The Institute for Educational Advancement (IEA) is dedicated to the intellectual, creative, and personal growth in our nation’s gifted and high potential youth. Central to the mission of IEA is a commitment to the development of the whole child through engaging learning experiences that promote optimal challenge, mentorship, exploration of ideas, and recognition of personal potential. IEA seeks to connect like-minded individuals and supports a diverse community that creates a sense of belonging and affirmation.
At this year’s Bradley Seminar, we asked our high school students what inhibits them from pursuing their goals. The most common answers: fear and the expectations of others. This discussion segued into our conversation about “finding your voice,” cultivating courage and trust. I remain amazed at the depth of conversation and scope of personal discovery our students display in short periods of time.

A taste of our outcomes....

Finding your inner voice requires reflection and patience. Our core beliefs influence the voice we hear inside our head and the lens through which we interpret the world. Nurturing that inner voice to help define the life you were meant to live requires courage. Each time you acknowledge, respect, and listen to that voice, your spirit strengthens.

Trusting our spirit provides courage to move forward in the face of fear and the unknown. Trust heightens our awareness and compassion for others. It enables us to handle life with intellectual and emotional flexibility, confidence, and a bit of humor.

This newsletter highlights the voices of several individuals from our community. Each contributor has experienced what it means to heed their inner voice. IEA’s vision is to help our community connect in positive ways as we endeavor to support one another with trust and courage. Join us on our journey!

Elizabethe Jones

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CHECK OUT OUR NEW VIDEO!

ACADEMY
Year-round enrichment classes focused on exploration and the application of knowledge and taught by content area specialists, including Ph.D.s from local universities and professionals from leading scientific institutions. Subjects include math, science, literature and more. (Preschool-8th grade)

CDB
The Caroline D. Bradley Scholarship is an award that provides highly gifted students with a four-year scholarship to a high school that fits each Scholar’s individual intellectual and personal needs. (Students apply in 7th grade)
Mark Your Calendars!

ACADEMY
Summer Session I
June 13 - July 1
Now Enrolling!

EXPLORE
Session I
June 13 - June 24

EXPLORE
Session II
June 27 - July 8

EXPLORE
Session III
July 11 - July 22
Now Enrolling!

YUNASA WEST
June 19 - June 26

YUNASA
July 30 - August 6

EXPLORE
Session IV
August 1 - August 12
Now Enrolling!
Southern California Institute of Architecture

ACADEMY
Fall Session
September 19 - November 19
Applications Due: September 9

SEPTEMBER
Monthly Gifted Support Meetings Begin (Year-Round Calendar Coming Soon!)

EXPLORE
Externships for high school students offering the unique opportunity to learn about working in a variety of professional settings, help solve real-world problems, and make professional connections with bright minds. (Los Angeles Area, 9th-11th grade)

YUNASA
Pioneering and award-winning summer camps unite highly able youngsters and experts in the social and emotional development of gifted children to teach campers how to balance all aspects of their lives. (10-15 year olds)

PUBLIC POLICY INITIATIVE
In November 2015, IEA hosted a gathering to discuss the dearth of public policy supporting gifted youth. Since then, IEA has been working towards actualizing the initial goals set forth by the meeting’s participants.

OTHER SERVICES
Consulting Services, Gifted Resource Center (GRC), Gifted Support Meetings
Meet Cassidy Kao

I am ten years old and the author of Constellation Exploration: Greek Mythical Stories Retold with Simple Facts and Fun and Mysterious Riddles, and Roller Coaster: Kid’s Guide on How to Write Poetry. I have many varied interests, from writing poetry to playing the piano to dancing ballet. But when you ask me what my favorite subject is, I would say, “It’s math!” In my spare time, I love to read, and enjoy hanging out with my friends to play Minecraft and shoot silly homemade movies. (Cassidy has been an Academy student since 2014. She recently taught a poetry workshop to a handful of eager Academy students.)

The Zodiac Circle
by Cassidy Kao

Here comes bright Aries, Shiny, magical, golden A gift from the gods

Libra is coming Scales, light, ready for justice The pair of true scales

Then there is Taurus A white bull, sneaky, stealthy A powerful god Scorpio sneaks by Scorpion, hissing, wary A mad scorpion

Look! It’s Gemini Twins, loving, with happiness A beautiful two Sagittarius Goat, musical, sad A majestic goat

Who can miss Cancer A crab, curious, naughty A very measly crab Capricorn gallops Satyr, happy, archery A hopeful satyr

We can see Leo Lion, ferocious, angry A strong-willed lion Now, Aquarius Water bearer, prince The lonely bearer

Then, Virgo swirls by, Beautiful, distressed, tired A searching goddess Pisces, swimming by The fish, helpful, amazing The beautiful fish

we’ve been having a ball!
To be gifted is to be endowed with a unique way of seeing the world, coupled with a passionate desire for understanding. It is more than academics and has an often overlooked, but equally important, social and an emotional component as well. Put into practice, giftedness can manifest as a deep passion for Old English literature, a need to memorize every type of dinosaur that roamed the earth, a desire to solve math puzzles just for the fun of it, or drive to read books for hours on end. Although we may praise the accomplishments and precociousness of these kids, we also need to recognize that giftedness can take a social and an emotional toll. It can feel isolating to be an elementary school student who wants to talk about quantum physics during recess, or to be the one who sits outside the classroom doing advanced math worksheets, or to be the kid who leaves early to work at home because the material taught at school is too basic.

