



Jacquelyn Negus is Head of School at Quest Academy.

Learning Today, Leading Tomorrow

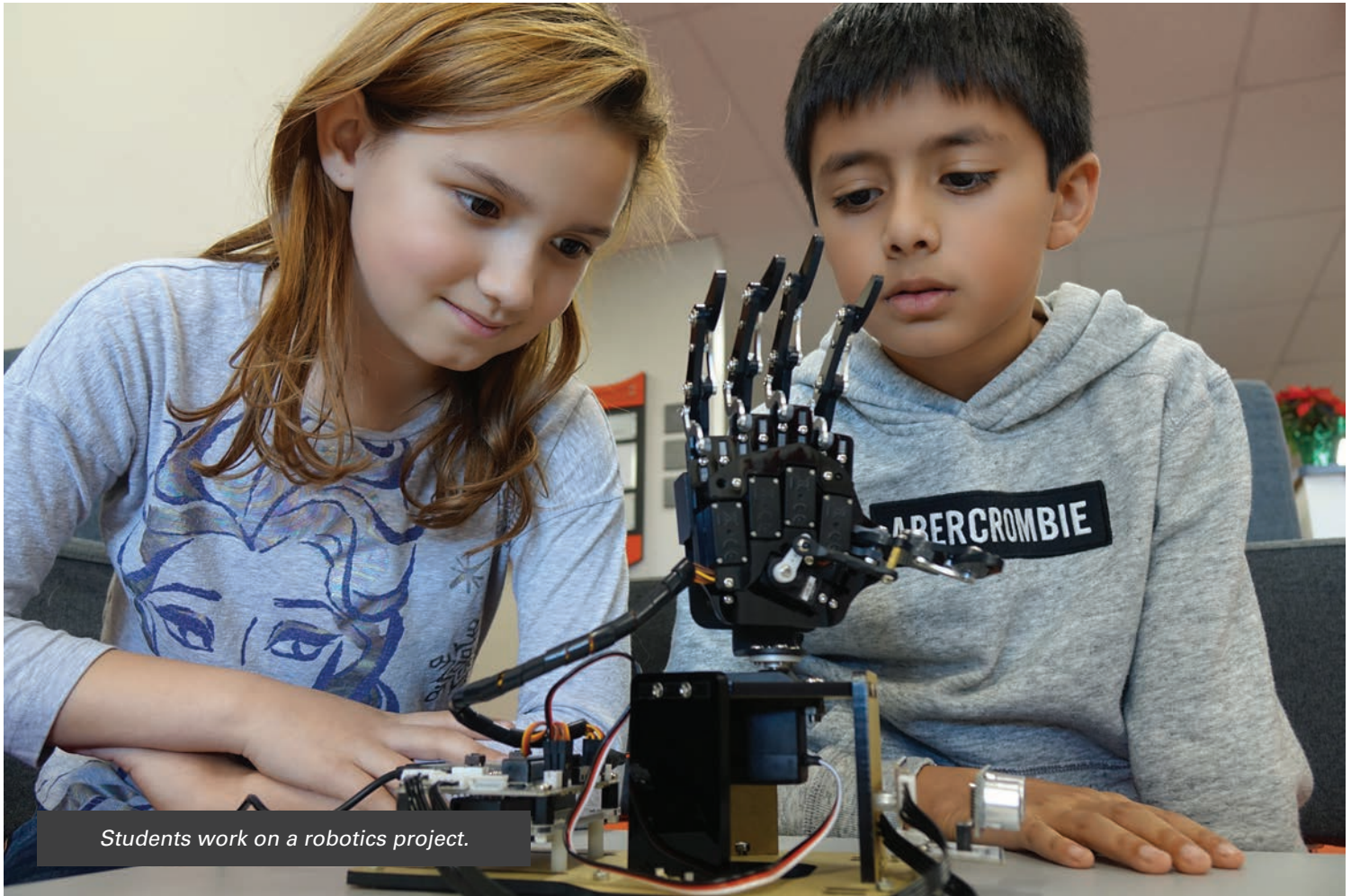
Quest Academy makes a monumental impact in the lives of its students

Inquisitive. Creative. Observant. Insightful.

Exceptional. Gifted. These are just some of the characteristics that Jacquelyn Negus, Head of School, uses to describe the students who attend Quest Academy, a private school serving gifted children from preschool through eighth grade.

School leadership and staff members take pride in implementing the highest academic standards and offering a challenging curriculum for its brightest children in the Chicagoland area. They cultivate an enriched environment where a diverse group of students emerge as leaders and upstanding citizens into adulthood.

By **AMANDA DAVEY** and **JILL DREYER**



Students work on a robotics project.

