifted/Talented and Enrichment Department. The goal of this newsletter is to provide the general public with information on both the GT and enrichment programs offered by the district, as well as some outside enrichment ideas and helpful resources.

We reserve space in each issue of **Our GT Advocate** for student input. If you would like to be a contributing member, please contact Sharon Handley at (973) 535-8000, Ext: 6920 or [shandley@livingston.org](mailto:shandley@livingston.org)

**Our GT Advocate** can be found posted on the Livingston District website at <http://www.livingston.org> below the drop down menu: District

Departments, Gifted and Talented, and click the link on the left for **Our GT Advocate**.

If you would like to have **Our GT Advocate** emailed with each new publication, go to the district website <http://www.livingston.org> and click: "Subscribe to LPS News" and check the box for **Our GT Advocate**.

# NJAGC Annual Conference Workshop Overview

The March NJAGC conference offered workshops that can be used not only at school, but at home to foster creativity and imagination.

## Engineering Exploration!

Children develop problem solving skills, higher order thinking and creativity through their explorations of how things work.

Engineering is all around us. From Purell to Rocketry, engineers have a role in the development of many areas in our world. There are Chemical Engineers, Mechanical Engineers, Civil Engineers, and the list goes on! Through challenging learning experiences at all levels, students can develop their STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering and Math) understandings and application. The hands-on activities presented in this workshop apply to small and large group settings in the classroom and can easily be implemented at home. A few of the ideas are presented below.

## Primary Grades (Pre K-2)

Use empty food containers to create a variety of items. Include challenges to the child to build a bridge, tower, vehicle, etc. Examples of possible materials include toothpicks, toilet paper tubes, paper, Lego's, or almost anything you can find around your house. Another great activity is to put ten different things in a container and see what they can construct.

To invent, you need a good imagination and a pile of junk.  
-Thomas Edison

## Intermediate Grades (3-4)

Incorporate some literature into your activities to connect ideas. Melissa Sweet's book, Balloons over Broadway is a great picture book depicting the origination of the Macy's parade. Have your child analyze how pop-up books are created and engineered, then create his/her own book. Shadow Theater also provides a wonderful opportunity to work with how light and movement can work together.

## Upper Grades (5-6)

Have preteens and teens look at the arcade created by a 9 year old boy at [www.cainsarcade.com](http://www.cainsarcade.com), then let their imagination go wild!

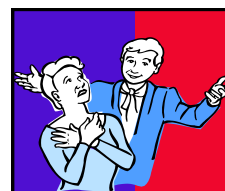


## Everyone Can Write

This interactive workshop incorporated strategies designed especially for reluctant writers to channel their own gifts for writing and tell their own stories. The workshop was led by Kevin Fox, whose credits include *Lie to Me*, *The Negotiator*, and episodes of *Law & Order* and his wife, Lynne Fox, an experienced educator.

Participants engaged in a variety of exercises designed to unlock creativity and writing reluctance. The storytelling activity was

particularly beneficial. Participants divided into groups of three. One person had about 2 minutes to tell a personal story. After the story was completed, the other two participants quickly wrote the story down. Then the three versions were compared. The power of this, however, was in the debriefing process. The audience was asked two questions, "How long did it take you to tell your story?" Answer: "...about 2 minutes." "How long would it have taken you to sit down and write the same story?" Answers: "...from 2 hours to days." The point made was that most people have "editors" residing between their minds and the paper. If we or our children can learn to "fire the editors," we can begin to write more creatively.



Another effective strategy is Dramatic Improvisation. Choose several volunteers to act out a scene. Have the group brainstorm any movie or book, characters, location, and time period. Students must act out a scene which includes all of these components.

Both of these examples use humor and imagination to unlock a writer's inner creativity.