To find a place of belonging, not just academically, but socially and emotionally as well, is something gifted kids long for. For our children and others, that place of belonging is Yunasa. Matthew first picked up a brochure on Yunasa when he was in fifth grade after attending an IEA Academy class called Rocket to Calculus. He was so excited to find a sleep-away camp where he would be with other gifted kids in a non-academic camp environment. For Matthew, the downside of being gifted was often feeling alone in his passionate interests about a variety of topics, but he anticipated that being at Yunasa West in Colorado would provide him the opportunity to be surrounded by like-minded peers in a tranquil and supportive environment. Yunasa was that and so much more. He was excited about the daily activities, such as hiking and horseback riding, but he also gained confidence in himself when he tried the ropes courses. He made friends quickly, and conversation came easily as there were many children and adults with common interests, and he found a new sense of social ease. He learned tools to help him develop mindfulness and calmness, and developed a sense of pride in his independence in being away from home. Matthew appreciated that he could let his guard down for the first time and just speak his mind without feeling worried about what he said or how others would view him, which was a life-changing and self-affirming experience.

The following year, our daughter Sarah joined Matthew in attending Yunasa in Michigan, and she felt safe in sharing her challenges, dreams, interests, and accomplishments with the other campers, counselors, and mentors. She kayaked and swam in the lake, rode horses and hiked, and enjoyed deep and meaningful conversations. She remains in contact with her new friends and cannot wait to return and spend time with them. Both Matthew and Sarah will return to Yunasa this summer, and we feel so fortunate to have found such a safe and nurturing environment to support our children and others, and only hope that all gifted children can have this opportunity. To our family, Yunasa is much more than a summer camp, it is a validating, unique, meaningful, and life-changing experience.

We would like to thank the Burke family for their generous contributions and involvement with IEA over the years. They are dear members of this community, indeed!

From Right to Left: Betsy Jones, Matthew Burke, and Sarah Burke
Q & A

2016 Bradley Seminar: Finding Your Voice

Jim Delisle and Michael Piechowski are both near and dear to IEA. This year, we asked them to share a few thoughts on the Bradley Seminar. Jim Delisle, Ph.D. is a Fellow and IEA Board member. He has worked with and for gifted children for 33 years. He is the author of 16 books, and joins us every summer for Yunasa. Michael Piechowski is an author and scholar; he is a Senior Fellow with IEA, the author of *Mellow Out, They Say. If Only I Could: Intensities and Sensitivities of the Young and Bright.*

How many Bradley Seminars have you attended and how was this one different from previous years?

**Piechowski:** Two. This time I could hear the speeches much better.

**Delisle:** This is the third Bradley seminar I’ve attended. Although each seminar has its own theme, the spirit of unity and gratitude among the collected CDB scholars and their parents is always present.

Did you have any interesting student interactions or conversations that stuck with you?

**Piechowski:** I witnessed one student ask about how one could make the effort to find the very bright and talented among the less privileged classes. Members of my group at Yunasa had this kind of conversation....

**Delisle:** My most memorable student interactions are always the unplanned ones—the conversations at meals, the questions after my presentation (...they always have questions!), the casual banter as we walk back to the hotel from the Barder House. Also, watching from afar, I enjoy thoroughly when I hear the graduating CDB Scholars welcoming the newly-selected Scholars. Indeed, this collective resembles one big family.

Do you have a highlight or memory from that Seminar that left a strong impression?

**Piechowski:** One strong memory is the high level of profound appreciation and gratitude expressed toward Betsy and Bonnie.

**Delisle:** I always get emotional when I hear the brief speeches given by the seniors. Even though I don’t know these students nearly as well as Betsy, Bonnie and other IEA staff members, I still feel a connection to each student as s/he shares a memory or piece of wisdom or advice from the podium.

EXPLORE

"It’s simple—not many high school students get the opportunity to work in a real-life professional setting. The program provides invaluable opportunities and insight early on in our academic lives, without having to wait until college to really get a genuine idea of what we want to do with our lives."

- Program Alum

Externs will have the unique opportunity to work alongside professionals at fifteen different sites, including:

Southern California Institute of Architecture (Sci-Arc) *Apply Today!*

Astronomy at Caltech

Arts Education at Kandenze

Neuroscience at UCLA
In your opinion, what is valuable about this kind of gathering?

**Piechowski:** The creation of enduring bonds is a treasure for the rest of their lives because it is a network of trustworthy contacts; keeping track of each other, and being ready to help.

**Delisle:** The value of the Bradley Seminar can be encapsulated in one word: “communion”. Everyone needs to feel a part of something bigger than they are, and at each year’s CDB Seminar, the Scholars, alumni and parents come together to form a collective whole that is all too rare in life.

What wisdom do you have to offer on the topic “Finding Your Voice”? Why is it important?

**Piechowski:** It’s a subject of central importance. It defines one’s life. It seems to me that one finds one’s voice either through a process of self-discovery and self-affirmation or as the benefit gained in psychotherapy—to become one’s true self and be true to oneself.

**Delisle:** To me, “Finding your voice” was a wonderful theme for this year’s seminar, as each of us has both something to say, and something we need to hear from others. Voices can be quiet or loud, rude or respectful, indulgent or generous. With this year’s “Finding your Voice” theme, we were all asked to look inward to discover what we have to offer and what we have to learn.

Do you have any other reflections or words of wisdom to share?

**Piechowski:** ...admiration and gratitude to the IEA staff and volunteers who so generously give of themselves—Brianna getting up at 6 AM after a strenuous weekend just to get me into a taxi on a foggy morning.

**Delisle:** Literary greats Laura Riding and Robert Graves, in 1937, and Yogi Berra, in 1974, gave us a piece of reality that we would be wise to recognize: “The future isn’t what it used to be.” OK...OK...so Yogi Berra substituted “ain’t” for “isn’t” in his retelling, but the message remains the same: be open to ambiguity, be less assured of inevitability, and enjoy the ride as you move forward into uncertain times. Along the way, you’re sure to find your voice.
RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED