

FALL 2014  
Volume 33 | No. 1

# GREENHOUSE

Nurturing Home Education in North Carolina and Beyond



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but they have also to be left to  
educate themselves.

— Ernest Dimnet —



## About GREENHOUSE

GREENHOUSE (ISSN 2169-916X) is the periodical of North Carolinians for Home Education. It is a quarterly—four regular issues, plus a bonus graduate issue. It is mailed to subscribers and posted online. The name GREENHOUSE was chosen to represent the type of care homeschooling parents are able to give to their children. Children are lovingly “tended” in a protected and nurturing environment until they are sufficiently mature to go out and take a place of service in the world. Letters and articles addressed to the GREENHOUSE become property of NCHE with full right to publication without further permission required. Ideas and opinions expressed in letters and articles do not necessarily represent those of NCHE.

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## DEADLINES (Received By)

Issue Date	Articles	Ads and Announcements
Winter - Jan/Feb/Mar	Nov 20	Dec 1
Spring - Apr/May/Jun	Feb 20	Mar 1
Summer - Jul/Aug/Sep	May 20	Jun 1
Fall - Oct/Nov/Dec	Aug 20	Sep 1

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**North Carolinians for Home Education**

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# NCHE BOARD RETREATS TO *Haw River*

by Kevin McClain

It has long been the practice of the NCHE board to have an extended time together during the summer that includes an official board meeting. This meeting anchors the year, providing time not only for a debriefing from the May conference, but also for committees to work on strategies and plans for the upcoming year. This August 14-16 the board conducted its annual meeting, referred to as “the retreat,” at Haw River State Park in Brown Summit, just north of Greensboro. I’d like to share with you a little of the experience.

Before I begin telling you about NCHE activity, I’d like to give a big shout out to the staff at Haw River and say how much the NCHE board appreciates the North Carolina State Parks system and the public servants who maintain the sites. Haw River State Park is a real treasure, as is the staff who worked with NCHE for a successful retreat.

Now, I will tell you more about the 2014 “retreat.” You may have noticed that I placed the word “retreat” in quotations marks. I did this because it became an inside joke amongst some of the board members that this annual extended meeting is not very oriented toward relaxation. Rather, it is very work oriented and fast paced. In fact, it is less like a retreat and more like a triathlon. The event started Thursday evening with a nearly-three-hour board meeting full of updates, committee reports and motions. The first activity of the Thursday board meeting is prayer asking for God to guide the work of the board, and then families are introduced. It has long been NCHE’s tradition that the retreat includes families. Given that board members devote significant time to their NCHE duties, time that could be spent with their families, I think it good for the board members to be able to include their families on this long weekend. One of the goals of the retreat has always been to give board family members an opportunity to build relationships with each other. The other board meetings

involve just the voting board members and possibly, their spouses. The board is blessed with supportive spouses and children. It is always a highlight of the retreat for me to be in the presence of those who are an inspiration to the individual members of the board.

Part of Thursday's meeting is the election of several new board members. Over the last two years, the NCHE board has gone through a process of updating its bylaws and board structure. As a result, some new board positions were created and others were better defined. One significant change was that the regional director position was changed to regional liaison and the position is no longer a part of the board. This change helps to achieve quorum at board meetings and also to better signify the distinction between the *director role* board members play and the *connection role* of the regional liaisons with support groups in their geographical areas. Several board members who had been regional directors became regional liaisons, and several retired. Others were nominated and voted into newly created director positions. These changes resulted in several vacancies in the 2013-2014 board. I spoke about these vacancies at the annual conference and encouraged interested NCHE members to apply. I am happy to report that several members stepped up, and during the retreat, several positions were filled. You'll be hearing and seeing more of these new board members over the coming months, but very briefly, allow me to introduce them to you:

Stephanie Cox will serve as NCHE's first marketing director. Stephanie received her master's in business administration (MBA) from Liberty University. In addition to homeschooling, she works with the North Carolina Community College System teaching a variety of business and entrepreneurship courses.

Brian Gilpin will serve as NCHE's first development director. Brian works for Classical Conversations and has years of experience in relationship building.

Matthew McDill will serve as NCHE's regional liaison for region three, which covers the state's northwest counties. If you have attended NCHE's annual conference, you may have heard Matthew speak. He passionately shares about the freedom believers experience.

Fran Jones will serve as NCHE's regional liaison for region six, which includes much of the piedmont triad. Fran has long been active in support groups, as well as NC legislative matters.

I'm excited about working with our new board members and regional liaisons and the fresh insight they'll bring to the organization. I want to commend Kathy Landoli, our community relations director, and the nominations and election committee for doing the good work of vetting these candidates and welcoming them to the board.

Thursday night we receive the treasurer's report. Tanya



Dickens is NCHE's treasurer. One of the goals of the board is to be highly accountable for our spending, as we are funded by donations from members. Tanya is skilled in accounting and the board continues to appreciate her willingness to chair the finance committee and continue to keep the organization above reproach financially.

