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GREENHOUSE

Nurturing Home Education in North Carolina and Beyond



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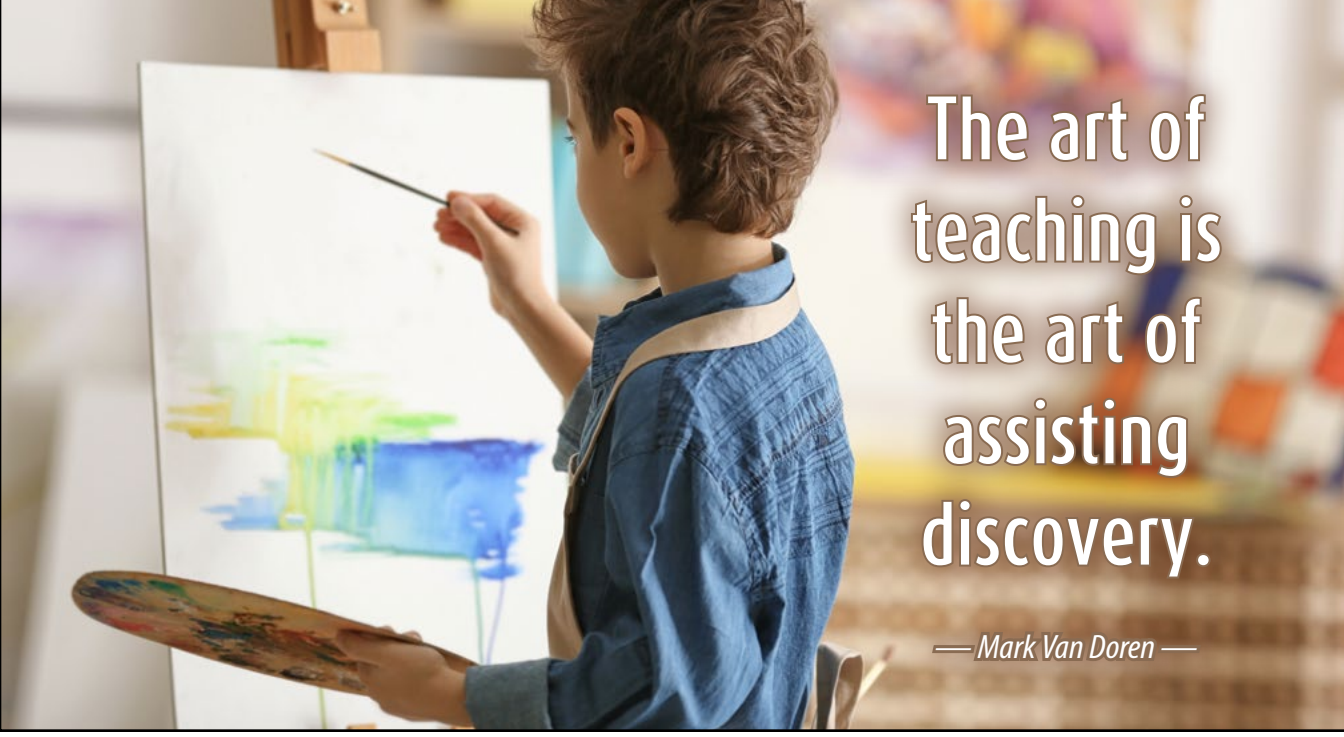
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About GREENHOUSE

The GREENHOUSE is the periodical of North Carolinians for Home Education. It is published twice a year, spring and fall. There is also a special graduate publication in May. It is mailed to all members and posted online. The name GREENHOUSE was chosen to represent the type of care homeschooling parents are able to give to their children. Children are lovingly "tended" in a protected and nurturing environment until they are sufficiently mature to go out and take a place of service in the world. Letters and articles addressed to the GREENHOUSE become property of NCHE with full right to publication without further permission required. Ideas and opinions expressed in articles do not necessarily represent those of NCHE.

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GREENHOUSE Editor
Ivey Deitz. . . . . Hudson
(828) 396-8959 • *email* greditor@nche.com

Published by:
North Carolinians for Home Education
4441 Six Forks Rd., Suite 106, Box 144
Raleigh, NC 27609

(844) 624-3388 • *email* nche@nche.com

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COVER PHOTO by Cricket Johnson/Lightshine Images

Are You Missing the Greatest Goal for Home Education?



by Matthew McDill

My name is Matthew McDill, and it is my privilege to serve as the new president for NCHE. I would like to thank John Kirkland, our former president, for his kind heart and strong leadership over the last year.

I love homeschooling, and I love North Carolinians for Home Education! For many years, Dana and I have benefited from the ministry of NCHE in equipping us to homeschool our children. I am grateful for the opportunity to help continue this ministry to other homeschooling families.

I grew up going to public-school in Portland, Oregon. My parents saw that what I was learning in school was not a complete education because it did not include biblical and spiritual truth. When I was in elementary school, they requested that I be allowed to come home half a day each week for "Wisdom Class." When I arrived home on those special days, my mom had prepared a curriculum of Bible study and memorization, activities, and discussion of biblical truth.

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As I entered the ninth grade, my parents saw the negative influence the public-school culture was having on my character and attitude. Halfway through the school year, they became so concerned that they pulled me out and sent me all the way across town to a Christian private school that they could barely afford. Soon after this, we moved to North Carolina where I heard about homeschooling for the first time. When I was in college, I saw families that I respected homeschooling their children, and I observed the wonderful fruit coming from it. Watching these families convinced me to homeschool my own children one day.

You have also made the important choice to homeschool your children. It is not easy, but it is so good! Even when it is challenging, discouraging, and exhausting—keep pressing on!

And let us not grow weary of doing good,
for in due season we will reap, if we do not give up.
Galatians 6:9

There are a wide variety of reasons people choose to homeschool, from physical safety to academic excellence, from freedom to select curriculum to desire to help children with disabilities. Whatever your reasons, I would like to remind you of the most important reason of all.

Paul expresses a powerful truth as he tries to help the Corinthians deal with an intense issue in the early church related to food and idols.

Now concerning food offered to idols:
we know that 'all of us possess knowledge.'
This 'knowledge' puffs up, but love builds up.
If anyone imagines that he knows something,
he does not yet know as he ought to know.
But if anyone loves God, he is known by God.
1 Corinthians 8:1-3

While knowledge is important, it simply isn't enough by itself. Knowledge is not all there is, and it is not the most important thing. The most important thing is love, and the most important love is the love of God.

I want my children to have an excellent education and to gain knowledge. However, what I want for them more than anything is to learn to love and know God. There is no greater goal and responsibility as parents than to teach our children to love God and follow Jesus. Is this your primary goal for home education? How are you planning to teach your children to love God and follow Jesus this year?

NCHE is here to help you accomplish all your home education goals. Our official mission statement is this: "NCHE has a vision for flourishing families and thriving generations in which people remain passionate, curious, and actively engaged in their faith and in their learning." We want to help families in NC thrive in home education and in discipleship. Practically, we do this in three ways:

1. Protecting your freedom to homeschool in NC,
2. Equipping you with information and resources you need to homeschool, and
3. Connecting you with local homeschool communities and mentors.

The NCHE board is a wonderful team of people who have hearts to fulfill this mission. We are so thankful that each of you are a part of the NCHE family! Here is how you can be a meaningful part of our community.

- Please pray for our board as we serve homeschooling families in NC.
- Please help us get connected to other families in NC who can benefit from this ministry.
- Please pray about how you might be able to serve. You can go to nche.com/serve to learn how you can get involved and get in touch with us.

May grace and peace be multiplied to you.
1 Peter 1:2b



Matthew McDill and his wife, Dana, homeschool their nine children in Creston, NC. Matthew has been on the NCHE board for several years and currently serves as president. He is a pastor of Highland Christian Fellowship in Boone, NC. Through his ministry, Truth to Freedom (truthtofreedom.org), he loves to teach and write about discipleship, marriage, family, parenting, home education, and church. Matthew holds a B.S. in communication and two master's degrees and a Ph.D. in biblical studies.



NC DNPE Update

by Spencer Mason

The NC Division for Non-Public Education (DNPE) has implemented a major change in their school database that affects homeschools. This change—to a real-time database—will make a dramatic improvement in the efficiency of DNPE operations and provide better accuracy and security to homeschool information. When a Notice of Intent to Open a Home School (NOI) is entered online, the person entering the notice will create a user ID, password, and will enter an email address. The site will ask for the following information:

- Name of the homeschool (Be sure to pick a name that will look good on a high school diploma. Once you have picked a name, you can't change it.)
- Mailing address and county
- The name of the chief administrator
- Under which part of Article 39 the school will operate (Choose Part 1, religious or Part 2, non-religious. Your school will be treated the same with either choice.)
- The age and gender of the homeschool students (You are not required to fill in this section.)
- The primary teacher's name

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- Additional teachers' names (This is not required.)
- A scanned image of the teacher's high school diploma or equivalent. (You can provide an image of a high school diploma or transcript, a GED transcript, a college diploma or transcript (AA, AAS, BS, MS or PhD), a professional license or certificate (such as a nursing certificate), or a DD214 (military discharge document) or active military documentation.)

Once families fill out the required information and attach a scanned proof of a high school diploma, they will have their schools added to the DNPE database. In a few days, they can sign in to their account to see the status of their NOI.