# Debate: Pro or Con?

One of our most popular and competitive spring Academic GT cluster choices at the Middle School Level is Debate. Working with a partner, students research both sides of an assigned issue, and prepare formatted speeches. Each student must then deliver his/her

own speech during an in-house competition, and add on "attacks" to rebut their opponents' statements. The speakers with the top scores will then travel to the New Jersey Consortium for Gifted Education's regional competition being held Wednesday, May 21, 2014 at the

College of St. Elizabeth. This year's topics: JV (Grade 6) – *Be it resolved that the number of hours of instructional time in NJ public schools should be increased.* Varsity (Grades 7-8) – *Be it resolved that the USA Patriot Act should be repealed.* Good luck!

# Local Enrichment Opportunities

**Princeton University Art Museum** offers *Art For Families* Programs and activities for all ages on Saturdays from 10:30 a.m.—1:00 p.m. The museum has an extensive calendar of events offering films, a variety of artwork from around the world, special exhibits, and lectures. February 8<sup>th</sup> – June 8<sup>th</sup> visit *Edvard Munch: Symbolism in Print: Masterworks from the Museum of Modern Art, New York*. For a calendar of events visit: [Princeton Art Museum](http://www.princetonartmuseum.org)

NYC's **Intrepid Sea, Air & Space Museum Complex** is a dynamic, interactive and educational journey for all ages. The museum's mission is to honor our heroes, educate the public, and inspire our youth. The **Space Shuttle Pavilion** explores Enterprise's critical role in the development of our space program. You can see the new **Masters of Disguise: World of Camouflage** exhibition now through the end of August. [Intrepid Museum](http://www.intrepidmuseum.org)

**Franklin Institute presents: 101 Inventions That Changed the World**

Just a few of the 101 inventions you'll see are the incandescent light bulb, penicillin, the World Wide Web, LEGOs, Velcro, the locomotive, the atomic bomb, and color television. There's something for everyone! Your exploration begins in an immersive multi-screen environment and concludes in the gallery of replicas. Touchscreens invite you to learn more about the ones that interest you.

June 14 - October 26, 2014.

[Franklin Institute](http://www.franklininstitute.org)

**The Newark Museum** offers exhibitions and activities year round. *American Chronicles: The Art of Norman Rockwell* is a special exhibit running through May 26, 2014. Visit: [Newark Museum](http://www.newarkmuseum.org)

Looking for  
something to do?

**The Philadelphia Museum of Art: Treasures from Korea: Arts and Culture of the Joseon Dynasty** A sweeping panorama, *Treasures from Korea* celebrates the artistic works of the Joseon dynasty, a line of twenty-seven monarchs that ruled the Korean peninsula for more than five hundred years. A variety of objects are on display, including costumes, calligraphy, screens, furnishings, scrolls, accessories, and ritual wares, which are used in ancestral rites and Buddhist worship. Explore the roles of king and court, the distinct spheres of men and women in society, and religious beliefs, all underpinned by the ideals of Confucianism.

March 2, 2014 – May 26, 2014

[Philadelphia Museum](http://www.philamuseum.org)

**The Hunterdon Art Museum** presents changing exhibitions of contemporary art and design in a nineteenth century stone mill that is on the National Register of Historic Places. In this unique setting, the museum, a landmark regional art center since 1952, shows work by established and emerging artists and offers a dynamic schedule of art classes for children and adults.

[Hunterdon Art Museum](http://www.hunterdonartmuseum.org)

At the **Museum of American Glass**, your experience begins with an eye-dazzling panorama of 6,500 objects on display in sunlit galleries. The comprehensive collection ranges from Early American bottles and flasks, Mason jars and paperweights, to outstanding work from today's exciting contemporary glass artists.

[Museum American Glass](http://www.museumofamericanglass.org)

Nestled in the heart of central New Jersey, you can find **Grounds For Sculpture**, a magical place where art and nature are always at play. At its core are more than 270 sculptures by renowned and emerging contemporary artists, each positioned throughout meticulously landscaped parkland full of thousands of exotic trees and flowers. As you walk around you will see bunnies, an occasional fox, ducks, and other wild- (and less than wild) -life who happen by for a visit. There is always a photo ready to be taken. [Grounds For Sculpture](http://www.groundsfor Sculpture.org)

**Duke Farms** is a huge estate with diverse woodlands, extensive bike and walking paths, and gardens.

[www.dukefarms.org](http://www.dukefarms.org)

This **EagleCam**, located on Duke Farms allows viewers an up-close and personal view into the lives of a pair of bald eagles as they breed, incubate, and raise young. During the month of February three eggs were laid that have now hatched into eaglets.

