



# Newsmagazine

*THE ASSOCIATION FOR BRIGHT CHILDREN OF ONTARIO*

March 2003

Spring Issue

ISSN 1185-362X

The Camps and  
Scholarships Issue

Summer Camps

President's Message

Personal Reflections  
on Public vs Private  
School Gifted  
Programs

All About  
Scholarships

Chapter News

Web Site Suggestions

May We Introduce...

## Summer Camps for Bright and Gifted Children

By Jane Langille

Every summer, there are about 10 weeks where our children are not in school and can benefit from a summer camp experience to break up that long stretch of time from the end of June to the beginning of September. There are many different camps throughout the province which provide a wide range of opportunities for social fun, leadership development, or learning a new skill. For some children, camp can be an even more positive experience if they share something in common with the others, like being gifted!

To assist you in your quest to find the right program for your children, the following provides information on those camps that market themselves as being targeted for gifted or bright children. This list is by no means exhaustive, but we hope it will provide some key information you can use to follow up and find out if these programs are right for your family. Web sites and contact details are provided for each program.

1. **Bright Math Summer Camp – University of Ottawa.** This camp is run in collaboration with the Department of Math and Statistics. Different levels are offered. A brochure and information are available at [www.ncf.ca~au680/index.htm](http://www.ncf.ca~au680/index.htm).
2. **Deep River Science Academy (DRSA)** is an award-winning, six week summer program dedicated to giving high school students the opportunity to test-drive a scientific career in leading Canadian laboratories and earn academic credits while they do it. Each pair of students is supervised by a researcher and tutored by a university student. The Academy has operated for over 13 years and typically has about 70 students between the ages of 13-18 years. Campuses are located in Deep River (Ontario), Pinawa (Manitoba) and Okanagan (B.C.) and a bilingual campus in Fredericton (N.B.). The high quality research experience can serve to help students choose a career direction and provide help in course selection in later university. ...CONTINUED ON PG 3

## President's Message

Many of you are aware of how important it is to advocate for our gifted children.

Every school board is required to establish a SEAC, a Special Education Advisory Committee. The SEAC operates in an advisory capacity, making recommendations to the Board with respect to any matter affecting the establishment and development of special education programs and services for exceptional pupils of the Board. It also provides specific information, advice and assistance to parents/guardians whose children may require additional support. The SEAC consists of a maximum of 12 local parent associations and their alternates, and up to three trustees. Representatives are nominated by the associations. School Boards appoint members to SEAC usually for a three-year term. Senior board administrators act as resources to the committee. It is important to note that all representatives on SEAC represent the best interests of all exceptionalities, regardless of the association they represent. This works in the same way in which a School Council represents the whole school community, rather than just one specific class.

ABC has many outstanding volunteers who take on the additional role of SEAC Representative in their school board, where they advocate for gifted education as part of Special Education. This is an important role because most associations support regular class placement as the only option for children with identified exceptionalities, whereas ABC supports a full range of regular and special education class placement options for all exceptional students. For some exceptional students, including gifted students, a self-contained or conjugated class is the appropriate placement option to meet their educational needs.

Children do grow up however, and there are some dedicated ABC-SEAC Representatives who have completed their volunteer commitment, as their children are finishing high school and in some cases, university or college. We are looking for ABC members who would be interested in representing ABC on the SEAC in their school boards. The basic time commitment is one meeting per month during the school year, usually in the evening. There may be additional meetings, depending on the school board. There also may be opportunities to sit on various subcommittees of the SEAC, for example reviewing the Board's Special Education Plan, or service provision in areas like transportation.

Please contact me if you are interested in promoting the interests of bright and gifted children and working as a volunteer on the SEAC in your school board.

Carol Ann Sloat  
President, ABC Ontario  
abcinfo@abcontario.ca

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For further information, contact **ABC Ontario, 2 Bloor St. W., Suite 100-156, Toronto, Ontario M4W 2G7 (416) 925-6136**

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## Summer Camps continued...

The university student tutors benefit from the research and the tutoring experience, as well as from the summer salary. More information is available at <http://www.drsa.ca> or by calling 1-800-760-drso.