Because of the changes, schools can be added to the DNPE database in days rather than weeks.

The DNPE Email to Homeschools Opened before 2003

DNPE recently sent emails to homeschool administrators who opened their homeschools before 2003. The email asked homeschoolers to respond to the email with the following information so DNPE can update their records.

- The Chief Administrator of your school
- The name of your school
- The status of your school (opened or closed)
- If your school is a two-household school (Not required by law)
- Enrollment (not required by law)
- Address changes

The reason for this email is that when DNPE mailed letters to these homeschools, more than half of the letters were returned as undeliverable. Then DNPE sent this email to the homeschools they could not reach and more than fifty-percent of the emails bounced as undeliverable. DNPE could not contact the majority of homeschools that were opened before 2003. As a result, those schools were closed.

DNPE Annual Reminder Emails

Each year DNPE will send an email to homeschools to remind them to sign into their account and check the accuracy of the information about their homeschool and make corrections when needed. If you have moved or changed your address since opening, and you have not notified DNPE, you should email or call them to ensure that your school is still open and that DNPE has the correct information.

Homeschool administrators will have the opportunity to provide the date annual standardized tests were administered and the name of the tests that were used. This is for the homeschoolers who want the state to have a record of the tests that they administered. There is not a way to enter scores or student-identifying information—only the type of test taken. Homeschoolers do not have to give this information. The inspection by mail program was discontinued several years ago, but many homeschools still mail copies of their records to DNPE every year. Because DNPE must store these papers for three years, DNPE is running out of room. They have asked us to get word out again. *Please don't mail copies of your records to DNPE.*

Summary of What Is Required by Law

All the requested information is valid and reasonable to request. However, the law only requires only the following information to be shared with the state, "name and address of the school, and name of the school's owner and chief administrator." The law also requires that the homeschool administrator "shall notify a duly authorized representative of the State of North Carolina (DNPE) upon termination of the school." The law doesn't require homeschools to provide any information about their students or their status as a two family homeschool. However, NCHE recommends that you provide DNPE any of this optional information that you feel comfortable sharing. The reason is that this will give DNPE a more accurate idea of the number of NC homeschool students.

If you have further questions or concerns, please share them with us by sending them to law-policy@nche.com.



Spencer and his wife, Debbie, homeschooled their four children for twenty-six years. They have served on the NCHE board since 1988. Spencer served as president 1998-2000 and 2008-2012. He now serves as law and policy director and executive office manager.



2017 NCHE Scholarship Recipients Announced

by Evelyn Bickley

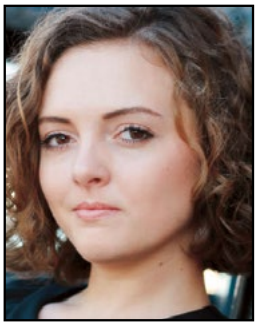
As NCHE's activities director, one of the very exciting things I am responsible for is the administration of the scholarship program. Starting in December, the scholarship application process is opened for North Carolina homeschooled seniors whose families are members of NCHE. The application, available on the NCHE website, and accompanying required documents allow students to tell us some of the wonderful things they have been doing. I can tell you that you are raising some amazingly talented and gifted students!

Academically, this year's applicants included one with a nearly perfect ACT score, another with a nearly perfect ACT essay score, many who have accumulated college credits, and at least one who will have attained her associate's degree by the time she receives her high school diploma. Their interests include music, sports, collecting more than 70,000 LegoTM bricks for orphans in India, textile design, and renewable energy solutions. They had experiences that confirmed their desires to pursue engineering, musical theater, or medical missions. We had many great applicants this year, which made the selection process even more challenging.

The selection committee was made up of homeschool parents who have graduated all their students and been through the process of helping their students search for colleges, determine majors, and then, find the funds to pay for everything.

This year, NCHE could award four scholarships, due in part to generous donations from Apologia Publishing and the HINTS homeschool support group in south Charlotte. In addition, individual members and supporters of NCHE have donated to the NCHE scholarship fund to make these scholarships possible.

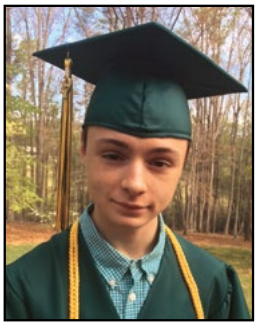
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Abby Wright—The Apologia Missions and Ministry scholarship of $1000 went to Abby Wright of Bermuda Run. She has participated in at least five US mission trips and one international trip to Papua, New Guinea. She went on that trip even though it conflicted with a rare invitation to participate in the national competition of the National Christian Forensics and Communications Association (NCFCA). Abby said in her application essay that she doubts she will spend years as a missionary on a remote island, but she hopes to make the world a better place through the power of words. Abby plans to study communications and journalism at Chapel Hill.



Haddon Fox—The HINTS Community Service scholarship went to Haddon Fox of Raleigh. Haddon has earned forty-nine dual enrollment college credits while maintaining a 4.0 GPA. In addition to his academic load, he developed and taught a weekly biblical Greek class, launched a young men's book study group in which he mentored younger boys in leadership, and has learned many practical skills such as welding, woodworking, and metalworking. Most significantly, with the help of two other teens, Haddon built an 1,100-square foot handicapped accessible addition to a friend's home to accommodate the needs of the mom who was left paralyzed after being hit head-on by a drunk driver. Haddon plans to further develop his skills as a mechanical engineer while attending Grove City College in Pennsylvania.



Sam Knight—Sam is from Madison, and he is the recipient of the 2017 Academic Award. Sam maintained a 4.0 GPA while taking physics 1 and 2 along with calculus 2 and 3 during his senior year. He is fascinated with how things work and loves to build, create, and invent. During his high school years, he sought opportunities to job shadow engineers who confirmed his inclination to pursue engineering. He will be attending NC State to become a mechanical engineer.



Kiera Daley—The recipient of the 2017 NCHE Award for Arts is Kiera Daley of Morganton. Kiera, who is one of nine children, maintained a 4.0 GPA. Along with a sister, Kiera started a baking and catering business. Being fluent in ASL, she teaches a beginner's sign language class to other homeschooled students. Kiera was awarded the Arts scholarship because of her talent as a pianist. She has won several awards including the North Carolina Federation of Music President's Award and has performed the past three years during the NCHE Talent Show. She plans to study piano performance at Chapel Hill.

Please consider financially supporting the NCHE scholarship program so that students in future years may continue to reap the rewards of being recognized for their achievements. Mail donations to NCHE, 4441 Six Forks Road, Ste. 106, Box 144, Raleigh, NC 27609 or given online at NCHE.com.



Evelyn Bickley is the activities director for NCHE and a homeschooling veteran of more than twenty-three years. She has served on the boards of several different support groups and as an adviser to the Zeta Epsilon chapter of the National Homeschool Honor Society. Wife to Barry and mom to four homeschooled graduates, Evelyn enjoys travelling, leading a Gavel Club for teens and advising other homeschool families on their journeys through high school.

"Never be afraid to trust an unknown future to a known God."

— Corrie Ten Boom —

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1,200%

College tuition has risen almost **1,200%** in the last **35 years**.[1]

3.8%

The average tuition increase from 2013 to 2014 was **3.8%** at private colleges, and **2.9%** at public universities.[2]

$312K

The cost of a 4-year education at a private college will average **$312,000** in **18 years**.[3]

$1,200

The average cost for books and supplies for the 2013-2014 school year exceeded **$1,200**.[2]

1 New York Times, 2014
2 The College Board, 2014
3 Savingforcollege.com, 2014



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REFLECTIONS OF A *Retired Homeschool Mama*

by Ivey Deitz

As many of you are starting out a new school year, excited, anticipating what lies ahead, I am reflecting on my years of homeschooling. It has been a full year since I closed our homeschool. We graduated our last son at the NCHE graduation in May of 2016. A prouder mama no one could find. Both of my sons have gone to college, are doing well at it, working, and growing into their new lives as the men of God I had hoped they would become. We homeschooled for just fourteen short years!

When starting our homeschool experience, I never knew how fast time would fly. It seems like yesterday that I was reading the *Rainbow Resource* catalog from cover to cover. (Anyone that has seen an actual hard copy of their catalog would be impressed.) Finding just the right curriculum and making sure you do not mess up your child's education is a huge weight on most homeschool parents' shoulders, just as it was mine. I loved reading the catalogs when they came in the mail. I still get them, and I am slowly getting to the point where I can toss them out, and remove myself from the mailing lists. I have shelves of books on homeschooling that I just cannot get myself to part with. You never know when you might meet someone who needs one of them, or, one day, I hope a new daughter-in-law will need them for my grandchildren.

There are many things, as I am reflecting, that come to mind. Things I wish I had done, or not done. What *would* I share with a new homeschooler? Let me start at the beginning, the first and most important lesson I can share.