[Eagle Cam - Duke Farms NJ](http://www.dukefarms.org/eaglecam)

**Spend the day together....**

New Jersey State Aquarium

<http://www.njaquarium.org/index2.html>

Battleship NJ

<http://www.battleshipnewjersey.org/visit/>

Extensive sites: NJ art museums

[http://artcollecting.com/nonprofits\\_nj.htm](http://artcollecting.com/nonprofits_nj.htm)

NJ Museum and Zoo sites

[http://www.metrojersey.com/museum\\_zoos.htm](http://www.metrojersey.com/museum_zoos.htm)

The Bronx Zoo

<http://www.bronxzoo.org/>

Fun things to do in New Jersey

[http://www.funnewjersey.com/Fun\\_with\\_Kids.asp](http://www.funnewjersey.com/Fun_with_Kids.asp)



## GT Game Night!

When is the next Game Night?



What do laughter, pizza, snacks, and friends have in common? **GT Game Night** of course! On Friday, March 28<sup>th</sup>, over 75 of our Livingston elementary and middle school GT students got together to play strategy games. This social event was planned by Laurie Rubenstein so children from various district schools and grade levels could meet for a few hours and play games like chess, Risk, Monopoly,

Apples to Apples, and Othello. In parts of the room, you could hear a pin drop where intense games of chess were being played; in other parts, you could hear laughter when friends shared jokes and stories, and there were also some heated debates overheard about answers to questions. Children even used the floor to play together.

Over the course of the evening, children not only ate pizza and

played games, but made some new friends. The students are already asking, "When is the next GT Game Night?" Thank you to Laurie and the parents who volunteered on Friday night to help make this a special event for our GT children.

## HMS - Model United Nations

Each fall, Model United Nations is offered at Heritage Middle School as an Academically Gifted and Talented cluster choice. Students are afforded the opportunity to:

- Play "Mining on the Moon," a simulation of international negotiation skills.

- Research an assigned issue as a member of an "adopted" country.

- Prepare and deliver formatted speeches in order to convince others to adopt an original resolution.

- Create a unique flag for their country.

- Compete for a place on the HMS team, which travels to a regional competition sponsored by the NJ Consortium for Gifted and Talented Education. This event is run by Drew University's *Political Science and United Nations Semester Program* students.

- Prepare games, crafts, and foods in order to educate others about their country by holding and exhibiting at a Multi-Cultural Festival.



We are thrilled to announce that the HMS Junior Model United Nations Team has returned from the 2014 Regional Competition victorious! The students representing *Saudi Arabia* - Andrew Jones, Alexander DeFilippo, and Zachary Zawila - earned the distinction of *Best Delegation* for their discussion of *Sustainable Energy*.

The HMS students representing *Mexico*, Jonathan Ackerman, Nicole

Bazhenov, and Bella Brodsky earned the distinction of *Best Delegation* for their discussion of *Global Education*.

Eashan Bagia of Azerbaijan was declared *Best Delegate* for his lively discussion of *Humanitarian Intervention*.

The HMS delegations for *Azerbaijan*, *Germany* and *The Democratic Republic of Congo* also gallantly defended their resolutions. Congratulations to all Model United Nations Members!



# GT Summer Offerings

The summer offerings listed are provided as a reference of opportunities for gifted students outside of the Livingston School District for weekend and summer classes and are neither endorsed nor promoted by anyone associated with the Livingston School District.