- Shad Valley** is an international summer motivational program which exposes top youth to the best in science, technology and entrepreneurship. It is designed especially for top students in high school and is offered at eight host campuses across Canada (Waterloo, Calgary, New Brunswick, McMaster, Acadia, Carleton, UBC and Sherbrooke) and one in England. Participants hail from countries all over the world. In operation since 1981, it is operated by Shad International, a certified educational institution and a Canadian registered charity. The month of July is spent at one of the universities across Canada or in England in a four week academic program comprised of stimulating and varied lectures, workshops, and group projects. The majority of participants also pursue a five-week work-term with a Shad partner company, testing their minds and skills on intriguing real world challenges. The web site outlines the characteristics that a typical Shad Valley candidate would display, including: creativity, initiative, leadership, and high academic success, especially in math and science. See more details at [www.shad.ca](http://www.shad.ca), where you can download a brochure and an application form.
- Peel Summer Academy** provides a unique two-week summer residential program for intellectually gifted students. In its 19<sup>th</sup> year of operation, this program serves to provide stimulation, fun, and social growth as students select from a menu of courses that are exploratory and non-evaluative. In total, there are four programs at four different venues. Program 1 operates at the University of Toronto at Mississauga, for students in Grades 4 through 8. Each student attends four exploratory courses each day as well as participating in late afternoon and evening recreational activities. Program 2 provides a Northern Ontario Leadership Experience for students in Grades 7, 8 and 9. There are two different settings, the first near Caledon where the students camp-out and participate in environmental activities and the High Ropes Challenge. The second setting is in Moosonee and includes stays in northern lodges, visits with Cree people and continuation of leadership activities. Program 3 is meant for students in Grades 9 and 10 and takes place at Memorial University of Newfoundland at St. John's. Memorial University is one of the world's foremost centres for ocean studies and course opportunities reflect sciences, arts, and marine technologies. Program 4 also is housed at Memorial University but at the Corner Brook location and is a Grade 10 Leadership Experience. This program is for those students who would like to visit a more remote part of Newfoundland and who want to develop their leadership potential, as they participate in day and overnight excursions along the western coast of Newfoundland. All the details can be found at the web site [www.peelsummeracademy.com](http://www.peelsummeracademy.com).
- Children's Technology Workshop** is fairly new on the scene in the Greater Toronto Area. This summer day camp is the result of five years of development by a former head of science and director of technology at a private boy's school in Toronto. Campers choose from a series of themes including Mission to Mars, Expedition Egypt, Team F1, Fashion Designer, Architect, Olympics, Medieval, Entrepreneur, Rescue, and Animation missions. Within these missions, children ages 8 to 14 may do activities in the following areas: computer and stop-frame animation; mechanical engineering and robotics; computer programming; video game programming; graphic design; and invention. While not overtly marketed toward gifted children, you may find that this type of camp is a good fit if you happen to have a spatial wizard at your house. Year-round facilities operate in Toronto and Mississauga, with satellite camps located in schools in Oakville, Markham, and Richmond Hill. More details can be found at [www.ctworkshop.com](http://www.ctworkshop.com) or call 1-866-566-4366.
- Discover Engineering Camp at Ryerson University** is a summer day camp to inform young women about engineering and to encourage them to consider post secondary education and a career in this profession. Young women spend five days at Ryerson, undertaking hands-on projects in a wide variety of engineering subject areas such as making slime and lip balm in a chemistry lab, using LEGO to learn about mechanical engineering, and designing and building electronic and digital circuits. They meet women engineers and engineering students and learn about the challenges and excitement of both an engineering career and education. For more information, go to the web site at [www.discoverengineering.ryerson.ca](http://www.discoverengineering.ryerson.ca).

## Personal Reflections on Public vs. Private School Gifted Programs

By: Karen Fuller, ABC Peel Member

It's the time of year when we begin to think about the next school year and what might work best for our gifted children. While it may not feel like there's much to choose from, because of space and other restrictions, it's worthwhile looking at what choices are open to our kids. As the parent of two recently identified gifted children I've had a crash course in "giftedness" during this past school year and have looked at a number of options. I moved both kids out of our neighbourhood elementary school: one child has remained in the Peel public system and one is attending a small private school for bright and gifted children. For what it's worth, here are my personal observations about both systems and our decision about who goes where next year.

My son attends a public elementary school in Peel that has congregated classes for grades one to eight. The program seems to be working well for him, particularly on a self-concept/ social level. He no longer fights going to school, he has friends who think and experience the world in the same way he does, he feels he belongs and is a much happier child than when he was in the regular stream. Is he getting what he needs to thrive academically? Time will tell. I firmly believe that individual teachers will "make it or break it" for my son because the system is far from ideal.