Put the Bible, Bible, Bible, Bible, Bible, Bible first. Yes, we used the Bible in our homeschool. We used Bible-based curriculum when we started. We studied history from Creation onward. However, it wasn't until I read those words in an article that they came to life for me. We needed to base *all* our studies and life on this book, not just get the curriculum that was based on it. We needed to start our day out reading the actual Word of God. Looking back, I can see how the Bible could be used entirely as someone's curriculum. "All Scripture is God breathed and is useful for teaching,

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rebuking, correcting, and training in righteousness, so that the man of God may be thoroughly equipped for every good work" (2 Timothy 3:16, 17). *All* subjects, reading, writing, history, even basic or supplemental math, can be learned from God's Word (search the internet for ideas for using the Bible for teaching!) That is how they taught in the homes so very long ago. Why have we been dependent on someone else to gather up the lessons based on the Bible instead of using it directly to teach? I will admit that we did not do our entire curriculum from the Bible. I just said I could see, looking back, that I could have done that very thing. We did, however, start each day reading the Word. We read through the entire book several times. We did not even skip those difficult books, like Numbers or Leviticus. We read; we discussed; we learned; we used the information, the wisdom, for our lives, and the rest of the day fell into place as we started this habit. I encourage you to start your day out this way. Children can learn anything that adults can learn. Their spirits are just as big as ours. Do not talk down to them when reading the Bible or make them read a Bible story book. Give the Word to them in small bites of meat, then repeat it again and again in different ways.

Take time off *before* you start. If you are just beginning to homeschool, I recommend that you do not start until you have done your research. I wish, when we began, that I had taken six months or even a year off to read all those books that I have on my shelf now. I read just one when I began, and it was written by a highly structured homeschool mom. It still makes me hyperventilate when I read it. It was so intense. I never could do all the things she said in her book. It was intimidating. It was not until the next year or so that I found other homeschool books that fit the style I wanted in our home. We were a relaxed homeschool, but we did not start out that way. I opened our little school with the pledge and prayer and did all the subjects just like that first book said to do. By the end of the first year, we had stepped back. We re-evaluated where we wanted to take our boys in their education. We needed some structure, but not as much as we had begun with. That is when the real research began for me. I read everything I could get my hands on, including that *Rainbow Resource* catalog! We discovered unit studies! I read many books over that first summer break. It was so relieving to find the other philosophies. Do not be in such a rush to start back this school year. Take some extra time to research for yourself. Pray and see what God wants for your child's education.

***Keep up* with the activities.** When we started our journey, we met at the park every week with other homeschool families. It was the best couple of years! We were all new at homeschooling, and we could let the kids play while we discussed all the issues that arise when you are teaching your own children. When the kids grew, we stopped the group because life got busy in other areas. Later, we got involved in 4-H and Contenders of the Faith. We took science classes at the science center, art classes at the art museum, and did a lot of field trips. After some time, however, my boys and I got to where we were tired of all the running, and we began to stay home more and more. I got tired of *making* the boys go to clubs and activities that they did not want to go to. Today, I wish we had not stopped. I do not mean that we, as homeschoolers, should overdo it. I think there must be a balance. We do not have to keep up with the homeschool Joneses, but we should not isolate ourselves either. I think our family did a little bit of that. By the end of our homeschool journey, we participated only in football with the Hickory Hawks. (We kind of *had* to do that, since football was always a huge part of my boys' lives, and my husband is the GM of the team.) Now, I think that the clubs and classes played more than one role in our lives. We need to think of our kids like little puppies. When someone gets a dog, especially a potentially dangerous breed, like Rottweilers or Pit Bulls, they must *keep* them around other people to make sure they are properly socialized and trained. (Yes, I said the word *socialized*. It comes up everywhere, doesn't it?) If we are going to keep our kids in the greenhouse, we also need to temper them by taking them in and out of the garden every now and then to help them make the adjustment for the day they are planted into the great outdoors.

Do not forsake the field trips. We did a lot of field trips with our boys when they were younger. The older they got, it was a little more difficult to find things they could do that were age appropriate. That is a shame, but part of life. I have always been a doer. I am a take charge kind of person, so it was easy for me to get field trips together. When we wanted to go somewhere, I posted the information in our homeschool newsletter (back when we had those), and later, online with the Yahoo group. Support groups have changed over the years. When we started, the parents were used to doing things for themselves, so it was natural to include field trips and other activities into that. Today, I see more isolation which includes not having regular support group meetings, depending on someone else to get something going, or giving an idea but not being willing to organize it. The result is that no one is going on trips together. It cannot be *us four and no more*. If you are going somewhere, make the effort to open it up to

other homeschoolers. Remember, the dog illustration? It is not hard to post a time and a place on your homeschool loop. Post it, and others will show up! (Oh, and you should attend the trips planned by others. Do not isolate!)

Don't get rid of your books, at least not right away. When I mentioned that I had a lot of homeschool books, I meant the type a parent would read to learn about homeschooling—not curriculum. I sold, or threw out, all our curriculum, and I wish I had not. We did keep items from the older son to use for the younger, but I got rid of the items after we finished high school. There have been several times that it would have come in handy to have some of the old books. My younger son wrote a paper in college on the pros and cons of homeschooling. Some of the points he brought out were things he learned in his studies in history with me. He used the points, but his teacher wanted him to cite where he got the information. We had to find the books and videos all over again to get the information cited. The math books would have also come in handy when going over subjects that needed some recollection while taking college algebra. When the boys were young, after the crazy, intensely structured lessons we did the first year, we did unit studies. I created most of what we did. I researched topic after topic, gathered crafts and activities, recipes, field trip ideas, books to read, and so much more. When the boys got into high school, we stopped doing unit studies. What did I do? I threw out all my papers with all my ideas! What if my sons' wives do want to homeschool? What if they want to do unit studies? I am not one to be a pack rat, but in this area—saving all my plans and ideas—I wish I were.

Maybe my sharing my 20/20 hindsight will help you as you start into your new school year. Think carefully before you make unalterable decisions.



Ivey Deitz, wife of thirty years to husband, Doug, is retired after being a homeschool mama for fourteen years to two godly young men, Jesse and Matthew. She is the current GREENHOUSE *editor. Ivey helped start the NCHE conference mentor program, organized local homeschool conferences, sat on the board of several local support groups, as well NCHE as a regional director, and continues to assist homeschoolers in her local area.*



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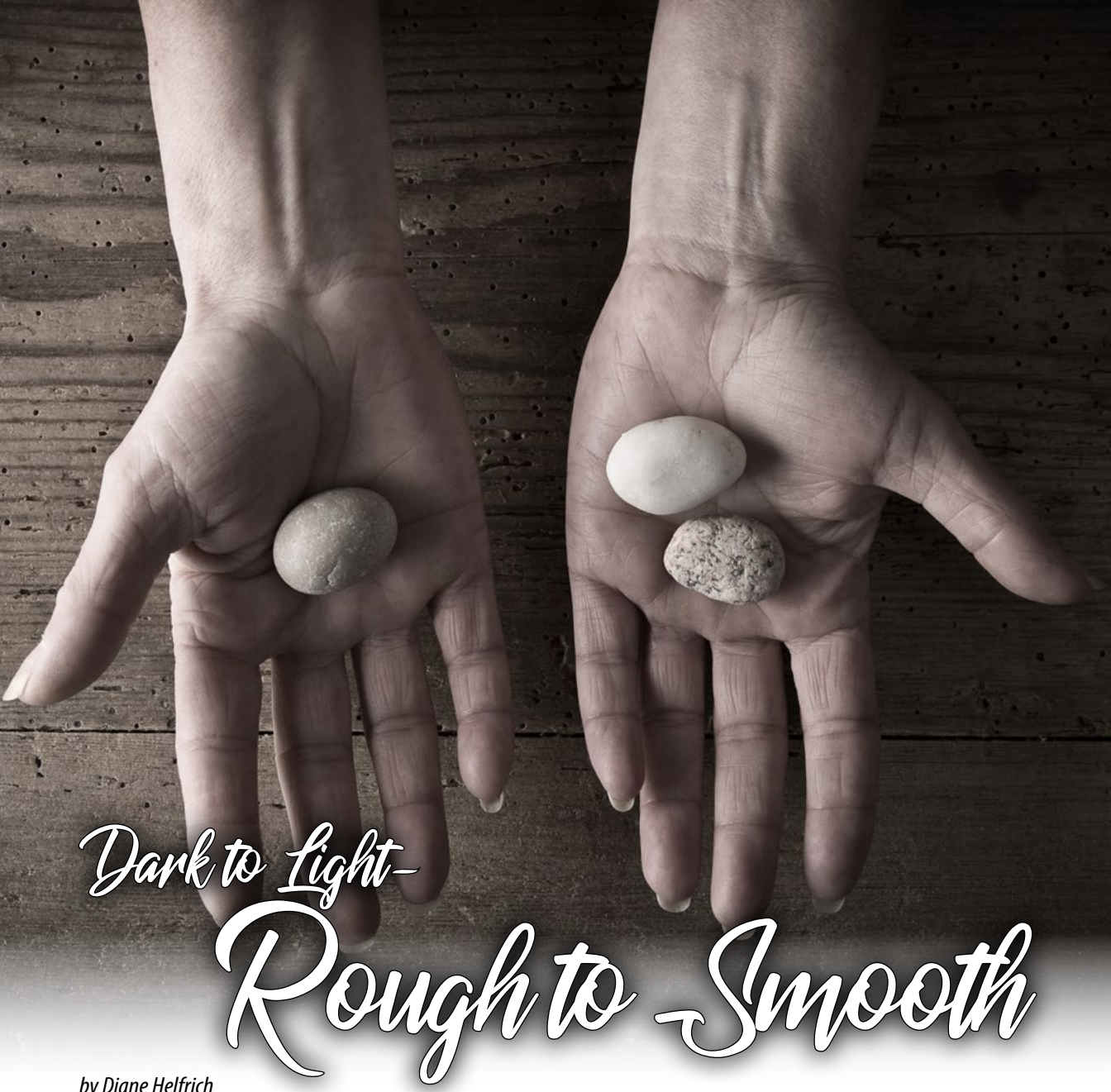
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Dark to Light– Rough to Smooth

by Diane Helfrich

Are you a new homeschooler beginning your first year, questioning if you have made the right choice for your family? Maybe you are moving into the high school years for the first time, fearing that you will ruin your child's chances for good colleges. Perhaps, you have homeschooled your other children, but the child who is coming of age has learning disabilities, and you know the journey will be different this time. Your high schooler may be going into concurrent enrollment at the local community college, and you question not only his readiness, but yours. Possibly your senior is graduating next spring, and either this is your first venture into letting go, or your last; and you are now facing the upcoming empty-nest, feeling tugs at your heart and questioning who you are now that your household is changing. These are some of the situations that can create anxiety and make you question your choices. I would like to share my experiences to give you encouragement!

