

# NDAGC Quarterly Newsletter



## Furthering our mission

By Beth Ustanko

NDAGC President

I wholeheartedly believe that NDAGC is an organization which is vitally important within our state. The reasons for this can be found within our mission:

**Advocacy-** Gifted Education has always needed strong advocates. NDAGC provides our state's only resource about the needs of gifted children for parents, teachers, administrators, and other interested community members. I believe now more than ever advocates for the needs of Gifted Children in North Dakota must make efforts to come together in order to give a voice to those needs.

**Education-** When best practices are implemented, students receiving gifted education services are provided with powerful tools and supports necessary for their growth and development. As an organization, we strive to inform and be a resource for our membership about these practices.

**Collaboration-** We are better together, and NDAGC provides a place to collaborate for all stakeholders concerned about the needs of the gifted.

**Research-** The field of Gifted Education is ever-evolving as new research brings updated best practices. NDAGC connects experts in the field from our state, and promotes the exchange of new ideas and understandings.

## Newsletter Highlights

Message from our President

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October Webinar: Infusing Thinking Skills with Content

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Parent Corner: Stem for Busy Gifted Families

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With Deepest Gratitude to Dr. Yee Han Chu

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Teacher Corner: Mensa for Kids





NDAGC has an amazingly dedicated team who volunteer their time and expertise to furthering its mission. Our board includes passionate experts from across the state including Andrea Edstrom, Alicia Schroeder-Schock, Connie Jadrny, Holly Magcalas, Julie Jaeger, Mikayla Cramer, Ligia Carina Feo de Drago, Anna Adrover, Kristy Coopman, and Allision Anderson. In addition, we are fortunate to welcome Kim Rensch to our board this fall. The work of implementing NDAGC's mission necessitates countless hours dedicated to planning, collaboration, and outreach. Much of this work happens behind the scenes, which these individuals rarely receive acknowledgement for.

Any recognition of individuals vital to our board would not be complete without mention of NDAGC's Past Presidents Yee Han Chu and Ann Davidson. Both were instrumental in making NDAGC the effective organization it is today. Their passion for advocating for the needs of gifted students has helped shape the organization into one which is focused on furthering our mission. Dr. Chu is a master researcher who has done much to support teaching and learning about best practices in gifted education throughout the state. Ann Davidson is an admired leader whose expertise in gifted education is known in North Dakota and beyond. They have left both a legacy, and big shoes to fill.

It is with great humility that I step into the role of NDAGC President. Gifted Education is a field I love! I serve on our board as both a parent of a gifted child, and as a teacher of gifted students. My colleagues in gifted education are professional, creative, knowledgeable, passionate, dedicated, persistent, fun, caring, and curious lifelong learners. The parents of gifted individuals I have had the privilege to know are passionate about their child's growth and development. They care about programs which meet their child's intellectual, academic, and social/emotional needs at school. Parents are an important voice for the needs of their children, and a great support and source of advocacy for gifted education programs.

I appreciate the opportunity to serve NDAGC's board and members- and most importantly gifted children in the state of North Dakota.

## Upcoming Event: October Webinar

On Monday, October 23rd at 4 PM CST, Alicia Schroeder-Schock will present a webinar about infusing thinking skills with content. Follow the link below for more information and to register:

<https://ndagc.org/event-5446891>

**NDAGC Webinar Series:**  
**Infusing Thinking Skills with Content**

**Monday, October 23, 2023 @ 4:00 PM CST**



This webinar will focus on supporting teachers with educational opportunities that infuse thinking skills with content to increase the depth, complexity, and rigor of a task. It will build off evidence-based resources that include PETS, Kaplan's Depth and Complexity icons, and Project Zero's Thinking Routines to create engaging and accessible lessons for learners ready for advanced learning experiences that promote higher-level thinking and creative productivity. It will also offer concrete, standards-based lesson examples that teachers can use or modify to fit their learning environment. We hope you can join!

**Presenter: Alicia Schroeder-Schock**

Alicia Schroeder-Schock is a K-5 gifted and talented teacher in West Fargo Public Schools and a regional representative for NDAGC. She received her Master's degree from the University of Connecticut in educational psychology with a concentration in giftedness, creativity, and talent development and is currently working on her Doctorate degree with William & Mary in educational leadership with a concentration in gifted administration. Through these experiences she has increasingly focused on effective instructional practices, advanced curriculum development, and equitable program design. Alicia loves working with educators on lesson design and implementing concrete, feasible, and engaging curriculum options for high ability learners.





