

D51 Gifted Education Newsletter

December 2022

Winter Break - December 22 - Jan 5



winter break

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News from our GT Director

It is the time of year when many people are thinking about gift-giving. Below are some links and ideas to help. However, keep in mind that the best gifts are often experiences and don't have to cost a lot of money. These ideas include things and experiences...

- [50 Best Experience Gifts for Kids](#)
- [NAGC 2015 Toys and Games List](#)
- [42 Experience Gifts](#)
- [Mensa Select Games](#)
- [The Ultimate Gift List for Bright & Quirky Kids](#)

There are also amazing classes in our community. Check out the Enrichment Opportunities and Scholarships available on our [D51 GT Webpage](#).

From all of us on the D51 GT Team - we hope you have an amazing holiday season and thank you for sharing your incredible students with us!

Student Spotlight - Loma Elementary

Adalyn TenEyck - 4th grade

When asked about her favorite school subjects, Adalyn quickly responds, "Writing, no social studies... but I love to read." It is quickly obvious that this fourth grader's love for learning crosses all curriculum and includes lots of topics outside of any school curriculum. Adalyn does indeed love to read and says that her favorite author so far this year is Kate DiCamillo. She especially enjoyed *Tiger Rising* which her teacher recently read aloud to her class.

Adalyn is the definition of a self-directed learner. Her mom says that Adalyn often makes notes at school about topics that interest her. She then comes home and researches those topics on her own. One of her favorite things to do is to find a place that she heard about in the classroom or on the news and then find that place on a map. She enjoys finding out how far the place is from her hometown of Loma.

Adalyn's family is especially important to her. She takes great pride in the conversations her family shares. Adalyn says, "I think I get to learn about lots of things other kids don't because I'm the youngest in my family. Since I have an older sister, the conversations we have are different from families who only have kids my age or younger."

Adalyn is a valued member of the Loma Lions community!

Student Accomplishment - Appleton Elementary



Meet Daxton

Daxton (Grand Junction, Colorado)

When he was little, Daxton's mom asked him if he'd rather be a programmer or doctor when he grew up. He chose programmer! From that moment on, he started using Scratch Jr. to build small programs that did everything from animation to a little store that he could play with his friends. These days, Daxton has moved on to more complex code and as a Level 4 student on the Coder's Ladder®, he is constantly taking his skills to the next level in languages like Python and Javascript.

"I just moved to level 4 and I'm excited to learn a bunch of new things to use in my projects. It would be cool to learn more CSS animation, I could make some awesome projects with that."

What impresses Daxton's instructors the most is how hard he works outside of class to build projects and come up with his own code. He even built a website for his drawing and writing club at school! Almost every day afterschool he spends time building projects with his friends. They will jump into repl (a program for coding in Python) and divide up a project so that they all get a piece to work on. Recently, they finished a typing test game that took them six months to complete as a team.

"When I'm working with my friends on something, we'll divide and conquer so that we aren't working on the same parts of the code."

So whether it is a new piece of code for a project or an algorithm to solve a 3x3 Rubix cube, he's the kind of kid that likes to break down a problem and try solutions until he's worked it out. That curiosity and passion is what drives him to learn more and why, all these years later, he still wants to be a programmer when he grows up.

"I've made, like, millions of tests on repl to help me figure out how it works."

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Teacher Game Reviews

Bookcliff Middle School - Mrs. Feather

We all can't wait for Friday! In many GT classrooms, Friday means game day. There is a reward waiting at the end of the week. We spend four days stretching our thinking and working on various projects. When Friday comes, we pull out the games, take a dip through the different games, and

invite peers to join in the fun. Teachers and students gather at a round table where all are players in a game. Game day also allows us to build strong relationships. In our class, we do a lot of stretching of our thinking, which requires being a risk taker in front of our peers. We collaborate on projects or problem based learning. We learn a lot about each other when we play together. The bonds in our classroom help lead to stronger learning and a sense of belonging. Game day helps support that.