Isaiah 42:16 begins with, "I will lead the blind by ways they have not known, along unfamiliar paths I will guide them." I remember well the first year we decided to homeschool. I had no idea about curriculum or how to structure our day. I went to the NCHE homeschool conference in Winston-Salem and dashed

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through the three days, running from one speaker to the vendor area for ideas and then dashed back to another speaker. About mid-morning on Saturday, I felt saturated with ideas and overwhelmed by the choices. I was swimming in advice from all corners. If you saw me that morning, you may have thought I resembled the deer in the headlights, and if you asked me a question, you may have wondered if anyone was home in my brain! Nevertheless, I made my purchases and went home to pore over them and try to schedule our year. As we began, I realized homeschooling was a different environment from my previous corporate life with a department full of adults. Even though I knew I had organizational skills, I was frustrated that the things I wanted to accomplish didn't fit the schedule I'd set. I had little idea what to do with my third grader!

In looking back, I see now the God-connection that led me to a homeschool group: a co-op that met weekly. We started with one class that met every other week for one semester; we were real joiners! What happened, however, was that I listened to parents around me and soaked up conversations. I started getting to know parents I respected. As we became more involved with classes and other activities, those parents became my friends. As we had kids in classes together, and as we discussed things on the playground and in the halls, God provided the exact mentors I needed to proceed with more confidence. The parents who had become friends had children older than mine, and the transitions into high school and college came with enlightening discussions that prepared me.

We had always bathed our school in prayer, but I could not always see how God was working until I could look back. You are not alone. God has you in His palm, and He will guide you, provide for you, and answer your questions. Not every day is easy—it wasn't in corporate America either! The darkness does meld into light, and you often don't even realize it until you stop to see what you have accomplished. Isaiah 42:16 goes on to say, "I will turn the darkness into light before them and make the rough places smooth." If your darkness level is high, remember that the sun comes up every day. It will not be dark for long. That is a certainty of nature!

Let's talk about making the "rough places smooth." In your school, you will inevitably run into the season when your child does not want to do what you have planned—maybe, the curriculum doesn't fit the child's personality or learning style. Maybe, something traumatic has happened in your family—cancer, death, a family move, a hurricane that brings damage and the loss of school materials. Perhaps, a new baby arrived at your house and schedules are up in the air. We were not immune to those things in our school, and sometimes, when I look back, I marvel that we kept going. What I learned, however, was that fighting the rough places wasn't my job. When I could submit to the flow, I found that even if we didn't finish what I had planned (yes, or sometimes even start what I had planned), the kids turned out fine. Sometimes, I think they turned out fine despite me! If you look at that statement, you unavoidably conclude that this was a process less about me than I ever could have imagined! You see, it's God's job to make the rough places smooth, the crooked paths straight, just as He makes the sun rise every day. He promises us that, and His promises are perfect. Your schooling may not look at all like what you envisioned, or it may reflect very clearly your vision. It doesn't matter. What matters is that you trust the process and keep focusing on the love of learning in your household, on excellence, and on broadening horizons. What matters is that you trust the process that is bigger than you!

The last statement in this Isaiah verse is, "These are the things I will do; I will not forsake them." I try to make my promises perfect, both to myself and to my kids. I am human, and mistakes are part of my existence, often too much so. God, however, is perfection. Trust your blindness, the darkness, and the rough places to Him. He said handling them was His job, and He meant it. When things are unclear or unsettling, know that God's promise is for you, and He will not forsake you. One day, you too will look back and see that it was much less about you than you expected—and your kids are just fine!



Diane Helfrich homeschooled fourteen years before retiring. Her older son, Ian, now has two masters degrees and is pursuing a Ph.D. in economics at Georgia Tech. Her younger child, Anna, is an honors and dean's list student at George Mason University in Virginia. Diane is married to David and serves on the NCHE board both as the secretary and region 8 liaison.





Back to (Home) School Ideas:

Seven Ways to Encourage Kids to Get Excited —



by Christina Brown

Back-to-school for kids who go to traditional school means back packs, locker chandeliers, and the school list that we spy other moms trying to fill in the local Walmart. These traditions don't always work for those of us who school in our PJs.

I wanted my girls to look forward to back-to-school. Here are some ideas that got them excited, and me too!

Joy is the serious business of Heaven. ~C. S. Lewis

1. Take pictures on the first day. Go outside. Pictures always look better outside. Don't be a perfectionist. Try to catch your kids' personalities. Tell them in advance, so they can plan what to wear. Don't rush. Let them pose. Be silly; no rules!

Consider taking pictures of a tree in your yard or a view that you see from a kitchen or a schoolroom throughout each season this school year. I have pictures taken that way one year. It is a wonderful way for your family to see the seasons change and to notice the extraordinary in the ordinary. It is also a great way to say goodbye to summer.

Seeing the changes in the seasons has reminded me that spring is a new start, summer is for building, autumn is a time of change, and winter is the time to buckle down and stay the course.

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2. Make "Back-to-Homeschool Bags" for the first day of school. My kids look forward to this every year. I use pretty or colored gift bags but you could use back-packs or paper lunch bags as well. Ask your kids what they would like for school.

From preschoolers to high schoolers, they may like some of these: gum, candy, sharpened pencils, markers, crayons, paper of their own, journal, stationery, glue sticks, colored pencils, erasers, hot wheels, games, sharpeners, Lego's™, hair clips, Pez™ candy and dispensers, Life Savers™, chocolate, socks, pocket knife, snacks, notebooks, calculator, cool pen(s), punching balloons, shaving cream, a special razor, crafts, coupon for classes they want to take, make up, nail polish, a new tooth brush, tooth paste, dollar bills, coupon to a coffee house, homemade coupons, special drinks, or that little something you usually do not let them have. My youngest wanted vitamin water. Who knew?

3. Write a letter to your child addressing things you are looking forward to this year. You might include character issues you are proud of and ones that need work, a Bible verse for encouragement, thoughts on the new school year, and anything else you would like your child to remember. I have done this every year and what memories they hold! Many of the thoughts I expressed I would have forgotten without the letters.

4. Conspire with your kids to find out what they would like to study during the year. Then, follow up. Buy a book or check one out from the library and incorporate the subject into your studies. We saw a shark at the beach this past summer, and my youngest is now very interested in sharks. Investigate things that align with your child's bent. Start slow: don't do every subject the first week.

5. Ask your kids what they would like to do during the school year. What would they like to accomplish or try? These ideas can be like a school-year bucket list of goals: field trips, mission trips, theater productions, movies, games, sports, 5Ks, camping, friend dates, etc. We keep these on large index cards and go through them throughout the year to see if we hit our goals.

6. Think about a new perspective on lunch. Sometimes, I just need a kick start to get inspired. My girls had their own ideas when I asked for suggestions. Google easy lunch ideas.

Making a special breakfast the first day is always appreciated, too. Special treats are something my kids look forward to.

7. Get excited! The best way I have found to get my kids looking forward to back-to-school is for *me* to look forward to it. Get organized. Pray for yourself and your homeschool. Make starting anew special. Mention your excitement often. We are so blessed with this opportunity to homeschool, and our gratitude is infectious if we show how blessed we are by our actions and the words that come out of our mouths!

Here is to a successful, prosperous, and most excellent year! Cheers!

I will give thanks to you, LORD, with all my heart; I will tell of all your wonderful deeds.
Psalm 9:1



Christina Parker Brown is a momma of three, homeschooling since 2000 and the author of AKAHomeschoolMom.com and Alphabet Smash. Her work has been featured in Proverbs 31 *magazine,* The Old Schoolhouse *magazine,* Home Educator Family Times, GREENHOUSE *and others. Christina's passion is to encourage others to intentionally connect faith, family and fun. She is a hopeless logophile and always brakes for yard sales. Her writing is inspired by her faith in Jesus Christ, adventures in NC with her Adventure Group and her twenty-three-year marriage to her best friend, Richard.*

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In Over Your Head?

by Jessica Frierson

Do you feel like you are in over your head? Even after homeschooling for over seventeen years, I still have this experience. Sometimes I feel like my little boy sitting in this great big red chair. This homeschooling thing is so big, and I'm just me! I'm not as good at this as—my friend—my sister—that lady at park day—whoever it is that looks like they've got it down, while I'm struggling just to pick a math curriculum.

