

K6GBM at Granite Bay Montessori School — A Student's Viewpoint

Olivia Brophy, KI6TWK



Brian Lloyd, WB6RQN/J79BPL

Hi, my name is Olivia and my call sign is KI6TWK. I am a student at Granite Bay Montessori School. I am eleven and in the 6th grade.

Last year our science teacher, Brian Lloyd, started a ham radio club at our school. We got a club call, K6GBM, and Brian started all the 5th through 8th graders on the Technician book. It took many testing sessions but in the end we all passed and got our licenses. Two of us, Joshua and Rachel, even got their General license.

What makes our program fun and challenging at the school? Hmm, well it is probably that we all help each other achieve our goals. Our friends help us through the tough parts and we help them with theirs. In the end, no one comes out on the top as smartest or more powerful.

We all help each other and make the experience fun for one another.

Another thing that helps us is all the support we get from Brian's other ham radio friends, from our teachers and from our fellow classmates. They help us with learning Morse code, studying, building antennas and building many other things. We all appreciate the help we get more than anything. If it weren't for the support that we get here at school and at home, I don't think as many of us would have our licenses.

We have done many projects for our station. We built our GAP Titan DX antenna ourselves and then raised it ourselves. It was like an antenna raising party. We received a kit for the Elecraft K2 transceiver last year and everyone took part in building it. We set up our own repeater and we have had a lot of people connect using EchoLink.¹ People from all over the world connect and talk to us. We have held a campout for Field Day where we all got to talk on the radio and we all slept out on the school field. It was a ton of fun.

Some advice for teachers from a student's perspective: If you want to help set up a station at a school or teach a teacher (it is possible for teachers to learn) how to run a station, I'll tell you some ways that you can help.

First, if you are teaching a group of students, make it interesting. Whether the students are 7 or 17, they want an interesting class. Another thing is not to be too pushy. If kids or teens feel like they are being pressured too much, they won't pass and they will think they aren't smart enough and incapable of passing. I know that after all but four of us had passed, I felt like I couldn't pass, but I did. If you have kids who absolutely refuse to study for the test, let them, but if it is possible, keep them in the class. Then, when all of their friends and classmates have passed and are talking on the air, they'll realize how foolish they were to be stubborn. Make sure that you are open to them and always keep asking them if they have changed their mind. If you don't, they will think that you don't care and give up all together — and we don't want that.

Once all the kids have passed, organize a social and fun ham radio get-together, like participating in a Field Day. Another thing that you could do is go to a hamfest or a swap meet in your area. Look for old (or newer) radios for the kids or parts for a project you are doing with them. That is one other thing that you should include in their curriculum — projects and building things. Make sure that there are plenty of hands-on things to do. If the students have their own radios and antennas, they will be able to make more contacts and gain more knowledge of the bands and who can use them. The more they know the better. Also, if they have their own radios and antennas, they will become more prominent members of the amateur community.

*Olivia Brophy, KI6TWK, is a 6th grade student at Granite Bay (California) Montessori School where she and her classmates learned about science by earning their ham radio licenses. Read more about Olivia and her classmates in QST.² She can be reached through Brian Lloyd, WB6RQN/J79BPL, Granite Bay Montessori School, 9330 Sierra College Blvd, Roseville, CA 95661, **wb6rqn@arri.net**.*

¹Our repeater is K6GBM on 444.35 MHz, +, CTCSS 114.8 Hz, also via EchoLink at K6GBM-R (node 399102).

²B. Lloyd, "Ham Radio 101 at Granite Bay Montessori School," *QST*, Jan 2010, pp 67-69.