## Computers:

Apple Camp happens at all Apple Store locations and each workshop is three hours

<http://www.apple.com/retail/camp/>

Computer camp – locations: Montclair, Princeton, and South Orange at Seton Hall

<http://www.internaldrive.com/locations/nj-summer-camps-new-jersey-computer-camps/>



## Local area:

Summer Institute for the Gifted: day programs in Hoboken, Princeton, and Lincroft

<http://www.giftedstudy.org>

Gifted Study in Glen Rock, NJ: three separate sessions run between June and August

<http://giftedchildsociety.com/>

Montclair State University: Summer daily programs

<http://www.montclair.edu/gifted/>

Triple Threat Theater Camp in West Orange at the JCC: offers 3 and 6 week camps

<http://jccmetrowest.org/ttt>

Storming Robots: For novice and experienced GT students, this offers problem solving and hands-on projects.

<http://summer.stormingrobots.com>

Union County Dance Centre offers a Performing Arts Theater Workshop - enroll 1,2,3,4 or 5 weeks during the summer.

[http://www.ucdconline.com/summer\\_camp.html](http://www.ucdconline.com/summer_camp.html)



Verona Summer Music offers music lessons in the morning for beginning and advanced band instruments, guitar, and/or piano. If you are into the theatre, they offer a musical production in the afternoon.

<http://www.veronasummermusic.org>

Rutgers Summer Programs from Mason Gross School of the Arts: includes an Opera camp, theatre, dance, band, orchestra, voice, and more Julie Roth, director 732-932-9360 x 512

<http://www.masongross.rutgers.edu/extension/summer-programs>

Rutgers Summer Scholars Program: If you are an ambitious and high achieving high school junior (or younger), you may apply to take up to two Introductory level college courses at the Rutgers — New Brunswick campus this summer!

<http://summerscholars.rutgers.edu/prepare>

The International Ivy Summer Enrichment Program offers science, technology, math, the arts, and sports, with locations in Short Hills, Caldwell, and Chatham.

<http://www.iisummer.com>

Fairleigh Dickinson University: A Summer - Fun Camp with activities in science, art, theater, nature and sports

<http://view.fdu.edu/default.aspx?id=94>

Westfield Summer Workshop: Students get to create schedules of classes in performing, fine arts, and crafts. There is an extended day program available with the Westfield YMCA for sports/childcare, etc.

<http://njworkshopforthearts.com/>

Camp Invention offers classes in science, technology, engineering and math — locations in every county

<http://www.campinvention.org>

## Out of State:

John Hopkins University: offers summer program grades 2 - 12

<http://cty.jhu.edu/>



## Outdoor Wildlife Programs:

The Great Swamp in Morris and Somerset Counties - ranges from one hour to weekly summer camp programs in the natural sciences - programs are all hands on, including hikes

<http://www.greatswamp.org/EdPrograms.htm>

Trailside Nature and Science Center in Mountainside, New Jersey, Union County

<http://ucnj.org/community/parks-community-renewal/parks-facilities/trailside-beta/>

Essex County Environmental Center in Roseland

<http://www.essex-countynj.org/p/index.php?section=en v/o>

## Elementary GT Music

*"Creative musical thinking involves the ability to think imaginatively (creatively) in sound and to manipulate and create new and interesting musical ideas. As musicians call upon their creative intelligence in music, they are thinking mostly divergently, rather than convergently, about putting together new sound possibilities. Convergent thinking is the ability to think logically to find the one best solution to a problem, whereas divergent thinking does not require one correct answer, but the ability to render many possible answers. Music composition and improvisation require both kinds of thinking, but offer the best opportunities for students to exercise their divergent, or creative, musical thinking."*

Excerpt from the book Music Outside the Lines, by Maud Hickey, Northwestern University, Oxford University Press .

Fourth and fifth graders in the Gifted and Talented Music program have been immersed in a wide variety of compositional experiences this year. We started off the year by asking the question, "What is music?" At first, this may seem like a simple question to answer, but as the year has progressed, students have been challenged to expand upon and refine their definition of music. Units of study this year have included the following:

- ◇ "Found Sounds" - creating sound out of found objects and collaborating in a group to devise a composition based on these sounds.
- ◇ Aleatory ("Chance") Music: Students rolled dice to determine a sequence of musical phrases. This device and similar strategies have been used by well-known composers such as Mozart, John Cage and George Harrison from The Beatles.

