Help Us Identify and Develop the World’s Brightest Young Minds
Ensuring that advanced young learners receive appropriate academic challenge is crucially important to their ongoing success — and our shared future. Empowering the world’s brightest children to find their passions, discover their potential, and receive support that propels them to the highest achievement possible has been the Johns Hopkins Center for Talented Youth’s specialty for nearly 40 years. We need these talented young people working at optimum levels for their own well-being and the common good.

Our schools cannot take on the challenge of identifying and nurturing advanced learners alone — particularly when those students come from low-income backgrounds. Too often classroom teachers lack the resources to provide the kind of instruction these exceptional learners need to thrive. With your support, CTY can be the partner that enables our education systems to address this critical gap.

We are the oldest and most recognized university-based nonprofit dedicated to the identification and development of high-ability pre-collegiate students. CTY’s programs have reached more than 1.5 million young people worldwide since our 1979 founding by renowned Johns Hopkins psychologist Julian C. Stanley. We are proud of what we have achieved so far, but we know we can and must do much more. With your help, we will strengthen our student financial aid, educator support, and research and advocacy work. Together, we can impact advanced learners of all backgrounds. Your gift to CTY will demonstrate your firm belief in the next generation of thinkers, doers, and dreamers.

Answering the next big questions in talent development
How do we better identify high-potential youth who aren’t demonstrating their academic abilities through traditional testing? CTY Executive Director Elaine Tuttle Hansen considers this question the biggest challenge facing the talent development field, and CTY, she says, is uniquely situated to answer it. Traditional above-level testing is not an effective means to identify students from low-income families who have not had equitable learning opportunities compared to their middle- and upper-income peers. Our researchers are testing and evaluating alternative methods — observing a student’s spatial reasoning skills through block-building activities, for example — in the communities that we serve.

Our policy experts are sharing research results with lawmakers and administrators who are seeking evidence-based guidance for improving struggling public school systems across the country. And when we discover these talented students, we’re doing all we can to provide them with financial support so they can benefit from CTY programming.

“All young people deserve the opportunity to find out where their passions and talents lie, and to be supported toward their highest achievement, no matter their life circumstances,” Hansen says.
OPENING OUR DOORS WIDER TO QUALIFIED STUDENTS, REGARDLESS OF FINANCIAL CIRCUMSTANCES

CTY has a robust community of alumni numbering more than 155,000 who are leaders in fields that range from science and technology to finance, law, education, and the arts. Many of these alumni received full or partial scholarship support to enroll in CTY programs. A select number of these students were chosen to enroll in CTY Scholars — a four-year college access program designed for academically advanced, low-income students from groups traditionally underrepresented in higher education.

We aim to keep CTY an attractive option for more instructors like Howard and Melnick and expand professional development opportunities like the Barder Fellowship for classroom teachers, but these efforts require new resources. To this end, we seek $1 million to launch an endowed fund that will enable CTY to recruit the highest caliber instructors and subject-area experts to lead our programs, and to create awards that recognize and develop standout teachers nationwide. With your help, we can attract, retain, and reward these exceptional individuals who nurture, inspire, and challenge CTY students.

“CTY was a turning point for me”

In the past decade, Ilenna Jones has graduated from Dartmouth College, studied under the direction of a Nobel Prize winner, worked in a Johns Hopkins laboratory, and started a PhD in neuroscience at the University of Pennsylvania. She hopes someday to advance treatments for neuropsychotic illnesses, such as schizophrenia. Looking back, Jones considers her CTY genetics and genomics summer camp “a turning point for me.” It allowed her to break that mold and look at subjects in ways she had never considered.

“I went home after one week of camp and said, ‘Our family was going to make sure I got into the best possible program for genetics,’” Jones says. “That was a big turning point for me — to go and learn for learning’s sake. CTY sparked her hunger for that intellectually stimulating environment, and she’s pursued it ever since. Thanks to a full scholarship to CTY, Jones tackled challenging coursework as pivotal to their academic, professional, and personal successes. Ilenna Jones, a 2009 alumna (see profile below), says that, before CTY, she had a "complacent frame of mind where the point of learning was just to get good grades." A scholarship to attend two CTY summer courses "allowed me to break that mold and look at subjects in ways I didn’t expect."

To open CTY to more low- and middle-income students, we must substantially increase our financial aid resources. We seek to raise $10 million in philanthropic support for full and partial CTY scholarships, and for the CTY Scholars program. Your gift is crucial in helping us accelerate the continued expansion of access to CTY programs for advanced learners, regardless of their families’ economic circumstances.

