



# The Anderson School

## NEWSLETTER

A publication of the Anderson Private School for the Gifted & Talented  
14900 White Settlement Road, Fort Worth, Texas 76108

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### PERSPECTIVES

of DR. & MRS. ANDERSON

The assimilation of voluminous data by the individual human mind is becoming less strategically significant due, in part, to a changing technological environment and our inability to retain the exponentially increasing body of knowledge. And today, information is readily available on the computer and can be easily accessed.

The ability to genuinely think, however, is found only in the biochemical, holographically imaging computer called the human brain. And its unique and innate characteristics and capabilities are sorely neglected in schools.

Precocious children can typically remember facts with one or two exposures to new information (learning cycles). This is one of the most dynamic characteristics of gifted children. But overexposure to the same information can become detrimental. Bright children become easily bored and can withdraw from a world that no longer stimulates their dynamic and hungry intellects. For them, the process of thinking is significant, not the products. Facts alone do not lead to intellectual growth. A dynamic and engaging intellect does not thrive on a diet of more and more of the same information.

***“Facts alone do not lead to intellectual growth.”***

When the mind is without challenge, it may wander aimlessly and go down pathways that seemingly fulfill a desire for intellectual stimulation, banter or creative encounter. And this may become highly counterproductive. Boredom can effect a healthy, vibrant mind in ways that are similar to sensory deprivation - emerging in behaviors that range from negative attitudes and enterprises to the exploitative, unlawful and even dangerous or self-destructive. The idle mind of a bright child is truly a dangerous workshop. It is filled with an unbelievable potential and *no place to go*. And so its powerful, innate creativity creates its own new pathways. And where they go is anyone's guess.

***“The idle mind of a bright child is truly a dangerous workshop. It is filled with an unbelievable potential and no place to go.”***

They may lead to withdrawal into secret recesses of the mind, acting out to meet the need for stimulation, dropping out socially, emotionally or mentally, or to a variety of psychological maladies and disorders, or eventually a total withdrawal from socialization, reason or reality. A healthy mind demands an enormous degree of interaction. If we do not provide

young minds with acceptable, positive, interactive and productive avenues and realistically viable alternatives, they will chart their own course - carving unpredictable tributaries through a landscape of unimaginable consequences.

*- Always use the word impossible with the greatest caution. -  
(Werhner Von Braun)*

### IMPORTANT DATES

- Mar. 15 - 19 Spring Break Holidays
- Apr. 2 & 5 Good Friday/Easter Holidays
- Apr. 9 Inservice Day
- Apr. 26 - 30 Spring Adventure Trip (McDonald Observatory)
- May 5 Cinco de Mayo Holiday

*- The best way to predict the future . . . is to create it. -*

### NEW SCIENCE TEACHER

A warm welcome to *Nance Gaines*, a second year medical student with an undergraduate major in Biology. Nance will be working with both small groups and individuals. Her instructional focus will be with hands-on experimentation.

*- Rule # 1  
Don't sweat the small stuff.  
Rule #2  
It's all small stuff. -  
(LeVonna Anderson)*

## COMMUNITY SERVICE

On February 24 and December 16, the entire student body participated in a food drive and volunteer work at the Metroplex Food Bank. Viewed by many as the best experiences of the year, these days of labor on behalf of others who are in need, gave our students (and parent volunteers) a deep sense of the genuine needs that exist and provided opportunities to give something back to the community.

The Food Bank is the largest provider of emergency food assistance in Texas. If you can contribute through food drives, in-kind donations, volunteer work or cash donations call 817-924-FEED. *They have never had enough food for all who ask.*

*- I don't want the cheese, I just want to get out of the trap. -*

(Spanish Proverb)

## WEEKLY STUDY TRIPS

Using the community as classroom provides wonderful opportunities. Lately, our students viewed the Picasso/Matisse and Treasures of the Nile exhibits at the Kimbell Art Museum, attended the annual Ft. Worth Stock Show, enjoyed the stage west production of the Greek classic *Media* by Euripides, danced on the ice at Skatin' Texas, saw the Greatest Places at the Omni Theater, listened to a rousing Bass Hall performance of STOMP, and viewed the exhibits at Ripley's Believe It or Not Museum and the House of Wax.

*- Men stumble over the truth from time to time, but most pick themselves up and hurry off as if nothing happened. -*

(Winston Churchill)

## HOW WE DIFFER

[FROM OTHER SCHOOLS PART 11]

The act of thinking, as a serious and deliberate process for study, is typically neglected in schools. For children to think efficiently and effectively they need to think about thinking and, more important, have a significant portion of their

curriculum systematically dedicated to the processes (not the products) of thinking.

At the Anderson School, approximately one hour of each class day is devoted to thinking skills and strategies. And one room (called the "Think Room") is reserved for this marvelous process. It is liberally stocked with games, puzzles, and other items all related to higher level thinking. It provides a quiet place for students to become intellectually engaged.

All of our students are involved in the unique class, in which a dynamic series of problematic activities, questions, puzzles and games are structured for divergent, analytical and open-ended thinking in order to engage young minds in non-linear and unconventional ways. Students are expected to process, evaluate and analyze information, not regurgitate it.

A wide variety of resources are utilized ranging from Mensa questions, mind benders, and brainteasers to plexars, logic puzzles, red herrings and more.

***"Students are expected to process, evaluate and analyze information, not regurgitate it."***

Why do we dedicate so much time purely to the pursuit of thinking? Because the process of engaging the mind in deep reflective thought is not generally a conscious or planned endeavor in day to day living (or learning). Giving intense, deliberate thought to a problem, question, situation, or even existence itself, is not typically expected from educators. And thinking "outside of the box" of what is expected, accepted, linear or traditional is requisite to creative production.

We endeavor to train pliable young scholars and thus enable them to make deep reflective thought processes deliberate, frequent and, most important, habitual. When attitudes toward thinking evolve into a habit of questioning, and processing (not merely possessing) information in a clearly deliberate manner, then we have established a

lifetime perspective that will derive incalculable benefits.

***"We endeavor to . . . make deep reflective thought processes deliberate, frequent and, most important, habitual."***

The Anderson School places great emphasis upon thinking as a substantive part of life and living. The challenges we give students during this unusual program are not easy. And we do not ever intend to make them easy. The questions, problems and dilemmas presented are deliberately difficult or without concrete resolution, as are many of life's problems.

***"The challenges we give . . . are not easy. And we do not ever intend to make them easy."***

Challenging young minds enables children to confront the very real problems they will face a daily basis with better solution, resolution or acceptance.

*- He who has no fire in himself cannot warm others. -*

## MRS. ANDERSON ON DISCUSSION PANEL

A parent network group seeking alternative treatments for A.D.D. without using controlled substances such as Ritalin, invited Mrs. Anderson to serve on a discussion panel and present information about the Anderson School. She informed the gathering of the school's philosophy and its alternative instructional and motivational strategies. Our school prohibits the use of such drugs by its students.

Dr. Mary Ann Block, noted physician and author of ***No More Ritalin***, chaired the panel. She is well known for her remarkable work which enables parents and their children to discover viable alternatives to drug therapy. Her pioneering book is available in area bookstores.