

SPAN Meeting Minutes April 24, 2012

*SPAN Board approved for next year:

Co-presidents: Lisa Garborg and Apryl Henry

Vice president:: Julie Mueller

Treasurer/webmaster: Anne Fry

Secretary: Kathleen Martins

*Treasurer's Report:

Anne reviewed monies taken in through new MCGT memberships and Synergy Family Night as well as expenditures related to Family Night, a memorial for Kari Klima, and auditorium fees for the CHAT night. A detailed report can be found on our website (www.mcgt.net/priorlake).

*Ideas for next year's SPAN meetings:

- CHAT night (topic?)
- panel of middle school teachers of advanced classes before middle school registration
- elementary principals on how gifted students' needs are met there
- summer opportunities
- curriculum director and superintendent (status of gifted education in the district)
- needs of gifted children socially and emotionally as they grow

Q: If SPAN had more money, what would we want to do with it? (Food for thought...no real answers here yet, but do email span@mchsi.com if you have thoughts on this topic.)

*Michele Tindal...summer opportunities for gifted kids:

Why summer programming?:

- It encourages learning about a passion area
- Kids can develop new peer groups
- It can counterbalance "cognicentrism" (summer activities can be different from regular school...could be physical, artistic, etc.)
- It can mitigate sedentary behavior
- It can alleviate depression and anxiety (there are no grades/evaluation; there is are opportunities to learn from those with great expertise in different areas)
- To learn a new skill or develop a skill in an interest area
- To experiment
- To have fun!
- To allow a child to have choices as to how to spend time
- To challenge and excite kids

What to consider?:

- What are the child's interests?
- How much schedules vs. unscheduled time would be best for the child and the family?
- Does the child prefer competitive or noncompetitive activities?
- What are the costs vs. benefits of different activities?
- How much active involvement (vs. sitting and listening) with the child have?
- Does the child need to keep up an active social life? Will activities help to foster friendships?
- Does the child thrive more with "just for fun" or deadlines/competitions?
- Is this the summer to get a pet?
- Is this summer a good time to work on organizational skills (that can be practiced and then used during the next school year)?

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What could be done “instead” of formal classes/camps?:

- Classes/camps can be overwhelming if a child isn't social...
- Build your own thematic program, based on the child's interests (cooking, a certain decade, movies, etc.)
- Volunteering/community activism
- Trips to local attractions (museums, art galleries, etc.) IF the child is interested
- Thematic reading (Michele has an extensive book list)
- Nature hikes/naturalist-led adventures (can be multiage)
- Geocaching (can rent/borrow equipment at many parks)
- On-line classes, including world language
- Find a family member/friend/neighbor who can help mentor them in something...sewing, cooking, painting, etc.
- If you are going on a trip, have your child learn all about the area where you will be traveling
- Have your child build/invent things from materials found at garage sales (“junkyard wars”); Michele's son build a variety of siege machines (trebuchets, catapults, onagers) this way
- Read classic literature with your child/as a family
- Help your child explore movie-making/photography
- Investigate family history (collect anecdotes from relatives, digitize photos, create a book
- Join/create a book club (SAGE grades may look into this)

Camps/classes:

*Michele had copies of MCGT's annual list of summer activities. If you are not a MCGT member and would like a copy of this list, please email span@mchsi.com, and I will send email the list to you. (If you are an MCGT member, you should have received this yellow insert in your latest MCGT Outlook newsletter.

*Michele also had copies of the Gifted and Talented Institute's brochure. GTI is a partnership among a variety of south-of-the-river school districts and provides summer classes for gifted students. Information on GTI's summer offerings can be found here: (<http://www.rschooldtoday.com/se3bin/clientgenie.cgi?schoolname=school417&statusFlag=goGenie&geniesite=54>)

*MN Institute for Talented Youth (<http://www.mity.org/>) has a variety of summer classes in St. Paul.

*Concordia Language Villages (<http://www.concordialanguagevillages.org/newsite/>) offers camps where students can have immersion experiences in different languages

*Northwestern University's Center for Talent Development (<http://programguide.ctd.northwestern.edu/>) offers a variety of classes and camps around the country for qualified students.

*Michele has a list of recommended books for students of various ages. I will send an email when I have a copy of this list, and I can either email it to you or may post it on our webpage.