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GREENHOUSE

Nurturing Home Education in North Carolina and Beyond



In This Issue



• Toward a Culture of Learning

• NCHE Supports Cooperation with
Voluntary Requests by DNPE

• Homeschooling and Adoption

• Learning in the Autumn

• Why I'm Passionate about
Unschooling

• Weary? Rejuvenate Your School with a
Day of Activities That You Love!

• Do What You Believe

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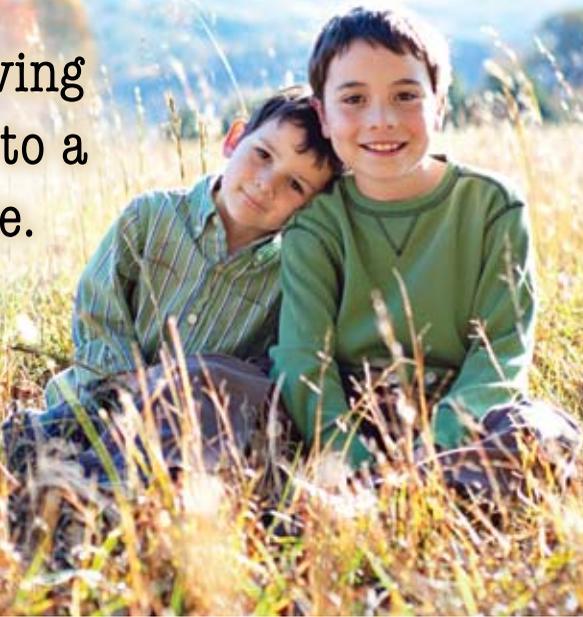
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– Neil Postman



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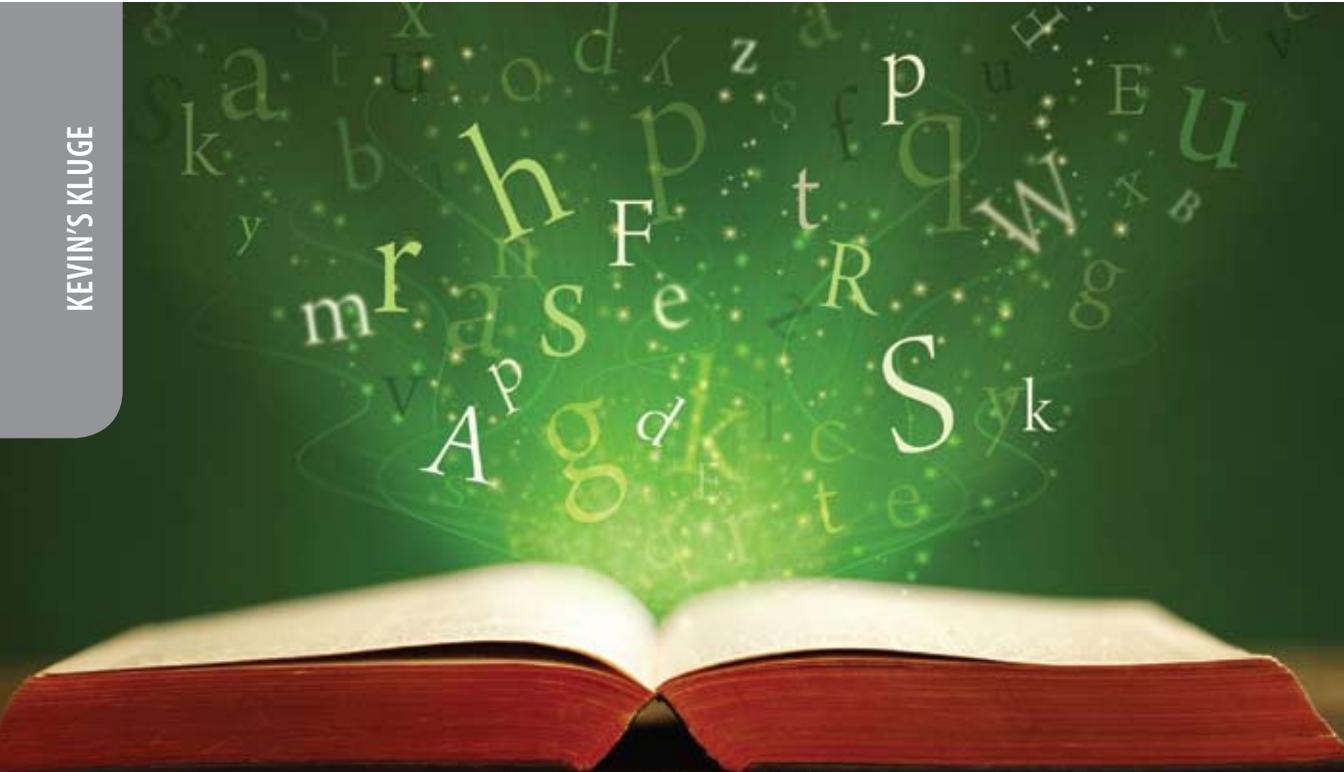
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TABLE OF CONTENTS

- 2 Kevin’s Kluge: Toward a Culture of Learning
- 6 Law and Policy: NCHE Supports Cooperation with Voluntary Requests by DNPE
- 8 Homeschooling and Adoption
- 12 Brown Family Adoption Story
- 14 Benefits of Homeschooling Adopted Children
- 16 Our Adoption Story
- 18 Learning in the Autumn
- 20 Why I’m Passionate about Unschooling
- 22 Surveying the Sites
- 25 Strategies for Success
- 28 Do What You Believe
- 30 NCHE Athletics: Homeschooler Patrick Geotze Signs Professional Contract with the Boston Red Sox
- 32 Weary? Rejuvenate Your School with a Day of Activities That You Love!
- 36 Bulletin Board



Toward a Culture of Learning

by Kevin McClain



Kevin McClain and his bride, Brea, are embarking on their tenth year of homeschooling. Kevin is studying educational philosophy at UNCG where he is employed as an educational technologist. He is NCHE's new president.

Last issue I introduced myself to you as NCHE's new president. Prior to the presidency, I served as the education vice president, and my responsibilities were focused on the education and publications committee, which produces this publication and works to keep the website current. As president, my role is greatly expanded, and I am learning more and more about and am directly involved in the hard work that occurs under the leadership of the other vice presidents. For example, the conference committee is very active year-round. NCHE is embarking on our thirtieth year, and the 2014 conference will be the organization's thirtieth. We just had a major meeting, and the plans are exciting. I personally am looking forward to one of our featured speakers, Dr. Anthony Bradley. I think you will find him to be inspiring and challenging.

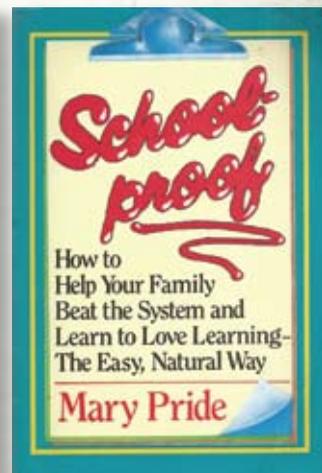
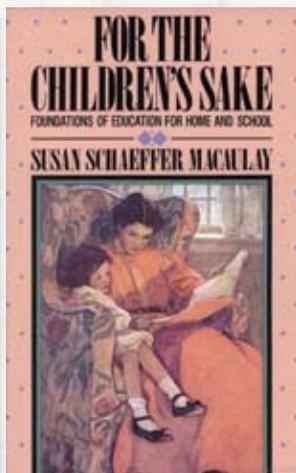
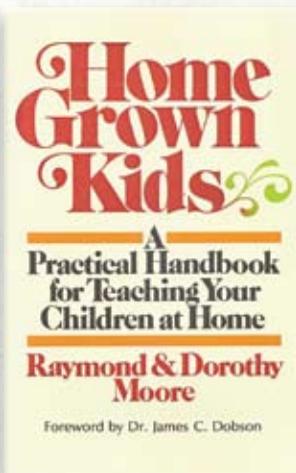
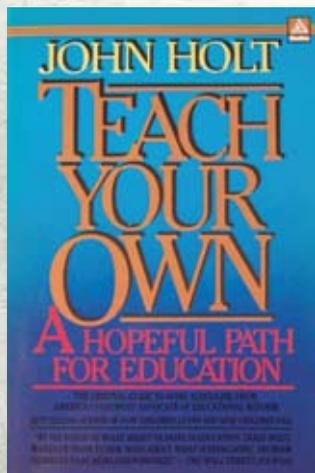
A lot has happened in the practice of home education over the last thirty years, and the annual conference and book fair has always been NCHE's main vehicle to serve North Carolinians. It brings to the state the best resources available, the most articulate speakers, quality curriculum developers and innovating peer educators: parents who were excited to lead workshops and share what they have learned about education in the home. Lately, I've had opportunity to hear stories of early NCHE conferences, see photos and even leaf through some of the early conference programs. Some of you have been there and can recall those early years. I, alas, was too young and in a far colder state. But I can imagine that it must have felt very different than our present-day conference, but at the same time, very similar.

I am a student of the philosophy and history of education and, in particular, of home education. I enjoy reading the works of home education advocates from the beginning of the modern homeschool movement—the 1980s. Many of the authors, sadly, are no longer with us, or are no

longer actively advocating. I wonder how many of you will recognize these names, some of whom NCHE was fortunate to have speak at the annual conference: John Holt, Raymond and Dorothy Moore, David and Micki Colfax, Samuel Blumenfeld, Susan Schaeffer Macaulay, Ruth Beechick, Mary Pride, Gregg Harris. These are just some of the names of influential home education advocates of the 1980s whose writings helped change the American education landscape. Not all these individuals advocated for home education in the same manner. Some, like Holt, were more oriented toward the philosophical, while others, like the Moores, were more empirical and focused on the research. The Colfaxes wrote from their homesteading experiences and were very practical. Blumenfeld was a historian who told the story of how public education developed. Regardless of their approach, however, each was an advocate for a better way to educate children. During the 1980s much of “the better way” was still being debated, even amongst themselves. So, even though these advocates did not see eye-to-eye on some matters, they shared insight into what facilitated learning (personal experiences), and where educating the next generation occurred (in the context of meaningful relationships, specifically in the home). Because of this commonality, they were unified in a hope for something better for the sake of our children. What they all had in common was a vision of healthy future generations, where people were passionate and actively learning, not just in childhood, but throughout life.

Some also went so far as to envision a society without schools. For Holt, best known for his concept of *Unschooling*, the process of instituting education portended an end to genuine learning. Schooling meant passivity and a squashed curiosity. Holt encouraged parents who guided, but he was suspicious of professional educators, and even of the notion of pedagogy,

the science (or art) of teaching. Others were not so radical. One advocate, Mary Pride, in her book *School-proof: How to Help Your Family Beat the System and Learn to Love Learning—The Easy, Natural Way* (1988) envisioned a day when every town would have “Education Emporiums” instead of schools. She envisioned emporiums like in an antique mall with traders and booths full of their historic wares, where educators would offer their services, from lectures to laboratory experiments, and anyone could participate according to their own interests. In many ways, this is what the NCHE annual conference accomplishes, except its content is oriented toward a specific educational audience: home educators. However, Pride’s vision was more consumer-oriented. In some sense, Pride’s vision is accomplished by technology today. Not surprisingly, none of the early advocates foresaw the Internet (few futurists really did). No one imagined the significant changes the widespread availability of curated information and multimedia would produce. The World Wide Web, combined with powerful search tools, can help us locate the best answers to our questions. I am often amazed at the vast repositories of information, like Wikipedia, and sites with every DIY instructional video imaginable. But at the same time, the Internet has created a somewhat insular learning experience. For all its information and interactivity, the Internet and especially its newest incarnation, social media (Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, etc.) raises serious questions about whether technology can truly stretch us, or simply take us to the places our patterns have predetermined, guiding us into increasingly smaller social enclaves which function to placate us with groupthink. I’ll be honest, as someone who has worked on the World Wide Web for almost twenty years (I made my first webpage in college in 1995), and who was enamored with the potential, and as



someone who works in higher education and sees young people who have never been without the Internet, I have my doubts. I believe in "everything in moderation." But even I get caught up sometimes in the number of "Likes" the latest NCHE Facebook post has received.