## PARENT CORNER: STEM FOR BUSY GIFTED FAMILIES

By ANNA ADROVER

As a mother of two children I am constantly looking for things for my children to do that would be both entertaining and educational. I'm the kind of mom that encourages natural curiosity, but not at the cost of a big clean up! I often struggle coming up with ideas and I don't have enough time to surf the web to pick through someone else's pinterest ideas. I need some fun, fast, and simple experiments to delight my children with the things I have at home. This is why I jumped for joy when I heard that the KVRR morning show in Fargo, ND, is planning to offer a twice monthly segment that features gifted kids doing STEM activities with their meteorologist Mariah Bush!

NDAGC has been asked to collaborate on this segment, and I couldn't be more thrilled; who better to filter through those STEM ideas than the experts who advocate for gifted kids all across North Dakota? Not only that but NDAGC wants to feature gifted kids doing the experiments, which means my little ones will see kids their own age and interest trying these things out! This is where you come in, because it's your kids that could be the ones to show their talents on TV!

NDAGC is now seeking gifted and talented students who are interested in appearing on TV participating in STEM activities that our NDAGC educators plan. Segments will be pre-recorded at a day and time that will be determined in the future. They will need approximately 4 to 6 students, of any K-12 grade, to begin with. I know my girls will be jumping at this chance so I let Connie know we are interested! I hope you do too, so we can all try out some very cool (and hopefully not too messy) STEM experiments that will amaze and inspire other kids across the valley to dig into new interests!

If your child is interested in this opportunity, please email Connie Olson ([cjadorny@gmail.com](mailto:cjadorny@gmail.com)) and I will get you more information as the project comes together.



## NDAGC'S FIRST GIFTed gathering

In September 2023 NDAGC hosted its first GIFTed (Guiding Individuals and Families Together) Gathering in Fargo, ND. Over 70 parents and children attended the event which featured educational experiences, time for connecting with others, food, and fun in the park. Thank you to all who attended! Our organization hopes to continue these events and expand them to other cities in our state.

All of the photos utilized in this newsletter were taken at the GIFTed gathering!





## With Deepest Gratitude to Yee Han Chu, PhD, MSSW

By Ann Davidson

In 2018, a small group of educators around the state of North Dakota came together to breathe life back into NDAGC. The organization had been in place for decades but for a while hadn't had a concentrated group of individuals consistently working together to design, broaden, and move its vision forward.

It is now 2023, five years later, and this past August, NDAGC said goodbye to one of our recreators, Dr. Yee Han Chu.

Yee Han Chu, PhD, MSSW is the Academic Support and Fellowship Opportunities Coordinator at the University of North Dakota's Academic Affairs Office. Her role there is to assist students in applying for nationally competitive scholarships and fellowships. Dr. Chu also has an extensive background as a licensed clinical social worker-- as a professor in higher education and also in professional practice.

For NDAGC, Yee Han Chu dedicated these last five years serving as president and past president and because of her focused leadership and passion for gifted education, our organization was significantly strengthened. Dr. Chu taught graduate courses in gifted education through UND supporting North Dakota teachers desiring to obtain their endorsement in gifted education. She also offered an immense amount of her expertise and talent in the way of professional development and advocacy to parents and teachers across North Dakota.

Dr. Chu's scholarly nature, smart discourse, lovely sense of humor, passion for gifted education, authentic spirit, and all-important make-no-apology-this-is research-based-best-stuff-grittiness has been inspiring to all of us and we are incredibly grateful for having benefited from her extraordinary gifts.

Thank you, Yee Han, for the leadership and expertise you have selflessly given to NDAGC. We know we get to march forward in this work as a stronger organization because of your tremendous impact.

Thank you for all you have given to us, North Dakota, and gifted students everywhere.

## Teacher Corner

Mensa for kids is an excellent resource for teachers, providing free, high quality, and diverse educational resources for kids of all ages. Visit the website below for access to lesson plans, and to learn about their Excellence in Reading program:

<https://www.mensaforkids.org/>