From what I can see, the Peel program has only a few of the features that the literature on gifted education suggests should be in place. This may be because of a rigid provincial mandate to cover the curriculum that doesn't allow for flexible programming. To its credit, the Peel system groups gifted children together and the curriculum is delivered at a much faster pace resulting in less of the mind-numbing, repetitive exercises found in a regular classroom. The faster pace also creates an opportunity for enrichment activities. Each child has an Individual Education Plan (IEP) and this gives the illusion of a system that is committed to meeting the needs of the kids. (If you compare IEPs for gifted students from child to child and school to school, you read virtually the same document.) My overwhelming impression is that "gifted" programming is in place because it has to be, by law, in this province. It's under-funded and under-supported and when I hear that Peel has one of the best programs in Ontario it disturbs me.

The private school (King's College) that we chose for our daughter is small with up to 60 bright and gifted children from Grade 3 to University entrance are handpicked to attend the school. The school is not as rich in resources as the public system –they don't have great library, gym, or lab facilities. What they do have is very high academic standards (mastery or an 80% grade is required in each subject) and while they cover the same curriculum as the public system, they have the ability to tailor it to the child's needs. Curriculum compacting (testing out of material already mastered), subject acceleration and enrichment are all offered. In my daughter's case this has allowed her to take some subjects at her grade level (grade 7) while moving ahead in others and this has worked extremely well. She can choose to "linger" over the curriculum and enjoy enrichment activities or move through it quickly into the next grade level. She's learning great time management and work habits in the process. The size of the school means that small classes and a lot of individual attention can be expected.

The key difference between the two systems is subtle. The public system appears to be curriculum driven while the private system is much more child centred. Let me try to explain. They both deliver the same curriculum but the end goals are different. King's approach is based on a belief that bright and gifted children can and should develop their intellectual potential and unique gifts to be the best they can be and provide leadership in the world. They also believe that the school should foster this growth and work with each child to help develop the "leader-within", while covering the curriculum. The curriculum is one of several means to an end. The public system, on the other hand, has a much narrower focus – the goal in the gifted program is pretty much the same as in the regular stream - cover the curriculum and try to meet the standards set by the province, (particularly in EQAO years) while providing some enrichment activities. This is not to say there aren't outstanding teachers in the public system that inspire students to "be their best"; it's just very hit or miss from year to year.

As a parent, I experience a very different reception in the two systems. In the public system I often feel I have to choose my words carefully for fear of appearing critical/pushy/demanding/neurotic and thus causing a problem for my child. It doesn't feel like a partnership and that may be because I want more than curriculum coverage and some enrichment activities for my child. In the private system, I can be open with my concerns and suggestions and I feel understood and supported by the school. It feels like a partnership. Is this because we're paying the teacher's wages? I don't think so – I think it's partly because we share the same goals and ideology around what giftedness means and partly because the private system has fewer restrictions in handpicking and placing appropriate teachers to work with gifted kids.

Which system do I prefer? It's probably clear that I like what's happening at King's College. There are inconveniences (no bus-sing) and expenses in the private system that I could do without. ...CONTINUED ON PAGE 6... ..

## All About Scholarships

By Jane Langille

At the ABC Provincial Council meeting on February 22, 2003, Mary Carmen Galea, a former teacher of gifted students for the Toronto Catholic District School Board gave a presentation about how high school students can win scholarships and awards. This is a synopsis of her presentation.

There are many scholarships that are never awarded simply because people do not know they exist. There are also situations where few students apply and the scholarships are awarded without much competition. Parents and students need to know where to find information about scholarships and students need to apply for them. An excellent place to start is [www.scholarshipscanada.com](http://www.scholarshipscanada.com) where you can register and customize your search of over 60,000 scholarships, review detailed descriptions and receive contact information. Families should investigate their specific connections to see what offerings are available from a wide variety of areas like employers, banks, ethnic community associations and even associations that grandparents belonged to such as the War Veterans. Scholarships change from year to year, so students should get to know their guidance counsellors as they are the recipients of new information sent to schools.