I started this column reflecting on the fact that NCHE is now thirty years old and that thirty years ago the leaders in home education advocacy were envisioning the future. We still need visions for the future, ones that carry forth the best hopes and ideas from previous visions but also hone them in response to today's reality. Part of my role as president is to be the Chief Visionary for the organization. My own vision for our society is that we have, what I call, a "culture of learning." I plan to expound on this vision over the next couple of issues, and it is my hope that I'll get to talk about it during the thirtieth annual conference in May. But I wish to leave you with a foretaste. One of the chief characteristics of a culture of learning is the presence of, and active participation in, free, or voluntary, associations. In order for society to flourish, people must have the ability to mutually enter into and vacate social relationships. But they must have more than the freedom to do so. They must see the true value in organizing in order to accomplish mutually

beneficial goals. Without a robust sector of free associations, societies collapse into power vacuums. A major worry about twenty-first century America is the diminished support of free association and over-reliance on either the State or the Market in order to meet needs. Both sectors have an important role to play, but that role is limited. They alone cannot sustain a vibrant civilization and a culture of learning. I believe their role, when it comes to education, is to partner with, and follow the lead of, the family and free associations. This partnership is important and warrants significant reflection, which I plan to provide in later issues.

For the moment, I am proud to say that NCHE is a free association. I, and my associates, voluntarily labor for our neighbors, the citizens of North Carolina, because we value education and believe it starts in the home. We work hard to build healthy relationships with state officials and law makers but also with curriculum developers. I want to see society flourish, and I want my children: Ransom (fourteen), Asher (twelve), Sigourney (ten), Toby (eight) and Corwin (eighteen months), as well as your children, to inherit a culture of learning. That vision is worth my time, talent and treasure.

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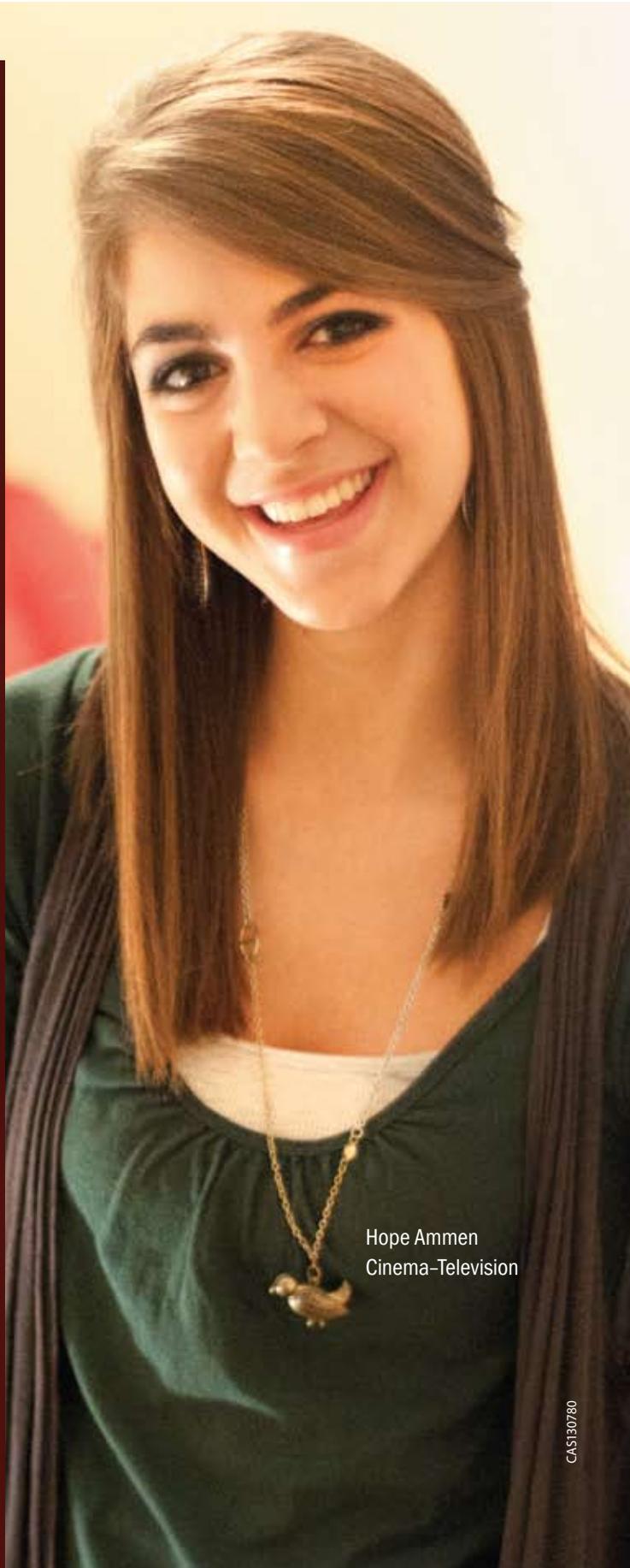
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NCHE Supports Cooperation with Voluntary Requests by DNPE

by *Spencer Mason*

North Carolina homeschools began receiving email requests from the NC Division of Non-Public Education (DNPE) this fall to go to the DNPE website and provide some information about their homeschool. The information asked for includes verification that the homeschool is still in operation, any modifications to the school's contact information and the homeschool's enrollment numbers. It is important to recognize that the NC homeschool statute does not require homeschools to participate in this annual update. There are no repercussions if a homeschool decides not to participate. Participation is voluntary.

In another voluntary program, DNPE randomly invites homeschools that are in their second, fourth, seventh or tenth consecutive school year of being listed with DNPE to participate in a Record Review Meeting. During this meeting the homeschool's administrator or teacher and the DNPE representative will mutually examine the homeschool's legally required records. DNPE selects a place to meet, such as a library or a community center, in locations throughout the state. These meetings typically last about twenty-five minutes. During this meeting, a DNPE official may inquire about your home education practices. This information is not required but it is their way of getting to know you and how homeschooling is working. You are free to share this information or not.

The easiest response to these requests to provide information or to meet is to not participate. However, I want to encourage you to consider taking part in these voluntary programs. From the early days when DNPE first started requesting participation in a voluntary inspection by mail program, NCHE has recommended that homeschoolers participate. We fully acknowledge that it is voluntary and not required by law. So why would NCHE recommend that homeschoolers go beyond the requirements of the law?

North Carolinians are fortunate to have a Division of Non-Public Education to oversee the

law governing private schools and homeschools. (This benefit did not come easily. It resulted from a hard-fought battle waged by heroic private Christian school leaders and pastors, culminating in the 1979 law that established DNPE and removed private schools from the jurisdiction of the Department of Public Instruction. Often sleeping in their cars in order to be in Raleigh during the legislative session, these men brought about the benefit that now blesses us.) To the best of our knowledge, North Carolina is the only state to have such an office. Other states simply have a department to oversee education in that state. Typically, that department is primarily oriented toward effective public education, and as such is heavily regulated. As you can expect, there is often an internal tension within these departments between public and non-public education. Given the orientation in public education toward regulation, the absence of regulation is frowned upon. As a result, in many states homeschools are much more heavily regulated. The freedom that North Carolina home educators possess is directly related to the governance under the Division of Non-Public Education and not the Department of Public Instruction. Distinct agencies facilitate distinct governance practices. Therefore, it is in our best interest, if we wish to maintain our freedom, to maintain this distinction.

The best way to maintain this distinction is to support the Division of Non-Public Education in its oversight practices. Policy-influencers, from journalists, to social scientists in research institutions, from lobbyists to legislators, use data to defend the effectiveness of laws. The absence of quality data often gives way to accusations. Quality data enables a more robust public discussion. Currently, DNPE's practices to gather data are voluntary. The alternative is that they not be voluntary, but required. When we provide DNPE with quality data, DNPE is better able to service requests concerning the effectiveness of the current law. It is good for the citizens of North Carolina when good data is voluntarily made available. It also has the benefit of demonstrating that a separate agency for non-public instruction, with voluntary programs, is an effectual way to govern. Without quality data, ammunition is given to those who believe non-public education should be more heavily regulated. Opponents could argue for increased regulations in the law, or governance under Department of Public Instruction (DPI), which, judging from past history, would almost certainly lead to increased regulation and regimentation. It is the NCHE view that governance under DPI would not be in the best interest of maintaining our freedom.

DNPE, we believe, functions as a positive mediator between the homeschool and the policy-influencing citizen. It is in our best interest that the policy-influencing citizen agree with the above assessment, and trust DNPE to understand us and represent us well. Our work to keep a good relationship with DNPE is practical, but also strategic.

From a principle point of view, it is NCHE's position that responsible citizenship is characterized by an active participation in governance. This active participation means governing power is shared. An indicator of liberty is shared governance. The alternative is concentrated power in the hands of a few. While most people recognize this principle in their duty to vote in the election of our governing officials, many question the value, necessity and even wisdom of participating in information-gathering government programs, such as the DNPE online record update or Record Review Meetings. Voluntary participation is an act of shared governance. The stronger the shared governance, the fewer regulations are required, and more liberty is experienced. As the saying goes, "Freedom is not free." In order to have liberty, we should participate with the good and resist evil. While we understand homeschoolers' tendency to be wary, NCHE believes the officials at DNPE understand shared governance. We believe they are not collecting any data that the average citizen could keep private if their child were educated elsewhere. As of today, it is NCHE's position that DNPE is a partner with NC home educators in maintaining the freedom of North Carolina citizens to choose among education alternatives. We advocate that NC home educators share governance with DNPE, and that means participating in non-intrusive voluntary programs.

"The efforts of the government alone will never be enough. In the end the people must choose, and the people must help themselves." John F. Kennedy



Spencer Mason and his wife, Debbie, homeschooled their four children for twenty-six years. They have served on the NCHE board since 1988. Spencer served twice as president, from 1998-2000 and 2008-2012. He now serves as legislative vice president.



The Guthmann family all together

HOMESCHOOLING and ADOPTION

by Alice Guthmann



Alice Guthmann has been married to Howard for almost thirty-five years, is the mother of five sons and four daughters, is the grandmother to two (soon to be three!), has been homeschooling for twenty-nine years and is thankful to be an adopted daughter of the King of Kings.

Do you love children? Of course, you do. That is one of the reasons you are homeschooling. Is there a nagging thought in your head or a tugging in your heart that you should grow your family through adoption? Why in the world would you think about adopting a child when you already feel overwhelmed with phonics, multiplication tables, piano lessons, swim practices and getting enough time for yourself to maybe exercise a couple of times each week? Do you believe you are that awesome of a parent that you are going to go out looking for an even bigger challenge? I guess your birth children get along so well that, hey, what's one more? Maybe it's because you are meeting all of your financial goals at this point in your marriage and you have no idea what else you should do with these buckets of money? My husband, Howard, and I asked each other these questions and more back in 2003. Ok, so those weren't quite the questions we asked ourselves. We really didn't think we were awesome parents, or that our birth children were getting along so well, and we certainly didn't have buckets of money sitting around. So, what were we thinking when we actively pursued adoption?

Earlier in our marriage, God had blessed us with seven birth children, so my childhood desire to adopt was shelved for about twenty-five years. After taking a rational inventory of

our lives, we decided that we would instead become foster parents to newborns with a local adoption agency. (Did I say rational?) Through the course of our foster parent training, we learned that there are millions of children worldwide who have lost both of their parents. That childhood desire to adopt returned as we joyfully placed each of our foster babies into their forever parents' arms. These babies were heading to homes of love and would have hope and a future. At forty-eight and forty-nine years old, Howard and I were not thinking of adopting a baby, but the desire to reach out to an older child was beginning to press in on our hearts.

It seemed at the time that our lives were full of blessings in every area and that, in comparison to almost every other person in the world, we were filthy rich! Were we ready to make some sacrifices for the sake of trying to love others like Jesus would? Could God have given us seven children to teach us to reach out to two brothers by birth who had no future? If we were telling our children that we were pro-life, could it also mean that we were to show them that we valued all children, not just squishy, adorable babies? In adopting, we hoped to be a blessing to the children who would become part of our family, and we hoped that in being more other-focused, we and our birth children would have more compassion for all the suffering people in the world.

After ten months of reading books on adoption, praying, seeking advice, and filling out a mountain of paperwork, we traveled in October, 2004, for twenty-seven hours to an orphanage in the Philippines to pick up our two sons who were then nine-and-a-half and seven-and-a-half years old. We were embarking on the biggest step of faith of our lives. This commitment to become parents to these boys, *sight unseen*, was much more monumental than our decision to be missionaries in Kenya with our first three kids. This commitment was being made to two strangers. Yes, just like we committed ourselves to each of our *sight unseen* birth children, we committed to these boys, but with the knowledge that these two boys who were joining our family forever have suffered the worst trauma a human can undergo—the loss of their birth parents.

