Alphabetical List of Long-Term Activities 2023/24:

**Author Workshop**

Students will interact with a local author in a workshop setting. Prior to the workshop day, students are expected to read a book by the author and participate in several round table discussion sessions. During the workshop, students will work with the author on a variety of activities that could include a writing exercise, a discussion of writing techniques or a question-and-answer session. In addition, the author will talk to students about his or her experiences with writing as a career and the publishing industry. After the workshop, there will be a culminating activity such as writing a thank you letter to the author. Time of the year *varies.* In the 2022-23 school year, we hosted local author Phil Beard as he discussed his novel *Dear Zoe* as well as the movie making process, as his novel was made into a movie released in 2022.

**Book Club**

Students who enjoy reading for pleasure will enjoy this book club. Students will read a variety of selections and meet during lunch periods to discuss the plot, characters, and themes. The book club’s atmosphere is relaxed, and students do not need to read every selection. *There is typically one selection per month*, some of which correlate to a play or production at a local theater. In the 2022-23school year, students enjoyed reading and discussing such diverse selections as *Truly Devious, Mary’s Monster, Frankenstein, Insignificant Events in the Life of a Cactus, How I Live Now,* and *The Fault In Our Stars.*

**The Buddy Program**

GATE students will work cooperatively in enrichment activities with Life Skills students, typically themed around holidays. The program fosters social awareness and integration of students with varying abilities and needs. This program typically meets *monthly* in the school classroom setting.

**CalcuSolve**

This competition is for 9th and 10th grade students only. CalcuSolve is a higher-level math competition at Duquesne University during which students compete against other Allegheny County schools. This is a one-day event, typically held in the *fall*.

**Career Connections, Sponsored by the Allegheny Intermediate Unit (AIU)**

This opportunity involves career exploration with local professionals and students from other high schools. Students must apply for this program through the AIU website in August and pay a $100 fee to apply (this will be returned if you are not accepted). Apprenticeships may be during the *fall* or *spring semester*. You will be responsible for your own transportation. Apprenticeship opportunities range from acting to zoo animal care.

**English Festival**

This is for 9th grade students only as it is a competition for grades 7-9. Students work in teams of 3-5, reading five or six books over the course of the school year. Each book will be discussed as a group with the GATE teachers. On competition day, students first listen to a presentation by the author of one of the books, then move to breakout rooms to work as a team to compete in four categories (trivia, super trivia, insights, and talk show). This is typically held at LaRoche University in May. Last year’s books included all *Rise for the Honorable Perry T. Cook, The Devil’s Arithmetic, Lifeboat 12, Survival Colony 9, Charlie Hernandez and the League of Shadows, and the Notorious RBG: The Life and Times of Ruth Bader Ginsburg*.

**Fairchild Challenge**

The Fairchild Challenge, sponsored by Phipps Conservatory, encourages high school students to investigate, devise imaginative and effective responses, and to take action at many levels on environmental issues through a menu of challenges. Each challenge option is designed to appeal to a broad range of students with varying interests and abilities by incorporating visual, literary and performing arts, research, and community action. The challenges begin in *October* and extend through *May* with one due about once per month. You do not have to commit to participating in all of the challenges by choosing this goal. There is typically an awards banquet in May.

**Green Initiative**

A team of 9th grade GATE students started the green initiative in 2008 after a visit to Phipps Conservatory and Botanical Gardens. With the district’s support, a fully functional, low energy usage greenhouse was built in 2010, a rain garden added in 2019, and a sensory garden (with raised beds) was added in 2022. Current projects often include maintenance of seedlings grown for various local organizations and maintenance of the area around the greenhouse. Also, the greenhouse serves as the hub for many other horticultural and ecological projects. Timing *varies*.

**Heinz History Center US Military Experience Class**

Enjoyment of history is taken to a new level with participation in this class. Students will spend several sessions focusing on primary sources and evaluating those sources for historical research purposes. Preparation culminates in a hands-on learning experience at the Heinz History Center where students will have the opportunity to interact with veterans from foreign wars. In 2022, students met with one WWII Veteran, two veterans of the Vietman War, and one Veteran from the War on Terror. This is typically a *spring* activity.

