Welcome to the 42nd Confratute!

Welcome to our Confratute! Each year when we see the diverse, committed group of educators who spend a week learning about enrichment and creativity, we feel honored to host this special event. And what an event it is! We welcome participants from all over the country and the world. You are principals, teachers, curriculum specialists, gifted education coordinators, enrichment specialists, and parents. With so much talent and diversity, we know that multiple points of view will be presented and respected.

What is Confratute? It is a place where energy is restored and creative teaching is valued. It is a place where we try to combine the best of both a conference and an institute to engage educators in the best available professional development in our field. At Confratute, you will find strands that will tickle your fancy, put advanced content in the forefront, and capture your imagination. Take a moment while you are here to try something you have never experienced before. Attend a strand or participate in a special topic session that tweaks your creativity or exposes you to the arts. Learn from some of the nation’s best known researchers in gifted education while simultaneously taking strands from some of the most experienced teachers in the country. You may want to stop in and see Gampel, home of our outstanding Huskies! You might also want to tour our beautiful campus, with all of the new buildings and landscaping that has happened over the last few years.

We pride ourselves on our core beliefs at Confratute! First, we believe we have the best faculty of any educational conference in the United States. Second, we believe in extending some forms of high-end pedagogy to all students. That is, while we believe in the education of talented students, we also believe that we can develop gifts and talents in many more students than are identified in schools today. We also believe that every school in America should have the services of an enrichment specialist who can escalate curriculum, provide high-end learning, coach teachers in compacting and differentiation, and most importantly, schedule many joyful, interesting learning experiences to promote creative productivity in all students. We believe in creativity and the joy of learning something that you want to understand.

Our major hope, dream, and expectation is that you will return to your school or district and do something that will make positive changes to improve on any and all practices in the students that you and your colleagues serve. This is what true leadership is all about and we hope that you will reach out to others to get some good things going as a leader as well as a better informed educator.

We wish that each of you will have a week in which you restore your commitment to enrichment teaching and renew your ideals and your creativity! To provide enriching, differentiated learning experiences to all students is a goal of most teachers, and at Confratute, it is our trademark. Welcome to Confratute, hosted by the Renzulli Center for Creativity, Gifted Education, and Talent Development at the University of Connecticut’s Neag School of Education. We hope your week is especially memorable and joyful and that we can meet each of you while you are here. Let us know if we can do anything to make your stay with us more memorable. And again, welcome!

~Joe and Sally
Sunday's Keynote: Laughing Yoga - Jay Amaran Lingam and Dr. Madan Kataria

The 42nd Confratute opened with the auditorium reverberating with laughter as Jay Amaran Lingam, one of the founders of the laughing yoga movement and mentor to Dr. Kataria, led the audience through a variety of laughing yoga exercises. Jay shared the tremendous benefits of laughing yoga for students of all ages including improved concentration, decreased stress, and improved physical and mental health. Their work has reached millions of students in India and around the world. The components of laughing yoga include laughing, rhythmic chanting and clapping, and deep breathing. It was clear from the video clips we saw how much the children delighted in the exercises. Jay encouraged everyone to consider bringing laughing yoga into their schools and offered his assistance to anyone looking to write grants to help support these initiatives.

Sunday's Keynote: Deceit, Deceptions, and Fraud OH MY!!! Widely Taught Math Lies Exposed - Dr. Rachel McAnallen

Back by popular demand, the 42nd Confratute began with an energetic and hilarious keynote by Dr. Rachel McAnallen entitled “Eight Math Falsehoods That Are Told to Students.” Rachel’s lifelong passion for math is evident in everything she does. She completed her doctoral degree here in Connecticut, currently travels the world presenting professional development on math instruction, and has recently published several children’s books on mathematics that feature “Awesum Alex” a young math detective.

The 8 Myths Rachel discussed were:
1. When you multiply a number by 10 just add a zero to the end of a number.
2. You cannot add 2 to 3, there has to be a noun after the number.
3. You cannot subtract a bigger number from a small number.
4. Addition and multiplication gives you a bigger number.
5. Subtraction and Division give you a smaller number. Mind benders, create opportunities to question math assumptions
6. You always divide the larger number by the smaller number.
7. Two negatives do not give you a positive.
8. Borrowing, carrying, and reducing are not mathematical verbs.

Rachel illustrated each of these myths with humor that frequently focused on money and finances such as when she pulled out a $5 dollar bill and drew a zero next to the 5 or when she shared with the audience that she wished that when she added her credit card bills together that it meant she had more money. In addition to keeping the audience in stitches she repeatedly showed practical examples for encouraging students how to interrogate these myths, to explore different ways of solving the same problem, and to be flexible with numbers. Towards the end of her talk she gave a wonderful example of a fun Pi day activity that involved having audience members bring up different sized circular objects that included everything from a can of cat food to a unicycle. Then using masking tape to measure the circumference of the object and then laying the tape out flat so you could use your circular object to see how many diameters make up the circumference (in each instance it was “3 and a bit”).