Along with losing their birth parents, when we adopted them, they also lost all their friends and house parents. They left behind a mangy dog with puppies. Yes, they left behind poor health and dental care, no education and the prospect of being back on the street when they turned sixteen years old, but they also completely left their country with its sights and smells, its language and traditions. How their

losses would later impact each of us, we could not even imagine. Unless we have been adopted internationally, we have no idea what this is like.

When our boys came home to live with us, they were expecting Disneyland. The orphanage had used the television to pacify them, filling them up with Disney movies and American TV shows. They were angry that they were not allowed everything they wanted at stores (“Americans have everything they want”) and were incredulous that they would have to do chores like the rest of our kids. Not knowing whether this huge stash of food in our fridge and pantry would be there the next day, they hoarded food in their rooms. Along with having fairytale expectations, they did not expect to have to do any schoolwork. Period. Were they ever in for a shock!

We chose to homeschool our two new sons primarily because we had been homeschooling our birth children since they were born. Homeschooling encompassed education, parenting and spiritual discipleship for us. In 2004, we still believed that if we “did a good job” as homeschooling parents, we would not have to deal with rebellious teens and would be able to see all of our children become productive, educated and compassionate Americans, who loved Jesus and wanted to live for Him. In addition to our outcome-based philosophy with our birth children, we identified some other reasons to homeschool our sons who had been adopted.

1. Bonding with parents takes a *lot* of time.
Time is needed for being held, looking into our each other's eyes, reading aloud, singing, and eating together every meal.
2. Bonding with siblings and our family culture takes a *lot* of time.
“This is the way our family does this.”
“This is what it means when we tell this joke.”
“This is the crazy way our mom hates snakes.”
“This is what we believe about God and the Bible.”
3. Assimilating into the US culture could be filtered through us.
The children need to learn about manners, customs and social mores.



John and Josiah (shortly after they were adopted) with sister Suzannah

4. Language learning could develop through our choice of books, etc. Our boys spoke Tagalog to each other for three months. By six months, they only spoke English, and we were able to be involved in every aspect of that learning.
5. We could minimize social, emotional and sensory overload. Coming from the simple world of an orphanage in a developing country, the U.S. is extremely overwhelming.
6. Homeschooling would allow us the freedom to personalize studies to each child's interests and strengths, and give us time to help them in their weaknesses. We hoped that this showed a respect for the boys' individuality that they had never experienced.
7. We could demonstrate cultural appreciation for our sons' birth country and culture during our studies. We had plans to learn Tagalog ourselves and have the boys

involved in Filipino cultural events. As it turned out, they wanted nothing to do with the books and music that we purchased, nor would they speak Tagalog with the Filipino friends we have. This reaction to our attempt at making our sons essentially dual citizens is not uncommon, as many kids who have been internationally adopted want to be Americanized as quickly as they can.

If you are considering adopting a child beyond the baby/toddler stage, maybe you would benefit from what we have learned in our last eight years of homeschooling our sons who were adopted.

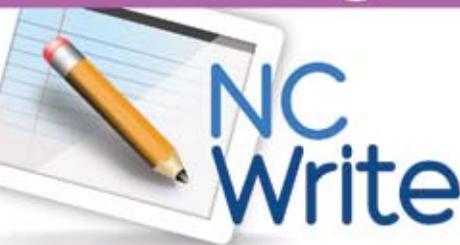
1. Approach the decision to homeschool with much prayer. Many, many parenting strategies are counter-intuitive with traumatized children. What worked with your birth children won't necessarily work with these kids.
2. Some homeschool methods can be similar to what you may have done before, but everything has to be done slower. Think about a year or two of extended kindergarten-type experiences, especially if your child is learning a new language.
3. Check your expectations—academically and relationally. We had read that the age that your child experienced his separation from his parent is the age that he will regress to when he is adopted, and this is absolutely true. Our almost ten-year-old became a five-year-old again, in every imaginable way. Our eight-year-old became three years old. In addition, if your child initially seems thankful and happy that he has a forever home, it almost certainly won't last. His deep heart issues will have to be dealt with before he can reconcile his huge loss. The trauma that your child endured will make an impact on your entire family, and this in turn affects your schooling. It is harder than we expected to come to grips with the fact that the sacrifice you have been called to make in adopting an older child sometimes negatively affects your birth children.
4. You may need to simulate some institutional schooling if your child was successful in a conventional school prior to joining your family. That was not the case with us.

5. You need to realize that there will be power struggles. Most adopted children are survivors, so their number-one concern is for control. In addition, almost every child in the world has heard of Disneyland, but your traumatized child often thinks he deserves to live the Disney life because he has suffered so much. Unrealized fantasies can lead to anger.
6. If you homeschool your child who was adopted, or even if you don't, get support from others. There are local support groups in many cities, annual conferences, online groups, and many, many helpful books that have been written. It is very draining for you and your child to go through the mountains of adjustment that have to be climbed before he can feel like a true member of your family. Call on others!
7. Finally, if you are Christians, you will need to daily remind yourselves that God has a plan for your lives and your children's. He loves them more than you ever could. Although you may be totally committed in your beliefs

that homeschooling is the best educational choice, you may have to surrender this ideal for the survival of your marriage, your mental health, your birth children's education and your adopted child's best interest. Yes, after six years of being homeschooled, one of our sons is enrolled in a public high school because, after an agonizing season of prayer, we realized it was what we needed to do to survive. Having him there is the death of the dream that we could happily meet all of his needs here at home, but the renewal of our hope that God is going to have His way in all of our children's lives.

Adoption is a big commitment and the decision to adopt should be taken seriously. Homeschooling an adopted child is possible, but may have additional challenges. Doing what is best for your family, including your adopted children, takes precedence. 

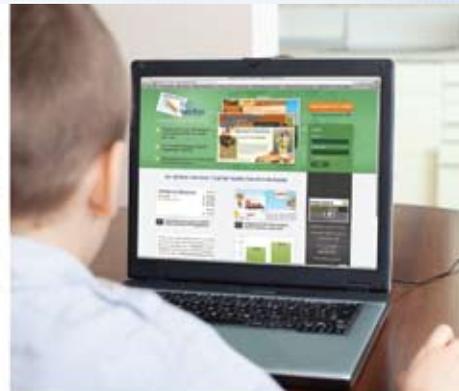
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BROWN FAMILY ADOPTION STORY

by Kevin Brown

Adoption is part of God's plan for mankind as the Apostle Paul recorded in Romans 8:15, "For you did not receive the spirit of slavery to fall back into fear, but you have received the Spirit of adoption as sons, by whom we cry, 'Abba! Father!'"

Our family didn't always understand fully what adoption means to God. It should also be said that in the beginning of our marriage we really didn't take seriously the command given to Adam and Eve and to Noah to be fruitful and multiply. God wants to use all of us in many ways to build his eternal kingdom. We grew up in the American Dream society, where so many have pushed the idea of having more than two children out of their minds. Many say, "We could never afford more than two children or be able to send more than two to college." This was our philosophy as well. God showed us about ten years into our marriage that this view was not scriptural at all, even though we considered ourselves solid followers of Christ.

Through a series of events (miscarriage and inability to have more children), God opened our eyes to the possibility of adoption. One factor was a radio program Pam heard on "Focus on the Family," about the millions of children in the world in orphanages. She felt specifically called to foreign adoption (more specifically China), so she prayed about it and didn't tell me for several months. When she finally confessed this leading, I was open to it but unsure of the cost and work involved. Interestingly, at the same time, our oldest daughter, Katy who was about nine years old at the time began speaking to us about adoption. She told us she was having dreams about pushing a sister in our backyard swing, but "she doesn't look like us." Katy said, "She is Asian." Pam and I had said absolutely nothing to either of our two biological children, Katy and Kandace (six years of age at the time).

Finally, we told our daughters we would pray about this adoption thing for six months and see what the Lord said to us. During that time we attended an America World Adoption Agency (AWAA) seminar in Charlotte. After I was there five minutes, I was convinced. Before anyone even got up to speak, I saw a little two or three year-old Chinese girl run up to her American father and say, "Daddy." That did it! And so the journey began. After \$25,000 in fees and costs, stacks of paperwork

(measuring one foot thick) and about a year's worth of work, we were winging our way to China to adopt our little girl. We stayed two weeks in China and ultimately halfway through the trip, a chubby-cheeked, twenty-eight pound, little girl named Fu Mei Xue was given to us. We named her Clara. She cried for two straight days! But, we finally realized that she disliked the hotel room. Once we got her out in public, she was a totally different child. To this day, she loves being around people.

We thought our adoption journey was complete, yet God, (as He often does), had different plans. God placed it in our heart to adopt again. This time we felt compelled to adopt a special needs child from China. These children are called *special needs* because they can have health issues ranging from various kinds of birth defects, clubbed feet, hearing/vision issues, heart problems, missing limbs, etc. We thought originally that another girl was in the offing. Yet, God led us to a little boy who had two clubbed feet. He was three-and-a-half years old, and we were told the Chinese

would not pay to have his feet reconstructed. His orphanage was too poor for such an expense. He would be relegated to a life of pan-handling on the streets of his town in the Henan province because of his inability to walk properly. This broke our hearts, and we fell in love with him. After a little over a year's worth of paperwork and approximately \$22,000 we were ready to travel again.

So, after another two-week journey to China, the Brown family had another child. His name was Dang Qing Bin. We named him Andrew David

Brown. On March 12, 2013, he had his third and final surgery to repair his clubbed feet.

He can walk, run, jump and play like any other child. Clara and Andrew are only two weeks apart in age. Both will turn eight years old this spring. To say that our family has been blessed by these two children would be the greatest understatement known to man. Without question, the greatest joy our family has ever known (outside of salvation in Christ) is adoption.



Andrew and his casts



Kandace feeding Clara

There are millions of orphans throughout the world who need a home. There are special needs lists with hundreds of children just waiting to be adopted. Do you have a heart of love to give? Do you value life? Adoption is a way to give the gift of *family* to a child and to give the gift of modeling unconditional love to your birth children (they will be forever changed as well). God provided the money for our family. As a pastor, I didn't make the income to be able to spend close to \$50,000 on adoption fees for two children. But, God provided through our family, church, friends and even strangers. It has been said, "Whatever God calls you to, He provides for." Amen to that!

We know that God adopts us into His family when we call on the name of His Son. We know that doing so makes us joint-heirs with Christ. Yet, we can easily forget the name of that transaction. It's called adoption. Amazing thought, isn't it?



Kevin Brown and his wife, Pam, have been married for twenty-two years, and they are the parents of four children (two adopted from China). They have been homeschooling for sixteen years and have one married daughter (a homeschool graduate) and three children still in the home. Kevin pastors Mt. Pleasant Baptist Church in Wilkesboro, NC. Kevin has written a book, Rite of Passage for the Home and Church-Raising Christ-Centered Young Adults. In the book, Brown details how the Christian faith depends upon the transfer of the gospel from one generation to the next. He describes how "Rite of Passage" is not a program, but instead represents a family's commitment to making sure the principles of Scripture are passed to the generations yet to be born.

Benefits of Homeschooling Adopted Children

by James and Tanya Dickens

The Dickens Family



James and Tanya Dickens serve on the NCHE board of directors.

We have adopted four children, three girls and one boy. Our first two girls came to live with us in 2007, and the other two came to live with us in 2012. In 2007, we both worked outside the home. We enrolled our children in the best daycares that we could afford. Over the course of eighteen months, we moved our children to three different daycares. These were four and five star daycares, and in our visits, everything looked fine, but the more they attended daycare, the worse they got academically and socially. We also began to see changes in their speech and behavior that we knew they picked up from their time spent in daycare. They were exposed to things on television and language that we would never expose them to, and we realized that our children were spending more of their waking hours in daycare than they were with us. This problem was compounded by the fact that we had adopted our children, so they were adjusting to two new environments. We really did not want our children being exposed to two sets of standards.

In December 2008, I (Tanya) had foot surgery, and while I was home recovering, I had the opportunity to spend all day with our daughters and work with them at home. I loved it, and in 2009, I was introduced to the idea of homeschooling. We joined a local homeschool support group and became actively involved in the homeschool community. By the time our oldest daughter was five in the spring of 2009, she was reading between the first and second grade level. Her younger sister was only slightly behind her, reading on a solid first grade level. They were performing similarly in math as well.