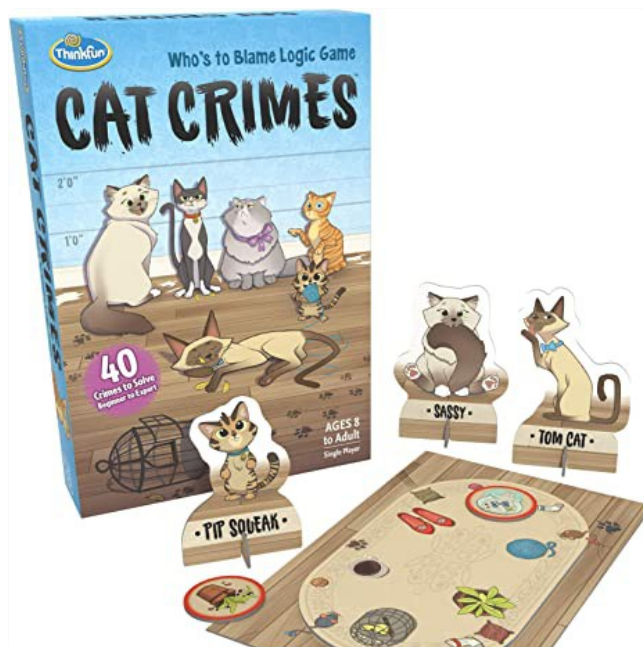


A class favorite is the game [Kulami](#); it is a game of strategy between 2 players. You place pieces on a board in order to have the majority of pieces in order to win that square. The person with the most square pieces wins. The board setup can be changed every game, which allows variety and varying skill levels.

Pear Park Elementary - Mrs. McGowen

In the age of technology, board games have sometimes gone by the wayside; I want to share two games that students have gone crazy for here at Pear Park. Qwirkle is the first game that students love, no matter their age! I have played this game with kindergartners, as well as fifth graders! Learning the ropes takes a few tries, but once they understand how to play, the strategies come into practice! It's a great game to help students think ahead and strategize how they can win the game. They make this game in rummy form as well which my own children love to play at home! The next game that always piques students' interest is Cat Crimes. This is a game that helps students think deeply about clues to find which cat committed the crime on the card. It's a great game to play with a small group or just a couple of people; there are multiple levels of difficulty which allows for different ages and levels of kids to play and use their critical thinking to solve problems.

I hope these two games pique some curiosity for you and your learners to try; there are days when team building and laughter help get our brains back to focus on the learning we have to do - these games are great opportunities to grow and learn together in different ways. Enjoy!



Student Work - Grand River Academy

The First Word - by Baylee Burchard 4th grade

Personal Narrative:

I came into this writing aiming to write about a meaningful moment in my life. That was the prompt. And I thought it was going to write about something like when I got my drum set, or when I held my baby cousin for the first time. But this isn't about any of that. This is not about a moment that held some meaning in my life. This is about the most meaningful moment in my entire life. This is about the moment that changed my life forever.

I was eight years of age, and I remember that my mother was gone for the weekend. It was just my dad and me. It was dark and a blanket of grayish shadow covered the room. But it didn't feel unnerving or frightful. I like the dark, although some think it gloomy. It gives you time to think, to breath, and to enjoy how the shadows melt the walls and the stars shine so brightly now that night has fallen. The hours of the day had flown by so fast from the perspective of my memories. All I could remember was that fateful night.

I stood by the wooden, blue chair in the dining room. My father and I were speaking to each other about my writing. I have been writing for about four years now. It all started with me as a four year old asking my mother to write in a book. She had stapled paper together for me to write in. At first, I didn't write my own stories. Instead, I did fan fiction stories. But one fan fiction turned into many, and soon after that I wrote my own stories. I created so many. It didn't stop as I got older, either. I kept writing more stories, but I never published them. I thought that you had to be an adult.

I remember telling my Dad that same thing. "Yeah, I think I'm going to become an author when I'm an adult. I've got a lot of stories to tell," I recall saying.

My dad was sitting on the couch across from me with his small, black phone in his hand. His dark blue eyes that were usually glued to it's screen now rose up and looked at mine. A sparkle of something related to confusion sat inside them. "You don't have to be an adult to be an author," he replied.

For a split second, my heart stopped. I didn't understand what he meant at all. My curious mind could barely process what he had told me already. "What are you talking about?" I asked him. "Come here," he said. I obeyed his words and trotted over to the spot where he sat. But I had no idea what he was about to show me.

I sat beside him and glanced at the white Google screen on his phone. He tapped the blank bar and a keyboard came up. He typed two words: "child authors." An big, underlined blue link popped up came up. The title it bore was, "Ten Child Authors." Dad clicked it. He read, "When you think of an author, you will most likely think of an adult. But there have been many child authors in the world."

