

Honoring LORI KIM

Sharing Her Gifts

LORI KIM is a proud Barrington resident. Her family chose to move to Barrington for its friendly, welcoming atmosphere and its commitment to academic achievement including gifted education, extracurricular programs, and supporting local businesses and organizations. Her family also appreciates the community's dedication to preserving the natural beauty of the area and providing opportunities to enjoy it. "We feel fortunate to be a part of such a vibrant and caring community," she said.

Lori is a working "Mo2GP" (Mother of 2 Girls and Puppy). By profession, she works as a Sr. Customer Success Account Manager at Microsoft, responsible for managing three major accounts in the Financial Services Industry. As an architect of consumption, she works collaboratively with teams to empower customers to realize business value, deliver differentiated client experiences, and drive operational excellence.

At work, Lori feels energized, empowered, and joyful when helping others by being actively involved in various employee groups, such as Women at Microsoft Midwest, Marketplace Ministry for Microsoft (MMFM), FSI STEAM, and Parents of Highly Capable Children (POHCC). She is also part of the Faith and Work Movement Global Chicago team. "I believe that amazing things happen when people are freed to bring their authentic self to work. It's important to bring our whole selves to work, including our faith, to grow and be respected do our best work as a result." she said.

Outside of work, Lori serves in non-profit organizations with amazing teams advocating for children with gifts and talents and empowering families and communities



BY LISA STAMOS
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to support their needs. She is the president of the Barrington Council for the Gifted and Talented (BCGT) and a Board Member of the Illinois Association for Gifted Children (IAGC). She is also a volunteer attorney and Board Member at Pro Bono Network (PBN), an organization that strives to transform lives by increasing access to legal representation. As a passionate supporter of Administer Justice (AJ), she serves as an ambassador. "I firmly believe that no one should face injustice alone, and I am honored to be a part of such a dedicated and compassionate community," she said.

As someone who deeply empathizes with the challenges of mental health and the importance of self-care, Lori is proud to serve as a volunteer and mental health ally at the Korean American

Wellness Association (KAWA). By working to increase awareness of mental health issues, providing education, and bridging resources, they are striving to promote wellbeing and normalize conversations around mental health. She also serves closer to home.

"I am absolutely thrilled to be a part of the Barrington Civic Leaders Program alongside such incredible servant leaders with huge hearts for making positive impacts in our community," Lori said. "I am grateful for the culture of care and encouragement that is so prevalent in our community. It is inspiring to see so many individuals working together towards creating a more inclusive and welcoming community in Barrington. I am excited to contribute to this important work."

WE ASKED LORI KIM TO SHARE HER THOUGHTS ON GIFTED LEARNING

Why are you passionate about gifted learning and gifted learners?

Education played a crucial role in my life when I first immigrated to the United States at the age of 11. My parents placed a high value on education and encouraged my sister and me to pursue academic excellence. It provided me with the skills and knowledge necessary to succeed in a new country, including learning the language, understanding the culture, and recognizing my potential. This experience helped me appreciate the importance of education, the importance of having the right resources, and opportunities to connect with like-minded peers and become passionate about gifted learning.

Gifted learners often have unique abilities, talents, and social-emotional needs that require specialized educational programs and resources to help them develop their skills and interests. When talents and gifts are nurtured and supported, it can lead to exceptional achievements and contributions to society.

Why is there a need for a gifted education?

Every brain is unique, like a fingerprint, and research has shown that high IQ brains are physically different. Neurodivergent children, including gifted children, may experience developmental differences that occur on a different timeline than their peers. This can be due to differences in brain structure and function, which can affect cognitive, emotional, and social development. For example, gifted children may experience delayed maturation of the prefrontal cortex, which is responsible for executive functioning skills such as planning, organization, and decision-making. However, once this delay is overcome, gifted children may catch up rapidly and excel in these areas. Gifted education is considered part of the neurodivergent spectrum because it recognizes that gifted children have unique cognitive and social-emotional needs that may require specialized support.

Belonging and authentic social connections are important for humans, including gifted children who may feel different and struggle to find peers who share their interests and understanding. Gifted children often seek more mature social relationships, which can lead to feeling left out socially. They may also feel like they must "fake it" to make friends and may struggle to find someone who truly understands them.



We will be discussing this topic at one of our upcoming events, so be sure to attend if you're interested in learning more.

When did you join the Barrington Council for the Gifted and Talented?