Every high school student is required to do volunteer work as part of their diploma. Students should do more than the requirement if they want to make a difference. Smart time management skills starting in Grade 9 can be a huge advantage. Applications for scholarships are lengthy, requiring lots of detail about contributions students have made in lots of areas, not just academic success. Students should keep track of all of their activities in extra-curricular activities including areas like clubs, athletics, band/stage, music, contests, drama, student government leadership, academic awards, volunteer work at school and in the community, and employment. While not everyone can be the president of the student union, pertinent leadership opportunities would include things like taking initiative and starting a new club. Details should include: the role; the period of time in the association; personal bests; any leagues or competitions; results; performances; placement in contests; hours worked; names of supervisors; and job descriptions. Even things as small as winning essay writing contests can add to the total picture of the well-rounded student and make the difference in distinguishing that student from other applicants. Some applications include an interview process. This should be treated like a job interview and students should go well prepared and dressed appropriately.

A point of view expressed by the presenter was that while an International Baccalaureate Program can offer excellent distinctiveness and a global perspective, the AP or Advanced Placement course route may be a more flexible route for gifted students. The benefit of the AP route is that the individual subjects can be chosen by the student and can be done anytime during the four years at high school. The IB Program is sometimes only available in the Diploma format, executed in Grades 11 and 12, and is prescriptive in its subject areas. Many post-secondary institutions in the United States look favourably on AP credits. For more information, refer to [www.ibso.ca](http://www.ibso.ca) and [www.collegeboard.com/apstudents](http://www.collegeboard.com/apstudents) to learn more about these types of programs.

Notably, this process worked well for a certain young man named Alex Sloat, son of Carol Ann Sloat, President of ABC Ontario. After filling in some pertinent information on the [www.studentawards.com](http://www.studentawards.com) web site, he located the "As Prime Minister Awards" program at [www.asprimeminister.com](http://www.asprimeminister.com). This program is supported by the Magna for Canada Scholarship Fund and offers a distinctive experience for young Canadians who are currently enrolled in a Canadian university, college or CEGEP. On the basis of a 2500 word essay, 50 semi-finalists are selected and brought to Toronto for five days to present their innovative ideas and visions before a national panel of judges. After that, 11 finalists travel to Parliament Hill in Ottawa to formally present their essays to the government and Prime Minister of Canada. Finalists and their families engage in a variety of media activities and tour various historic and national landmarks in Ottawa. Finalists receive a cheque for \$10,000 and an offer of a four-month internship with Magna International Inc worth \$15,000. The national winner receives an additional \$10,000 and the offer of a one-year internship, worth \$50,000. All of the essays were published in a book with full colour photographs of the finalists. Alex Sloat was one of the successful finalists in this competition. The interesting part of this story is that Alex apparently was not really interested in writing in high school but became interested in doing so for this scholarship, writing the essay in one day. The other interesting part of this story is that Alex turned 17 years old on the presentation day. The other applicants ranged in age from 22 to 34, but as a university student, Alex was able to apply. What a wonderful experience that started with finding out about a scholarship and entering a quality application essay.

Some other helpful web sites for scholarships are: [www.studentawards.com](http://www.studentawards.com); [www.millenniumscholarships.ca](http://www.millenniumscholarships.ca); and [www.scholarships.com](http://www.scholarships.com). Hard copy advice can be found in a series of books by Michael J. Howell and published by the University of Toronto Press called *Winning Scholarships: A Student's Guide to Entrance Awards at Universities*. There are different versions covering the various geographical regions in Canada.

## Chapter News

**ABC Cornwall Chapter**—This chapter consists of a small group of dedicated individuals who have maintained a chapter in this area since 1997, supporting the Cornwall/Brockville/Quebec border region. Parent meetings are usually held on the fourth Monday of each month at 7:30 pm. Workshops for children are offered on a variety of subjects. As there are no current withdrawal programs for identified gifted children in the area, the Cornwall Chapter is working together with parents to advocate for appropriate services for their children. Contact Chapter President Earle DePass at [earfran@cogeco.ca](mailto:earfran@cogeco.ca) for more information.

