

Gifted 101 Mini-Conference

Advocating for your Gifted/Talented Children:

Being an effective advocate for your gifted child is often challenging. This session will focus on identifying your child's educational priorities, effective strategies for collaborating with the school and tips on how to overcome obstacles to advocacy. There will be time for discussion, exchange of practical ideas and problem solving.

Kathy Geary has served on MCGT's Board of Directors since 2002, when she became involved in individual advocacy, and has also served on MCGT's RAVE Chapter's Leadership Committee. Kathy is a SENG Model Parent Group Facilitator and has been a member of MITY's Board of Directors since 2011. Kathy's background is in special education. She is the parent of two GT young adults.

Characteristics of Gifted Children:

How do you know if your child is gifted? What does it mean to be gifted? Is it possible for a child to be gifted and have a learning disability, or do they cancel out? We will look at these questions and more as we explore the quirks and characteristics of gifted children, including asynchronous development, Dabrowski's Overexcitabilities, and twice-exceptionality. Practical parenting strategies included.

Carol Malueg is the mother of 2 gifted girls, a professional in the field of gifted education, and an active member of several state and national organizations that support gifted kids and their families. Carol currently serves as President on the state board of directors for the Minnesota Council for the Gifted and Talented (MCGT), and is a Master Facilitator and Trainer for Supporting the Emotional Needs of Gifted children (SENG). She is currently employed by the University of St. Thomas as a research project manager for a Javits Grant project focused on improving identification of and services for gifted at-risk students. Carol also works with the Center for K-12 Guidance as an Independent Educational Consultant, specializing in K-12 educational planning and support for gifted and talented students in the Twin Cities of Minneapolis and St. Paul.

Harnessing your Child's Energy (Movement and Behavior Management):

This dynamic session provides a description of gifted student energy, overexcitability and behavioral challenges. Techniques are presented that give parents and students skills to manage high energy, emotional intensity, and stress. Skills that promote student self-advocacy are also introduced. Exercise is used in this session to focus learning, relieve stress and improve mood. Get ready to move, laugh and learn!

Melissa Malen, Ph.D., Certified Personal Trainer, parent coach, student counselor and fitness consultant, uses exercise to focus learning. She also supports parents in advocating for gifted students including IEP, 504 and teacher meetings. As a parent of two gifted children, Melissa has both personal and professional experience working with students to manage excitable behavior, anxiety and stress. Melissa also works with ADHD students and their parent advocates.

Planning for the Future – Educational Options for Gifted/Talented Children:

School is our children's job until they graduate high school, college, grad school... How do we help them successfully navigate an educational system not designed with them in mind? This session will help you begin to map your child's educational journey. We'll help you identify priorities, look at types of educational settings available to your child, and explore the related concepts of resilience and mindset.

Martha Palm is presently a classroom teacher of gifted students in Bloomington, MN. She has 24 years of teaching experience starting in a small rural community in MN, international experience in both the International School of Stavanger in Norway, and the American International School of Krakow in Poland, urban teaching experience in Minneapolis, and finally 8 years of experience teaching the highly gifted in Bloomington, MN. Martha has her masters in international education, and two certificates in both gifted education and for students who are twice exceptional--very bright but there is something getting in the way of thinking and understanding. Martha loves teaching and is a very passionate educator. In her free time, she finds fun things to do like build igloos, visit tree houses, and travel the world.

The Social and Emotional Well-Being of Gifted/Talented Children.

How does being Gifted/talented GT impact functioning besides intellectual and academic? Look at common characteristics of GT kids and how they may impact social and emotional development. Gain understanding of GT social dynamics and the risks and benefits of being GT for mental health.

Dr. Andrea Johnson is a clinical psychologist in private practice in Edina, MN. She specializes in working with gifted kids and their families. She has worked or trained at Mayo Clinic, the U of MN, Children's Hospital in Denver and Minneapolis, and the MN Department of Health, Children's Mental Health. She is also the parent of 2 gifted kids.

What, How, and What of Assessments for Gifted Children

When can assessment or testing tell me something useful about my child? How do I find the right kind of assessment – school-based or private pay, IQ or achievement, neuropsych or creativity? What can I do with the information I get? How much does it cost, who pays for it, and when is it worth the money? And what is an IQ anyway? A psychologist specializing in GT and other intense children will discuss these questions and others parents may have as they learn how to use assessment as a tool for understanding and advocating for their children.

Mary L. Wandrei, PhD, is a psychotherapist with offices in White Bear Lake, MN. She specializes in assessment, coaching, and psychotherapy for gifted and talented and twice-exceptional children and adults; Asperger's Syndrome screening/consultation; school adjustment and educational planning; and consultation around executive functioning, anxiety, depression, sensory processing, and temperament issues. She can be contacted at www.marywandrei.com.