QUEST ACADEMY IS NESTLED in the Northwest Suburbs of Illinois with a 42,000 square foot campus right outside the downtown Palatine district. The state-of-the-art facility encompasses an area where students have all the means necessary to prosper both academically and socially.

Educators value the importance of creating a positive classroom experience by keeping classroom sizes small with no more than 17 students in each class. This ensures children receive the undivided attention they deserve. Collaboration amongst students is highly encouraged by educators, and the reason desks are placed in a non-traditional layout, unifying this small group of learners. Being immersed with like-minded peers formulates thoughts and opinions, which is fundamental to their development.

Barrington mother Renata Sanfilippo sees the value in Quest. “We are very happy having our children at Quest Academy especially because of how much attention and care they get from their small class sizes. The students don’t have to vie for attention, and they learn more that way. The whole program Quest offers is based on each child’s needs. I have twin boys that learn in different ways and they are both learning a lot.”

The school contains the tools and resources necessary for students to pursue and reach excellence. On campus, students can be found reading literature in the newly renovated Learning Resource Center or coding and laser cutting in the Innovation Lab. These rooms, while vastly different, are

available for students to research, create, and brainstorm with their peers on classroom assignments and project work.

Jen and Mitul Vakharia of Barrington appreciate the wide range of subject matter offered. “Quest is a great fit for our children because of the smaller class sizes, the hands-on science curriculum, including Makerspace, and the excellent art, music, drama, and Spanish instruction. Our children seem to do better in school when they are really engaged, and they get that at Quest.”

The assortment of studies is present as you navigate throughout the building. Just down the hallways, students gather with classmates in the gymnasium where students enjoy team activities and the sounds of children harmonizing can be heard from the music room. An equally exquisite two-acre West Campus is comprised of outdoor space used for recreational basketball and soccer, amphitheater, walking path, science exploration, and raised gardens. Students thoroughly enjoy opportunities to develop outside the classroom setting and delve into this scenic landscape and with its natural surroundings.

Reaching Their Full Potential

Educational research has found supporting evidence that the needs of gifted children are simply different from that of other students. In neighboring schools, bright children may find themselves withdrawn or disengaged from grade-level curriculum. Even when slightly accelerated content is



Our West Campus is used for outdoor events and features a nature walking path, outdoor amphitheater, basketball court, raised gardens, soccer field, and science exploration area.



Quest Academy is a private school serving gifted children from preschool through eighth grade.

offered, children may still become disinterested and frustrated with the classroom experience, both in content and process. Children who find themselves in an environment that is not designed for their learning needs may exhibit behaviors that are tangential to the actual learning, including acting out in class or expressing social emotional concerns that may result in anxiety, depression, or low self-confidence. As a result, parents may find themselves struggling to discover the best course of action for their young children to ensure emotional well-being and foster a love for learning.

At Quest Academy, the staff is dedicated to providing a nurturing and balanced education, ensuring all Quest students reach their full potential regardless of their circumstances.

The school is comprised of qualified educators who have the expertise and training to engage, motivate, and inspire an advanced group of students. They embrace the qualities that make a child unique, understanding that each learner interprets and receives information differently. With the teacher's support, students develop into thoughtful individuals and ask more complex questions, channeling their inner curiosity.

Barrington resident Matt Vondra appreciates what Quest offers his child. "We are lucky to have an institution like Quest Academy this close to our community, not requiring long commutes or relocating our family completely. Quest offers young minds an atmosphere where they can both master their foundational skill set at an accelerated pace and expand their learning to include topics of relevance. As a conscious consumer, Quest delivers multiples on the price of admission by eliminating lost opportunities to learn and grow each day."



Quest Academy keeps classroom sizes to no more than 17 students.



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The curriculum at Quest Academy is aligned with state and national standards without the constriction of grade-level restraints.

Customized Teaching and Curricula

As a fully accredited independent school, Quest Academy faculty enjoy the opportunity to tailor the learning experience to the children in their classroom. The curriculum is aligned with state and national standards without the constriction of grade-level restraints. A student in second grade who is ready for more advanced work is able to study fourth grade-level math, for example.

Quest Academy appreciates a “no ceiling” approach to learning that allows children to grow at their own pace among like-minded peers. Cathy Gruzinsky, a third-grade teacher, shares that “Teaching is centered around what the children need. Children over time have changed and teaching has evolved. Quest allows me to be as creative as possible and forward-thinking. As educators, we appreciate all aspects of gifted.”

Recently, third-grade classrooms partnered with fellow classmates and transformed into captivating storytellers during their Renaissance Faire unit. This assignment granted students the opportunity to work together and showcase their imagination, creativity, and sense of humor through their depiction of exploratory tales. From the audience’s perspective, the students clearly demonstrated extraordinary public-speaking skills. However, observing more closely one witnessed the confidence and joy illuminated from each and every student as they performed their student-developed scripts—a truly remarkable achievement.

