

The Cultivation of Gifted Students

A unique partnership between THE GOLDMAN SACHS FOUNDATION,
and THE CENTER FOR TALENTED YOUTH AT THE JOHNS HOPKINS UNIVERSITY



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It is not always easy to discern who among young people possess the brightest, most inquisitive minds. A casual glance may not be enough to tell.

Often, like a precious metal, intellectual potential lies hidden beneath an unspectacular surface, waiting to be unearthed. However, while gold can be preserved indefinitely for future extraction, intellectual potential must be cultivated early in life in order to maximize its value. Failure to mine this priceless resource robs young people of their promise forever.

ABOUT THE PARTNERSHIP

The Goldman Sachs Foundation and the Center for Talented Youth (CTY) at The Johns Hopkins University are working together to discover and cultivate the intellectual abilities of bright 12-, 13-, and 14-year-olds from diverse backgrounds.

With the most extensive offerings in terms of number of students, geographic reach, courses offered, and track record, CTY is the country's premier program for gifted education. Through the Goldman Sachs Scholars Program, high-potential students from groups which are underrepresented in higher and gifted education are engaged in CTY's program of academic enrichment. Support from The Goldman Sachs Foundation enables CTY to conduct outreach to qualified students and to fund their participation through scholarships.



Dr. Lea Ybarra arrived at the prestigious Center for Talented Youth following a 25-year academic career. In her first summer as Executive Director, Ybarra visited several CTY summer programs on college campuses to observe children as young as 12 and 13 who were



living in dormitories and pursuing challenging college-level academic work. “I was very pleased to see an academically challenging and stimulating environment – engaged students, excellent faculty, small class sizes,” Ybarra recalls. “However, there was an important element missing: we were not

reflecting the face of America, in terms of ethnic and economic diversity, in our classrooms.”

Ybarra says her mission became increasingly clear. In The Goldman Sachs Foundation, she found a like-minded collaborator. Programs like CTY’s “truly touch the lives of children in vital ways,” Ybarra says. Funding from The Goldman Sachs Foundation allows CTY to enlist full-time recruiters in its outreach effort to identify qualified children. “We now have dedicated people in New York, Boston, Philadelphia, Washington, D.C., Los Angeles, and San Francisco.”

Historically, misconceptions have stymied programs like the Goldman Sachs Scholars. Ybarra says, “People think that if you bring in minority students, you have to lower standards. That is definitely not the case. We do not have to decrease standards, we just have to increase outreach.” Goldman Sachs Scholars prove that underrepresented students with potential for high academic

achievement exist. Another troubling misconception is, “if they’re smart, they’ll do well anyway,” Ybarra says, but “that’s just not true. Without a helping hand, many of these young people will not reach their potential or develop themselves as far as they might.”

According to Ybarra, the success of the CTY program is measured by how effectively it identifies and

cultivates the intellectual abilities of underserved students. “We appreciate the vision of The Goldman Sachs Foundation in understanding that we have this vast resource in our country that we are not using. We lose tremendous intellectual potential if we fail to take advantage of it,” she says. “The children we are reaching today will become the scientists, doctors, engineers, and leaders of the future.”

“The Goldman Sachs Scholars Program gives underrepresented children a level playing field so they experience what other students with more advantages do. Goldman Sachs Scholars say, ‘at CTY, for the first time, I felt comfortable being myself’- we give them an environment where, academically and socially, they can be comfortable as smart kids.”

—Lea Ybarra EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR, CENTER FOR TALENTED YOUTH

ENTREPRENEURSHIP EDUCATION

Goldman Sachs Scholars participate in an entrepreneurship education program from September through May of their first year in the program.

Led by volunteer adult mentors, students work in teams to conceive a new product and develop their ideas into viable business plans. The program uses educational materials developed by the National Foundation for Teaching Entrepreneurship (NFTE), and challenges students to work on product concepts that have potential to be developed into profit-making enterprises. These efforts culminate in a business plan competition where students promote their ideas in fully-developed presentations before a panel of judges.

“Developing well-prepared leaders for tomorrow is a driving goal of the Foundation. The CTY/Goldman Sachs Scholars Program ensures that bright students from all backgrounds will have access to the resources and enrichment opportunities that will prepare them for success in high school, college, and beyond.”