Maybe you felt like this at the conference, which is where I took the picture. You came to get some encouragement, meet other moms like you, and buy supplies for the school year. You walked into the vendor hall and felt like Dorothy set down in the middle of Oz. Just show me where the math books are, please. Uh, there are how many publishers to choose from? Maybe this homeschool business isn't for me after all. I'm just not good enough to pull this off.

Wait a minute, Mama! You can do this. We've got a chair just your size. God made you perfectly designed for your unique family and your specific needs. You are unmatched, incomparable, so stop judging yourself by other people or by your circumstances. You just need to focus on what fits for you and your children.

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Psalm 61:2 says, "When my heart is overwhelmed; lead me to the rock that is higher than I." As you prepare for the school year ahead, your first step is time with the Lord. Take your Bible, a pen, and a notebook to a quiet place. Ask God to guide you as you consider what each child's specific needs are now. Hint: they may not only be academic. Character and heart issues are more critical to a child's success in life than writing an eloquent essay or scoring well on the SAT.

When my heart is overwhelmed;
lead me to the rock
that is higher than I.

— Psalm 61:2 —

Think about how each child learns best. Do they need more hands-on activities: are workbooks and fill-in-the-blanks what motivates them? Will a more structured school day work best for your family or do you accomplish more with a laid-back, relaxed approach?

Now you can start putting together your plan for the year by fitting each need with the right tool by talking to friends, looking at curriculum styles, visiting a homeschool resource room or book store. Don't be afraid to dip your toes in the water and work your way in slowly. Who says you must start the school year with everything all planned and do every subject right away? Borrow a history book, and try it out for a week. Move out in faith with what you've got and make changes along the way as God nudges you with new ideas.

Remember, God gave your children to you. Paul reminds Timothy in his second letter to him that if he is "diligent to present yourself approved to God" he "will be a vessel for honor, sanctified and useful for the Master, prepared for every good work." Don't try to meet the expectations of anyone else or match up with what you think others are doing. Sit in your own chair, the one the Master Carpenter designed especially for you. It is a perfect fit—for you!



Jessica Frierson is a second-generation homeschooler now teaching her own ten children. She has experienced firsthand the explosion of homeschooling from the handful fighting for the opportunity, to the many thousands embracing that freedom today. She and her husband, Ernie, knew from the time their first child was born twenty-two years ago, that home education would be their only choice. They moved back home to North Carolina in 2000 to take advantage of the less restrictive homeschool laws here. She joyfully serves the Lord through ministry to her family, serving in her local church, writing and encouraging others with the testimony of the treasure of love she has discovered in our Lord Jesus Christ. Jessica is NCHE's region 2 liaison.

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What's Your Long-Term Vision for Your Family?

by Mark Fox

It's that time of year again, when homeschool parents all over the country pull out their lesson plans, dust off their unit studies, pore over their reading lists, and gather their courage for another year. We at the Fox household finished twenty-eight years of homeschooling last May, and graduated our youngest of seven; so, we know how you are feeling as you face another year. It's a mixture of excitement and dread, perhaps, but mostly gratitude that you have the great privilege of preparing your children for adulthood. As you begin preparation for the year, may I suggest that you take a bigger view of that task by setting down on paper some goals you want to accomplish with your children before they leave home?

Dad—you are the visionary for your household. That means, first, that you have been given a purpose for your own life and ministry. You have been given a large vision, a God-sized purpose to fulfill in His name and for His glory. How do I know that? I know it mainly because of what God's Word says! He gives all His sons and daughters a purpose and a calling. There is not a random molecule in the universe. Neither is there a man or woman, boy or girl, called by His name and created in His image who does not have value and purpose before God. "He chose us in Him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and blameless before Him. In love, He predestined us for adoption as sons through Jesus Christ, according to the purpose of His will, to the praise of the glory of His glorious grace." (Ephesians 1:4-6)

I know this is true for you married men for another reason. The very fact that God has brought a helpmate to you is proof that you have a God-sized purpose to fulfill that you cannot accomplish alone. The question is, what is your purpose? What is your calling? What has God set you down on the earth to do? One thing is certain: you who have children are given the God-sized task of raising them! May I remind you that you are not raising children. You are raising adults. More than that, you are raising parents, who will, like you, invest in the next generation. Prepare them well, for the sake of their children, and for the sake of the world they will impact.

Your wife is given to be your helpmate to accomplish that vision. Your children have also been given to share in your vision while they are young and to be trained to walk out their own vision and purpose as they grow up and prepare to leave home.

Men, let me ask you: what is your vision for your family? What do you want to accomplish more than anything else with your children before you let them go towards their own purpose—those children who are "arrows in the hand of a warrior?" A warrior has a target for every arrow; he lets none fly without taking careful aim, they are so precious. We should do as the prophet suggested and "write the vision and make it plain" (Habakkuk 2:2). Cindy and I sat down when our children were very young and wrote down the following vision that we had for them.

First, that each has a vibrant and growing relationship with Jesus Christ and a love for His Word and the local church. We cannot make that happen, but we can certainly pray for it and help facilitate it. To that end, we made family devotions a cornerstone in our home, and prayed daily with and for our children. We now have the joy of knowing that each will be in heaven with us.

Second, that each has solid, biblical character. We read to them (or asked them to read) countless biographies of great men and women of the faith who demonstrated good character. We also encouraged and rewarded gratitude, honesty, thoroughness, diligence, punctuality, and perseverance that we saw in our children.

Third, that each is a servant with a solid work ethic. We wanted our children to know how to do everything needed in the house and the yard by the time they were twelve or thirteen. They also learned as teens how to work for someone else, whether in a business or through babysitting or odd jobs in the community.

Fourth, that each learns to communicate with clarity and with passion. They each took the writing and public speaking classes that I taught at the homeschool co-op. Some of them competed in forensic speech organizations. All of them traveled with me and Cindy to other countries and learned to communicate their testimonies there and to give reports to the church when they returned.

Fifth, that each loves the gospel and holds fast to a biblical worldview. We had countless dinnertime discussions about how the Bible speaks to what is going on in the culture. We read books that challenged them to see everything through the lens of Scripture. They learned to study and understand the Bible for themselves.

That's the first step. Write the vision, and make it plain. Cindy and I wrote down those five purposes many years ago, and then worked out various means of helping our children to accomplish each one. You should revisit this process on a regular basis. Cindy and I would try to take a retreat at least twice a year, go away for a night or two, and enjoy time alone as a couple. At least one of those trips included a session of making, assessing, and tweaking goals for our family, our marriage, and our children.

What is your vision for your family? Have you ever sat down and written it out? I have heard Dave Ramsey encourage us many times to do this with our budget, with our financial goals and dreams. Isn't it even more important to do the same with our most precious "commodities"?



Mark and Cindy Fox have raised seven adults, four of whom are married. They have five grandchildren, (so far!) and enjoy every minute they get to be with them. Mark pastors Antioch Community Church in Elon, NC, and teaches at Elon University. You can follow his blog or podcast, or find his books and contact information at jmarkfox.com.



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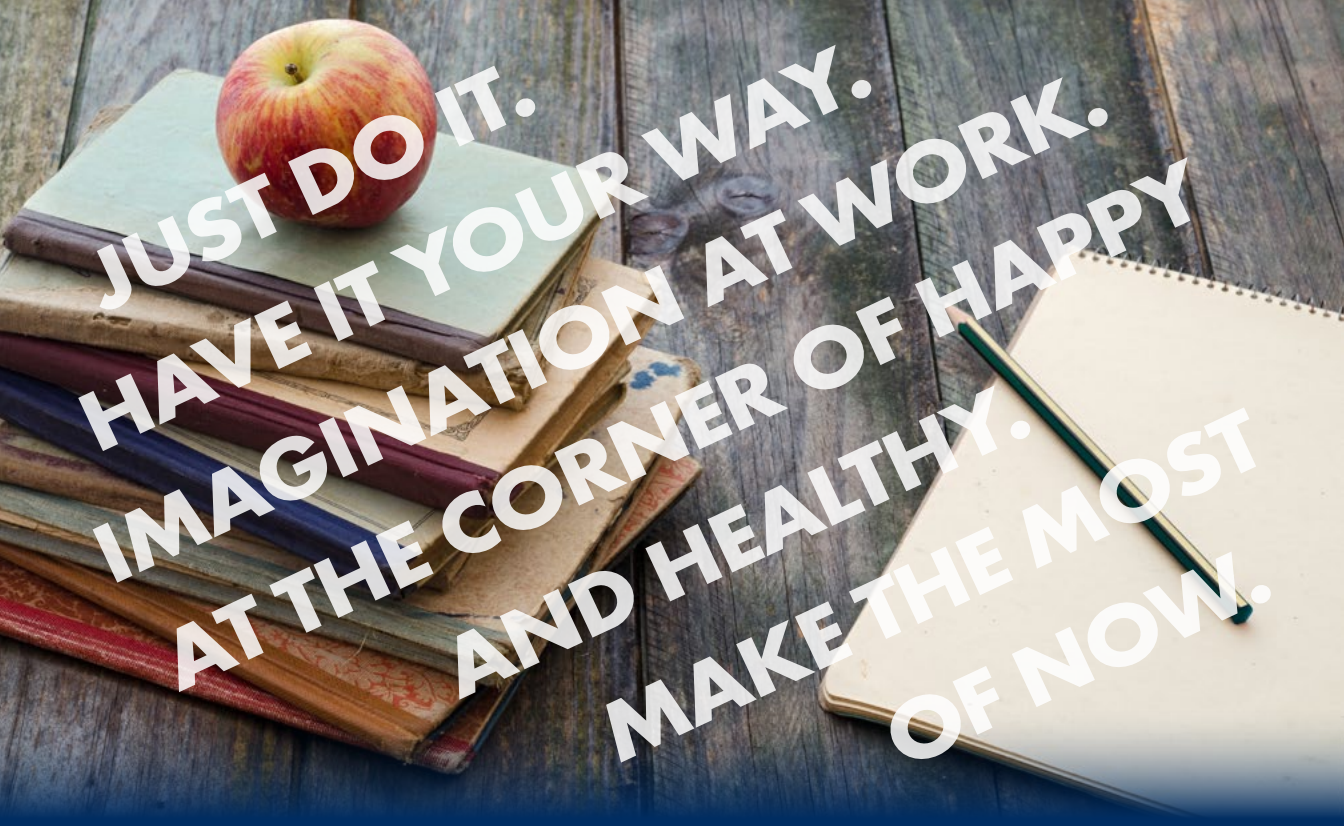
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Back to School Blues