I joined the Barrington Council for the Gifted and Talented during the pandemic when all in-person events were halted. In October 2020, I presented the "Wisdom Program" idea to the BCGT Board members during a monthly meeting. The Wisdom program provides a psychologically safe and inclusive space for students, parents, educators, and professionals to come together virtually via Zoom or Teams as a learning community.

I was elected as Co-President to lead the Monthly Wisdom initiative starting in January 2022. Our very first event was focused on The Gift and Power of Emotional Agility with Dr. Joseph Chen, Founder and Lead Psychologist

at TransformEdge and Associate Professor/Director, Office of Prior Learning Assessment at DePaul University. Mentorship is a powerful tool that can compress time for students by providing them with guidance and support from today's empathetic leaders who have already achieved the goals they are striving for. I believe that the Wisdom program by BCGT, can educate, and empower our students to achieve their full potential.

How does BCGT work with Barrington 220 and why is this partnership important?

The partnership with Barrington 220 can leverage the district's nationally recognized extended services program and enhance the existing resources for students, families, and teachers. This can create a more comprehensive approach to education and benefit all learners involved. Partnering can empower students by providing a wider network of resources, mentors, sponsors, and allies.

BCGT is incredibly grateful for the partnership we have with Barrington 220. We work closely with Jordan Anderson, Director of Learning Services for Barrington 220, Samantha Scheinman, Director of Communications, principals, educators, and community leaders to build a stronger community.

As a nonprofit, how do you raise funds?

BCGT relies on the support of generous donors and volunteers to operate, provides majority of our programs at no-cost especially for our students and educators, and is grateful for their contributions to gifted education and the potential of students.

Why do you believe emotional agility is needed for high achieving learners?

Gifted children tend to share three common characteristics: perfectionism, intensity, and sensitivity. Emotional agility and resilience are important for high achieving learners because they may experience social isolation, perfectionism, and high expectations from themselves and others. These challenges can lead to stress, anxiety, and even depression if they are not addressed. Emotional agility refers to the ability to navigate and regulate emotions effectively. Gifted students, who are emotionally agile, can recognize and manage their emotions in a healthy way, which can lead to better mental wellbeing. We are excited to begin our Wisdom series this year with a discussion about emotional agility and mental resilience at our September event.

You founded the Wisdom Program. Who should attend?

The Wisdom program provides a psychologically safe and inclusive space for students, parents, educators, and professionals to come together as a learning community. This program is open to all learners of all ages. The program provides a refreshing source of meaningful learning opportunities that allow participants to learn from different perspectives and bring their whole authentic selves to the table. This program creates a living, learning culture that encourages us to pursue our passions and purpose while supporting one another in our personal and professional growth. Overall, the Wisdom program is a valuable resource for anyone who is committed to continuous learning and development. It offers a psychologically safe space where we can connect, engage, and empower one another to achieve our full potential.

What can students and parents expect from STEAM events?

Our STEAM events promote hands-on learning and exploration in science, technology, engineering, arts, and math. These events are designed to foster creativity, critical thinking, and problem-solving skills, which are essential for gifted education and the future of work.

Students, parents, and educators can expect a range of benefits from attending STEAM event, including hands-on learning, exposure to new ideas and technologies, and networking opportunities.

We are thrilled to announce our upcoming STEAM “Hack to Learn” event, taking place at the Microsoft Chicago campus on Friday, 10/20. Join us for this high-energy event, featuring a team of passionate experts in the STEAM field and a variety of hands-on, interactive workshops including



BCGT hosts Family Game Night at the Barrington Area Library.

an Azure Open AI and Co-Pilot sessions. Save the Date! You won't want to miss this.

What other programs do you have?

In addition to our Wisdom and STEAM events, we hold monthly meetings during the school year with the BCGT Board and our community. Everyone is welcome to attend these meetings. We also offer career exploration sessions, parent coffee and conversations, and family game nights. Two of our most popular events are our Barrington High School (BHS) and middle school transition panel sessions, where we speak to the specific experience of our extended students as they navigate the transitions between schools.

How can a family join?

At BCGT, we welcome everyone to join our learning community and our BCGT membership is open to all of today's learners.

Visit bcgt220.org/membership to learn about our membership options. While membership is not required to attend our events, we are grateful to our generous donors who make it possible for us to offer most of our events free of charge to students and educators. Join us today to learn, collaborate, and make a meaningful difference in the lives of our children. If you have any questions, please don't hesitate to contact us at bcgt220.org or by emailing bcgt220@gmail.com and visit bcgt220.org/meet-our-board and for events, visit bcgt220.org/events. 