

ABC PEEL NEWSLETTER

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE: GINA HEISZ

Choices

I hope you have all had a wonderful summer and are settling into a new school year comfortably and having lots of fun!

Me? I have been pondering. With a provincial election coming up, and without getting too political, I have been thinking about the choices I have in front of me – and the choices my kids have in front of them. How are the choices we have already made going to impact on this year? When I look at the big picture, how will our choices impact on our lives?

My oldest son wanted to apply for the Sci-Tech program last year. Living in Brampton, that would have meant making the choice to find private bussing to a school that is actually over 20 kilometers away from my home; having him leave home in the morning an hour before he would normally; having him come home in the dark in the winter. Losing too much time for family, fun, and friends. That was a choice our family was not willing to make. Does it really matter that my son is not going to specialize in a program at the age of 12? Probably not.

I had a choice to make with my youngest child this year too. Was I going to put him in public school for JK or keep him at his daycare? He knows the kids and the teachers at his daycare. It is close to my workplace. He is learning a lot there since they are very aware of his needs and are eager to teach him. I chose to keep him there. Will it matter that I didn't get him into the public system in JK to have him tested and possibly identified this year? Probably not.

So, because I have already made those decisions, I wonder now, what will the decision I make on election day mean to my kids? I should be reviewing platforms and sending off emails to my local candidates, but instead I am looking at what is new on the online music shop and thinking - what will be more influential to my kids – my politics or my taste in music? Probably my music.

PARENTS' NIGHT THIS MONTH:

This month, our Parent's Night will be held on Sept. 28, 2007. Since there are usually many open houses at each of your children's schools, there will not be a speaker for the evening. Please bring along your coffee, tea or juice drink. We will be having an informal discussion. You can talk about anything you wish, talk to other parents, or ask questions.

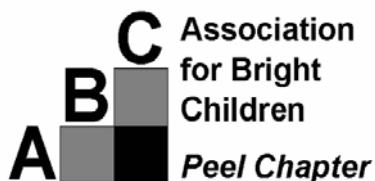
We hope to have executive members available to answer your specific concerns, or you can just come out to mingle with other parents like yourselves. If you have any friends who are "new" to the gifted community, please feel free to bring them along.

As always, the meeting will be held at 7:30 pm in the Inglewood room on the 3rd floor of the Peel District School Board offices at 5650 Hurontario St. at Matheson.

MEMBERSHIP RENEWALS:

It is that time of year again when your membership fees are probably coming due. In order to simplify our administrative process, the executive would appreciate if you could renew your fees in September or October.

Remember that it is only \$40 for the annual membership and your cheques should be made payable to ABC Ontario but mailed to ABC Peel at PO Box 10010, Watline Postal Outlet, Mississauga, Ontario L4Z 4G5. You may also renew your membership at our Parents' Night and you may give the cash or cheque to our membership secretary Jennifer Campbell, or any of our executive members.



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BOARD UPDATES:

Many of you should have received your gifted review surveys from the school board over the summer. We would like to remind everyone to fill out the surveys as carefully and thoughtfully as possible. If you haven't already done so, please fill out the surveys and return them.

Please remember that they are completely confidential and the committee members do not know where, or from whom they came. The committee will be meeting again in September and hope to have a final report in December of this year.

At the May 22, 2007 board meeting, it was announced that Shirley Ann Teal will be leaving the position of Superintendent of Special Education to become Superintendent of elementary schools in the Bramalea, Central Peel, Harold Brathwaite, North Park and Turner Fenton family of schools.

It was also announced the Deborah Krutila will be the new Superintendent of Special Education Support Services. She will take over Shirley Ann's position on the gifted review committee as well.

Remember that all Board and SEAC meetings are open to the public.

ABC PEEL'S FAMILY PICNIC ON JUNE 24, 2007:

Last June, ABC Peel held a family picnic in Inglewood. There were approximately 9 families in attendance and the weather cooperated with beautiful sunshine throughout the day. It was a great chance for families to get together with their children and meet each other in a casual setting.

Next June we hope to have a much larger turnout with lots of activities planned for the children.

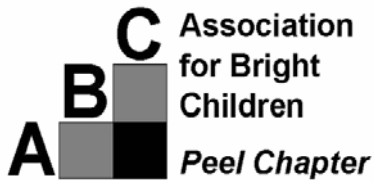
LAST MAY'S PARENT NIGHT:

Last May our final Parents' Night of the year was held around the topic of focus groups. The larger group was divided into 4 smaller groups led by an executive member, and each group brainstormed around a few topics. They were also given a list of discussion items and questions to answer. Each group wrote their answers on large sheets of paper and presented to the rest of the group. Many of the responses were very similar, which proves that we all seem to agree about what is going well, and what needs improvement in Peel.

We are in the process of summarizing the responses and will present all of the findings at an upcoming ABC meeting.