- ◇ "Winter Scenes" - students chose from a series of winter photographs and, after reflecting on the main qualities of the image, created a musical soundscape with instruments and even some spoken word to convey their ideas.
- ◇ "Moods as Inspiration" - students chose an emoji and created a short piece reflective of that emotion.
- ◇ Serial Music - a 20<sup>th</sup> century technique that grew out of shifting ideas on tonality and musical structure. Students first created a "tone row" from a telephone number, and manipulated the row in a number of ways: inversion (upside down,) retrograde (backwards,) and retrograde inversion (upside down and backwards!)

Currently, students are in the process of expanding their understanding of "Serial Music" via the creation of a movement sequence

that will incorporate these ideas as part of the choreography.

In addition to these hands-on activities, students have been encouraged to think reflectively about each unit and what they have learned as they explore each compositional technique or device. Students have been encouraged to keep a "music journal" to record their thoughts about the compositional process. To learn more about the program, please visit my teacher page at: [Mrs. Slater's Webpage](#)



Students in the GT Music program extend their understanding of 20th century compositional techniques through movement.

## Dig it: Archaeology



**Archaeology** connects people to the past through discovery - a way to travel in time. Imagine what it might have been like to live in Ancient Egyptian times or to contemplate the meaning of cave symbols and drawings. The study of archaeology includes both scientific

inquiry and cultural understanding, touching on science, math, history, social studies and art. It also enhances higher level thinking skills such as problem solving, synthesis, and evaluation.

The Archaeology Cluster begins with an understanding of stratigraphy. The students may "layer" artifacts and soil or they may "unearth" these layers during a simulation. The "archaeologist" must practice record keeping and site gridding using a square field plan. As the students participate in

a simulated archaeological "dig," they are responsible for documenting their findings in a journal. Once the "dig" is completed, the group works together interpreting the artifacts to explain and bring meaning to this society including their lifestyles, beliefs and cultures. Finally the students painstakingly reconstruct a piece of pottery from shards. Hopefully the students will demonstrate the character traits so necessary for an archaeologist: patience and perseverance.



## Livingston Students Win NJAGC Contests!

This year's theme was "My Creativity, Curiosity, Challenge." When interviewed, each student was asked, "Why did you decide to enter the contest?" and "What inspired you to create the piece you did?" Here are their responses:

For this contest, I was inspired by my mom's question, "What do you like to do?" My answer - "Reading!" So I took the things I got from books and drew them, like my bed turning into a dragon.

**Audrey Wang (Grades K-2)**  
**1st Place: Art**

I entered this contest because it would benefit me and I would also learn many things along the way. I was inspired when I thought about how the three c's (curiosity, creativity, challenge) all linked together.

**Cindy Liang (Grades 3-5)**  
**1st Place: Writing**

I am really good with design and like fashion design, so I try to go to different contests where I can express myself. I like fashion, so my passion is designing new styles of clothing. I am curious about comparing old fashioned styles from China with the freedom of American fashion, and blending



them together into a new look.  
**Wenjing "Maddy" Huang (Grades 6-8)**  
**1st Place: Art**

I decided to enter this contest because I thought it would be a good way to show what I can do. I have always been an artist and wanted a chance to challenge myself to win...Lastly, I wanted to feel proud of all the work I've done over the years and the piece that I created. My inspiration was all the things I love, a flower vase represents my love of nature, and a paint palette and brushes represents my love for art. This inspiration actually came from a real life scenario when I saw a flower vase on my desk and my paint palette, along with a cup of dirty

paintbrushes. I looked at the scene and realized it was perfect for the contest.

**Maria Granowska (Grades 6-8)**  
**2nd Place: Art**

I've always wanted to compete in an art contest and this was going to be my first one. I've always loved drawing sea creatures and ocean life. And one day, I was sleeping, then mom woke me up to draw my picture. That was how I got my idea.