**ABC Hamilton Chapter**—After a few years of inactivity, the Hamilton ABC Chapter has been resurrected! In April 2002, several parents of the Grade 5 gifted students got together to talk about common issues, concerns and experiences, and succeeded in increasing their ABC membership from 3 families to 22. The Executive consists of Peter J. Maurin and Kathy Eastwood (Co-Presidents), Beth Bromberg (SEAC), Anne Greenlay (Secretary/Co-Treasurer) and Leena Jaanimagi (Co-Treasurer). The Executive would like to thank “elder stateswoman” Bev Shepard, who has been a great resource person. Special thanks also go out to Libby Jenkins, former Hamilton SEAC representative. It’s been a busy first year for this chapter with many events for parents and families including: a trip to Medieval Fare; Family Day at Dundas Driving Park; a chess tournament; an information session for new and potential members; a trip to see the Kiev Ballet perform *The Nutcracker*; a holiday cookie decorating party; a games day; an evening at the McMaster Planetarium; and volunteering at the Wesley Urban Ministries to help those less fortunate during the holidays. Upcoming events for the Spring include: a robotics workshop in April; a creative writing workshop; a spring BBQ; a parent evening with a psychologist speaker; and a family outing to Canada’s Wonderland. In addition to these social events, the Hamilton chapter is working to advocate for bright and gifted children in Hamilton, meeting with representatives of the Hamilton Wentworth District School Board about the future of gifted education and the possibility of bringing in an International Baccalaureate Program at the high school level. This revitalized chapter is enthusiastic, highly motivated and eager to create opportunities for children and parents to interact. Please email [abchamilton@sympatico.ca](mailto:abchamilton@sympatico.ca) if you would like any further information.

**ABC Ottawa Region Chapter** – in addition to running the Spring 2003 edition of the successful “Take-off” programs for children, the Ottawa Chapter has launched a new parent discussion group in January called “Parenting Bright and Gifted Children”. It is based on the SENG model (Supporting the Emotional Needs of the Gifted) and the facilitators are Jane Berman, past ABC SEAC representative for the Ottawa Catholic District School Board, and Nancy Corbett, past president of ABC Ottawa. You can find an article about the SENG-model groups by Dr. Jim Webb and Arlene DeVries at [www.sengifted.org/model.htm](http://www.sengifted.org/model.htm).

Don’t see your chapter news here? Go to the ABC Ontario web site at [www.abcontario.ca](http://www.abcontario.ca) and click on “Chapters”. Contact information in the form of web addresses or email is available.

### Continued from pg 4: Reflections on Public vs. Private Gifted Programs

(We’re using our daughter’s university fund on her elementary and high school education because we fear that the public system won’t work for her and she’d never make it to university despite her very great cognitive ability.) I’m delighted with the growth that I’ve seen in my daughter and with relief, I’ve watched her regain her love of school and become engaged in learning. I love the school’s view of giftedness and their vision of what each child can accomplish. They set the bar high and the kids strive to meet it. More important, the school is meeting her needs on a number of levels so we’ll keep her there.

The public system is far too bureaucratic and pedestrian for my taste. There doesn’t seem to be the same spark or energy that I see in the private system. No doubt, the politics of public education in recent years have contributed to this. There are some outstanding teachers but they’re working in a system that feels tired and beaten down.

Will I keep my son in the public system? Yes, for now. The system is not perfect but I see great changes in my son. I’m not sure I can say he is “engaged in learning” but he’s getting there. He feels good about being “smart”, he likes school again, enjoys his classmates and he wants to stay at the school.

The greatest learning for me in this journey of helping my children “find their way” is to listen well to what they have to say. The challenge is to trust their wisdom and my own gut and find a way to get them where they need to be.

**Advertisements**

## May We Introduce...

**Ginny Dunlop, Vice President of ABC Ontario 2002-2004.** While we introduced Ginny in an earlier Newsmagazine this year, ABC is proud to acknowledge that in March 2003, Ginny was re-appointed by the Minister of Education for another three year term on MACSE, the Minister's Advisory Council on Special Education. Ginny's many active roles serve as an important contribution to ABC at the provincial level. Congratulations Ginny!

**Jane Langille, Newsmagazine Editor for ABC Ontario.** Jane has been involved with the ABC York Region Chapter for three years. After writing articles for the Newsmagazine in 2002, Jane took on the additional role of Editor after attending her first ABC Provincial Executive meeting in September 2002. A parent of two energetic gifted children, she is very familiar with advocating for gifted education. In the past, Jane has been an active volunteer in the school system as a School Council Chair, a classroom volunteer and a reading tutor. Jane holds a Bachelor of Business Administration degree from Wilfrid Laurier University, with a major in Marketing and a minor in French. She worked in product management in the consumer packaged goods industry for six years before deciding to work at home raising a family. While working part-time as a grader for a second year MBA Finance course in the winter term of 2002, Jane is focussing now on developing her freelance writing.

*ABC is a registered charity. You can make donations in memory of a deceased friend or loved one.  
Write the ABC Ontario office: 2 Bloor Street W., Suite 100-156, Toronto, Ontario M4W 2G7  
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