PARENTS' NIGHT TOPICS:

- September 28th - Coffee night—no scheduled speaker
- October 20th - Family Games Day in Brampton
- location will be made available later
- October 25th - Tentative Topic — Organizational Skills for children in grades 5-8
- November 29th - Tentative Topic—High School Programs—led by high school students in IB, Arts, Enhanced etc.
- December - No meeting
- January 31st - Discussion about the Gifted Review



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ANOTHER SCHOOL YEAR:

It's that time of year when we send our children back to school for another year. Some of your children may be returning to the same school with their old friends, while others may be going into a new contained gifted class, not knowing anyone.

This can be a very difficult transition for some children. Some are used to being at the top of their class and might come to realize that they are no longer in that position. Some kids may not want to stay in the new class or school, but, remember that it can take up to 6 weeks to "get used" to a new situation.

Sit down with your children and negotiate a deal. You can let them know that you *do* realize that things might not be going as well as they had hoped, and you understand how they are feeling, but, they must give it a chance, and things may settle down and they will become more familiar with the new teacher or new classroom routine. If after a 6-week trial period, your child still does not want to remain in the new class, you can tell them that they can always go back to their old classroom and friends. Many times after the adjustment period is over, the children are much more comfortable and have forgotten about ever wanting to leave.

We all want our children to be happy, and in many cases this is much more important than what they actually learn in the classroom. However, if your child's self-esteem is suffering, or they are losing that "spark" to learn because of a bad situation in a classroom, it may be better to remove them from that situation. Listen to what your children are actually saying about their class, and don't be afraid to contact ABC to discuss your options, or talk to another parent from ABC at our Parents' Nights.

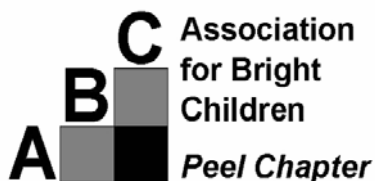
PUBLIC SPEAKING: Toastmasters

Brampton Library and Toastmasters have partnered to help youth ages 14 to 18 develop their communication and leadership skills so they can become leaders in business, industry and their community. The Toastmasters Leadership Program teaches participants speaking and leadership skills they will use for the rest of their lives, including how to:

- overcome the nervousness everyone feels when asked to speak before an audience;
- organize and present their ideas logically and convincingly;
- listen carefully to others' ideas;
- offer advice that will help others improve their speaking and leadership skills.

Each session is conducted as a meeting, not a class, and everyone who takes part gets a Participant's Notebook to help them along the way. The group selects officers who preside over the meetings, and remaining members are assigned other duties on a rotating basis, so everyone is actively involved. Discussions take place at each meeting, and participants also deliver short impromptu and prepared speeches while learning to apply the principles of listening, thinking and speaking.

This exciting opportunity will take place at Brampton Library for eight weeks, beginning Saturday, October 6. The sessions will be held in the Auditorium at the Library's Four Corners Branch, from 10:30 a.m. to 12:30 p.m. Two local Toastmaster chapters – Toast of the Town and Nortel – are sponsoring this initiative, which promises to give interested teens a chance to increase their self-confidence as they learn, make new friends and have fun. As an added bonus, certificates will be issued at the final session on November 24, as part of a special graduation ceremony. Space is limited to 25 teens, so anyone interested in this free offering should register right away by calling the Library at (905) 793-INFO (4636).



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HUMOROUS QUOTES ABOUT EDUCATION by FAMOUS PEOPLE:

Thank goodness I was never sent to school; it would have rubbed off some of the originality
~ **Beatrix Potter**

If a man empties his purse into his head, no man can take it away from him. An investment in knowledge always pays the best interest ~ **Benjamin Franklin**

Human beings, who are almost unique in having the ability to learn from the experience of others, are also remarkable for their apparent disinclination to do so
~ **Douglas Adams**

Education is an admirable thing, but it is well to remember from time to time, that nothing that is worth knowing can be taught ~ **Oscar Wilde**

The illiterate of the 21st century will not be those who cannot read and write, but those who cannot learn, unlearn and relearn ~ **Alvin Toffler**

Education is that which discloses to the wise and disguises from the foolish, their lack of understanding
~ **Ambrose Bierce**

A mind once stretched by a new idea never regains its original dimension ~ **Oliver Wendell Holmes**

If you think education is expensive, try ignorance
~ **Derek Bok**

It is possible to store the mind with a million facts and still be entirely uneducated ~ **Alec Bourne**

Give me six hours to chop down a tree and I will spend four hours sharpening the axe ~ **Abraham Lincoln**

WEBSITES OF INTEREST:

<http://www.metmuseum.org/home.asp>

This is a link to the Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York city.

<http://www.techeblog.com/index.php/tech-gadget/top-10-strangest-lego-creations>

This is a link to pictures of some amazing LEGO creations.

<http://www.accessexcellence.org/RC/VL/xrays/>

This is a link to the Living Skeleton: a virtual tour of the human skeleton.

CONTACT INFORMATION:

Telephone support: 905-230-8281 (mailbox '2' has information about upcoming Parents' Nights)

E-mail support: support@abcpeel.org

Website address: <http://www.abcpeel.org>

Membership Information: membership@abcpeel.org

Parent's Night Information: activities@abcpeel.org

Children's Programs: activities@abcpeel.org

Webmaster: webadmin@abcpeel.org

Communication Team (Newsletter):
abcpeelnews@hotmail.com