As 2009 has all but whisked by, everyone involved with the CHIP Centre would like to wish CHIP families a wonderful Christmas and peaceful New Year.

Should we have our child pursue subjects that he/she is not interested in? What do we do when our child won’t finish composing a story because he can’t think of the perfect ending? Can you motivate a child who is not contributing effort at school despite ability? Should you reward appropriate behaviors?

These were some of the questions Dr Glenison Alsop addressed at the recent parents forum held on Sunday 1st November 2009.

The forum was the latest initiative organised by the CHIP Family Support Group. An interactive forum, attending parents were given the opportunity to email questions to Dr Alsop before the day to have them discussed in the open forum. Dr Alsop mused how bright children are generally great manipulators and provided parents with some strategies on how to avoid being involved in lengthy arguments on a whole range of topics and situations.

As parents, we sometimes struggle to know how involved to be, how to respond to challenging questioning or debate from our children, how to instill expectations in them without being pushy. The forum offered an opportunity for parents to share experiences in using different strategies and approaches in guided discussions with Dr Alsop.

Parents have provided feedback to say that they found the session informative and thought provoking and a terrific opportunity to share ideas on how best to support their children’s needs.

Thank you to Dr Alsop for facilitating the forum and to Highton Primary School for hosting the group. We certainly appreciate the continued support of the group’s activities and events by Highton Primary.

Dr Alsop has agreed to facilitate further events involving parents of children with high intellectual potential, so if you are interested in...
CHIP Family Support Group Inc is a not for profit group whose aims are to support parents of children with high intellectual potential; encourage the development and education of children with high intellectual potential; foster the special talents and interests and provide an opportunity for children to interact with like-minded peers. Memberships are welcome. A once off fee of $10.00 is payable, and membership is a reasonable $20.00 per family per annum. Members receive email notification of upcoming events and discounted fees for programs.

If you have any ideas or requests for events, please contact Meg Kingsley 52227763. Watch out for our new program in 2010!

CFSG Geelong-A Parent Perspective

I am writing to thank you for your professional assistance this year with the Geelong CHIP Family Support Group. As we are new members this year, it has been wonderful to be welcomed into the Group by you and the other parents.

A special thanks for helping to organise the two visits by Dr. Alsop that I have attended. To be able to have access to her wealth of knowledge has been a privilege. I appreciate the way she honestly and directly answers our questions and concerns. Sometimes we as parents need guidance to keep us on track and improve our parenting skills with our CHIP children. After each of the Forums I came away armed with new strategies and also a better understanding of how my child 'ticks', as well as the bonus of what the future may hold as he gets older. I hope that the Group can continue these meetings next year as we have found them to be an invaluable resource.

Thank you again Sandra, and please enjoy a safe and happy holiday season!

Sincerely,
Maura, Mick and Ronan Donohue

Coming early in 2010

The CHIP Foundation is very proud to announce a new resource for parents. Developed over the last two years and drawing on the resources and research of our Board of Management, the CHIP Foundation is releasing a revised and expanded website which will contain extensive information about CHIP Children, their families and schooling. Designed with a view to meeting the needs of parents, our website will provide easy to access information based around different age groups and stages of schooling. A good deal of information will be free and open to all. For those people interested in accessing more detailed information, based on the CHIP Foundation’s extensive knowledge of over 21 years of dealing with CHIP, their parents and their teachers, there will be an option of purchasing an annual membership so that you can gain access to a wider range of resources. We are at the first stage of releasing what we believe will be a unique and invaluable product. If you would like to be kept informed about the
To Develop Children of High Intellectual Potential

progress of the release of our new website and to receive notice when the site goes ‘live’ then just email enquiries@chipfoundation.org.au and put “Website interest” in the subject line. We’ll send you information as soon as it becomes available.

| Role of the CHIP Centre Geelong |
The Chip Centre supports Children of High Intellectual Potential (CHIP), their families and schools through identification, counselling, a parent support group and parent information sessions. **We are also accredited service providers for the Department of Education and Early Childhood Development (DEECD)** in the areas of assessment and professional development.

| SCHOOL NEWS |
This year, students at Highton Primary School have been supported through their involvement in ‘Like Minds’ classes. These classes were specially developed to provide an academically challenging work environment that had a large focus on social interaction and risk-taking behaviours. Students have participated in a number of learning engagements planned to explicitly teach the skills needed for effective group work. They have been encouraged to develop the attitudes of empathy and tolerance. When the need has arisen, Highton teachers have supported a fluent transition between class levels for specific subjects. In 2010 Highton will continue the ‘Like Minds’ concept however this will be arranged through small groups within year level classes. Within this structure, students will be supported by a small group of similar thinkers and be challenged with authentic learning experiences, problem solving activities and strategic thinking exercises.

**Caitlyn Allan**

**Kelvin Lui (Highton PS year 4 student) topped the Belmont High School Yr 10 Advanced Mathematics this year. Congratulations Kelvin and also Highton PS and Belmont HS for facilitating this.**

**The article of interest this December is from SENG (Supporting the Emotional Needs of the Gifted)**

“I didn’t grow up gifted, at least not by name. I grew up being asked what was wrong with me.”

Joseph Hughes, age 19

Joseph Hughes once read more than 1,000 books to win a first grade contest. A high achiever, they all said.

In elementary school, he'd complete class assignments - perfectly - before the other kids.

But he'd quickly find himself in trouble for having done it before the teacher even reviewed the instructions. Impulsive, they all said.

