Beyond Boundaries

Ignoring the needs of its most capable young minds is something a nation does only at great peril to itself and its people. Events in our fast-forward global society constantly show that the brightest minds are needed to tackle the problems we face from daily challenges.

• We at the Center for Talented Youth view the need for the development of academic talent on both a national and a global level.

• CTY is proud of our role in creating a talented, highly capable and creative citizenry, ready to take on and solve problems, to innovate, and to improve the world they’ll inherit.

In the many ways described on the following pages, CTY prepares our bright young people for their tomorrows.
Since 1979, more than 1.4 million highly gifted children have been emboldened to let their talents soar by CTY’s programs and services. These students regularly report that CTY helps them envision higher personal academic goals. While keeping true to our mission, we have pursued new efforts and have adapted existing successful programs for the changing needs of gifted young people. We are pleased to describe below how CTY has gone “beyond boundaries” for gifted students.

CTY introduces, then expands, the first national search for academic talent

At its outset, CTY’s Talent Search enrolled top students who then took above-grade-level tests to find out their math and verbal reasoning skills. The first Search enrolled 10,000 students. Efforts quickly expanded into New England, the West Coast, and internationally.

The basic principles of talent identification—revolutionary at the time—haven’t changed and are now well accepted. But just as CTY’s Talent Search transformed how gifted students are identified, now it is again transforming itself.

In an ongoing effort over the last ten years, CTY’s annual Talent Search expanded efforts to recruit a truly diverse pool of extremely bright young people. The result? Joining in on the CTY experience are greater numbers of talented students in schools that may not have joined the Search in the past.

“When the focus is on academic talent, we find children from all schools and from all of America’s neighborhoods,” says CTY’s director Lea Ybarra. “Without a concentrated outreach effort, we risk losing these children and their potential contributions to our nation.”
Contrasted with past educational models, today’s learning takes place “anywhere and everywhere.” Nowhere is this more true than with CTY’s Distance Education program and courses that, thanks to online learning, now beam outstanding courses right into the homes and schools of gifted children from kindergarten to twelfth grade.

CTY’s Distance Education courses now exceed 7,000 enrollments annually from students in the U.S. and 66 countries and shows the reach of, and need for, high-quality online learning experiences. Responding to student and school needs, CTY now runs writing and math courses, and Advanced Placement offerings in Calculus, Composition, Chemistry, Economics, Psychology, and other disciplines.

Extending boundaries farther, CTY offers courses in ever-greater numbers directly to schools. A school that has a small number of students who want to take AP Psychology, for example, but no teacher to teach it, can now turn to CTY’s online version. This option saves a district money while offering students a strong academic program.

Also in schools you might now find Descartes’ Cove, a six-CD magical pixelated math program developed by CTY for middle school students.

Boundaries? Virtually none. One click and students now open a world of learning right in their own homes and schools. For all involved, that’s exhilarating.

Family Academic Programs

Created as an opportunity for children and their parents to learn together, the CTY department of Family Academic Programs offers over fifty educational programs each year. These programs range from one-day conferences to extended seminars and field trips. The one-day conferences focus on special themes such as Biomedical Technology, Astronomy, Science and Engineering, and various academic and career topics. The week-long seminars feature field trips to many destinations such as Dinosaur Digs in Colorado, the Rain Forests of Costa Rica, Exploring the Yucatan in Mexico, Marine Biology in Scotland, and a safari in Tanzania.

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In 1979, CTY rose from its launch pad and quickly demonstrated that this “radical idea”—a university-based program for gifted students—found a ready audience among the nation’s most academically talented young people. The notion, groundbreaking for its time, was that students as young as seventh grade could live and learn in residential programs, taking one course and studying that subject seven hours a day through an enriched three weeks of academic and social fulfillment. Today, challenging summer academic programs, offered to students as young as second grade, at over 25 sites from Johns Hopkins University in the east to Stanford University in the west, are the CTY trademark. Intensive, fast-paced courses, ranging from Latin to Biotechnology, Writing to Cryptology, Ethics to Neuroscience, enroll 10,000 students annually.