**NAGC Mock Trial**

Ninth and tenth grade students prepare for participation in a fictitious trial that entails acting as a participant for either the prosecution/plaintiff or the defense. Students will have the opportunity to work with lawyers in preparation for their trial. In addition, part of the experience will include a trip to the Court of Common Pleas where students will view a variety of civil trials. Preparation concludes with a formal competition at the Duquesne University School of Law in Pittsburgh, competing against local north hills teams. Trial materials are typically released in early *November*, and the competition takes place in early *January*. Last year’s case was a criminal case that involved a death during an obstacle course mud run entitled *Estate of Alejandro Desafios v. Storm Chase LLC.*

**Novice Model UN and/or Model African Union**

The Model United Nations is an educational simulation of the UN General Assembly. We participate in an event hosted by Riverview School District, typically *in October.*  This is a competition for novice (beginner) participants, so the atmosphere is relaxed and instructional. In Model UN, students step into the shoes of ambassadors from UN member states to debate current issues on the organization’s agenda. While playing their roles as ambassadors, student “delegates” make speeches, prepare draft resolutions, negotiate with allies and adversaries, resolve conflicts, and navigate the Model UN conference rules of procedure – all in the interest of mobilizing international cooperation to resolve problems that affect countries all over the world. We also will participate in the Model African Union, held typically in *March,* at the University of Pittsburgh, sponsored by their African studies department. This event is similar to the Model UN, except that the students represent African countries and deal with issues relevant to that continent exclusively.

**North American Computational Linguistics Olympiad (NACLO)**

CMU’s Language Technologies Center is the local sponsor for this multi-round competition that requires students to use language and logic skills to solve puzzles involving rarely studied languages. This competition is in late *January*, and students should plan to spend one period/week preparing for the Olympiad for a few weeks before the competition. Typically, the first round of the competition is proctored at our high school through a pencil and paper exam. The second round of the competition, if a student is to advance, is held at Carnegie Mellon University.

**PA Media and Design Competition**

This competition allows students to submit projects in programming, animation, logo design, web page design, digital movie, graphic design, desktop publishing, and multimedia presentation. This competition requires students to submit their projects electronically for judging and has participants from high schools across Western Pennsylvania. Prizes are awarded. Preparation typically begins in *February* for a *March* competition date.

**Peer Mentoring**

High school students make connections both academically and socially through a Peer Mentoring program with students at the Elementary School. A book is chosen as a basis for the discussions and activities. This year, students read *Unplugged* by Gordon Korman, a novel with many different topics to discuss including overuse of electronic devices, healthy lifestyles, and friendship. This program is typically *in the spring.*

**Pittsburgh Regional Science and Engineering Fair**

Students will conduct an experiment of their design. After collecting data, students have the opportunity to display the result and present their project (typically held in the lobby area of Heinz Field), informally interacting with judges from multiple scientific and engineering professions. A variety of awards are given for quality projects including monetary prizes and scholarships. This is an early *spring* activity. Student projects for the 2022-23 school year included a biology project entitled *The Effect of Sugars on Algae Photosynthesis* *.*

**Shakespeare Monologue and Scene Contest**

Sponsored by the Pittsburgh Public Theater, this program provides participating students with free coaching and two round of competition. Students may perform a Shakespearean monologue, scene, or both. Suggested scenes that work well with this type of competition can be found on the Pittsburgh Public Theater’s website. If enough students choose to participate, we will have an in-house competition as well. This competition is typically in *February* at the Pittsburgh Public Theater, downtown*.*

**Statewide Mock Trial**

Students assume the roles of attorneys and witnesses and compete against teams from across the region. Case materials for the Statewide competition, provided by the Pennsylvania Bar Association, arrive in early *November* and competition begins in late *January and last through early March*. Winning teams advance to higher rounds of competition. The team is advised by teachers and local attorneys. Competition is in the evening, typically at the City County Building in downtown Pittsburgh.

**Stock Market Game**

What would you do if you were given $100,000? Would you spend it all at once? Would you think about putting some of it in the bank? We’d like to teach you how to invest it, so you might grow it. Through the stock market game, you will gain a fundamental understanding of investing and how you might get your money to work for you. First time participants will also be required to complete a short training on how the online competition works. Monetary prizes are typically available for top finishers in the competition. This will be run for 8 weeks in the fall and 8 weeks in the spring.

**Westinghouse Science Honors Institute**

Students must apply and be accepted to the Institute. Lectures, seminars and/or workshops on current topics in science, hosted by leading professionals, will be held on *selected Saturdays throughout the year* at Franklin Regional in Murrysville, PA, throughout the year. In addition, students have the opportunity to travel to Penn State University to tour the Breazeale Nuclear Reactor. This free program is open to **high school juniors only**. Applications are available at the beginning of the school year.

**Wisdom Corridor Project**

Understanding that wisdom can come from many places, students will learn basic interview and interpersonal skills and then interview a high school teacher, resulting in words of wisdom gathered from each participant. These words, or life lessons, when completed will be compiled into a piece of artwork displayed at the high school.