In April 2012, we started the process of adopting our son, age five and now our new youngest daughter, age three. When they came to live with us during the adoption process, we immersed them in our homeschool lifestyle as well. We discovered after a few days that our son could not spell his name and his reading skills were behind where we thought they should be for his age. His sister didn't know any of her colors or alphabets. After a few weeks, we realized that our son might possibly have a learning disability. We did some research and began working with him one-on-one to help him work through his learning issues. Our other two daughters were pretty independent

by this point, so we had the time to focus on him. It took approximately six months, but this young man can now read at or above grade level and can successfully sound out words that he has never seen. He has begun to conquer his challenges, but we were able to do this, because we homeschooled him. No teacher or tutor in the traditional public or private school setting would have taken the time reach this young man. If he got an answer wrong, he would have sat quietly and not said another word. He would not be disruptive, but he would not retain anything that was being taught for the rest of the day. He would have been a statistic. His sister, now four, is coming along as well.

In our experience, homeschooling our adopted children resulted in several benefits. First, homeschooling allowed time for our children to become bonded to at least one parent, my wife, and it totally immersed them in the household full-time. Bonding is very important for any child, but it is often particularly difficult for adoptive children to bond with their adoptive families. Every adopted child has been taken from their birth family, and oftentimes, with little or no notice.

They may have lived in one or more foster homes, and each time they are moved, they experience the loss of yet another family, another home, another familiar environment. By homeschooling our children, it increased their ability to depend on my wife because she was home all of the time, and if she went somewhere, they went with her. Homeschooling enabled our daughters to develop an extremely close and loving relationship with their mother.

We really saw the benefits of homeschooling when our second two children came to live with us in 2012. Our first two daughters came to live with us when they were one and two years old. While our son and youngest daughter are younger than our first two daughters, our son was five and our youngest daughter was three when they first came to live with us. They carried a lot more emotional baggage and scars than our first two daughters because they were older and actually knew and remembered their birth parents. It took several months before

our son really bonded into our family, and it took close to a year for his younger sister to bond to our family. We don't know how we could have achieved the results we have so far if we had not homeschooled them from the beginning. Part of our homeschool lifestyle was letting them know that they were now a part of our family, no one was going to take them away again, and we were not going to change our minds about keeping them. This message had to be repeated over and over again!

Second, homeschooling our children helped them adjust to our home much easier. When we sent our first two daughters to daycare almost immediately after we adopted them, they were subject to two different

environments, and they had to learn to navigate each one at the same time. By homeschooling them, they were able to focus on learning the rules of their new home and not be confused by two different sets of standards.

Third, one of the benefits of homeschooling that we experienced, particularly with our second two children, was academic. Children who have been abused and/or neglected and ripped from their birth families generally are not performing at grade level in school. In fact, it is not uncommon for them to be developmentally delayed because of neglect or abuse. Homeschooling our son and youngest daughter allowed them to learn at their own pace in a loving and supportive environment. Our son had some very serious challenges in learning to read. Homeschooling allowed us to work with him one-on-one and give him the time and attention he needed. Our oldest two daughters supported, encouraged and assisted

them as well. They would not likely have experienced such a supportive environment in daycare or public school.

In sum, homeschooling has helped us to love and nurture our children, promote their emotional development and help them to excel academically. It has been our experience that homeschooling our adopted children has helped them cope with their previous losses and given them the comfort of knowing that they are in a safe and secure environment that will last forever. 



OUR ADOPTION STORY

by Wendi Hilton



Wendi and her husband, Virgil, have homeschooled for twenty years. She served on the NCHS board as region 7 director for eight years.

Our adoption story started in 1984. We went to see a movie that gave us a desire to want to give a child a home that does not have a home. The movie was not about adoption but for some reason it gave us a desire to adopt. I am not sure why it affected us like it did, but it left us with the desire to help children through adoption.

We had been married a year when we decided to go to an information meeting with social services about adoption. We came away with the realization that adoption was very difficult, and that the children who needed homes the most we could not adopt because we were not the same race. The laws were different then and the system did not allow cross racial adoption to take place. So we did not pursue it at that time but kept it in our minds as a desire for a later time.

When we had four children we started thinking about it again. We thought this was

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something God wanted us to do. However, we thought we had too many children, not enough money, were too old, didn't have a nice enough house, etc. When our youngest child was ten, we decided to give foster care a try. We went to the MAP class. We did everything they required. They came to the house, and they said we passed. Then they called back and said we didn't pass after all because some work on our house was needed. I had told the social worker ahead of time that we were renovating our house. After conversations back and forth, we decided to withdraw our file. We were discouraged and did not know what to do. About a year later we went to a church meeting on adoption. We met a private social worker there. She said that what happened to us was not right, but that the foster care system is very strict. So we decided to step out on faith, have her do a home study, and try to adopt a child from foster care. We passed our home study and began submitting it for children. Our social worker found out about two little

girls with an agency. The agency did not have a family for them, and they needed to be placed within a month. So we submitted our home study. The mother chose us. The only problem was the cost. We thought about not moving forward because of the money, but we finally decided that we should not let that stop us. We trusted God to supply



The Hilton Family

the money if this was what He wanted. And He did in a very special and miraculous way! We brought home two beautiful little girls ages two and five at the time. They became a part of our family very quickly and naturally. I know that does not always happen, but it did for us. The oldest had gone to kindergarden for a couple of months, but we began to homeschool

her. At first she missed school and being around a lot of kids, but she quickly came to like being homeschooled. I would say to anyone who feels like God is leading them to adopt, to step out on faith and let God lead you. And he will bless you beyond what you can imagine. 🇺🇸



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Learning in the Autumn

by Diana Waring

One of the freedoms I cherished most about homeschooling was that my kids could discover the *adventure* of learning rather than the *boredom* of school. To actually break through the bonds of boredom and into that learning adventure, however, may require some out-of-the-box thinking and a willingness to try something new.

So, if you are ready, I'd like to start with a bit of a poetic meander through the obstacles of learning outdoors in autumn.

Remember

Do you remember sitting, sitting, sitting in a classroom while, outside, the wind and the multi-colored leaves were swirling and dancing? Do you recall smelling tired air from the school's furnace, while, outside, the brisk tang of autumn air invited you to run and jump with the sheer joy of being alive? Do you remember the exuberance of the last bell of the day, when you were now free to revel in the scampering wind and blowing leaves and reviving briskness as you walked home? Can you picture it vividly? For me, the memory is startlingly clear. Now, in the contrast between the outdoors and the classroom, does one of them remind you at all of, dare I mention it, a *prison*?
Hmmm.

Consider

Now, on to today. Here you are, perhaps still enthused at the beginning of the school year, with all your hopes of getting through all the books, accomplishing all the goals and finishing all the projects. You might even have worked mightily to get your lesson

plans, schedule and orderly row of books and notebooks all sitting neatly, ready for implementation. You are determined to tidy the deck, muster the troops, haul out the sail and do battle—to conquer Mount Academia! I absolutely relate! I started nearly every year with that same anticipation, that same optimism, that same goal. Would you mind if, as a result of my own experience, I ask you whether your children happen to have the same goals? The reason I ask is that mine seldom did. As children, my kids resembled me when I was a desk-bound student, restless, bored and longing for a breath of fresh air.

Hmmm.



Picture

What if your kids could learn something, anything, outside. How would that impact motivation and interest? If they could read, sing, paint, skip, collect, run, examine, imagine, compose, recite under blue skies amid falling leaves, would *that count*, academically speaking? If the afternoon is pleasant and the yard is inviting, would it be possible to enliven study by taking the math or phonics book outside? If an afternoon spent foraging for acorns—whether for a science experiment

or an art project—brought a sparkle to their eyes and laughter to their hearts, would it be worth the hassle, the interruption to our well-laid plans? The reason I am asking is because both you and I know that it would be worth its weight in gold. So why don't we feel the freedom to do it?

Hang on to your hats, friends. I think the reason we don't feel the freedom to do it is because it isn't in the curriculum. It isn't in the textbook. It isn't in the scope and sequence. But if it's in your heart and in the hearts of your children, then maybe all you need is permission. So, here it is:

I hereby grant *you* permission to go outside this autumn with your kids and learn to your heart's content!



Diana Waring is the author of Beyond Survival, Reaping the Harvest and Diana Waring's History Revealed world history curriculum. Diana discovered years ago that the key to education is relationship. Audiences on four continents have enthusiastically received her energetic speaking style. Diana will be a featured speaker at the 2014 NCHE Annual Conference.

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Why I'm Passionate about

UNSCHOOLING

by *Melissa Jennings Lake*

My name is Melissa, and I'm an unschooler. I will admit that I'm more comfortable saying that now than I ever have been. These days nobody blinks at the idea of homeschooling. But I usually get some sort of reaction to telling people that we unschool. Sometimes it's genuine curiosity. (Really? What is unschooling?) Sometimes, it's confusion. (How will your kids learn to speak if you don't teach them grammar?) Sometimes, it's good-hearted teasing by family members who think I'm just a little bit nuts. (I think she even unschools her dogs!) However it comes up, I'm always willing and happy to talk about it!

There are five in our family: my husband, Doug, and me, our seventeen-year-old son, Jackson, our fifteen-year-old son, Nathan, and our nine-year-old daughter, Gianna. We started homeschooling Jackson in kindergarten *just to see* and have never looked back. The first few years, we followed a curriculum. Actually, we were never very good at following a curriculum, but the first few years, we tried.

We started moving toward unschooling after reading *Dumbing Us Down* by John Taylor Gatto. It was great for me because it got me thinking about education beyond the institution of school. Then I read a few books by John Holt. I had never read books that so resonated with me. The idea of unschooling really made sense to Doug, too. It was a gradual transition toward unschooling. Letting go of formal academics is not easy when it is all you've ever known. But now, we are full-fledged unschoolers.

There are about as many different ways to unschool as there are families who unschool. We focus mostly on interests, natural strengths and relationships. More than just trying to encourage our kids

to learn, though, Doug and I model curiosity and daily learning. We mostly learn by just living life: going for walks, watching TV, playing games, having conversations with a wide variety of people, going places, discussing ideas, going to the store, volunteering, looking at magazines, hanging out with friends, listening to music, asking our dear friend, Google, lots of questions, doing nothing and yes, sometimes we even learn by reading a book!

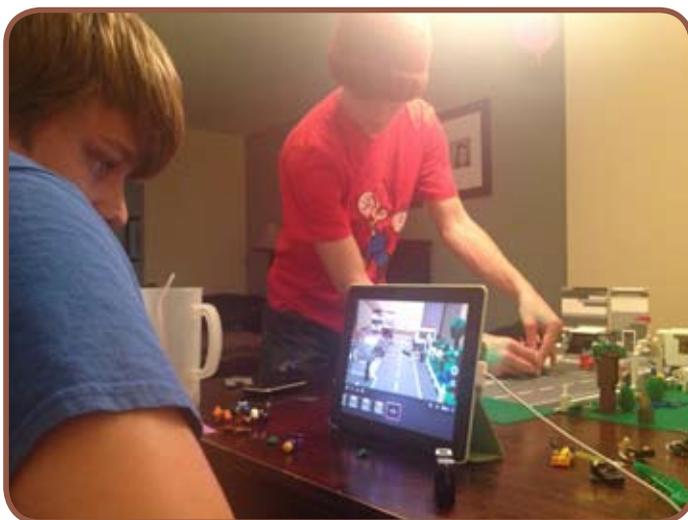
I heard a fellow unschooler say that when she is asked when they do school, her answer is “always and never.” I love that! Learning in our life isn’t compartmentalized at all. We fundamentally trust that our kids will learn what they need to know to function in life and to be lifelong learners without coercion from us, but as we have an open mind and a willingness to help them succeed.

I recently read this quote by Robert Brault and my heart leapt. Yes! This is how I want to be with our kids! “Do not ask that your kids live up to your expectations. Let your kids be who they are, and your expectations will be in breathless pursuit.” With that, let me tell you a little about the kids that my expectations are pursuing.

Jackson is our oldest child. He is a kind, bright, devoted, funny and sometimes rigid guy who loves music, video games, Minecraft, physics and astronomy. He is one of the most loyal and considerate people I know. He has taken Latin with his best friends for the past four years. With minimal preparation and a relatively small amount of formal academics in his lifetime, Jackson passed the GED and has begun taking classes at Grand Canyon University.

Nathan is incredibly fun, funny and quick-witted, sensitive, creative and boisterous. Nathan is amazing with people. I remember when he was about eight or nine, a new family had moved in next door. One afternoon he said to me, “Mom. I’ll be right back. I’m going to go meet the new neighbors.” That’s just Nathan. He also loves video games, Minecraft, music, Latin and Legos. He is just as happy playing music with Jackson as he is playing spies with his younger sister.

Gianna is spirited, creative, shy and has a laugh that is absolutely contagious. Gianna chooses her friends very carefully. She has a great sense of style. She loves learning about the US presidents, animals (especially baby animals) and China. Gianna is a spelling whiz and the only one of



Learning by doing: crafting a stop-motion film

our kids who has always been unschooled. She knows more geography than I do!