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Barrington parents, Rapeepat Ratasuk and Tanita Sirivedhin support the unique teaching model. “We like that Quest Academy provides an engaging and challenging learning experience that is differentiated without the constraints of a typical classroom. Their philosophies and understanding of gifted children extend to all areas, including STEM, fine arts, and performance arts. The caring support and encouragement from our son’s teachers bolster his self-confidence and learning alongside like-minded peers motivates him to continuously improve himself. Quest Academy provides both academic and character development that is tailored to our son.”

Collaboration with Microsoft

Over the past several months, Quest Academy formed a new and exciting collaboration with Microsoft—the only K-8 school in the United States to have this opportunity. Microsoft was attracted to Quest’s dedication to provide a forward-thinking learning experience, as well as exposure to the resources that are relevant in our ever-changing world. Working together, they developed a compelling first- through eighth-grade curriculum that integrated artificial intelligence into the already advanced academic structure. Quest Academy students now find themselves in the role of changemakers in the AI space and possess an opportunity to be at the forefront of ongoing innovations.

Artificial Intelligence can be used to analyze millions of iterations of



Students of all ages receive instruction in drama and music and participate in full scale productions to showcase their talents on and off the stage through performance, costuming, set design, and technical training.

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a design idea through self-learning logic and spans over various industries. Jacquelyn Negus, Head of School, believes that “Partnering with Microsoft has provided the Quest Academy AI Curriculum Team with a solid foundation of concepts upon which we are designing our program. Our knowledge of the gifted child and gifted curricula, coupled with Microsoft’s research on Artificial Intelligence, affords us a perfect opportunity to develop an AI curricula for 21st century learners.”

Another exciting event for Quest came in the form of a newly creative space that was crafted in concept by Gary Mann, Lower School Art Teacher, aptly named “My Museum.” He envisioned an interactive museum created by kids, for kids. My Museum is located adjacent to the Quest Academy campus and serves both Quest students and the neighborhood children as a free resource for creative play and social interactions. Building and executing this project was no easy task. With his guidance, students in preschool through third grade designed, crafted, and assembled each exhibit, ranging from an archeological dig and creative art station to installations that include a grocery store, fire engine, and food truck. Each exhibit is designed to stimulate imagination and serve as a playful educational experience for each child that visits.

Specially Trained Teachers


Beyond academics, Quest values the importance of establishing good character, commitment to global citizenship, and service-mindedness. Throughout the year, students participate in meaningful projects, often with established community organizations, that support character development and encourage the children to use their talents and resources for the good of others. Gifted children especially benefit from a robust and intentional Social Emotional Learning (SEL) program that is designed to provide them with the tools necessary to address perfectionism, self-control, healthy relationships, responsible decision-making, and problem-solving strategies.

Quest Academy teachers are trained to embed these SEL lessons into their classrooms and a commitment to being at the forefront of SEL understanding has resulted in an on-site trained expert to help lead this initiative.

Elementary school lays the framework for children as they navigate through their academic career to post-secondary education and beyond. These pivotal years include a tremendous amount of growth and maturity, where children learn how to be independent thinkers. Parents face a challenging selection process when determining the right fit for their children. Amanda Davey, Director of Enrollment at Quest Academy, acknowledges



the importance of this decision. “We understand that one of the most significant decisions you will face as a parent is how to approach your child’s education. We also understand that you have choices. As part of the admissions process, it is our hope that you will get to know Quest as the best option for your gifted learner. With a robust curriculum designed to engage the curious learner, Quest uniquely challenges students to interact with the learning material using innovative tools, forward-thinking teaching methods, and like-minded peers who enhance the experience through their thoughtful ideas, questions, and interests.”

Rewarding. Memorable. Inspiring. Respectful. Gratifying. These are just some of the characteristics that come to mind when a child experiences life and learning at Quest Academy. 

QUEST ACADEMY INVITES YOU

A Message from the Director of Enrollment

We invite you to get to know Quest Academy. The uniqueness of what happens within the school walls is only fully realized when you walk through the engaging hallways filled with artifacts of learning. A peek inside the classroom provides a view of joyful children engaged in challenging, creative activities across multiple subject areas. You will be introduced to caring staff who truly recognize the wonderful qualities that make each child unique - and celebrate these qualities! You will see students prepared to not only graduate but excel in high school beyond typical expectations. At Quest Academy, children engage with like-minded peers and are known by their teachers. This is a place where all students are welcomed, respected, and accepted.

Please contact Amanda Davey, Director of Enrollment at amanda.davey@questacademy.org or (847) 202-8035 x424. For further information, visit www.questacademy.org

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