My eyes widened. I can't quite describe how I felt the moment that he spoke the words " ... many child authors ... " The article then went on to list ten great child authors.

When the last words of the article were spoken, my heart felt frozen in time. My mind was racing, but my body was completely still. My breath was soft and slow, but it wasn't a bad feeling. Because I just realized something monumental. If they could do it.. I could too.

That night, I laid in bed as still as a stone. My eyes stared up at the dark ceiling that had been stained light gray by the night, but in reality, I saw my future story. I didn't quite know it was my future book yet, but I was close to realizing.

I had stories. I had writing potential. I had (some) experience. And I had knowledge. Knowledge that I could write a book, even though I'm a child.

And I made the choice right then.

The choice to write a story.

The next day, I got out a notebook with a shining, silver cover. I pulled out a pencil and an eraser, ... *and I wrote the **first word** of my book.*

Now to think that it's almost been a year and a half since that day, that one word has turned into ten chapters, and that it's not just one book anymore ... almost gives me chills. I won't lie to you, it's not exactly easy. But I wouldn't go back and change anything except for the fact it didn't happen sooner. Today, I feel honestly blessed that I'm able to write and go on these adventures with my characters.

Managing Stress & Anxiety this time of year

A guide for students and parents

At all of our high schools, we find ways to connect with our students. At the Fruita 8/9 School, we have weekly lunch bunch meetings. At Fruita Monument High School, we meet by grade level to help our students out with their collective needs. We are always available to meet individually with our students as well.



Because of our work with students as the school counselors and GT liaisons we see an increase in students wanting to see us this time of year because of stress and anxiety. We put together some ideas for students and a list for parents to help you navigate through the next few weeks.

Students:

Some stressors that may come up that are VERY common in Gifted and Talented students:

- fear of failure (or success)
- perfectionism
- procrastination (analysis paralysis)
- anxiety about future plans/goals
- overwhelm due to taking on too much

First of all, this is completely normal. Uncomfortable, but normal. Our stress response is a sign that our brain is trying to protect us. However, there is no saber tooth tiger chasing you, but an equally scary math test looming.

Some life hacks for stress management:

1. Identify stressor(s)

- Make a list
- Ask a friend or family member what they see you stressing about

1. Which can you control?

- Consult your list of stressors
- Cross off those you cannot control.
- Of those you can control, pick one small thing you can do (or not do) to make it better.

1. Prioritize based on values <https://www.therapistaid.com/worksheets/values-clarification>

1. Separate YOU (your worth) from the current situation

Videos:

[YOU ARE NOT DEPRESSED, STOP IT!](#) (for mood depression, not clinical depression)

[Mindfulness: Observing A Train of Thoughts](#)

1. Little things that help but don't add a lot to your plate:

- Drink a glass of water.
- Meditate for 5 minutes.
- Listen to a calming app while going about your day.
- Pet a dog or cat.
- Text a friend to say you appreciate them.

1. Get help from others. It's OKAY to ask for help from friends and adults.

- Resources: Therapist information: www.psychologytoday.com (put in your zip code to search)

Colorado Crisis Line: 1-844-493-8255 | Text "TALK" to 38255

Imatter <https://imattercolorado.org/> 6 free counseling sessions for Colorado kids

Want to dive deep?

- Full program covering a stress management plan:

<https://www.healthychildren.org/English/healthy-living/emotional-wellness/Building-Resilience/Pages/For-Teens-Creating-Your-Personal-Stress-Management-Plan.aspx>

Great podcasts to understand and combat stress:

- Hidden Brain
- The Happiness Lab
- Untangle: Mindfulness for Curious Humans
- Live Happy Now
- Good Life Project
- Tracks to Relax

Parents:

- Identify when your child experiences anxiety. It manifests in many ways. Here are a few:
 - Competitiveness
 - Irritability
 - Inability to concentrate
 - Worry
 - Stomach aches
 - Underachievement
 - Carelessness
 - Insomnia