I think the best thing unschooling has done for our family is that it’s taken the power struggle out of our day. What has been so cool for me, personally, is seeing how learning really can happen without coercion. Because they get to choose most of what they do throughout the day, the kids are usually happy to help out or change directions when I ask them to.

The way Doug and I see things is that it is very important to help our kids know who they are and what they are good at. We want them to love learning, know how to think, know how to develop close relationships, to love and serve God, be tolerant of others, etc.

We have discovered a lot through our unschooling journey—a journey that we are still on. One thing is that this lifestyle really works for us. I know it isn’t for everyone, just like I know homeschooling isn’t for everyone. It works well with our parenting style. I have actually been amazed at how much *school* stuff my kids have learned on their own or with my help, but at their request. They remember just about everything they learn, and they do what they do well.

I’m passionate about unschooling because it’s just who we are.



Melissa Lake lives in Phoenix, Arizona with her husband, Doug, and their three kids: Jackson, Nathan and Gianna. The Lakes have been homeschooling for twelve years and thoroughly enjoy their simple life.

SURVEYING THE SITES

by Lorie Codispoti

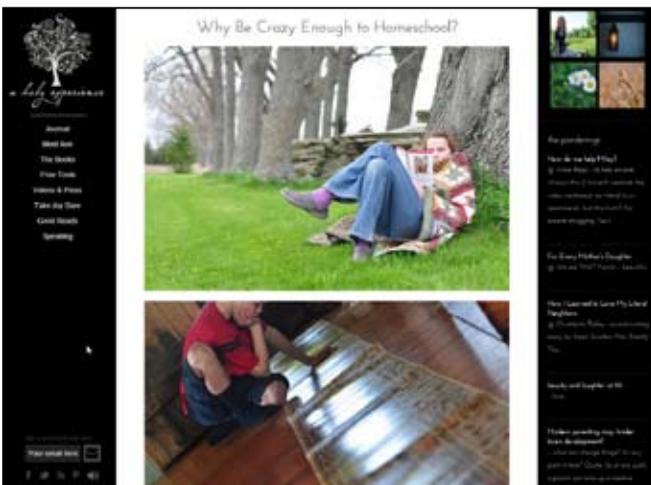
Not everyone has the time to survey around the Internet to find informative, fun, and educational websites for their family to enjoy. That's why we offer this column. By dividing it into four sections, we work towards our goal—to provide something for everyone. We hope that you will enjoy what we've surveyed for you this month.

ARTICLES OF INTEREST

"Hymn Study in Your Homeschool" by Mary Prather

<http://heartofthematteronline.com/hymn-study-in-your-homeschool/>

"One of the simplest ways to incorporate music in your homeschool is through hymn study. Hymn study makes for great copywork, scripture study, and memorization. You can also research hymns from the era you are studying in history." (MP)



"Why Be Crazy Enough To Homeschool" by Ann Voskamp

<http://www.aholyexperience.com/2012/03/pros-cons-homeschooling-christian-educatio/>

"Homeschooling is about going higher up and deeper in, for you learn to sacrificially love in ways you have never loved before. You come to know your own heart in ways you never imagined, the souls of your children in intimate, very real ways." (AV)

TEACHER FEATURE



Home Library Organization

<http://www.onlypassionatecuriosity.com/home-library-organization-free-printable/>

What a simple, yet thoroughly practical way to organize your homeschool library. The author even includes a free download for you to print your own spine labels.

25 Awesome Virtual Learning Experiences

<http://www.aceonlineschools.com/25-awesome-virtual-learning-experiences-online/>

Let's go on a tour! Here's a list of twenty-five great websites that feature some wonderful virtual learning experiences. You may never get the chance to swim alongside a blue whale, but taking this virtual tour, along with the others, will provide you with some interesting dinner conversation.

IT'S ELEMENTARY

Candy Experiments

<http://www.candyexperiments.com/p/experiments.html>

Okay, kids (of all ages, of course), here's one website you're going to love. It's all about experimenting with candy! That's right. Be sure to save your Warheads, Skittles, Starbursts, and even



your marshmallow Peeps. You'll discover more than taste bud science here as you learn about lighting Lifesavers, floating the M's off of the M&M's, and a host of other things, like how to add wheels to your chewy candy to make a car. Have fun!



Foldable Fun Geometry

<http://hootyshomeroom.blogspot.com/2013/05/foldable-fungeometry.html>

Notebook are great learning tools for every subject. Here's a great idea to include for your math journals. Turn a flat piece of paper into a three-dimensional shape and then use it to teach geometry terms.

HIGH SCHOOL AND BEYOND

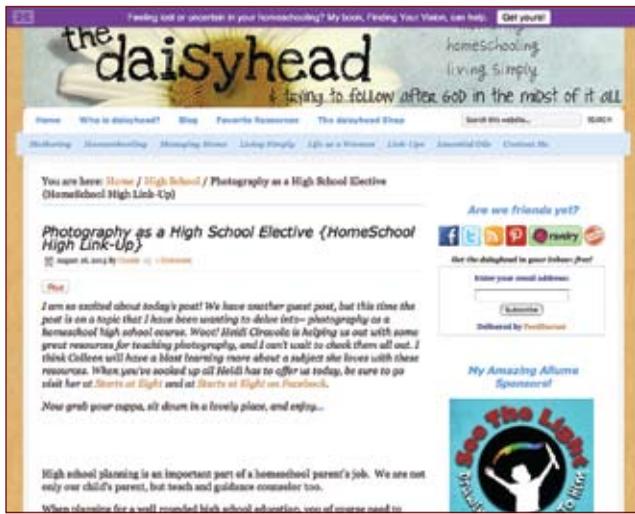
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<http://www.homeschoolcollegeusa.com/index.html>

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resources here to build a degree plan & study for CLEP or DSST. There's also a free 4-year high school curriculum plan. If you are on a tight budget, or just want to save some money on high school curriculum take a look at the resources offered on this website.





Note: Ideas and opinions expressed on the websites in this column are not necessarily those of the author or NCHC.



Lorie Codispoti is retired from homeschooling after successfully graduating her two children. She and her husband, John, are former NCHC board members. Lorie can be reached at GatesOfElloree@gmail.com.

Photography as a High School Elective

<http://www.thedaisyhead.com/2013/08/photography-as-a-high-school-elective/>

Here's a creative elective idea. If your child is interested in photography take a few minutes to read this article by a homeschool parent and photographer. She has compiled a list of resources for the course she titles Digital Photography Basics.



Meet Annie, a homeschooled teen whose father's work with NASA takes her all over North America, Europe, Australia, and the Middle East. But unlike most travelers, Annie encounters art thieves, industrial spies, terrorists, and two mysterious relatives. Read as Annie learns to trust God when she encounters the challenges of our day.

Annie's Adventures Series is for middle-grade readers and young adults from age nine and up. It is faith-

based, designed to teach and apply spiritual principles from the Bible to our everyday lives. Each book is filled with mystery and suspense to make learning fun.

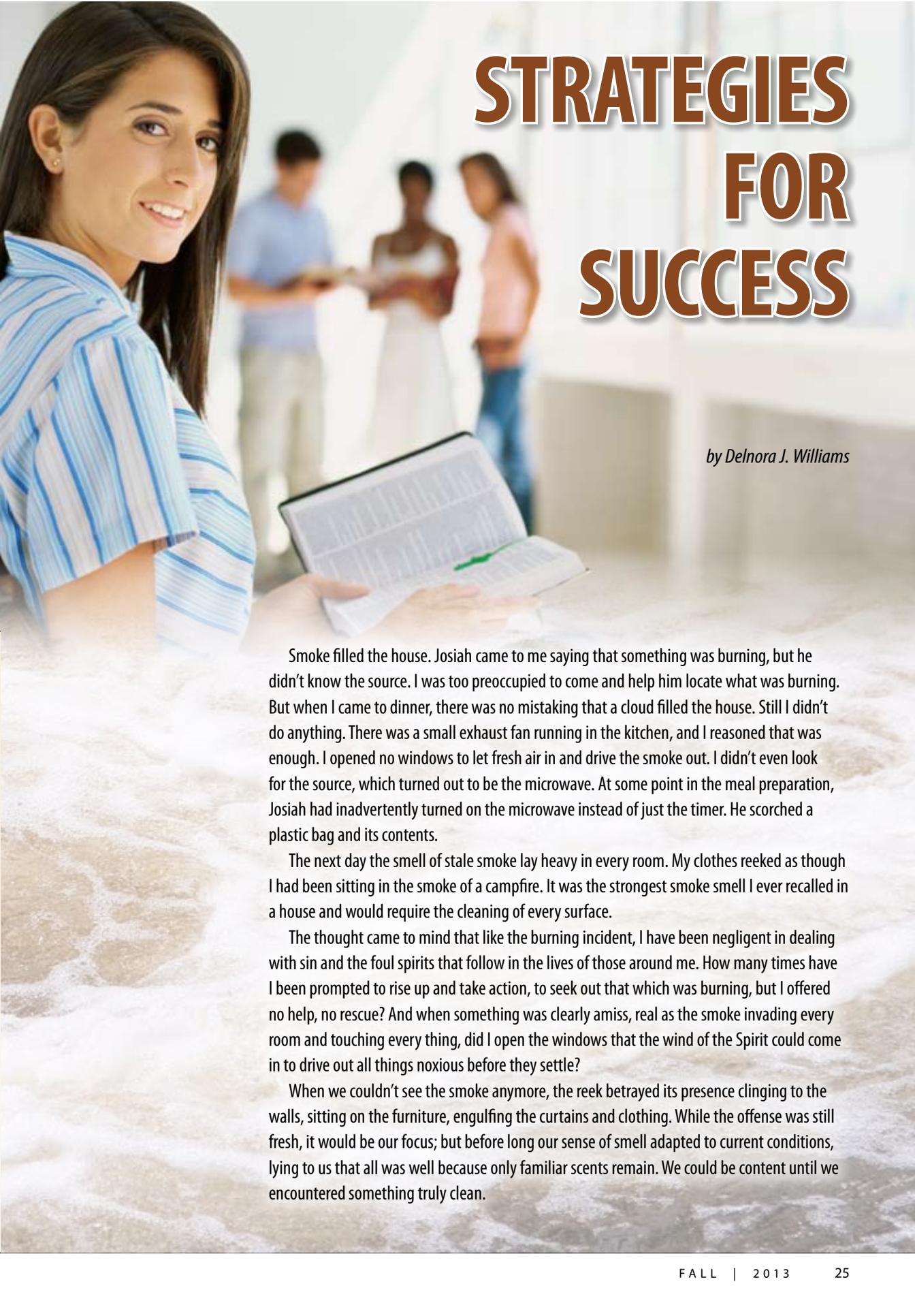
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STRATEGIES FOR SUCCESS