“ATTRACTION DYNAMIC CTY INSTRUCTORS AND INSPIRING CLASSROOM TEACHERS”

Advanced learners thrive with support from excellent teachers and other top minds in a variety of fields. Each year, CTY hires more than 1,700 instructors and staff to lead its residential summer programs, in addition to year-round full- and part-time CTY Online instructors. These include exemplary teachers, graduate students, and college professors as well as accomplished professionals with expert knowledge, such as Marc Howard and Miriam Melnick, CTY alumni and Google engineers who co-teach an advanced robotics course for high-school students (see profile on page 3). These enthusiastic instructors marry our students’ innate interests to their rapidly developing abilities, modeling fascinating — and attainable — career paths.

"Our female students are gobsmacked that there’s a woman, an engineer at Google, at the front of the class, encouraging them to follow their dreams," Melnick says. “We must provide stipends out of the office. These individuals, especially those from underrepresented groups, such as women in computer science, can deeply affect CTY students. "Our female students are "CTY was a turning point for me."

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Making an impact through
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When the U.S. Department of
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2016, a question arose: What
percentage of American students
are actually capable of working
above their grade level?
Within two months, Julian C.
Stanley Professor of Talent
Development Jonathan Plucker
and his colleagues had completed
a study and a policy brief finding
that up to 40 percent of
elementary and middle school
students perform at least one
grade level above their current
grade in reading and up to 30
percent in math. If so many
students were already ahead of
grade-based benchmarks, the
researchers argued, then
policymakers need to rethink
the current age-based,
grade-level paradigm. Plucker
immediately received invitations
to speak with state policymakers
to determine how their regula-
tions could be amended to
ensure resources aren’t wasted
teaching students information
they already know. These
kinds of “rapid response”
projects arise often, Plucker
says, and CTY’s international
network of contacts gives the
center an advantage in
pursuing them. The missing
link? Increased funding for
research costs.
“Through policy advocacy,
we can make a disproportion-
ately big impact,” Plucker says,
and philanthropic support
makes a very big difference.
There’s a lot of bang for the
buck in this area.”

SHARING OUR EXPERTISE WITH
EDUCATION POLICYMAKERS AND
PRACTITIONERS
In the four decades since our founding,
CTY has become the foremost authority
on characteristics of advanced learners
and interventions that can cultivate their
potential. But many critical questions
remain about the identification and
optimal development of exceptional
academic talent.
Experts like Amy Shelton, director
of research for CTY and associate dean
development in the School of Education,
are applying the lessons of cognitive
psychology and neuroscience to
explore spatial skills as fundamental
learning tools and to develop alternative
methods beyond standardized testing
to identify young students with high
potential, especially those from under-
resourced backgrounds. Renowned
creativity and human intelligence scholar
Jonathan Plucker, who holds appointments
to our programs, and create an engine for
educational change, including:
• $6 million to endow two professorships
for scholars focused on the basic
science of learning that underlies
academic talent development
• $1 million to create an endowment to
support faculty and staff conducting
innovative research and their travel to
present their findings at conferences,
in meetings with lawmakers, and more
With your support, CTY’s research
and advocacy efforts will make a tangible
difference in the lives of young learners
nationwide — perhaps in your own
community.

To do this, we seek $7 million to
advance CTY’s research and advocacy
programs, and create an engine for
educational change, including:
• $6 million to endow two professorships
for scholars focused on the basic
science of learning that underlies
academic talent development
• $1 million to create an endowment to
support faculty and staff conducting
innovative research and their travel to
present their findings at conferences,
in meetings with lawmakers, and more

WE NEED YOUR HELP
CTY cannot succeed in achieving
these critical priorities without the
generous support of dedicated
individuals and organizations firmly
committed to serving academically
advanced students, their families, and
their teachers. Gifts at every level are
needed, and opportunities include:
• $5,000 – To support one CTY
teaching award for one year
• $10,000 – To support one CTY
Scholar for four years
• $30,000 – To endow one full
summer program scholarship OR
two online scholarships annually
• $1 million – To endow a CTY annual
symposium
• $3 million – To endow one research
professorship

We welcome the opportunity to
explore these and other giving options
with you. We will work with you to
plan and structure your gift in ways
that support your goals and ours. We
look forward to hearing from you and
thank you for your interest.

MAKE A GIFT
To learn more and to discuss your gift,
please contact:
Margaret Walsh
Senior Director of Development
Center for Talented Youth
Johns Hopkins University
Phone: 410-735-6005
Email: mwalsh@jhu.edu

CENTER FOR TALENTED YOUTH