—Stephanie Bell-Rose, *President*, THE GOLDMAN SACHS FOUNDATION





Eral Leon (far left) and Mireyda Miranda (lower right) celebrate their successes with mentor, Will Slota (upper right).

At 15, Eral Leon has already spent two summers on the campus of the University of California at Santa Cruz studying mathematics. The sophomore from Warren High School in Downey, California, first took “Geometry and its Applications,” and later “Mathematical Excursions.” “I have been taking honors math since the fifth grade,” he explains.

Eral observes that at CTY,

“You meet so many different people. From the experience, you just find out more about who you are, and what you want. Since participating in CTY, I have found I have many more choices available to me than I thought.”

Eral believes his drive for success comes from within: “It’s really the student’s choice. I plan to get where I’m going, and to take advantage of every opportunity.”

His participation in the entrepreneurship competition was also a rewarding part of his experience as a Goldman Sachs Scholar. “We won first place in the competition with Royal House Care, a business that offers housecleaning and gardening services, using only students with 3.0 or higher grade-point averages. I made several new friends through the competition, and I’ve maintained some of those relationships.”

MENTORING

Students participating in the entrepreneurship education program interact with volunteer mentors from Goldman Sachs and college students from area schools online via an “e-mentoring” program designed by the Center for Children and Technology (CCT).

E-mentoring facilitates improved student-mentor communication in the face of distance, scheduling conflicts, and other competing demands on time.

CCT allows students and mentors to confer online and correspond via e-mail. These exchanges are monitored by CCT professionals to ensure that technology performs smoothly and that discussions are productive. While a primary focus is to support the entrepreneurship curriculum, CCT guides also provide additional discussion topics from time to time to stimulate the development of student’s self-confidence and leadership skills. Mentors participate in weekend sessions once a month, guiding their teams of students through the creation and development of their business plans. Students report rewarding relationships with their adult mentors.



When he learned that the Goldman Sachs Scholars initiative needed mentors, Philadelphia office head Gee Smith sought to lead by example and became the first employee in his office to sign up.

Smith considers the caliber of the young people associated with the program an important part of the Goldman Sachs Scholars Program’s appeal. “The kids in the CTY group are really quite exceptional, and by taking on a mentoring role, you’re making a real difference in their lives,” he says. “It’s key to realize that this program provides development opportunities these kids would not otherwise be exposed to,

and mentors are a necessary part of giving them that chance.”

Goldman Sachs has a firmwide commitment to community service, and Smith views programs like that provided by the Foundation and CTY among the most worthwhile uses of the firm’s human and intellectual capital. “You get to see children progress and grow intellectually; I definitely saw a transformation in the team I worked with. That’s why we got so much out of it,” he adds. “There definitely is a return involved when you are making a difference in someone’s life.”

Mireyda Miranda, now a freshman at Downey High School in California, began to place into honors classes early in middle school. When her school offered a select few middle school students a chance to take the SAT, Mireyda was chosen. She recalls, “I was proud of myself that I scored so high.” Her scores were high enough to win her a place as a CTY/Goldman Sachs Scholar.

A poised and determined 14-year-old, Mireyda remembers that her first reaction to the invitation to participate in CTY was somewhat dismissive: “In the beginning, I was not all that excited about camp. I actually said, ‘no way, I’m not going unless I get a full scholarship,’ and then, of course, thanks to The Goldman Sachs Foundation, I did. By the second year, I was excited to go – it was so great.”

What is so great about CTY? “It’s just fun!” Mireyda says. “I always took advanced classes, but the summer algebra really helped put me ahead in understanding the material.” This year, she has been

placed into honors geometry and biology courses at her high school. “I work best with numbers,” she says, explaining her two summer courses in algebra and astronomy. “I’d like to pursue engineering and design next summer, and eventually, I’d like to become a doctor, since it involves both math and science.”

Mireyda recalls constructive interactions with Goldman Sachs mentors while participating in the entrepreneur program. “My mentors were very interesting and their careers were demanding, but they still had a lot of time for us. We really were nosy and bugged them with a lot of questions, and they were nice about it.” She worked on the first-place-winning Royal House Care entry. “It was fun to do the exercise, but our idea was kind of ironic, since I am not the world’s neatest person.”

