“Because of CTY

I have never wondered whether I was too young or too small in the world to undertake something exciting and new.”

Maria Cecire
CTY Alumna
Selected for the 2006 Rhodes Scholarship
Beyond Boundaries
Dear Friends:

Welcome to CTY’s 2006 Annual Report.

The title and theme of this year’s report is found in the phrase Beyond Boundaries. Let me outline why these words so perfectly fit The Johns Hopkins University Center for Talented Youth—who we are, what we do, and what we seek to become.

Beyond Boundaries describes CTY’s past. Prior to CTY, it was unheard of for precollege students to take above-grade-level tests such as the SAT to determine academic abilities, and to have access to comprehensive summer- and distance-learning courses. Today, CTY provides essential testing and innovative course work to tens of thousands of students each year.

The theme Beyond Boundaries fits today’s CTY. The people who work for CTY believe deeply that gifted students need special programs and services for their intellectual and personal growth. We identify students from across America and throughout the world and provide them with innovative and challenging course work that will help their talents soar.

Without a doubt, going Beyond Boundaries will drive CTY’s future. Technology is changing the face of education, and CTY is participating actively in this transformation. The whole world is connected as never before and here, too, CTY is reaching beyond our shores. To date, we have had thousands of students from over 90 foreign countries enroll in CTY programs. We have also established CTY-modeled programs worldwide. We hope we have made—and continue to make—a real contribution to the development of the global talent so necessary for our future.

Beyond Boundaries implies a worldwide reach, but we’re also mindful of how much we must do here at home to develop our nation’s brightest young minds. At CTY, everything we do strives to meet the highest ideals of American education—to make the most of our nation’s young talent, and to transform bright young people into the accomplished, high-achieving, contributing citizens so vital for our country and for the world they will inherit.

Sincerely,

Lea Ybarra, Ph.D.
Executive Director
Talent Search participants: 84,112
Since 1979: 1,437,782

Student enrollments in all CTY programs: 24,149
Since 1979: 336,836

Summer Programs enrollments at CTY’s 25 locations: 10,020
Since 1979: 136,769

Distance Education enrollments: 7,095
Since inception: 49,779

Countries represented among 2006 summer programs students: 42
Since 1979: 91

Students and parents attending CTY’s Family Academic Programs: 7,034
Since inception: 150,864

Number of CTY regional Awards Ceremonies honoring academic talent: 71

Number of students and parents attending regional Awards Ceremonies: 18,883

One-course scholarships donated in 2005-6 by colleges and universities to top-scoring CTY Talent Search students: 1,057

Dollar value of these scholarships: $2,006,144

Total 2005-6 financial aid awarded (excluding one course scholarships): $4,576,000
CTY ALUMS TAKE TOP AWARDS

CTY alumni who have won acclaim as a documentary filmmaker, a specialist in trade in the developing world, and a founder of an educational nonprofit, are counted among winners of the prestigious 2006 Rhodes Scholarship.

Rhodes recipients embody “excellence in qualities of mind and in qualities of person which, in combination, offer the promise of effective service to the world in the decades ahead,” according to the Rhodes Trust.

“The respect, trust, and intellectual stimulation that I received at CTY played an important role in forming my idea of myself and my abilities as a person,” said Rhodes recipient Maria Cecire of her time in CTY’s 1994 summer programs. Cecire, an English major at the University of Chicago, provides an arts-based education to children from underserved neighborhoods, while completing a documentary about the teaching of math and science in Zambia. Says Cecire, “Because of CTY, I have never wondered whether I was too young or too small in the world to undertake something exciting and new.”

Yale senior Jessica Leight agrees. “CTY helped to shape my intellectual interests, hone my skills and provide a taste of the intellectual environment and challenges that ultimately awaited me in college and beyond.”

According to Leight, who has focused her interests on trade policies of developing countries, “[the] CTY course I took on Geopolitics was one of the earliest sparks of my fascination with international politics and economics, which ultimately spawned much of my undergraduate work.”

William Hwang, a triple major at Duke University who in 2003 co-founded a nonprofit that develops creative science and engineering programs for young people from low-income households, credits his seven years in CTY’s academic programs as a key influence in both his academic and social spheres.

“CTY had a major role in developing my interest in math, science and engineering,” says Hwang. “From the engaging classes to the almost weekly dances, CTY will always occupy a place in my mind, like I was just there last week.”

Cecire, Leight, and Hwang, along with former CTY students Alison Crocker, Eliana Hechter, and Rahul Satija, joined scholars from 13 countries for a two-year study at Oxford. CTY alums also went on to claim top honors in the Intel Science Talent Search and the 2005-6 Siemens Westinghouse Competition.

Today’s young CTY scholars, pictured here at CTY’s site at Garrison Forest School, MD, are preparing for their own bright futures.
BEST AND BRIGHTEST SHINE AT CTY AWARDS CEREMONY

Chances are good that, decades from now, people will be looking to a photo of 450 middle schoolers taken this past June, and see the young faces of people who grew up to be brilliant scientists, authors, inventors, and shapers of their world.