**Chelsea Peng (Grades K - 2)**  
**3rd Place: Art**

I wanted to enter the NJAGC contest for my own benefit. The fascinating things about natural disasters inspired me to create my artwork.

**Jeremy Luo (Grades 3-5)**  
**Honorable Mention: Art**



## Team Chess Scrimmage

Team Chess is an Enrichment program opened to any interested Heritage Middle School student throughout the year. During weekly lunchtime meetings, students learn and practice the tactics used for Team Chess, a fast paced game played with traditional pieces, but engaging four students at once. School tournaments are held bi-annually, with the top scores earning students a place on our County Tournament Team.

Most recently, our team hosted a scrimmage with students from

Millburn Public Schools. The morning started with traditional chess play, and after enjoying a snack and camaraderie, the HMS students taught the Millburn students the accommodations needed in order to play Team Chess. These chess enthusiasts of varying ages proved to be worthy opponents, and a fun and challenging time was had by all.

The next event coming up for the Team Chess Team is the Spring County Tournament. Just this past fall, a costume contest was added

to the event, and we encourage our students to come dressed as a favorite chess piece. Prizes will be awarded in categories such as most unique, most traditional, and most comfortable.

We will be sure to share our photographs of this festive activity in our fall edition of "Our GT Advocate!"



Our GT Advocate

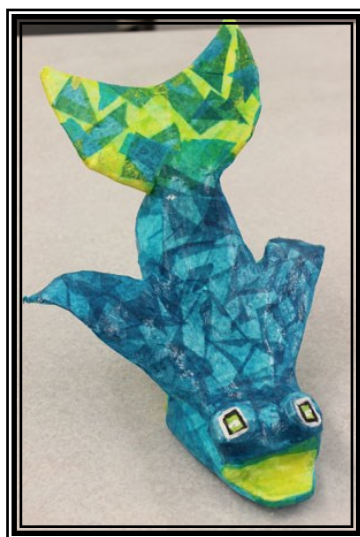
## Elementary GT Art

GT Art differs from the General Art Program in that it focuses on the Fine Arts. Students are introduced to various high end materials such as professionally used inks, oil pastels, charcoal, oil, watercolor and/or acrylic paints. The first few lessons of the year are geared towards training students to observe shapes, shadows and

detail. Eventually, students transition into lessons on color theory, where they learn about balance, contrast, and color mixing.

Gifted and Talented Art students refine their skills through the process of critique. Students are repeatedly asked to “take a step back” and self-assess their work, as well as the work of master artists.

Students are challenged at their individual levels, and with determination they work hard to meet those goals.



**GT Art Pieces  
Mt. Pleasant Middle School**



## MPM GT Art

Sixth grade Gifted and Talented Art students are involved in mastering basic concepts and techniques that allow creativity to blossom. Students are encouraged to experiment with media and concepts while working in their sketchbooks. These independent sketchbook assignments reflect their personality, as well as skill development. The assignments are then channeled into a creative journal page which is a visual record of their interests, skills, and personality. The Journal assignment is ongoing throughout the year.

The skill development continues while students are exposed to drawing from observation. This year we are concentrating on still life objects. The students completed a value study drawing using graphite pencil and conte crayon of a seashell. Students choose from a variety of still life collections to draw from observation and create an acrylic painting using a monochromatic color scheme. The activity will culminate in a discussion of the significant still-life artist.

Students will also be inspired to think outside the box and create surrealistic animal sculptures using

a shoe as the inspiration. The work will be constructed using a variety of found materials, plaster craft and tissue paper, and acrylic paint for color and texture. The work will be inspired by the surrealistic work of Salvador Dali who created bronze sculptures of animal forms.

*“Art is created from ideas. It is not enough to be able to draw, paint and sculpt. An artist should be able to think.”* (Gordon Woods). Our Gifted and Talented Art students are encouraged to challenge themselves to grow artistically and creatively, and to think.