by Amanda Garner

Wow. What a crazy, busy summer we've had in our household! It has been packed full of VBS, summer camp, house guests, mission trips, registering my oldest for college, and a few lazy days by the pool. As the saying goes, all good things must come to an end, including summer break. Between unexpected events and a good bit of procrastination, I keep pushing back the start of our new year. It would seem I have a touch of the "back to school blues!" To ease the pain, I thought a little fun would help! Below are five popular company slogans and a few thoughts on how they apply to the new school year.

1. Just do it. I spend a lot of time planning mentally, but eventually the time comes to committing it to paper and launching it into reality. We will soon begin our fourteenth-year homeschooling, and I've learned a little secret: I'm never 100% ready for the start of the year. Whether it's a few books we still lack, a half-filled planner, or simply *life*, I reach a point where I must take the plunge, and *just do it*. Yes, it's painful, especially the first week as we transition from carefree, go-with-the-flow days back to a regular schedule. After a couple of weeks and a few tweaks, the initial shock wears off, and we find our groove.

2. Have it your way. A sound piece of advice to newbies and a gentle reminder to seasoned homeschoolers: don't try to duplicate someone else's school. Tailor it to fit your family and customize it for your unique needs! There is great wisdom in seeking advice from other homeschool moms, and the market is flooded with amazing curriculum choices. What works for your friend, or is suggested in the teacher's manual, may not work for you. No single idea or philosophy is one-size-fits-all. I've also found that what worked well last year may not suit our needs the following year, and I often don't realize this until we are a few weeks into our year. My suggestion is to write in pencil and be flexible!

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3. Imagination at work. Psychologist Peter Gray, author of *Free to Learn*, asserts that ". . . children, if free to pursue their own interests through play, will not only learn all they need to know, but will do so with energy and passion." Obviously, every homeschool parent wants their children to succeed academically, but may I remind you that sometimes the education we as parents received is our own worst enemy? It has become so engrained in our thinking that if students are not seated quietly in front of a book or writing an essay they aren't learning. If we want to raise children who will truly change the world, then we need to give them an abundance of time to develop skills such as critical thinking, problem-solving, and conflict resolution.

4. At the corner of happy and healthy. This thought is a reminder to tuck away for a rainy day. You know, one of *those days* when the baby won't stop crying, the older kids are starting WWIII, the dog yacks on the floor, your husband is running late and can't find his keys, and you just want to run away—all before 8AM! Yes, despite our best intentions, those days happen. Rather than locking yourself in the bathroom and having an emotional meltdown laden with thoughts of guilt and failure, remind yourself of what matters: your kids are happy and healthy, and they love you. Cancel school for the day, go find a good cup of coffee, and spend the day at the park.

5. Make the most of now. A friend once commented, "the days are long, but the years are short." Although, she was referring to parenting, the same is true of our homeschool journey. You will never have this day again. Tomorrow, your children will be one day older and one day closer to leaving the nest. Even though you may think it won't come soon enough, I promise it will. I remember how excited I was when all the *littles* could buckle themselves into their car seats. The reality of the cliché, "that seems like only yesterday," hit me full force this past June when we had the bittersweet joy of graduating our oldest child—something I wasn't entirely ready for. Hold those babies as close as they will let you. Savor the moment, seize the day, embrace the season!



Seasoned homeschool mom, author, pastor's wife, and a serious coffee connoisseur, Amanda Garner and her family live, love, and learn together in Oxford. Married for twenty-three years, she and her husband, Wes, have home educated their four children for the past thirteen years. In addition to voracious reading, freelance writing, and teaching, Amanda also enjoys encouraging other homeschool moms via her blog: www.dropsofdelight.weebly.com

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Keys to Effectively Communicating with Your Children



by Mari Fitz-Wynn

A word fitly spoken is like apples of gold in pictures of silver. Proverbs 25:11

We've all learned as adults that communicating with others is not just important, it is necessary. We must communicate, in one way or another, to have our basic needs met, function in a work environment, or interact with our family at home.

From a very early age, our children learn basic communication skills from us. Encouraging them to talk with us, and giving them the freedom to talk about any subject no matter how uncomfortable will pay off down the road as they begin trying to navigate life more independently of mom and dad. Conversations with your teens and young adult children do not have to hit an impasse if you build a strong foundation by spending time together talking and discussing matters both small and great. Verbal and non-verbal communication are equally important, but in this article, we will focus on verbal communication skills that will help strengthen, energize and enliven your ability to stay connected with your children.

Let me share three of seven keys I've found worked well for my children and me.

Make talking a part of the daily routine. When we are intentional about spending time talking with our child (children) consistently, it becomes easier to deal with difficult subjects as they arise. Set aside time to talk with your child each day. This practice will help offset the times when busy schedules or crises may use up our available time.

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Recognize that sometimes the conversation may go longer than other times. At times, there may not be much to say. That's okay; the point here is to make time to chat regularly. Regular chats will help to head off forced interactions and allow both you and your child, or children, opportunities to develop a relationship with spurts, spontaneous growth, or to set the pattern for planned conversations that take place after meals, before bedtime, or throughout the day.

Offer a silent mouth and sympathetic ear. As parents, we are inclined to try to fix our children's problems. We want to prepare the road for the child rather than preparing the child for the road. Learn to listen without offering an immediate solution. This approach will help your child develop the skills needed to problem solve and work through whatever is bothering them. I remember a mom offering a comment about a situation that had recently taken place with her teenage daughter. The mom had noticed her daughter was feeling a little down or discouraged, and asked, "What's wrong?" The daughter respectfully answered that she wasn't ready to talk about it yet; she needed some time to figure out a few things. "Plus, mom," she offered, "whenever I tell you about a problem you jump right in and start trying to help me figure it out, and this time I need to do that for myself. May I come to you if I can't find an answer, or once I do, to make sure I'm on the right track?" This story illustrates that a wise mother will learn to recognize when she needs to give her daughter space.

As we parent and teach, we will make mistakes, and our children will, as well. Though it takes work, seeking to maintain good communication with our children will pay many dividends, especially in the hard times.



Mari Fitz-Wynn has twenty years of experience as a leader in home education. She published her first book, Take Heart: 26 Steps to a Healthy Home School *in June 2014 and has published a myriad of articles for the GREENHOUSE and various other home education newsletters. She is a home education consultant and president of Heart for Home School Ministries, Inc. Her blog is Heart Matters. (www.heartforhomeschool.org). She is the former lobbyist for NCHE.*

