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## Talents channeled

# They aid gifted students

By JANAN GRANNAM

In every classroom you'll find at least one child who stands out among the rest. He's either the class clown, the slowest learner or the most gifted student.

The class clown is usually told to just settle down and the slow learner is put in a special education program.

But the gifted student becomes very bored with his environment and in turn he has a discipline problem, according to Mary Connelly, mother of seven children and holder of a master's degree in educational psychology.

Attempting to meet the needs of the gifted and talented, Mrs. Connelly, Betty Russell, Jack McJury and John White, all from Oakland County, have established the Oakland Association for the Gifted and Talented.

Since its inception in November 1975, the organization has mushroomed into an independent county organization with more than 800 people on its mailing list.

"We are a group of concerned parents, teachers and administrators who have implemented a resurgence of interest in the education of the gifted," said Mrs. Connelly, president of the association.

Mrs. CONNELLY explained a gifted student is not a straight A student.

"A gifted student is not just a student who rates 120 or above on an intelligence test," she said. "It is a student who has creativity, perception and sensitivity to the world around him, wanting to direct his

special talents to help his community."

Our society's traditional view of a genius is a lonely child unable to relate to others his own his age, added Mrs. Connelly.

"Obviously this will happen if the child is not brought into an environment of his intellectual developments."

Acting as a clearing house directing teachers, parents and students to programs for the gifted, the association also has started a mentor program.

Each Wednesday night 45 classes are taught in Bloomfield Hills by prominent residents who want to share their knowledge and talents with the gifted students.

THE ASSOCIATION has sponsored a resource center and summer opportunities fair at the Bloomfield Library as well as programs in conjunction with various private schools and public universities.

Detroit Country Day School in Birmingham has developed a gifted student program for grades four through seven offering computer programming and enrichment classes as well as encounters in chemistry and biochemical reactions.

In cooperation with Michigan State University, high school juniors who excel in science may take high level courses on the MSU campus in the high school honors program.

Classes include biology, chemistry, computer science, engineering and physics.

Mrs. Connelly explained that by admission policy, some private schools only ac-

cept gifted students—usually on the secondary level.

One of the association's prime objectives is to create a regional school for the gifted within public school districts.

"We also need to provide rural families with financial resources to put their gifted children into a more stimulating and educationally sound environment," said Mrs. Connelly.

"Unfortunately, many parents who are not able to finance their children through a school for the gifted usually just allow the teachers to promote the child to a higher grade."

In prompting a resurgence of interest in gifted students, the association has encouraged parents and individual teachers to pay close attention to gifted students.

"Often teachers find out who the gifted students are, they begin to provide the individual with the extra attention they require," said Mrs. Connelly.

"It lends a positive aspect toward education of the child."

"FROM WOMB to tomb, we encourage gifted people—especially culturally deprived persons and gifted women—to discover their talents and to use them in a way that would be advantageous to society," said Mrs. Connelly.

While she agrees with the Montessori philosophy, Mrs. Connelly does not agree with the way it is implemented in American Montessori schools.

"Our society does not capitalize on good human instincts, which is a large part of the Montessori philosophy," she said.

Noting that many people feel her organization is out to create a group of elitists, Mrs. Connelly said that it is really not a characteristic of gifted children.

"Gifted programs in the past were designed to develop talents instead of directing those talents for the benefit of society," said Mrs. Connelly. "We are concentrating on the whole person—not just their intellectual development. Gifted children are really very humble people..."

## Compromise hinted on Telegraph plans

A compromise in the battle over the widening of a portion of Telegraph from Twelve Mile to Orchard Lake Road may be in the making.

After listening to a presentation by Oakland County Road Commissioner John Gau Jr., members of the state highway commission voted 3-1 to approve a resolution ordering the staff of the Michigan Department of State Highways and Transportation to meet with representatives of the Oakland County Road Commission.

"To resolve differences in interpretation of data."

"To make a progress report at the June 23 meeting of the state highway commission."

The state highway commissioners were responsive, and there was no indication that they are locked irreversibly into a commitment to hold the Telegraph reconstruction to six lanes rather than the eight originally planned, said Gau. "Their action confirms the impression I had gained earlier from their chairman, Pete Fletcher, that the highway commissioners are open-minded on the subject."

Earlier this year, in the face of objections from property owners in Franklin and Bingham Farms, MDOT staff retreated from its plans to rebuild Telegraph to eight lanes with a median from north of Twelve Mile to Orchard Lake Road. The highway planners said they would recommend that the widening be held to six lanes.

At the request of the county board of commissioners, the road commission staff prepared a technical study indicating that eight lanes would be necessary to solve congestion problems and assure reason-

able safety to motorists on the busy thoroughfare.

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