Throughout her talk she also helped the audience to think differently about these myths and by extension how to teach math. She encouraged us to not underestimate our students and to stop saying “this isn’t how I did it when I went to school.” As Rachel shared with us, “Teaching is easy, un-teaching is hard. I get to teach kids, I have to unteach adults.” However with her humor, practical wisdom, and creativity she demonstrated that it is possible even for adults to learn and unlearn our math myths. Rachel set the perfect tone for a week of questioning our assumptions as we engage in collaborative learning together.

I’ll also share that if you weren’t able to attend her talk I highly recommend you find Rachel at some point and ask for her advice on handling TSA security agents and robocalls — you won’t be disappointed.
Sally Reis and Joe Renzulli each offered individual keynote addresses. Sally kicked things off and focused her remarks on how talent development and strength based enrichment change students lives. Forty years of research on the SEM (School Enrichment Model) affirm that schools should be places of talent development not deficit reduction. Sally shared several themes related to talent development including:

1. Enrichment opportunities that offer rich challenging learning can make a profound difference in the lives of students (even when they participate for 2-3 hours each week).
2. When teachers use enrichment and strength based approaches to learning and extend these to all children, learning is more engaging and enjoyable and all students are able to make continuous progress.
3. The use of creative and joyful teaching does not result in lower test scores!

Talent development shapes educational experiences, non-intellectual characteristics (task commitment, curiosity, creativity), college and careers, and continued desire for creative outlets throughout education and life. Sally urged everyone to create Talent Development Moments in each day by providing enjoyable learning opportunities, helping students develop their interests and creativity, enable students to react to depth and complexity, and creating talent development opportunities.

Sally gave a range of real life examples of how this type of education changes kids lives and leads them to help make the world a better place. She called on all of us to join the talent development movement and help our students find enjoyment, engagement, enrichment, and enthusiasm in school.

Joe picked up on Sally’s themes and focused his remarks on new challenges in gifted education and the age of adaptability and preparing the class of 2030. He argued that “gifted education and talent development programs that focus on enrichment rather than advanced lesson learning can take the lead in showing schools how we can adapt to the dramatic changes that technology and the shifting world of career development will affect today’s students.”

Joe noted that the previous challenge was getting higher level thinking skills into classrooms for all kids and applying the goals of gifted education to total school improvement. Now the focus must be on make sure all students have a broad array of these skills to adapt to new challenges created by technology, rapidly changing world conditions and economy, and education. He made a compelling case that we need to cultivate a life long learning mindset and promote the so called “soft skills” that can’t be replicated by machines and are desired by employers. Joe urged us to not leave Confratute without a plan for how you can adapt your teaching and your school to meet these new challenges. He closed by sharing some poignant reminders of the powerful impact teachers have on the lives of their students.
A Warm Welcome to Confratute:
Greetings and Orientation

Joe Renzulli took to the podium to give us an overview of the history of Confratute. He reminded us that our weeklong experience is meant to be a conference, an institute, and a fraternity. We need to focus on all of our learning experiences here, and also remember to take the time to meet other educators and build our professional networks here at Confratute. Participants this year come from all over the United States and around the world. Make a new friend and expand your horizons this week! The four primary objectives of Confratute have remained the same since the very beginning — 1) Learn from faculty and each other, 2) Create —knowledge and thinking skills have no value until you apply them to something, 3)Interact—meeting other people and finding ways to stay connected after Confratute and 4) Take some time to relax.

Ben Lacina leads our ConfraChorus. Do you want to reconnect with your love of music? Just want to try something new? Come on out at lunch to join the ConfraChorus. Gail Herman took the stage to encourage us all to participate in Thursday’s Variety Show. Take a chance, put yourself out there. We are here to support you.

Nicole Waicunas talked about her work doing outreach and training for schools on the School Enrichment Model, if you are interested in learning more or bringing Nicole to your school please contact her. Bonnie O’Regan from the Connecticut Association for the Gifted (CAG) shared more information about the purpose and advocacy of her organization. Creativity Con will be October 18th. Check it out! Laurel Brandon shared more information about our Confratute app. The App contains schedule, map, links to handouts, announcements about events and room changes, and more. Please allow notifications.

Sally Reis gave us an overview of the week. She displayed the Conference at a Glance and reminded us about the times for each strand (a class you stay with the whole week), evening forums, and special topics. Please be on time for all events. Remember to keep your keys and meal plan cards in the zippered part of your neck wallet. Don’t lose those keys and cards! Conference housing office is open 24 hours a day. Follow all the parking rules, don’t speed, and always wear your seatbelt. Come to Command Central with any questions. If you feel sick this week, we have an Urgent Care in Downtown Storrs. Feel free to stagger meal hours to avoid lines. You can take Confratute for credit or for contact hours. Be sure to sign up this week if you want credit, because it cannot be done retroactively. We are there to help you. If you are interested in higher education programs here at UConn, please come to the meeting on Wednesday for more information. If you are an SEM school you can join the SEM directory through the Confratute App. If you want to do Creative Canvases, please come get a ticket from Command Central. Trivia night is this Wednesday. Prufrock Press will be where Registration was. Take this week to meet someone new, take a risk, and find at least one main strategy you can bring back to your schools and students this year.
Who's on Deck?