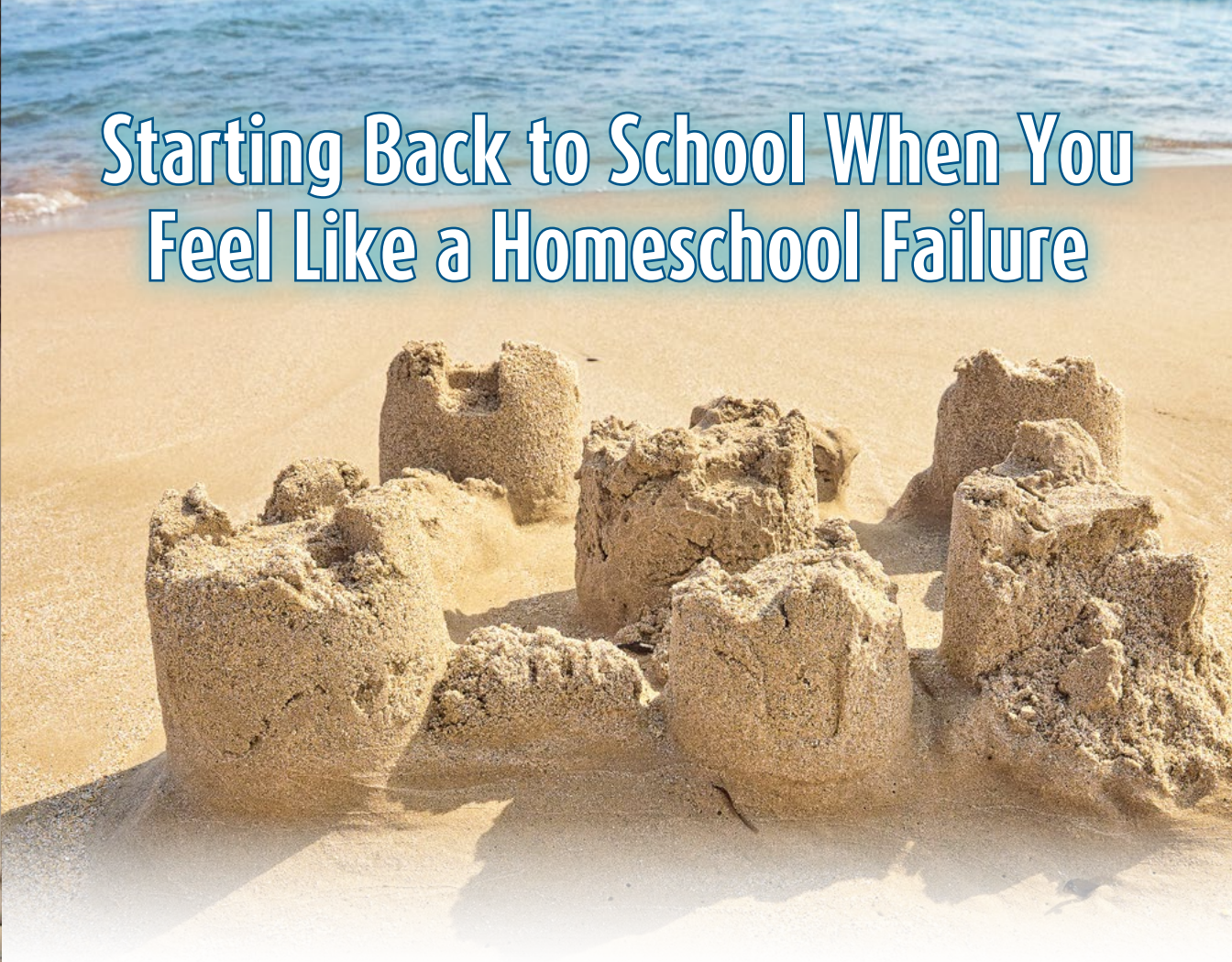


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Starting Back to School When You Feel Like a Homeschool Failure



by Melanie Young

Does thinking about the new school year make you feel kind of sick? Or sad? Are you putting off ordering curriculum, because you really don't want to face how far behind you feel? Do you just dread the whole thing, because you just hadn't done what you'd hoped you would last year?

Yep. Been there, done that.

We've homeschooled for over two decades. I've been that mom who was strutting with pride over my children and my homeschooling. I've also been that mom that hated to even think about homeschooling, because it was so laden with sadness and guilt for me. How can that be?

Well, we've been through a lot. We had a newborn with a dangerous illness who spent weeks in ICU; we wrote and marketed a book; we had three children who had surgery; and we found out Hal had cancer. All. In. One. Year. We felt as if we were permanently in survival mode, and honestly, school took a back seat.

So, what do you do when it's time to get ready for the next year, and you feel like a homeschool failure?

- **Remember that God's curriculum for your child may different than your own.** When I look back on those times when we were just *surviving* in homeschooling and everything possible went out the window, I realize that so much of what our kids learned wasn't part of my lesson plan. They learned how to respond to trials like a Christian, even the possibility of death. They learned how important family is in a crisis. They learned how to support, comfort, and care for people in need. They learned to be responsible for more than they dreamed they could be. They learned what *the Lord* wanted them to learn.

- **Remember that our God is longsuffering.** His mercies are *new every morning*. There is forgiveness with Him. He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins. If you haven't been as faithful as you should have been to get school done, if you've been distracted by social media, or doctor visits, or goofing off, or illness—whether a little bit guilty or a lot, confess all that is on your heart to your Savior, and just ask for forgiveness. His blood covers this, too, sweet friends! Whether your fault is little or much, forgiveness is there! Trust in Christ. Repent and accept His forgiveness because of what Jesus did on the cross.
- **Remember we serve the Father who can restore the years the locusts have eaten.** You have way more time than you imagine to make up what they've missed along the way—especially if your children are young. Homeschooling is flexible, and you aren't locked into a school system's calendar. It's so much easier for us to catch up for lost time than a student who missed classes in a schoolroom setting. When I read that passage in Joel (2:25), I'm reminded that the restoration came in response to Israel's repentance. Let's not miss that part; it's not enough that we feel sorry, God intends for us to change direction and go forward. He doesn't always remove the earthly consequences for what we've done. We may have to work hard to catch up, or to apologize for missed deadlines, or whatever we may have dropped along the way. God can bring things back into order, to restore them, and to make them better. As we came out of our year of trials, I remember asking one of our college-bound sons for his reading list to share with a college who requested it. I was dumbstruck at what he brought me: he'd read far more than I would have assigned to him (if I'd been so organized) and all on his own! The family's crisis had made him realize his education was on him, and that if it was going to happen, he needed to take the responsibility.
- **Pick yourself up and start new today.** I have a recurring nightmare that I'm back in college; it's finals week, and I realize I'm signed up for a class I haven't attended all semester. I don't know why that's such a horror to me, but I often feel that way in crisis: "I'm supposed to be in control of this thing, and I have no idea what I'm doing or even what I'm *supposed* to be doing!" *Stop. Take a deep breath. Start fresh.*
- **Once you've laid any failure at the foot of the cross, walk away, and get busy doing what you are supposed to be doing.** I tend to beat myself up over my failures. That just paralyzes me with regrets and keeps me from working to do the right thing. Instead, leave the past with the Lord and begin again today as if it were your first day. Don't worry about where you had planned to be, but find out where you are and start there. What would you do in the coming year, given the children you have, at the age they are, with the gifts and struggles they have, and where they are academically? Okay, that's where you start.

Raising our children is much, much more than spelling and math. Academics are important, of course. Our children will need those things as they grow to adulthood. What really matters, though, is the kind of people they grow up to be. What kind of character do they have? Are they walking with God? Those lessons in character aren't the kind that come out of packaged curriculum; they come from watching and working through the trials of life. They are the stuff of discipleship.

We've made a lot of mistakes over the years, but God has mercifully given us adult sons who love Him and serve Him—by His grace, not because of what we've done or not done. *It is amazing to see what God can create from our own pitiful efforts, our dismal failures, our inadequate attempts to follow Him. He is so good.*

Starting right now, begin again and work hard to homeschool in a way that will leave you with few regrets (recognizing that God will stand in the gaps)—but work harder still to *disciple* your children, because that will leave you with the fewest regrets of all.



Melanie Young is, with her husband, Hal, the award-winning author of Raising Real Men, My Beloved and My Friend, *and* Love, Honor, and Virtue. *They are publishers, writers, bloggers, and popular conference speakers, internationally known for their Christ-centered focus and practical, real-life stories. They are the parents of six real boys (four grown!) and two real girls and live in noisy, messy happiness in North Carolina. Find their blog and store at www.RaisingRealMen.com; listen to their podcast at www.HalandMelanie.com/radio; or contact them at www.HalandMelanie.com about speaking to your church or homeschool group.*

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It All Started with Annie

by Dave Dentel

Though not exactly *dying* to start a film career, Abigail Parker Brown did recently use her hard-earned acting skills to play dead.

The otherwise lively homeschooled seventeen-year-old donned pale makeup and a lifeless expression as an extra in a B-movie shooting near her home in North Carolina. It was, admittedly, an unglamorous part. Abigail's mom, Christina Brown, recalls rendezvousing with the film crew in "not the best part of town." It was a good experience for Abigail, who recently signed with the talent agency JTA.

A veteran stage performer since age nine, Abigail hopes her brief appearance on camera leads to opportunities to earn money as an actress.

"I'd really love to do this professionally," she said.

Earning Accolades

Abigail's big break came last summer when she competed in a talent showcase in Orlando, Florida, and won best overall actress for her performances in commercial, improvisation, and film scenes. It was this success that helped her close the deal with an agent.

Her mother recalls feeling extremely proud and even a little surprised at Abigail's achievement.



"[Taking first place] was a really big deal," Christina said, pointing out that her daughter was one of several hundred contestants at the Florida event. "Even as her biggest fans, we were floored that she won."

Her daughter's innate enchantment with the performing arts began quite early, Christina reflected. At age four, Abigail attended a community college production of *Annie* and came home transfixed. She had to have more.

"I remember later watching the movie version over and over," Abigail said. "I think I was just mesmerized by how magical it was. I watched it so much I actually broke the VHS tape. Mom had to get another one."

Presenting an American Girl

Abigail's acting debut came about five years later in a family-run production sparked by serendipity. During one of her mother's frequent visits to yard sales, Abigail explained, they discovered an American Girl theater kit for the play, *Check Under the Bed*—scripts, poster, and twenty tickets included. Billed as a *spooky mystery*, the drama deals with the search for a lost check.

"I cast all my friends in it and made my mom do it," Abigail said. "It was so much fun."

According to Christina's blog post recounting the event, it also required a lot of work. After securing a local church as a venue, two other homeschooling moms helped with directing, sound, props, and rehearsals.

Since then, Abigail has honed her acting skills through numerous classes, camps and symposiums, Gavel Club (a public speaking group for youths), and even YouTube videos. She credits homeschooling with providing her the flexibility to pursue her passion for drama.