(see picture on page 8)



At 13, Chris Diaz is an accomplished eighth grader who attends Kipp Academy in the Bronx, New York. Chris enjoys the performing arts, and is a violinist in his school's junior orchestra.

Chris had never visited a college campus before he participated in the CTY summer program, taking "Algebra and its Applications" at Roger Williams University in Bristol, Rhode Island. "I found the course very challenging, and was proud I did really well," he says. His work in algebra is paying off in his current course work:

"I know it has helped, because some of the concepts we worked on in the summer are coming up in my class at school now, and I'm very comfortable with them."

The program has also helped Chris to envision a path to future success. He says, "In general, my college plans include attending a top school. CTY really helped me see the way to that. Now I am focused mostly on being admitted to an excellent boarding school for high school, and that's a key part of the road to college for me."

A tenth-grader at the Berkeley Carroll School in Park Slope, Brooklyn, 14-year-old Dana Wilson has spent two summers at The Johns Hopkins University as a Goldman Sachs Scholar. "A great thing about CTY," she says, "is that, while some smart kids feel uncomfortable in their schools, the kids here have intellectual talent in common and feel pride in it."

Dana's first CTY summer course was "Individually-Paced High School Mathematics." "I always really liked math, and I figured it would be good to go ahead in my learning," she explains. Following her participation in CTY, Dana received advanced placements in math, chemistry and Spanish classes. She says, "My class this year is really fun because of my CTY experience. CTY has made me like and enjoy math even more, and in the future I'd like to stay focused on it."

As her classmates begin to think about taking the PSAT, talk frequently turns to college, and it's no different for Dana, despite her veteran status on college campuses. "I am considering pursuing a degree in architecture, engineering, or law;

something challenging, and, hopefully, with math in it," she says.

Dana's participation in the entrepreneurship experience was equally rewarding. "We worked as a group of kids with two mentors to come up with ideas for starting a business. We had to create a plan that accounted for the budget, marketing, advertising, everything. Our group came up with the idea for a Teen Savings Card – similar to a store gift certificate – that would allow kids to receive discounts with various merchants. It seemed like a good idea to consolidate a number of stores on one card," she explains.

"It wasn't hard to think through the idea because the study materials we used outlined the whole process, and there were a lot of people to help us," Dana recalls. "We all pitched in together to get it done, and then presented our plan in a competition. The eight or nine original groups were narrowed down to three finalists, and our team came in second. The judges were very positive about our presentation and encouraged us to seriously consider pursuing our idea."



Will Slota works as a mentor in the LA division of the CTY program.

Will Slota learned of the opportunity to volunteer as a mentor in the CTY program from an e-mail message his business unit manager sent out. “The message indicated this was an initiative unlike anything the firm had done before, and that appealed to me,” he recalls. “We were asked to commit every third Saturday from fall through May to work with the kids and help teach them how to build a business.”

Slota mentored the team of students who developed their idea for a home cleaning service. “We meet these kids in such a tentative developmental stage – they don’t have the confidence, but they do have the intellectual prowess. Coaching them out of their reluctance and getting them to believe in their own ideas is extremely gratifying,” he says. “At the beginning, one of our kids just wouldn’t offer anything at all to the process, but by the time the team was ready to make its presentation, he had transformed completely. His part in the

presentation involved acting out a product demonstration using physical comedy quite effectively.”

Despite his initial hesitancy, Slota found the program to be deeply satisfying. He relates, “I was a little wary of giving up my Saturdays, to tell the truth, but the payback was so great! These kids were amazing – the top kids in their class – and it is great to see them grow. They got so excited.”

“The NFTE people who ran the group exercises for each Saturday meeting also were incredible – the leader was motivating and the kids became charged up about his ideas even when the concepts were terribly mundane, such as learning how to model out the finances for their projects,” Slota adds. He says the team of NFTE experts also coached the mentors, supplying them with tools and exercises to help them be more effective and motivating to the kids with whom they worked.