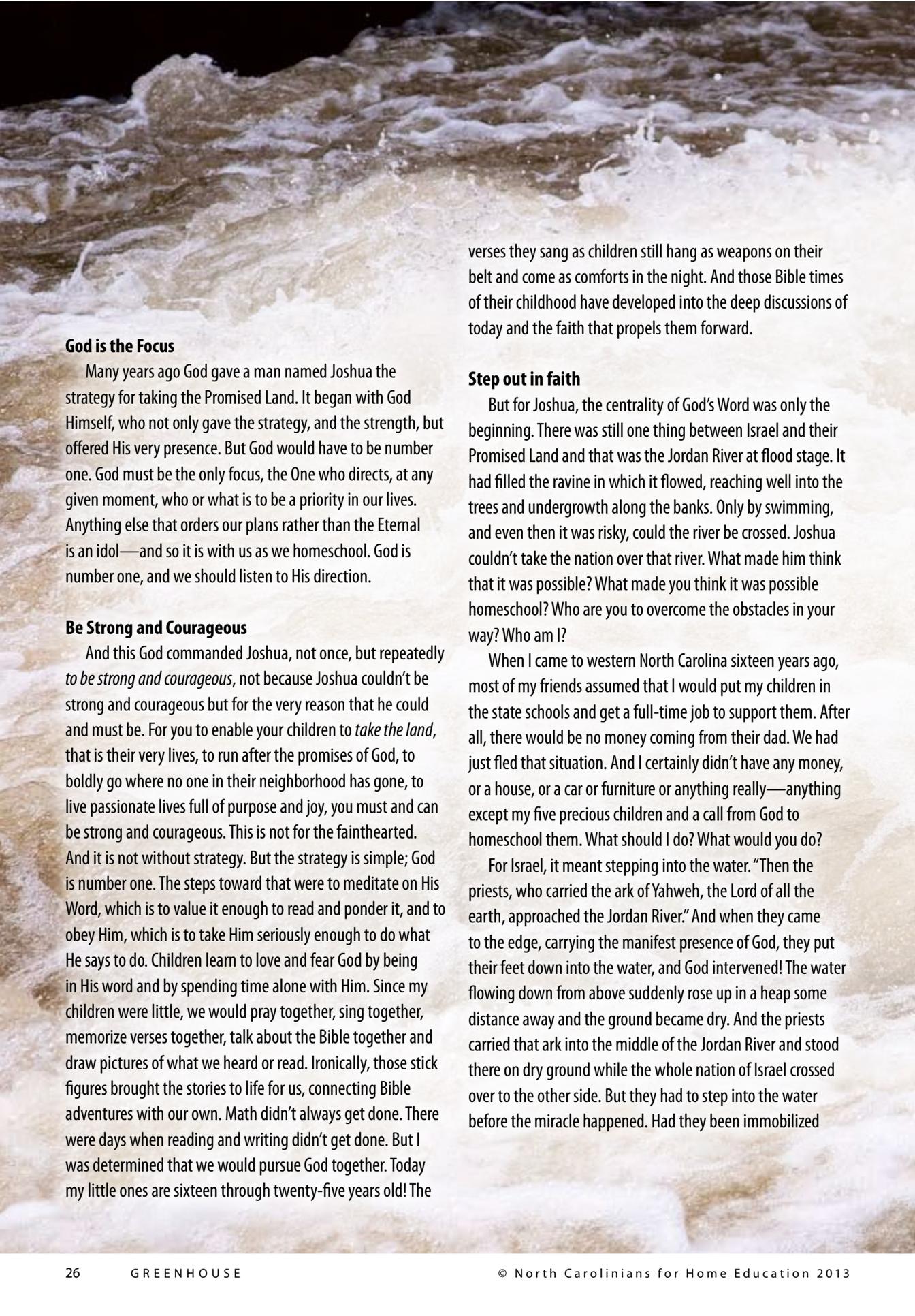
by Delnora J. Williams

Smoke filled the house. Josiah came to me saying that something was burning, but he didn't know the source. I was too preoccupied to come and help him locate what was burning. But when I came to dinner, there was no mistaking that a cloud filled the house. Still I didn't do anything. There was a small exhaust fan running in the kitchen, and I reasoned that was enough. I opened no windows to let fresh air in and drive the smoke out. I didn't even look for the source, which turned out to be the microwave. At some point in the meal preparation, Josiah had inadvertently turned on the microwave instead of just the timer. He scorched a plastic bag and its contents.

The next day the smell of stale smoke lay heavy in every room. My clothes reeked as though I had been sitting in the smoke of a campfire. It was the strongest smoke smell I ever recalled in a house and would require the cleaning of every surface.

The thought came to mind that like the burning incident, I have been negligent in dealing with sin and the foul spirits that follow in the lives of those around me. How many times have I been prompted to rise up and take action, to seek out that which was burning, but I offered no help, no rescue? And when something was clearly amiss, real as the smoke invading every room and touching every thing, did I open the windows that the wind of the Spirit could come in to drive out all things noxious before they settle?

When we couldn't see the smoke anymore, the reek betrayed its presence clinging to the walls, sitting on the furniture, engulfing the curtains and clothing. While the offense was still fresh, it would be our focus; but before long our sense of smell adapted to current conditions, lying to us that all was well because only familiar scents remain. We could be content until we encountered something truly clean.



God is the Focus

Many years ago God gave a man named Joshua the strategy for taking the Promised Land. It began with God Himself, who not only gave the strategy, and the strength, but offered His very presence. But God would have to be number one. God must be the only focus, the One who directs, at any given moment, who or what is to be a priority in our lives. Anything else that orders our plans rather than the Eternal is an idol—and so it is with us as we homeschool. God is number one, and we should listen to His direction.

Be Strong and Courageous

And this God commanded Joshua, not once, but repeatedly *to be strong and courageous*, not because Joshua couldn't be strong and courageous but for the very reason that he could and must be. For you to enable your children to *take the land*, that is their very lives, to run after the promises of God, to boldly go where no one in their neighborhood has gone, to live passionate lives full of purpose and joy, you must and can be strong and courageous. This is not for the fainthearted. And it is not without strategy. But the strategy is simple; God is number one. The steps toward that were to meditate on His Word, which is to value it enough to read and ponder it, and to obey Him, which is to take Him seriously enough to do what He says to do. Children learn to love and fear God by being in His word and by spending time alone with Him. Since my children were little, we would pray together, sing together, memorize verses together, talk about the Bible together and draw pictures of what we heard or read. Ironically, those stick figures brought the stories to life for us, connecting Bible adventures with our own. Math didn't always get done. There were days when reading and writing didn't get done. But I was determined that we would pursue God together. Today my little ones are sixteen through twenty-five years old! The

verses they sang as children still hang as weapons on their belt and come as comforts in the night. And those Bible times of their childhood have developed into the deep discussions of today and the faith that propels them forward.

Step out in faith

But for Joshua, the centrality of God's Word was only the beginning. There was still one thing between Israel and their Promised Land and that was the Jordan River at flood stage. It had filled the ravine in which it flowed, reaching well into the trees and undergrowth along the banks. Only by swimming, and even then it was risky, could the river be crossed. Joshua couldn't take the nation over that river. What made him think that it was possible? What made you think it was possible homeschool? Who are you to overcome the obstacles in your way? Who am I?

When I came to western North Carolina sixteen years ago, most of my friends assumed that I would put my children in the state schools and get a full-time job to support them. After all, there would be no money coming from their dad. We had just fled that situation. And I certainly didn't have any money, or a house, or a car or furniture or anything really—anything except my five precious children and a call from God to homeschool them. What should I do? What would you do?

For Israel, it meant stepping into the water. "Then the priests, who carried the ark of Yahweh, the Lord of all the earth, approached the Jordan River." And when they came to the edge, carrying the manifest presence of God, they put their feet down into the water, and God intervened! The water flowing down from above suddenly rose up in a heap some distance away and the ground became dry. And the priests carried that ark into the middle of the Jordan River and stood there on dry ground while the whole nation of Israel crossed over to the other side. But they had to step into the water before the miracle happened. Had they been immobilized

by fear, had they not stepped into the rushing waters of the Jordan, then the waters would not have parted. First Peter talks about us as believers in Jesus Christ as being a holy priesthood. We are the intercessors for those around us. We carry the presence of God. We set the tone in our families—fear or faith. Do you want to see the waters part? You have to step in. Hebrews tells us that without faith it is impossible to please God. Did you think homeschooling was any different?

That act of faith on my part, indeed, every act of faith on my part, has been met by the miraculous power of the living God. And my children watched this for sixteen years. Then they began to look for the Jordan River at flood stage, eager to step right in, believing God for provision in lack, wisdom with problems, power for the impossible. He brought money for college, made missions trips happen and piled the proverbial water up in heap.

These are the testimonies that we tell each other over and over again. Just as Joshua was directed to gather stones from the middle of the Jordan and build two memorials, so we collect the memories of mighty works of our God that the next generation would know that God is number one; “He rocks!”

Respond rather than ignore

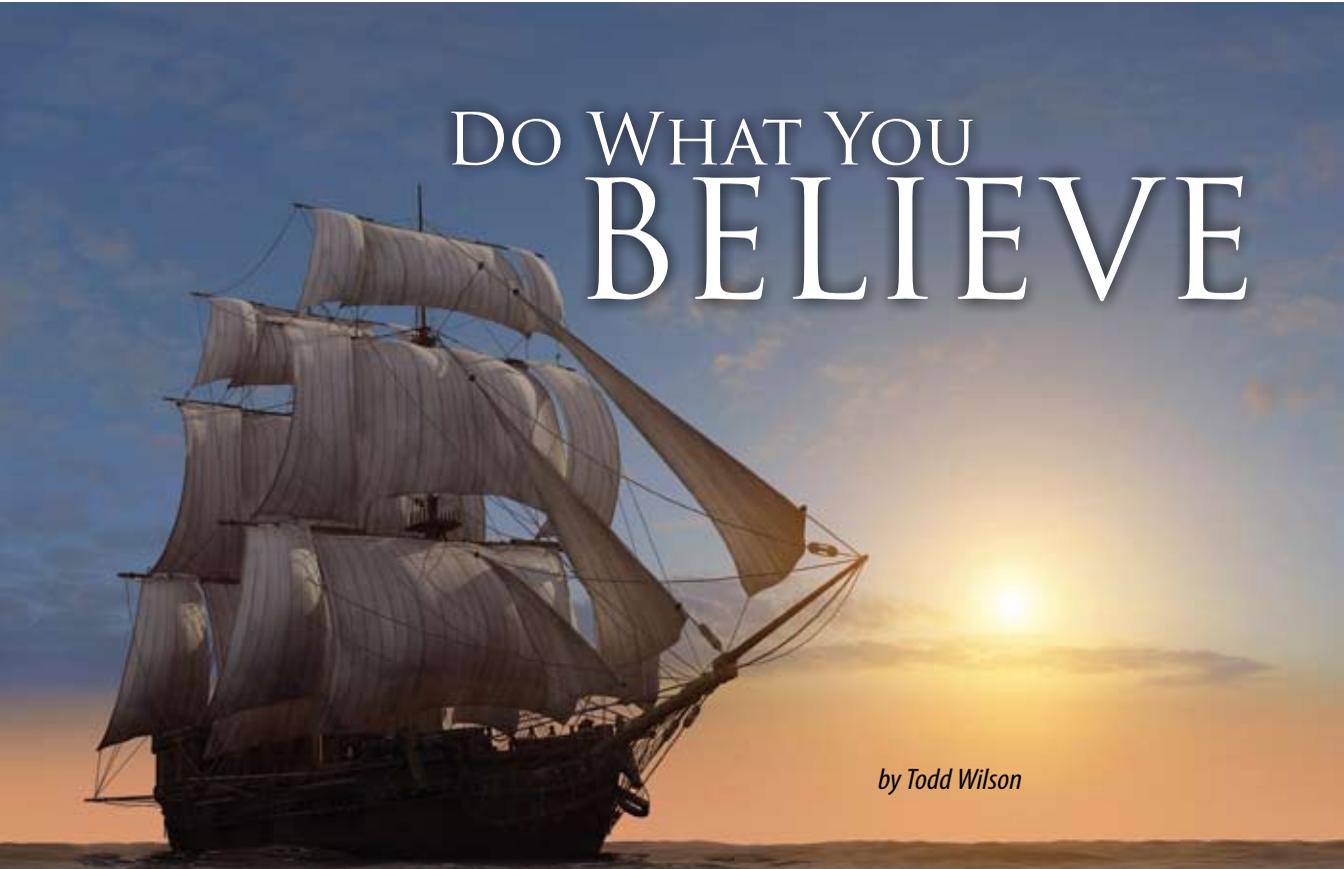
Finally, as you consider strategies for success, take sin seriously and respond rather than ignore when things happen. Attitudes of the heart matter. Achan may have been looking out for himself when he took plunder after the victory at Jericho. Perhaps he had been especially valiant when the walls fell and felt entitled, or had unusual financial burdens, or didn't get the memo about the devoted things. It doesn't matter. When they came to fight Ai, his sin made cowards of the victors and cost Israel dearly. The nation had to repent

before they could move forward. It is the same with us and our children but not always so clear-cut. Is it possible that the rude comments coming out of your teen are covering up pain? Is the two-year-old acting up again because she doesn't know what else to do with the rising stress level of fearful parents? This interconnectedness between us and our baggage is what drives us to our knees as a family to deal with our sin, our lack of love and compassion, our unbelief and anxiety, our fear of failure and outbursts of anger. More than once, when I intended to confront a child with a bad attitude, the Spirit of God redirected me to speak life instead, reminding her of her worth and identity as a daughter of the Most High God. And then the tears would flow, bringing repentance and healing as we got to the root of the issue.

Because God is our life, we are courageous; we remember His works: and we step into the flood. We also move in His agenda of forgiveness and restoration, remembering that “where there's smoke there's fire.” Someone we love may need our help, now.



Delnora Williams is the single homeschooling mother of five children, ages fifteen to twenty-five and founder of Kairos Equipping. A graduate of the University of Washington in Seattle, she has taught high school classes to homeschooled teens, administered the Woodcock-Johnson test of achievement and worked with youth in her community for over thirteen years. For the past three years, she has regularly hosted worship, study and prayer weekends in her home for teens and young adults to experience the love of the Father, the richness of the Word of God and the freedom available in Christ.