Lunchtime Roundtable Discussions
12:15-1:00 P.M. in the Rome Commons Dining Hall

Join us for a discussion for Minds in Motion with Katie Augustyn & Adam Parks & Applying for Grants with Jessica Stargardter.

Join us again tomorrow for a discussion Differentiation at the Middle School Level: A Pain Free Beginning with Wayne Trembly.

Tuesday Morning’s Keynote:
Sally Reis, University of Connecticut
and
Susan Baum, Bridges Academy

Using Strength-Based Pedagogy to Engage and Challenge 2E Students

Social Event 8:30-10:30 P.M.
Glow Night

Come on down to the Rome Patio and get ready to light up the night. Remember, neck wallets must be worn for admission!

Dining Hours
Breakfast
7:00-9:30 A.M.
Lunch
11:30-2:15 P.M.
Dinner
4:15-7:15 P.M.

Command Central
Hours of Operation
Rome Commons (Ground Floor)

Mon.-Wed., July 8-10
7:30-6:30 P.M.
Thursday, July 11th
7:30 A.M.-5:00 P.M.
Friday, July 12th
7:30 A.M.-12:00 P.M.
Confratute Contributions

Do you have an announcement, awe-inspiring quote, or special thank you that you would like to see in the next issue of the ConfraNotes? Please send submissions to Liz Braun at: lbraun@thegraysonschool.org

Calling all performers- beginners and “pros” alike! Sign up to perform a 2-5 minute individual or group skit, dance, and more for the Variety Show on Thursday, July 11th, at 8:30 P.M. in VDM. Sign up by 5:30 P.M. on Wednesday. You must attend one rehearsal on either Monday from 3:45-5:00 P.M., Tuesday from 3:45-6:00 P.M., or Wednesday from 3:45-6:00 P.M. in VDM.

CONFRACHORUS

If you love to sing, make joyful sounds, and (most of all) have fun, then ConfraChorus is the group for you! No expertise or prior experience is needed and everyone is welcome! Rehearsals are held Monday through Wednesday from 12:15-1:00 P.M. in the Rome Hall Game Room (ROME). Dress rehearsal will be held in VDM on Thursday from 12:00-1:00 P.M. to prepare for the evening performance at the Variety Show!

Line Dancing

Monday and Tuesday, 5:30 - 6:15 P.M.
Rome Patio
with Barbara Forshag

Join the ConfraWalk!

Greet the day and enjoy the beautiful Connecticut scenery with a guide who will lead you on an invigorating walk around the rolling hills of Storrs. The morning walks meet on the Rome Patio at 6:30 A.M. and last 45 minutes.
Mathematics Teacher
Position open for teaching high school mathematics to gifted middle school students in a small private school. Must be able to teach any math between sixth grade level and high school honors calculus. Passion, enthusiasm and flexibility required. Understanding of gifted and middle school age children necessary. Understanding of asynchronous development, social/ emotional needs of gifted children and ability to differentiate instruction is preferred. Certification not required. Send resume and cover letter to: Lydia Gibb, Talcott Mountain Academy, 324 Montevideo Road, Avon, CT 06001 or by email tolgibb@tmsc.org.

Save the Date: CreativityCon, October 18, 2019
Housatonic Community College in Bridgeport
We are pleased to announce that Duke Talent Identification Program's (TIP) Gifted Education Research Specialist Richard D. Courtright, PhD, will be the keynote speaker. problem-solving skills and productive play practices for their professional and personal life.

Persons interested in presenting a workshop are asked to submit their proposal at https://forms.gle/2QW956wrZGRZZMxD8

Primary workshop presenters will receive a complimentary registration to CAG CreativityCon Friday, October 18, 2019; co-presenters will receive 50% off their registrations. Transportation and lodging is the responsibility of the presenters.

Deadline for proposals is August 30, 2019. We anticipate sending notification of acceptance or non-acceptance in early September. Thank you for submitting a proposal! Registration will open August 1, 2019. For more information see www.ctgifted.org or email info@ctgifted.org
Did you get a chance to try one of those delicious cookies yesterday?

Thank you to Insomnia Cookies for donating them to Confratute. They are conveniently located in Storrs Center and even deliver from 10AM-3AM each day!

If you want to order a sweet treat, go to this website: https://insomniacookies.com/locations/store/41

- Wear your badge at all times.
- Don’t lose your meal cards or keys. Use your neckwallet!
- Write an emergency contact number on the back of your name tag.
- Write your name on everything!

- Be cautious with the construction around campus.
- Visit Command Central for any of your needs.
- Housing desk will exchange your towels or bed linens if you bring them with you to the desk.
- Drive carefully—stay under the speed limit and wear your seat belt.
- Keep your room locked and carry your key card.

- Stick with your strand—don’t strand hop.
- Handouts can be accessed online.
- Confratute can be taken for credit. Participants can major in a strand and complete a project determined in conjunction with your coordinator. See page 48 for more details!

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