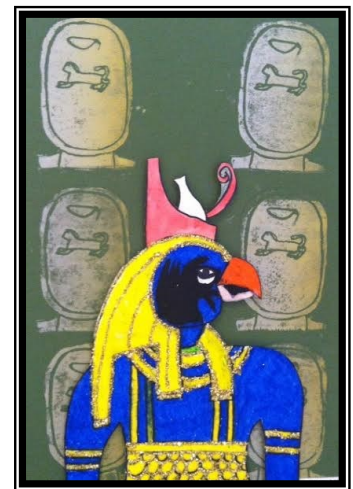
# Photo Gallery of GT Art

GT Art students paint the Heritage Middle School hallways.



Elementary GT Art  
Pastels on velour paper

Elementary GT Art:  
Egyptian gods/goddesses  
painted with watercolor  
on an ink printed  
background of a  
personal cartouche in  
hieroglyphics.



# Enrichment Forensics

Our district Forensics program is by far one of the most popular enrichment programs we offer. Through participation in Livingston's Forensics programs, any student in fifth through eighth grade is provided the opportunity to develop the lifelong skill of public speaking. Participating students increase their self-confidence and poise through coaching, practice, and making presentations.

At the elementary level, over 200 students accepted the challenge to participate in one or both offerings, Interpretive Reading and Oratorical Declamation. The students who participate in Interpretive Reading select a piece of literature, humorous, poignant or suspenseful, which they read aloud. Participating in Oratorical Declamation, students have the opportunity to select, memorize and present a portion of a speech in the spirit of the original orator. Students practice their pieces and, with the coaches, prepare to present them in front of an audience, hoping to be selected to represent Livingston at the tournaments sponsored by the Essex County Steering Committee for Gifted and Talented Education.

## Interpretive Reading

We were very proud of our Junior Varsity team members, who earned the second place JV Team Trophy. Megan Tappe, Lily Ann Nossen, Hayley Locke, Diego Bolanos, Veena Nambi, Shira Saltzman, Julian Levy, and Patrick Zotti all worked hard to earn this honor. Individual trophies were won by Hayley Locke, second place and Lily Ann Nossen, third place.

Ricky LaGrotta led his teammates as a finalist in the Varsity competition. His team members included Nicole Bazhenov, Rhianna Bhatia, Lauren Hirschmann, Brittany Sun, Michael Koewner, and Tina Li.

## Oratorical Declamation

This year we were thrilled to have a new and professional venue in which to hold the Oratorical Declamation tournament. Caldwell College very generously provided a spacious, scholarly venue for this county tournament. We extend our thanks to Caldwell College for supporting our efforts to provide opportunities for students to exhibit their public speaking skills. Over 120 students at the elementary and middle school level selected, memorized, and presented

speeches in the spirit of the original orator, at their individual schools competing for a spot at the county level.

Once again, Livingston students made us proud in this individual tournament! At the Junior Varsity level, Jaina Jallow earned a third place individual trophy. Gloria Liu placed as a finalist. They were joined by Junior Varsity team members Hayley Locke, Anant Gupta, Shira Saltzman, Valencia Xu, Katrina Leigh, Julian Levy, Jessica Woodlee, Jason Selvin, Adithi Jayaraman, Julia Benjamin, Caleb Choy, and Anna Panjikaran.

At the Varsity level, Nicole Bazhenov earned a finalist individual trophy. Team members included Avika Bansal, Ricky LaGrotta, Asma Khan, Jerry Zhuang, Elizabeth Tartakovsky, Rhianna Bhatia, Zachary Xue, Kevin Chari, and Brittaney Gui. Congratulations to our winners and worthy competitors!

## Lancers Junior Invitational

The challenge and competition will continue this spring. Many of our students are moving on to compete in the Lancers Junior Invitational Forensics Tournament sponsored by our own Livingston High School Forensics team. Dr. Michael Sunga has led our winning high school forensics team to national tournaments, no doubt helped by the experiences the students had at the elementary and middle school levels. Good luck to all the students who will be competing on April 26, 2014.