- What can you do to help your child?
 - Validation
 - Hear and empathize with their emotions.
 - “I can see you’re very worried. How can I help right now?”
 - Modeling
 - Be open about how you solve problems of your own.
 - Think aloud as you navigate struggles and setbacks of your own.
 - Model positive thinking.
 - Determine realistic expectations
 - Discuss best, worst, and most likely outcomes.
 - This helps with working through and reducing the impulse to “catastrophize.”
 - Remind your child:
 - Giftedness doesn't mean everything comes easy.
 - Giftedness doesn't demand perfection.
 - Giftedness doesn't mean tasking oneself with overwhelming demands.
 - Challenge thinking
 - Is what you're worried about likely to happen?
 - Help them be in the present. Oftentimes anxiety stems from things that haven't (and probably won't) happen. Being in the “here and now” can ground your child and distract from worrying about a future situation.
 - Provide structure and routine
 - Establish day in, day out routines.
 - Wake up and eat breakfast first thing in the morning.
 - Take a shower right before going to bed.
 - Simple daily routines reduce anxiety.
 - Fewer unexpected changes decrease anxiety.
 - Don't forget the anxiety reducing power of a healthy diet, regular exercise, and adequate sleep! The combination of these 3 necessities have a huge positive impact on our physical and mental health.

[Here's](#) a great video by Dr. Dan Peters who specializes in gifted and twice exceptional children. In it, he explains what anxiety is, why we experience it, and how we can help our children manage it. Well worth the watch!



Scholarship Application

22-23 GT Scholarship Application.pdf

[Download](#)

85.9 KB

22-23 GT Spanish Scholarship Application.pdf

[Download](#)

74.1 KB

Facebook

Westslope CO Gifted & Talented

This group is to support Westernslope Parents of Gifted & Talented and 2E kids.

We share hope, empowerment, ideas, opportunities, and overall support each other.





Community Chromebook Distribution

Chromebooks FREE for our Community!
5,000+ Chromebooks are being retired from use within DSJ, and we believe there is usefulness in them. These Chromebooks will be offered free of charge to anyone in our community on a first-come, first-served basis.

The DSJ Foundation along with the help of the DSJ Technology team will be offering the used Chromebooks with reloaded operating systems to students, families, and people in our community.

This is a way to thank and give back to the residents of Mesa County for their support of

EVENT POSTPONED
Due to issues with the reloaded operating system, the new date for distribution will be before Winter Break

By taking a Chromebook, you understand that while we believe there is usefulness in the device, there is no guarantee of its lifespan. DSJ, DSJF, or MCJ will not provide additional services on donated Chromebooks. Take at your own risk. Only 2 Chromebooks per person.

CALL US FOR MORE INFO
(970) 254-6108 ANGELA CHRISTENSEN, DSJ FOUNDATION EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR
(970) 254-7528 DAN BURKE, DSJ EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR OF TECHNOLOGY

Chromebook Distribution - postponed

ASIST

Learn the skills. Help save a life.

Suicide is preventable. Anyone can make a difference.

- Two-day workshop in suicide intervention skills
- Learn and practice a life-saving intervention model
- Widely used by professionals and the general public

ASIST's impact in 2016

87,567 interventions
108,583 interventions
15,201 suicide attempts prevented

ASIST works

Studies show that ASIST participants gain:

- Knowledge about suicide
- Skills to reach out
- Confidence to help save a life

ASIST changes lives

Odds of improvement after receiving an ASIST intervention (2013 study):

- ▲ 35% more hopeful
- ▼ 31% less depressed
- ▼ 49% less overwhelmed
- ▼ 74% less suicidal

ASIST is cost-effective

50:1 return on investment in decreasing long-term costs of suicide (2015 study)

Upcoming ASIST workshop
Date: December 1st/2nd
Location: CMU Campus
Hosted by: CNC and CMU
Cost: FREE
To inquire or register, email jennifer.daniels2@d51schools.org

Learn more about ASIST and see the evidence at www.livingworks.net/ASIST

Learn the skill. Help save a life.

McConnell Science Museum

EUREKA!

2023 Western Colorado Elementary Science Fair

Details

- Location:** EUREKA! McConnell Science Museum
- Date:** Submissions due by Friday, March 10, 2023.
 - Public viewing and Awards on Wednesday, March 15, 2023 from 10-11:30AM
- Grade:** 3-5th Graders
- Price:** FREE

Calling all future scientists and engineers! EUREKA! and DSJ are partnering to host our annual elementary science fair! Here's your chance to apply your love of STEM by creating and conducting your own scientific investigation.