A math whiz, Joe could quickly solve the toughest problems. But he got F after F, simply because he wouldn't show his work properly. A non-conformist, they all said.
And that's when the wheels on Joe's life began to wobble. His intellect far exceeded most of those around him, including some of his teachers. Unfortunately, it also far exceeded his emotional development. Joe became an outcast among his peers, and a struggle for his teachers. He got down on himself, wondering why he was always wrong, just because he saw things differently. His pain was deep and profound, eroding both his confidence and his motivation. Which made school, and learning, a horrible torture. It was only in high school that Joe was "diagnosed" as gifted, a label neither he nor his parents were initially eager to embrace. While others assumed that "gifted" meant compliant and high-achieving, Joe came to understand that not only did he have a desire to do things very differently, he had a burning need.

When Joe was about 16, Joe's parents discovered SENG - Supporting Emotional Needs of the Gifted.

"It was like walking through a portal into an amazing new world," Joe's mom, Holly, said. For the Hughes family, SENG became "the best repository of information on the topic, especially the human side," Holly remembers. From books and articles, to networking opportunities, to supportive conferences, SENG helped the Hughes family make sense of the inexplicable.

Speaking of portals into strange new lands, Joe completed his GED, entered college, and is publishing a 520-page fantasy fiction novel he first outlined in the sixth grade. Armorica is the story of a land "on the brink of destruction, held at the throat by daemons and their cohorts." Sounds like a place with which Joseph Hughes might have some familiarity.

Here is Joe's story, in his own words:

Through His Eyes

Hello. My name is Joseph Hughes, and I am 19 years old. You are probably asking, "Who are you, and why am I bothering to read this article?" Well, to begin with, the fact that you are reading this publication probably means you care about or are interested in the gifted.

I didn't grow up gifted, at least not by name. I grew up being asked what was wrong with me. People treated me like I was an idiot, at least that's how it felt to me. I had the "privilege" of going to private schools where "everyone is gifted." And I was the misfit because I would not do what they wanted the way they wanted. The world I grew up in had no idea what giftedness looks like - unless it is compliant and achievement focused. In me, all they saw was a problem kid who needed to be properly disciplined or given pills for ADHD. This did not work so well.

In the beginning my grades were really good. I worked hard and wanted to impress my parents and make people proud of me. In first grade, we had a competition to read the most books in the year. I read 1046 books, and the runner up read 700-800. But then something started to go wrong. I became an angry kid who hated life and everyone in it because nothing I did ever felt good enough. All I felt anyone wanted from me was results and that had nothing to do with who I was.

As middle school rolled around, things only became worse, as I was tagged the class problem. My classmates would laugh at me, and whenever something went wrong, fingers pointed my way. Teachers wouldn't even bother checking facts before kicking me out. It...
was an academically rigorous prep school with rigid standards; while everyone said I "should be able to do the work," I wouldn't do the mountains of homework I found meaningless.

Then came high school. I actually enjoyed a lot about the school and got along with most of my teachers. But after one math teacher gave me F after F simply because I couldn't properly show my work, I stood up, left and never went back into that class again. Supposedly, I'm "gifted" in math.

I left high school and got a GED, convinced that college would be better. It seemed like the other students saw me as weird -- I was so much younger -- and that made me uncomfortable. I didn't feel I belonged there, either.

My life then suffered a serious, traumatic blow that changed me forever. But it's also how my mother finally discovered what was "wrong" with me. She always tried hard to help me but only now stumbled on the answer. I was gifted - not gifted like sit-straight-in-your-chair-getting-all-As gifted but gifted like really different in the way I look at everything and feel about everything. I first learned about this strange new "gifted world" through SENG, and it was at a SENG conference that I first met people who felt like me, people who seemed to understand me and with whom I connected in a whole, new way.

That led to an introduction to a wonderful lady. Sue Jackson, founder of the Daimon Institute for the Highly and Profoundly Gifted, saved my life, and I am beyond grateful for what she has done for me. Sue has helped me make sense of it all.

Now, I hope my story might help others. I want to say there is nothing wrong with us - it's just who we are - and it may not fit with where you are and what you want us to be doing. Like when I should have been doing schoolwork from middle school upward, do you know what I did instead? I wrote, rewrote and edited a 600-page manuscript. My fantasy fiction novel, Armorica, will be in print by Christmas. What my teachers and peers criticized as a petty distraction is easily my greatest accomplishment, and I didn't do any of it in school.

So, believe in your kids and what they do. Try to accept our difference, in that being gifted can sometimes look like a lot of other things, some of which aren't so good. And trust us. We know more than you might think.

**Summer Holiday Activities 2009/10**

**Put together by Meg Kingsley CFSG Geelong**

CHIP LITTLE WEEK OUT HOLIDAY PROGRAM 18-22 January 2010 also have some great programs running in Melbourne.

http://www.chip.edu.au/

CSIRO run holiday programs- sign up here to be sent their email updates.

http://www.csiro.au/resources/VicMailingListForm.html

Geelong summer music camp

Geelong Gallery

Ekko Creatives- Christmas Craft sessions and holiday program through January 102 Ryrie Street Geelong Ph5221 8855

Insectarium of Victoria

The Insectarium of Victoria features what is alleged to be the world's largest crayfish, along with a wide range of insects. The Insectarium is located on the Calder Highway (next to the railway station) and is open from 10.00 a.m. to 4.00 p.m. on Sundays, tel: (03) 5427 2222.
Woodend Berry Farm
Woodend Berry Farm is located in Tylden Rd (an extension of Forest St). There you can pick, or buy ready-picked, blueberries, in January and February. Out of season frozen blueberries are available, along with blueberry jam and chutneys, tel: (03) 5427 3939 or (019) 933 702

Thank you Meg, Sonia, Caitlyn and the Donohue family for your contributions to the December newsletter

Dr Sandra Lea-Wood
Manager
CHIP Centre Geelong
Mobile 0407320043
sleawood@bigpond.net.au