"It's given me so much freedom," said Abigail. "As long as I do my schoolwork, I can go to an audition in the middle of the day. It's also given me a lot of ways to learn. I think it's taught me how to interact with different people, which I would not have learned if I was with my peers."

Looking to the Future

Abigail said she has also discovered that, given the choice of lead roles, she'd rather play the antagonist. Having to portray a touch of villainy in a character, she explained, "is so much more fun, and you get to learn so much more."

One of her favorite performances was as Sharpay Evans, the pink-loving drama queen who lords it over her classmates in the High School Musical series. During their local production at the Spotlight Performing Arts Academy, Abigail said, "there was a fun scene where my friend smears a cupcake in my face, and it gets all over the stage."

For now, Abigail plans to concentrate on her senior year of high school while taking classes and pursuing professional development through Acting Out Studio.

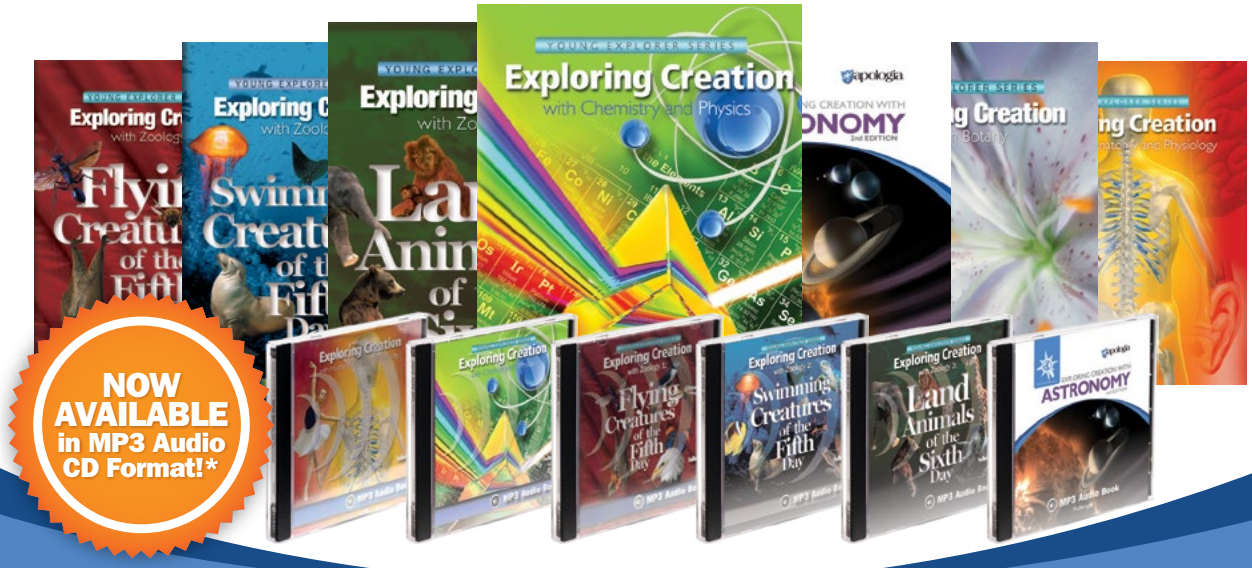
She's also hunting for the right college, and hoping for one that will offer her a scholarship to study film and musical theater.

Meanwhile, she has this advice for other homeschool students interested in acting: "Just get involved. A lot of times it's scary auditioning for the first time," said Abigail. Even if you don't get the part, "you still learn so much. Just keep trying."

Dave Dentel writes and edits content for HSLDA's website. He especially enjoys getting to interview bright, articulate homeschooled students. Abigail Brown is the daughter of Christina Brown, NCHE region 4 liasion. Article reprinted, with permission, from HSLDA.

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Check out NCHEAC.com for a team near you, or contact NCHEAC staff for information on how to get involved.

Cross Country

Oct 13, 2017
Hagan-Stone State Park
5920 Hagan-Stone Park Road,
Pleasant Grove, NC

Boys Soccer

Oct 20-21, 2017
Greensboro United
6105 Townsend Rd,
Browns Summit, NC

Girls Volleyball

Oct 20-21, 2017
Greensboro Sportsplex
2400 16th St,
Greensboro, NC

Boys/Girls Swimming

Feb 3, 2018
Gateway YWCA
1100 S Main St,
Winston-Salem, NC

Regional Basketball

— East —

Feb 12-13, 16-17, 2018
Franklin Academy Middle School
1127 Chalk Road,
Wake Forest, NC

New Life Christian Camp
9927 Falls of Neuse Rd,
Raleigh, NC

Wake Forest Baptist Seminary
222 N Wingate St,
Wake Forest, NC

— West —

Feb 16-17, 2018
Salem Baptist Christian School
429 S Broad St,
Winston-Salem, NC
(gym is on Spring St)

State Basketball

Feb 23-24, 2018
New Garden Friends
Page Frederiksen Campus
2015 Pleasant Ridge Rd,
Greensboro, NC

Ragsdale YMCA
900 Bonner Dr,
Jamestown, NC

Girls Soccer

May 4-5, 2018
Greensboro United
6105 Townsend Rd,
Browns Summit, NC





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Thrive! The NCHE Homeschool Conference will be May 31-June 2, 2018 at the M.C. Benton Convention Center in Winston-Salem, NC. Rooms at the Embassy Suites and Marriott will be open for reservations at 9:00A.M. on October 1. More conference information will be available on the NCHE website this fall.

Governor's Page Week for homeschool students, age 16-18, September 18-21. For more information on the program, see https://governor.nc.gov/governors-page-program or contact NCHE activities director Evelyn Bickley at evelyn.bickley@nche. com. To register, contact program coordinator, Tyler Robinson, at govpage@nc.gov.

Homeschool Night at the Hornets Game. Details are still being worked out, but there will be a special night for homeschoolers at a Hornets basketball game sometime in March. Details will be provided in our weekly email, Facebook, and on the NCHE website.

GREENHOUSE is mailed to all members. There will be three issues a year: Fall, Spring, and Graduate.

Correction. In the graduate photos from the GREENHOUSE 2017 Graduate issue, Justin James Nifong's photo was incorrect. We apologize to Justin and his family.

Support NCHE with Harris Teeter's "Together in Education"

The new "Together in Education" school year started on August 1. Through this program, Harris Teeter will donate money to NCHE every time you buy certain products. Simply give your Harris Teeter cashier our code, 2534, and your VIC card will be linked for the 2017-2018 school year. We appreciate your help!

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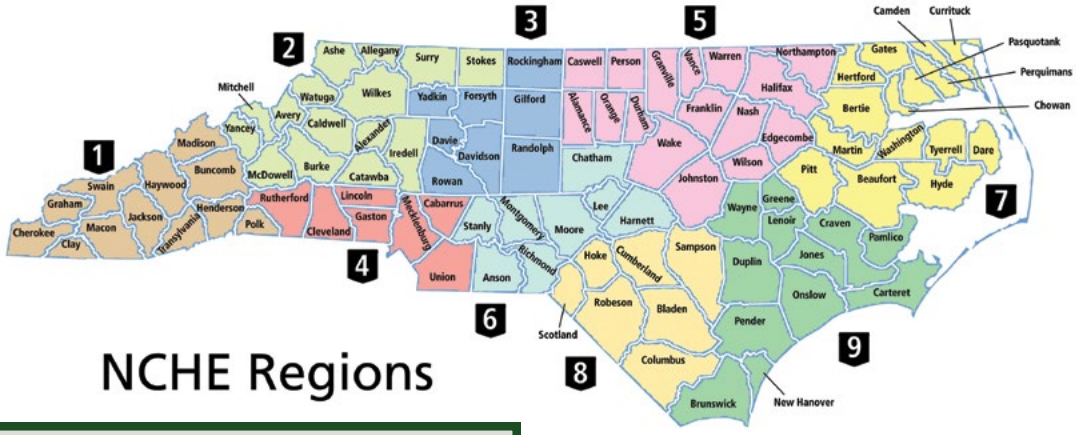
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About NCHE

In 1984, North Carolinians for Home Education was organized by homeschool parents to support and encourage home educators and to achieve the right to freely home educate in North Carolina. Since that time, NCHE has endeavored to serve the homeschoolers in NC. NCHE continues to work to promote the excellence of home education, provide support for those who choose to do so and protect the right to homeschool. Our name was selected so as to include all who are for home education, not just those who are currently homeschooling. NCHE is governed by a working board of directors who volunteer their time and efforts to serve homeschoolers. A non-profit organization, NCHE operates on the basis of biblical principles and welcomes members of all races and religions.

NCHE Membership

Membership in NCHE is available to anyone who supports home education. NC residents who are homeschooling must be in compliance with the NC homeschool law. Membership is obtained by donating any amount to NCHE (suggested donation is $25). The service of NCHE is made possible by the generous and consistent contributions of its supporters.

GREENHOUSE Information

The GREENHOUSE is the periodical of North Carolinians for Home Education. It is published twice a year, spring and fall. There is also a special graduate publication in May. It is mailed to all members and posted online. The name GREENHOUSE was chosen to represent the type of care homeschooling parents are able to give to their children. Children are lovingly "tended" in a protected and nurturing environment until they are sufficiently mature to go out and take a place of service in the world. Letters and articles addressed to the GREENHOUSE become property of NCHE with full right to publication without further permission required. Ideas and opinions expressed in articles do not necessarily represent those of NCHE.

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