School District 51
Poudre River and Platte

Less than 30% of STEM jobs are held by women! Funding through donations are available to participating female teams.

Reimbursements for teachers are available for supporting and guiding 3 or more student groups with their science fair.

Visit EUREKASCIENCEMUSEUM.ORG for resources and more info!

EUREKA 2023 Colorado Elementary Science Fair



Conversations with CAGT

Conversations With CAGT

1st and 3rd Tuesdays each month at 5:00 pm MST on Facebook Live

Conversations with CAGT is back with an all-new season of timely, relevant topics by preeminent local, national, and international specialists in the field of gifted education! CWC has a new format this season with programs premiering on the **first and third Tuesdays of the month** at 5:00 pm MST on Facebook Live. [Check out past Conversations with CAGT programs on our website](#), where you may rewatch experts anytime, including Linda Silverman, Jim Delisle, Julie Skolnick, Jonathan Mooney, Joy Lawson Davis, Jaime Castellano, and many others. *Conversations with CAGT* is an incredible opportunity to get expert advice on topics regarding giftedness for FREE with time to ask your questions. The best part is that as a CAGT member your questions get priority! Join us on the **first and third Tuesdays of the month** at 5:00 pm MST on Facebook Live! Click the Facebook link below to access *Conversations with CAGT*.

Tue. Dec. 6th: Dr. Joanne Foster

"Procrastination and Gifted Learners"

Tue. Dec. 20th: No CWC this day!

We are taking a short break. We will return with new CWC in January 2023!

[Visit our website](#) for upcoming "Conversations" and to view past sessions!



Live Events

IN PERSON!! Mesa County Libraries presents "Teen Time" events in December:

Dungeons & Dragons

Fri., Dec. 2nd at 4:00 pm

Central Library (443 N. 6th St.) in Grand Junction

“Teen Readers Meetup”

Wednesdays at 4:00 pm

Central Library (443 N. 6th St.) in Grand Junction

“Gathering for Awesome Teens”

Thu., Dec. 15th at 4:00 pm

Orchard Mesa Branch (230 E. Lynwood St.) in Grand Junction

[Click here for more information.](#)

Johns Hopkins Center for Talented Youth presents “Fostering Resilience in High Ability Students” webinar

Wed., Dec. 7th at 5:00 pm

[Click here to join the Zoom meet when it starts.](#)

JeffCo Public Schools presents “Understanding the CogAT Assessment for Parents and Students” webinar

Wed., Dec. 7th at 6:30 pm

[Click here for more information and to RSVP.](#)

The National Air and Space Museum presents “Flights of Fancy (Online) Story Time”

Fri., Dec. 9th at 8:00 am

[Click here for more information and to register.](#)

Bridges 2e Center presents “The Future is Inclusive: A Neuro- and Cultural Diversity (Online) Symposium”

Dec. 9th - 11th

[Click here for more information and to register.](#)

John Hopkins Center for Talented Youth presents “Balancing School, Extracurriculars, and Everything Inbetween”

Wed., Dec. 14th at 11:00 am

[Click here for more information.](#)





New GT Books

Note: CAGT does not officially endorse book titles; this list is simply to inform you of the most recently published books related to gifted education.

[Differentiation for Gifted Students in a Secondary School: A Handbook for Teachers](#) by Susan Nikakis

[Improving Technology for Working with Talented Students](#) by Rahmatova Fotima

[Designing for Depth in the Classroom: A Framework for Purposeful Differentiation](#) by Andi McNair

Rocky Mountain PBS Kids

Helping children feel safe during tragic news
by Joe Davidson



[ROCKY MOUNTAIN PBS](#)

Mister Rogers famously advised children in times of distress and troubling news to focus on "the helpers."

He said, "When I was a boy and I would see scary things in the news, my mother would say to me, 'Look for the helpers. You will always find people who are helping.'"

Following recent mass shootings, children and adults alike may be experiencing challenging emotions.

Fred Rogers Productions, the producer of Daniel Tiger's Neighborhood, reached out to Rocky Mountain PBS to share their PBS Kids for Parents article, [Helping Children with Tragic Events in the News](#).

The article explains that even young children are sensitive to how caregivers are feeling, and that children may be impacted when adults are worried by troubling news. But, there are many ways adults can help children feel safe and secure in challenging times.

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Mandy Budd

Mandy is using Smore to create beautiful newsletters