DO WHAT YOU BELIEVE

by Todd Wilson

I just spoke to a group of homeschoolers in Northern Indiana. It was a great meeting with lots of laughs. I could tell from the tears and nods of affirmation that what we talked about penetrated straight to the hearts of the moms in the crowd.

Afterwards, out by my book table, a group of moms descended on me like buzzards on a road-kill sandwich.

“So you think we should relax and not push our kids to excellence?” one of them asked.

“We can’t just let them be lazy and decide what they do or don’t want to do,” another added.

I let them fire their questions, and then I said, “I’m not telling you to do anything. In fact, I don’t care *what* you do for school. It’s not about what I want, or what my kids want. What do you think you should do?”

One of them said, “I believe all that you say about relaxing, and that each child is a masterpiece, but how do you live that out?” I know she was looking for some kind of curriculum approach that would fill in all the blanks, but I’m not about curriculum (although I could make a lot of money if I was).

“I’m not going to tell you *how* to live it out,” I said, “but I believe God will make it clear and that you probably already know how to do it, but you’re just afraid to do it.”

Just then, another mom reduced all the questions into a simple statement. “It would be easy if I lived out in the middle of nowhere and didn’t have to worry about anyone else.”

I’ve thought about that statement since our conversation. What that mom said is what I believe many other moms feel deep in their hearts. They know what is best, but the pressure that comes from others causes them to do something different—even something they don’t believe to be best or worthwhile.

So I’m going to try and help you do what you believe you should do.

FIRST—BUCK UP!

Do you want a happy home, filled with happy kids who love you, God and all that you believe in, or a miserable home filled with unhappy kids, who may or may not be able to do algebra and who vow never to homeschool their kids? If you choose the first, then you'll have to go against the flow. You'll have to chart your own waters while others look at you and scratch their head.

You may have to endure looks of shock or silent judgments, not just from non-homeschooling friends and relatives but from other militant, homeschool nuts. You can't live a life of freedom and joy by trying to please others. It just doesn't work. So buck up and quit making choices based on what others think, say or do.

SECOND—CHART YOUR COURSE!

With a pen or pencil, divide a piece of paper into four columns. At the top of the first column write *Essentials*. Under that heading list all the subjects *you* believe your children need in order to function in the world. At the top of the second column write *Desired*. Under this heading list all the subjects you'd like your children to know or be exposed to. At the top of the third column write *Frustrations*. In this column list all the subjects that exist in your present school format that frustrate either you or your children. At the top of the last column write *Stupid Stuff*. Under this heading, list all the subjects that you or your spouse think are a waste of time.

THIRD—BURN YOUR SHIPS!

Although Cortez may not have actually burned his ships to keep his troops from returning to wherever it was they were from, I like the idea of making it hard to go back. This is really an important step. I know too many homeschooling moms who know what is true but can't ever get away from the things they hate because they don't burn the ships.

So take the piece of paper that you just charted your course on. Now rip that last column off. You think these items or subjects are stupid and a waste of time, so get rid of them. Take this torn off piece and get rid of everything listed on it. That means if it lists a musical instrument, cancel your lessons and sell the instrument on eBay. If you listed something like sentence diagramming on this last column, then scratch it from your lesson plan. Do what you know to be best. Stop!

Now, turn your attention to the third column. Take a good long look at it. If these subjects or items are truly causing frustration, then do one of two things: either figure out a

different way to do those things to eliminate the frustration and disharmony or cut them out and get rid of them. The relationships and joy in your home are much more important than the things that are causing the frustration and relationship breakdowns.

That leaves you with two columns. Now adjust your homeschool day to reflect what really matters. It's simple if you will allow it to be.

FOURTH—CIRCLE UP THE WAGONS!

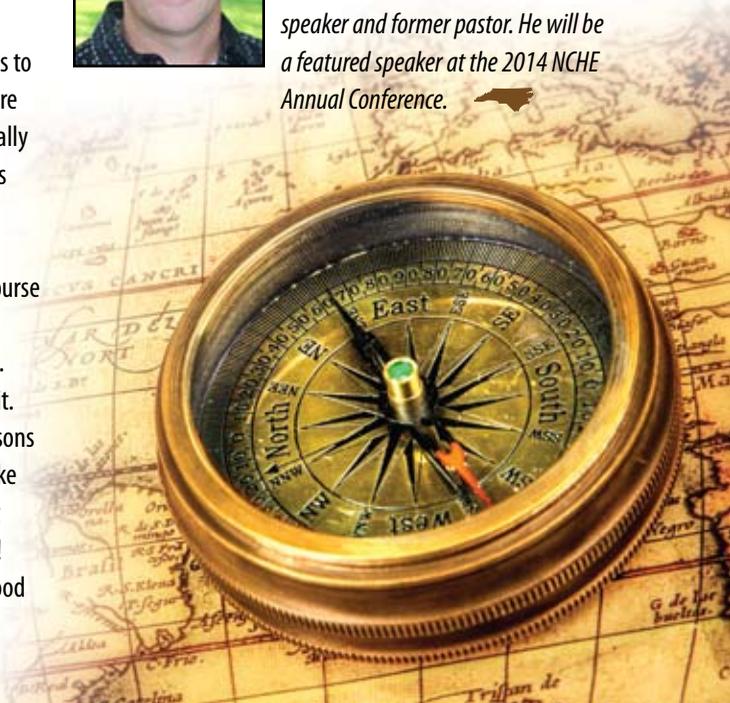
Since you don't live in the middle of nowhere (unless you're from Montana) and will hear others' critical comments, make sure to have at least one like-minded friend who has similar types of things on her list. Then hold each other to your lists of what really matters. That circle of friends is like a circle of wagons offering protection from the flaming darts of the enemy.

Husbands, if you're reading this, make sure you are one of those wagons reminding your spouse of what matters and what doesn't.

I'm telling you, you're *this* close to having the homeschool you've always wanted. All you have to do is—what you really believe.



Todd Wilson, author of Lies Homeschooling Moms Believe, Help! I'm Married to a Homeschooling Mom, and The Official Book of Homeschooling Cartoons, is a dad, writer, conference speaker and former pastor. He will be a featured speaker at the 2014 NCH Annual Conference.



Homeschooler Patrick Goetze Signs Professional Contract with the **Boston Red Sox**



by Ernie Hodges

Patrick Goetze (pronounced Getz), son of Kenny and Debra Goetze of Zebulon, NC, signed a professional contract with the Boston Red Sox in early July. He had previously signed a National Letter of Intent with Louisburg College. After receiving the professional offer, he decided that to accept the contract was what the Lord would have him to do. For this 6'6", 200 lb. prospect who throws comfortably in the low 90s, it was not a matter of ease getting to this point. In March of 2012, he had to undergo Tommy John surgery (named for the first professional pitcher to ever return to the big leagues after having surgery for ulnar collateral ligament replacement).

When asked what he thought about homeschooling, he replied, "I loved the whole homeschool concept about being around my mother, father, brothers and sister. Homeschooling helped get me to where I am today." He also related, "The flexibility of homeschooling allowed me to work out with major leaguer Josh Hamilton and to train with pitching coach Mike Caldwell. If I were in school, I might not have been able to work that into my schedule with school and team practices."

During his senior season, he helped lead his homeschool Wake County Warriors to their second consecutive second place finish at the Homeschool World Series, and he participated in the NCHE Athletic Commission spring season where they won the state championship this year. His personal statistics this year were a 6-1 record with an ERA (earned run average) of 0.69 earned runs per game. His pitching coach, Robert Stephenson, assessed his pitching abilities in the following manner:

"He throws both two and four-seam fastballs, both of which run in on the hands of right-handed hitters. He throws from a low three-quarter-arm angle, which creates deception to the batter and gives his pitches exceptional movement. Pat also has good command of his breaking ball and change-up and will throw these off-speed pitches on almost any count. Because his delivery doesn't change from pitch to pitch, right-handed batters don't know if the ball is going to run in on their hands or break toward the outside corner."

When his coach, Warren Harvey, was asked about him, he said, "He is just a great kid and has kept everything in perspective. He dealt with adversity with injuries and through all of that,

he didn't allow it to keep him from pursuing his goals." Further, he added, "Patrick never missed a practice or game while he was injured and helped motivate his teammates."

Participating with Purpose Driven Baseball, a showcase team out of Clayton, NC, benefitted his recruiting process. He also received exposure when his homeschool team played in the Homeschool World Series and tournaments such as the Bobby Murray Tournament where they played teams including East Wake, Fuquay-Varina, Millbrook, Northeast Guilford. He was evaluated by a scout for Major League Baseball and, in turn, he received interest from the Angels, Blue Jays, Braves, Pirates, Red Sox, Royals and White Sox (several of which visited him at his home).

Because shoulder pain in his right arm has slightly limited his pitching

time this spring, the Red Sox have had him in rehabilitation at their training facility in Fort Myers, Florida. He was just recently released to pitching in competition, and he pitched one inning in a Gulf Coast League game on August 14 where he retired two of three batters faced without giving up a walk or hit on seven pitches. He will continue in the Gulf Coast League, which is a rookie league, and hopes to participate in the fall instructional league.



Ernie and his wife, Iris, homeschooled their three children to high school graduation. Ernie served on the NCHC board of directors for many years and now serves as the NCHC state director.



Patrick Goetze pitching for the Red Sox



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WEARY?

REJUVENATE YOUR SCHOOL WITH A DAY OF ACTIVITIES THAT YOU LOVE!

by Nancy Coleman

The first day of school has come and gone, and your routine is well underway. Fall can be a time of waning excitement, and perhaps disappointment and discouragement have started to set in. You had a good start, but are realizing that you are only halfway to Christmas break, and there are many long days ahead before you reach the end of your school year. Thinking about it, you may feel like your head is barely staying above water. This can be an overwhelming time for teachers and for students. It's time for some coping strategies!

PRAY

Even though sometimes it defaults to last place, prayer should be our first go-to. It may seem unnecessary to point this out, but I frequently need a reminder. When I am in a tense situation and feel like the waves of stress are crashing on my face, I'm usually trying to survive—not stopping the madness to pray. Yet, prayer has the wonderful, inherent quality of infusing peace into every situation. It promotes peace in your home, school and relationships. Prayer also gives you a proper and realistic perspective of what is going on.

Try to approach your days and situations with patience. Knowing that this is easier said than done, do what it takes to get to a place that will actually foster patience. For me, this involves being somewhere alone—my bedroom, my car, my shower, the grocery store. Everyone has their sweet place to go into hiding. One of my favorite ways to escape is to put on my noise-canceling headphones, attach them to my iPod and crank the volume. (Not to a harmful level, of course.) I usually clean something when I do this. It's a great way to escape while remaining at home. Find that place for yourself, and pray for peace, perspective and patience.

GET OUT OF YOUR BOX

Sometimes all we need is a change of scenery: to get outside of our homeschool box. My husband and I live in the mountains of North Carolina. One out-of-the-box activity the kids and I did frequently was to pack up all our school books and head to the forest. We live about ten minutes from the Pisgah National Forest, so it was a short drive to freedom. We chose a picnic table near the edge of the road or by the river and set up shop on it. We always had a snack—which sometimes was purchased on the way and was never healthy. We could (and did) stay for hours, and we almost always turned from books to river and forest exploration. Those are great memories!

Another favorite out-of-the-box activity was what became known as Dairy Bar Day. The Dairy Bar is an ice cream stand that is only open in the summer months, and we always felt like we needed to take advantage of those months. Since it costs about four times as much to buy cones as it does to buy cartons of ice cream at the grocery store, we instituted a Dairy Bar jar. Into this jar went all the loose change that was found anywhere in the house, along with any extra money any of us wanted to contribute throughout the week. When



we needed a break, or on Tuesdays, we emptied the jar and headed out. This put us outside in the sunshine, engaging in an activity near and dear to our hearts—eating ice cream. We realized that these activities, along with others, provided the escape that helped to change our perspectives. They refueled us, and we were always able to get back in the saddle with more vigor.

FIND A WAY TO SERVE SOMEONE

Often, our perspective is wrapped up in the world of *me*. We start to feel a little discouraged, and then, suddenly, it becomes all about our situation, our problems, our challenges and so on. By no means is this a suggestion that your life demands are insignificant, but it is a suggestion that perhaps a break from thinking about those problems would do them, and *you*, a world of good.