Benjamin Jimenez talks about his experiences in the summer program at CTY with an enthusiasm more commonly associated with a day at an amusement park: “It was awesome! I loved it! What a great experience!” But, of course, this is the same ninth-grader who says, “I love statistics and probability. I love exploring concepts and reaching for ideas over my head.”

It is, therefore, understandable that CTY’s “Algebra and its Applications” and “Mathematical Excursions” courses really were like a day at the park to Benjamin. With the school year underway, he seeks continued excitement through participation in the CTY distance-learning course in trigonometry. Benjamin will have to use his school’s library computer and catch a late bus home, since Bravo Medical Magnet, in East Los Angeles, is such a long distance from his home in Highland Park, California.

But he is committed. “I want to do this now so I can take calculus in the summer and qualify for Advanced Placement. I need to take Calculus A, B, and C there, and get them out of the way so I can get to the good stuff.”

Benjamin’s experience with calculus as well as with the “good stuff” will help him become an engineer, in line with his current career plan. “I had not previously been interested in engineering, but I’ve learned more about it through CTY, and now I am. It’s something I can be innovative with.” He adds that the University of Southern California has already indicated an interest in him. This, of course, is encouraging news for a young person who says, “I really hope to go to college on a scholarship.”

This year, Benjamin is enrolled in honors English and biology, as well as algebra II – a class for tenth and eleventh graders. He expects to take

AP Physics the following year. His summer programs at CTY have prepared him well. “There is no doubt in my mind that this is the best thing that ever happened to me in my life. Where was I two years ago, compared with now? I have a head full of confidence,” he says.

“I am so grateful I caught onto CTY. I always knew I needed college for life, but now I know so much more about it, about keeping my grades up and making contact with schools early to find out what I’ll need for their engineering programs. CTY has given me a much stronger grasp of my choices for college.”



Benjamin Jimenez (lower right) poses with his teammates and mentor after their presentation in the entrepreneurship competition.

GOLDMAN SACHS SCHOLAR GUIDELINES

Students from designated geographic areas who have been traditionally under-represented in higher education, and are in grades 7 or 8, may be considered as Goldman Sachs Scholars if they meet the following criteria:

- *Score in the 97th percentile or above on a nationally normed standardized test.*
- *Complete a Goldman Sachs Scholarship application.*
- *Participate in the CTY Talent Search and reach eligibility test score on the SAT.*
- *Complete the Family Financial Aid Form.*

Goldman Sachs Scholars receive:

- *Waivers for Talent Search and testing fees.*
- *Scholarships for a three-week course in the CTY Summer Programs including room and board, books, supplies, fees, and travel to and from a program site.*
- *Free admission to attend two weekend academic, cultural, or career conferences during the school year.*
- *Tuition for one CTY distance-education course in either mathematics or writing.*
- *Mentoring, with a focus on entrepreneurship.*
- *Access to a student website.*

ABOUT THE CTY AT THE JOHNS HOPKINS UNIVERSITY

In 1972, Dr. Julian Stanley, a psychology professor at The Johns Hopkins University, introduced the first talent search designed to identify, challenge, and reward academically able young people. Since 1979, CTY has expanded to offer a wide range of academic opportunities and to conduct research, disseminate information, consult with educational organizations, advocate public policy initiatives, and offer diagnostic and counseling services. In 2002, almost 90,000 students participated in CTY's Talent Search. CTY summer academic programs were held on 20 college campuses from Hopkins in the east to Stanford in the west. CTY has established a broad network and continues to work with students, families, teachers, school districts, government agencies, for-profit and non-profit corporations, and others to identify and nurture academic talent at the pre-collegiate level.

ABOUT THE GOLDMAN SACHS FOUNDATION

The Goldman Sachs Foundation is a global philanthropic organization funded by The Goldman Sachs Group, Inc. The Foundation's mission is to promote excellence and innovation in education and to improve the academic performance and lifelong productivity of young people worldwide. It achieves this mission through a combination of strategic partnerships, grants, loans, private sector investments, and the deployment of professional talent from Goldman Sachs. Funded in 1999, the Foundation has awarded grants in excess of \$40 million since its inception, providing opportunities for young people in more than 20 countries.