## Curious Minds: Would you like to know?

Everyone loves a mystery. All students love to investigate, explore, do experiments, and solve a problem. The **Curious Minds** cluster provides students with various opportunities to examine, make predictions, and draw conclusions, while examining mysteries in history. The students will use both inductive and deductive reasoning skills. They will form and compare theories on such mysteries as *The Terracotta Soldiers*, *The Statues on Easter Island* and the *Mystery of the Mary Celeste*. Other students in the Curious Minds cluster are solving crimes. These crimes may

include *The Chocolate Caper* or *The Mystery at the Mall*. In order to solve these crimes, the students will use reasoning skills as they employ charts, graphs, and logic grids. The students will follow clues, suspects, and alibis. Who knows, we may have several "Sherlock Holmes" among our "curious" students.

Malaysia Flight 370 may be somewhere off the Australian coast in the Indian Ocean?



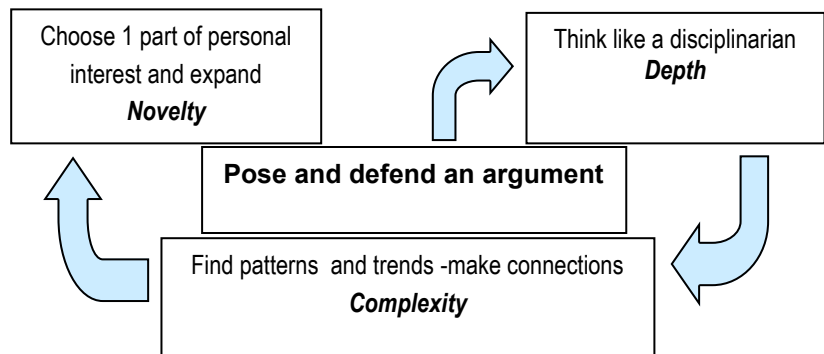
Students are also closely following the "real life" mystery of Malaysia Airlines Flight 370. They are charting facts as posted in the news, following the geographic search area on maps, eliminating suspects as new information is obtained, and drawing informative conclusions. Each day that brings a new "twist" in the investigation, causes the student to closely look at the facts and possibly change a generalization or assumption. A curious mind will always work to seek answers to the unexplainable or inexplicable.

## Creativity and Challenge

Dr. Sandra Kaplan is renowned for her work in the field of gifted education. At this year's New Jersey Association of Gifted Children's 23<sup>rd</sup> annual conference, her presentation of "Inserting Creativity and Challenge in the Common Core Standards: Differentiation to the Second Power" addressed differentiation for gifted learners. The goal was to demonstrate the varied ways to differentiate the Common Core Standards so that they are responsive to the integrity of the standards and, at the same time, reach the multi-layered needs of gifted education students.

During the presentation, Dr. Kaplan spoke of the G.A.T.E. model where four main ideas can be used to master a subject through a higher-level thinking process. The following can be adapted to virtually any grade, subject, and topic.

**Acceleration:** Students are recognized for their previous knowledge and are to be allowed to avoid redundant learning by being encouraged to learn the sophisticated and advanced information and skills of the curriculum at their own rate.



**Depth:** Extending the unit of study into an exploration of details, language of the discipline, rules, patterns, trends, ethics, and ideas.

**Complexity:** Activities that require students to make connections between disciplines, perspectives, and eras.

**Novelty:** Activities to make the curriculum personally relevant. When students think using these tools, they learn to approach subjects from the point of view of an expert. In doing so, they will understand concepts in a deeper and more complex way. For gifted

learners, this adaptation of the use of core curriculum standards provides both the learning of required factual information and the flexibility for independent learning and growth at their own pace.

*Dr. Sandra Kaplan is associate clinical professor for learning and instruction at the University of Southern California. She is a past-president of the National Association for Gifted Children. One of the world's foremost authorities in the field of gifted education, she has made presentations at the World's Congress on Gifted and NAGC and TAGT conferences.*



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**"Empowering all to learn, create,  
contribute and grow."**