The best way I have ever heard or experienced to get out of my “me, me, me” thought process, is to obtain a “you, you, you” focus. With your children, find someone who needs something done and do it for them without expectation of a return. There is no shortage of these cases, and you probably won’t have to look farther than your backyard. Listen to people around you. There are people who are really living difficult lives who need a break. Come up with something that

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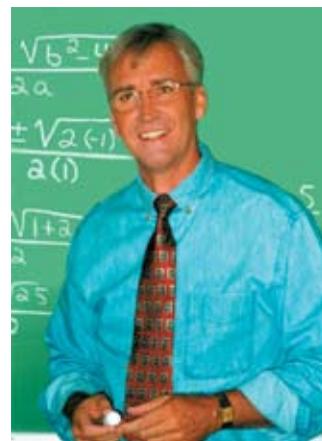
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Dana Mosely
(aka Uncle Buck)

would just be nice to do for someone. Take the initiative, don't discuss it with anyone, and do it—either anonymously, or with their full knowledge.

TAKE A SHORT TRIP TO SOMEWHERE NEW

You are probably within about thirty minutes of some place you've never been before. For us, it was easy to find a small mountain town or a museum or a national historic sight or even a store that we had never explored. Just the addition of new stimuli jumpstarted the creative process again in each of us. We were able to get back to work on our school tasks without the drudgery.

HAVE A COOKING PARTY WITH YOUR FAMILY

I have a couple of children who like to cook. I have a lot of children who like to eat. And they like to be together. Cooking together is something we have done for many years now. Often, we have someone else come for dinner, too. Sometimes our guests are involved with the process and sometimes not. We have a couple of family favorites; homemade ravioli, grilled pizza, Mexican build-your-own-burrito bar. Each of these means significant prep time. We gather ingredients, make a plan and start early. There is plenty of time for fellowship and laughs, and we usually end up eating much later than we had planned, but it gives us an evening to regroup and strengthen our relationships.

Remember: your school is what you want it to be. It should be tailor-made for your family and its needs. And



it should be fluid. It's OK to take a day and leave the books behind. Part of what you are teaching your children is how to manage stress and difficult situations and how to rejuvenate when they need to. When they are adults, these practices will be vital and will help them function as valuable members of society.

Take a break!



Nancy Coleman lives in the mountains of North Carolina, near a little town called Brevard. She is married to Tim, and together they have seven children, including one who still lives at home, and two who are married. She and Tim enjoy spending time with their family, as well as gardening and tending to their farm animals. Nancy has been a part of the NCHS board since 1996 and currently serves as conference vice president.

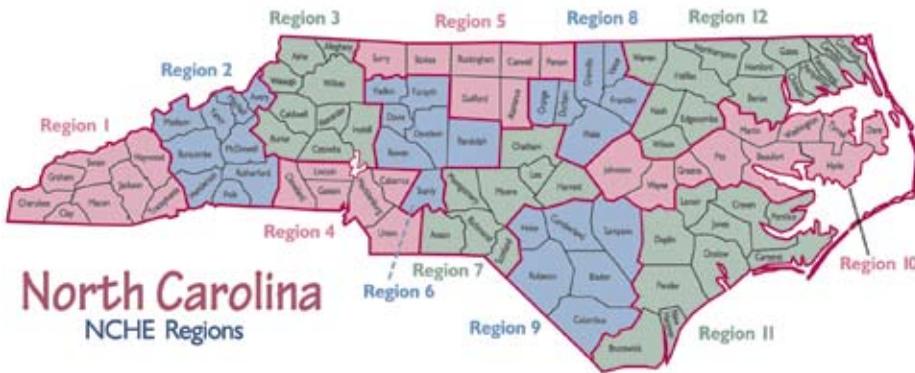
An advertisement for HSLDA. The background is a photograph of a baseball player in a blue uniform crouching to help a younger player in a red uniform. The text "We've been going to bat for homeschool freedom since 1983." is written in a large, red, serif font across the middle. In the bottom right corner, there is a logo for HSLDA (Home School Legal Defense Association) featuring a classical column inside a circle, with the text "HSLDA" below it. Underneath the logo is a blue banner with the text "Join Our Team" in white script. At the bottom of the advertisement, the website "www.hslda.org" and phone number "540-338-5600" are listed in white text on a dark red background.

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North Carolina Homeschool History

Although home education is the oldest form of education, it was not officially recognized in North Carolina until a Supreme Court decision in 1985 ruled that a homeschool could operate under the existing private school law. Through the efforts of concerned members of North Carolinians for Home Education, a bill was passed in 1988 that specifically named home education as an alternative for complying with compulsory school attendance requirements.

About NCHE

Our purpose is to protect the freedom to educate at home, to provide encouragement and support to families choosing home education for their children and to promote home education as an excellent educational alternative. Since its beginning in 1984, NCHE has grown from a few pioneering families to a statewide association of home educators that promotes home education and supports home educators. NCHE is governed by a working board of directors who volunteer their time and efforts to represent homeschoolers in every part of the state. A non-profit organization, NCHE operates on the basis of biblical principles and living faith. NCHE welcomes members of all races and religions.

NCHE Membership

Membership in NCHE is available to anyone who pledges to uphold the ideals of NCHE and comply with the North Carolina homeschool law (if they are homeschooling residents of NC). 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. The NCHE ideals are: educational excellence, parental authority and responsibility for education, protection and promotion of the family, diligence in moral and ethical instruction, responsible citizenship, freedom of choice among educational alternatives, and defense of constitutional rights.

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NCHE Thirtieth Annual Conference and Book Fair will be May 22-24, 2014, at the M.C. Benton Convention Center in Winston-Salem, NC.

NCHE East: Celebrating Homeschool. NCHE is sponsoring a one day event in Greenville on October 26. It will be a day filled with encouraging talks and vendors from NC. You will find complete information at nche.com.

Conference recordings. MP3s of conference sessions are available on the NCHE website, nche.com, under the NCHE store link.

GREENHOUSE Online. GREENHOUSE articles are made freely available online. Users may access a digital version (PDF) of the magazine in its entirety at nche.com. Users may also enjoy a mid-week update every Wednesday as NCHE makes one article from the current volume available in an online readable format at greenhouse.nche.com.

4-H Spotlight Article. The annual 4-H student achievement article will be featured in the winter issue of GREENHOUSE. If your student would like to be included, send specifics (county, age division and interest/subject and parents' names) to nche@nche.com by November 1. The students' families must be NCHE members to be included.

Email addresses wanted. Since NCHE uses email for much of its communication, your email addresses are needed in order for us to stay in touch. The Mid-Week Update is NCHE's regular email containing news, announcements and website highlights. If you would like to receive our emails, you can go online to nche.com and sign up to get the emails.

From Our Friends

Homeschool Historical Ball. Geared to homeschooled young adults and their families, this formal event will take place in the east Duplin area on Saturday, November 9. Live music will be mostly from Early American, English and Scottish periods. Modesty in dress and behavior are required; students must be chaperoned, and homeschooled high school graduates enter at no charge. Call Lydia Carroll for more information at (910) 340-7081.

Fall Homeschool Days.

Rural Hill Farm, Huntersville, October 4

The North Carolina Transportation Museum,
Salisbury, October 11

Chimney Rock, October 16

Carolina Raptor Center, Huntersville, inside Latta
Plantation Nature Preserve, October 18

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NCHE THIRTIETH ANNUAL CONFERENCE

May 22-24, 2014 • M.C. Benton Convention Center in Winston-Salem, NC

"In thirty years of speaking at homeschool conferences, I had never attended the NCHE conference until this year. I was blown away. The cost of the conference was underpriced; the location was central; the vendor hall was full of more than anyone could expect; NCHE trustees were all engaged and super helpful; volunteers were friendly and knowledgeable; the facility was convenient in every respect, and the lineup of speakers was unparalleled. Simply put, all things considered, the NCHE conference is the best home school conference in America."

– Mike Smith, president of HSLDA –



Jeff Myers
President of Summit Ministries



Dr. Anthony B. Bradley
Author, professor and public policy analyst



Diana Waring
Author and homeschool pioneer



Rachael Carman
Author, homeschooling mom and co-owner of Apologia



Todd Wilson
Author and homeschooling dad



Sean McDowell
Apologetics and worldview speaker

Follow us as the conference comes together at <http://conference.nche.com/>



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A ONE DAY EVENT • OCTOBER 26, 2013 • 9 AM TO 6 PM



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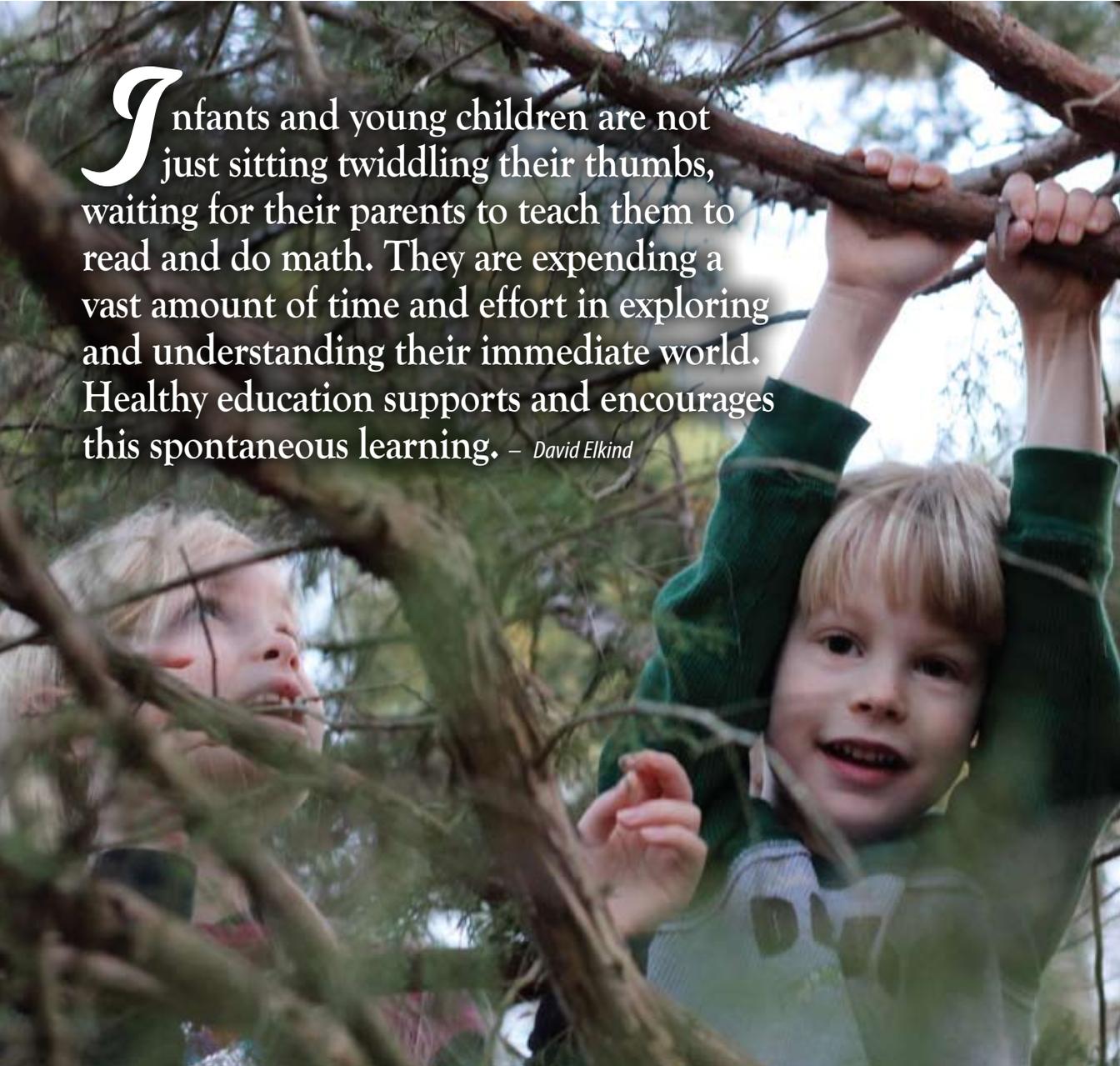
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A photograph of two young children climbing a tree. The child in the foreground is a young boy with blonde hair, wearing a green long-sleeved shirt, who is smiling and looking towards the camera while holding onto a thick tree branch with both hands. Behind him, another child is visible, also climbing and looking upwards. The background is filled with the branches and green needles of a pine tree, suggesting an outdoor setting.

Infants and young children are not just sitting twiddling their thumbs, waiting for their parents to teach them to read and do math. They are expending a vast amount of time and effort in exploring and understanding their immediate world. Healthy education supports and encourages this spontaneous learning. — *David Elkind*