



Dr. Del Siegle
NAGC President

If Not You, Who? If Not Now, When? Parents Will Make the Difference

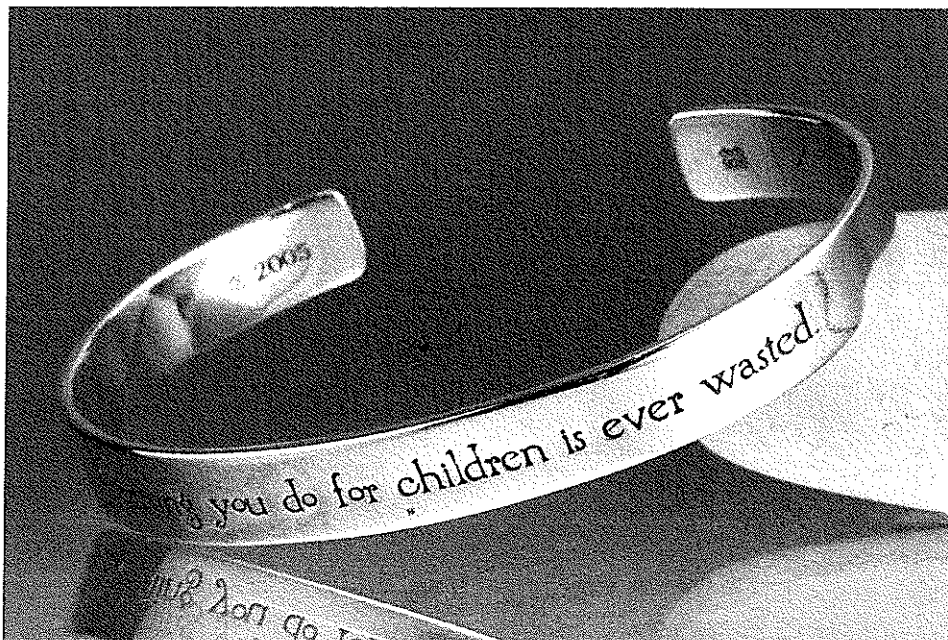
I am an educator. I have spent most of my adult life working with and studying gifted children. In my role as a teacher of gifted children, I coordinated parent efforts when we approached the superintendent of schools and board of education to expand gifted education services in our district. We also joined other teachers and parents in our state to lobby for increased state funding and mandatory services for gifted students. We connected with other parents and educators from around the country to lobby for national funding for research on gifted education. In each of these efforts, we were most effective when the voices of parents clearly articulated the importance of gifted education and its impact on the lives of talented young people.

Over the next two years, the National Association for Gifted Children will implement a national awareness campaign seeking expanded funding and services for gifted and talented students. That campaign will be successful only if we rally the full force of our 8,000 members and the members of our fellow associations dedicated to gifted children. That effort will only be successful if you, the reader of this column, not only support the effort, but recruit others to support it.

Soon I will be a parent for the first time. I am entering the parenting arena at an age when my peers are becoming grandparents. The significance of this new role has not escaped me. I understand how important my new role is to my daughter's development and happiness. As President of NAGC, I also understand the important role parents play in promoting services for gifted students.

As an association, we have perhaps relied too heavily on university professors and teachers of the gifted to carry our message to Washington. When I was a teacher, my local school superintendent and board of education were most responsive to parents and grandparents. To obtain funding and services for gifted children, we need you—the parents of our nation's greatest resource. Recent events suggest that now is time to act on behalf of gifted children. There is renewed interest in building the nation's mathematics and science talent. In an age of accountability, schools are becoming aware that gifted students are an asset. States are demanding growth for all children, which includes yearly growth for gifted children.

The National Association for Gifted Children works each and every day to build a larger database of gifted supporters. Such a corps of supporters can help to raise awareness in Washington and state capitals around the country, and to demonstrate how many people support this critical cause. Your name should be in that database. The names of your children's grandparents should be in that database. Your friends' names should be in that database. We invite all those parents, relatives, and friends of gifted children to bring their own talents to bear on strengthening gifted education in this country by joining NAGC today. It's easy to do online at the NAGC website (www.nagc.org). You will begin receiving information from NAGC about its advocacy efforts and the ways in which you can help us expand support for gifted education and gifted children. If you care about your children's educational opportunities, join us today. Not only join us, invite others to join us. Leaving the task for someone else is sending the message that it does not need to be done. This is the time, and you are the person who can make a difference in gifted children's lives. The voices of parents are needed today. If not you, who? If not now, when?



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