The place was Johns Hopkins, and the occasion was CTY’s Grand Ceremony, in which CTY honored middle school students who earned a 700 or higher on at least one section of the SAT, or a 28 or higher on the ACT. It is estimated that these students represent the top one-in-10,000 of their age group in verbal or mathematical reasoning ability. Included in this group are students who, at age 12 or 13, earned perfect SAT or ACT math or reading scores.

The Grand Ceremony is now an annual CTY event. The ceremony exists to give these very special young people a stage on which to recognize their achievements. According to CTY executive director Lea Ybarra, “Their performance places them at the very top tier of all students taking the test this year, and they certainly deserve acclaim for this extraordinary academic accomplishment.”

Who gets the credit for such success? “The students,” said Dr. Ybarra. “They possess an academic fearlessness, combined with a desire to learn and achieve that will benefit their entire generation.”

Leading them to their success, she said, are parents and educators. “Parents who support and encourage their children, and teachers who inspire through their knowledge and passion for a subject, create engaged young people who are well prepared to lead and shape tomorrow’s world.”

The top students invited to the June 17 Grand Ceremony were individually honored on stage, and were treated to breathtaking images of deep space presented by Dr. Bruce Margon, Associate Director for Science at the Space Telescope Science Institute near the Johns Hopkins campus.
GOT MATH AND SCIENCE? CTY’S NEW COGITO.ORG DOES

Developed over the past two years by CTY, with generous support from the John Templeton Foundation and others, Cogito.org debuted in late fall 2006 as a breakthrough online home for pre-college students worldwide interested in math and science.

Cogito (Latin for “I think”) welcomes all students under 18 interested in math and science. The site’s extensive offerings include interviews with experts, profiles of young scientists, science news, and useful resource directories. A special section of the site, featuring discussion forums, is open by invitation to top students.

Early results seem quite promising. “The discussion on the forums is at an incredibly high level, beyond what I expected or even hoped for,” says Cogito.org member Andrew Peters of Rochester, MN. “The chance to hear an expert’s opinion on a current event is a rare and excellent opportunity.”

The appearance of a site like Cogito.org couldn’t come at a better time. The National Academies of Science recently projected a future shortfall for the U.S. in the math and sciences without an active effort to interest younger students.

For more information on what Cogito.org has to offer and how to support it, visit www.cogito.org.

IMAGINE TAKES GOLD, AGAIN!

Imagine magazine, published by CTY, has won a 2006 Gold Award from the Parents’ Choice Foundation. Announced last spring, the award honors Imagine as one of the highest quality periodicals on the market geared toward children and young adults.

The Parents’ Choice Foundation recognizes children-focused books, software, and other media that “entertain and teach with flair, stimulate imagination and inspire creativity.” Its picks are often reported in national media such as NPR, and The Wall Street Journal.

“Imagine is now the magazine we knew it could become,” said Imagine editor Melissa Hartman. “We do our best to inform pre-college readers about programs that will nurture their academic interests and talents, and to inspire them to pursue those interests.”

This is the third year Imagine has won the award, sharing the top prize with periodicals such as Cricket, National Geographic’s World, and American Girl.
A KNIGHT TO REMEMBER

Last May, CTY’s offices buzzed with the chatter of 120 students from Baltimore City Schools as CTY sponsored and hosted the annual citywide chess tournament. Students poured in, unfurled their vinyl chess boards, set the pieces, shook hands with partners. Then, with the words “Begin play,” something strange happened. The students fell silent. Completely silent. A clock ticked. A light hummed. And that was the only sound made in this room full of energetic young people, now transformed by deep, silent concentration. For CTY, hosting a group of smart city kids for a chess meet had other benefits. “This is just the sort of creative means by which we have been working in the last few years to find and develop talent from all of America’s neighborhoods,” says CTY’s director Lea Ybarra. Plans are already underway for CTY to host the 2007 tourney with the Baltimore City schools, which, all agree, is a perfect match.

SET RENAMED FOR CTY FOUNDER

Each year, of the hundreds of thousands of students taking CTY’s tests, a handful of students 13 years of age or younger crack a magic mark—700 or better—on the math or critical reading section of the SAT.

To this group, CTY makes available its Study of Exceptional Talent. Created to help extremely talented students achieve their full potential, SET has assisted students from throughout the U.S., providing counseling and mentoring services to help these students find appropriately challenging academic opportunities.

As of June 2005, SET is now the Julian C. Stanley Study of Exceptional Talent. At a ceremony that unveiled the name, CTY director Lea Ybarra and Johns Hopkins Provost Steven Knapp praised Dr. Stanley’s research, vision, and dedication before friends and well-wishers. Dr. Knapp presented Dr. Stanley with the university’s Heritage Award to recognize distinguished achievement by a Johns Hopkins faculty member.

Also on hand were some of the first students—Joseph Bates, Jonathan Edwards, John Overdeck, and Andrew Shechtel—who met Dr. Stanley years ago and led to his work and CTY’s founding. Shechtel told Johns Hopkins Magazine that Dr. Stanley’s “primary message was to reach for the brass ring and realize that the only limitations are those we place on ourselves.”