Friday was a busy day with various committee meetings and impromptu work. The conference committee, chaired by Debbie Mason, and the legislative committee, chaired by Spencer Mason, were in full swing. The Masons have long been leaders in NCHE, and they continue to serve, working hard to shepherd the organization into its second thirty years. While Spencer has a long history of legislative leadership, this is the first year Debbie has officially functioned as the chair of the conference committee in the new role of events director. Exciting changes are afoot, and I'm looking forward to the future of the NCHE annual conference. We have been encouraged of late regarding the impact the annual conference makes in the lives of NC homeschoolers. However, there are always things that we could do better, and the committee, under Debbie's leadership, is working hard to continue to make the conference an experience that encourages and challenges parent educators.

Friday's committee meetings took us late into the night. Board members were deep in discussion, planning and working, until well after 10:00 P.M. John Kirkland, a long-time board member, and NCHE's first IT director, was one such person. Well into the night, I witnessed him actively studying our online systems to perfect our data, an ongoing and often thankless role, needed in any organization with complex information needs. For years John has served as NCHE's secretary. I really appreciate John and his willingness to step into a new role.

I will say that the retreat is not *all* work. Late Friday afternoon I was able to play the nine-hole disk golf course with Bill Kreiling. Bill and his wife, Jolene, have served on the board for two years, and have assisted with the conference's book fair. In addition, Jolene is employing her administration prowess as secretary. Bill is active on the legislative committee and great fun to be with. We wondered and laughed together at some of the crazy mushrooms we discovered along the golf course trails.

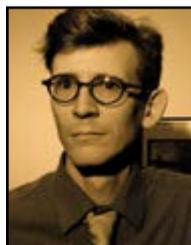
Saturday was devoted to the board meeting. At this meeting all the committees report to the board their plans and make motions on actions that are beyond the scope of their committees, e.g., their budget. This day is long and can be tedious at times, but that often is the nature of the service. Happily this year, we were able to finish slightly after 3:00 P.M.

Regardless of whether it is talking to new homeschoolers at the conference or voting on a committee motion, the service is full of life, and it is glorious. Two board members I have not previously mentioned, activities director Amanda Wares and homeschool helps director Rhonda Marshall, also provide examples of individuals who faithfully serve all year. I appreciate them both.

NCHE continues to keep an eye on legislative activity. Currently, we are working with legislators and other organizations on an issue where NC law has room for improvement in order to be more equitable and more in line with the best practices in other states. Statecraft is challenging work, and NCHE appreciates its public servants who are willing to listen to us, as we seek to protect the liberties we enjoy.

NCHE will host the bi-annual Capital Fest event in Raleigh on March 3, 2015. This educational event is always held during the legislative long session. We encourage you to come join us and plan to spend some time directly interacting with your legislators. You can visit the capital with us and perhaps bring some homemade cookies to share with your neighbors who serve as legislators.

I hope this column has provided you with some additional insight into the character of the NCHE board and their heart for homeschoolers. I ask that you pray for us and prayerfully consider how you might partner with us in our ongoing service.



*Kevin McClain, NCHE's president, and his bride, Brea, are embarking on their tenth year of homeschooling. Kevin recently earned his PhD in educational philosophy from UNCG where he is employed as an educational technologist.* 🇺🇸



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# Common Core and NC Homeschoolers

by Spencer Mason

## What Is Common Core?

The Common Core State Standards is a set of standards defining the knowledge and skills that students pre-kindergarten through high school need to master each year to be prepared for the next grade and ultimately college or work. Creating common academic standards across the country was a state-led initiative involving a coalition of governors and educators and has been funded by a number of non-profit organizations and the US Department of Education.

The National Governors Association (NGA) went public with the Common Core State Standards (CC) for English arts and mathematics in 2010. This was the introduction of CC, and at this point, only these two subjects are included, but other subjects will be added. The United States Department of Education has funded the CC standards through education funding to states that adopt CC and by providing money to non-profit organizations to develop assessments tied to CC. North Carolina adopted CC in 2010. By 2012, the NC public school curriculum and assessments for English arts and mathematics had been implemented. The NC General Assembly (GA) stopped funding for the implementation of CC assessments in 2013, and in 2014, it passed a law that charges the State Board of Education to develop standards specifically for NC students. Nothing prevents State Board of Education from selecting CC standards as those best for NC students. The new law also requires that “the assessment instrument or instruments shall be nationally normed, aligned with the North Carolina Standard Course of Study and field-tested.” The GA must approve of any assessment program before it is purchased.

## What Problems Have Been Identified?

Recently there has been a lot of negative news about CC. Even strong supporters such as New York Governor Andrew Cuomo, have become critics. Some teachers’ unions have been

critical of CC implementation. Critics of the one-size-fits-all curriculum, where every student learns the same things at the same pace, point out that people don't all mature at the same rate and don't have identical aptitudes, interests and career goals. They also say that a single curriculum can't adequately prepare a student for college studies and a non-college career at the same time. Others point out the high failure rates of students taking CC exams. Less than one-third of New York students passed the 2012 exams. Still others are saying the standards are being set too low.

While Louisiana Governor Bobby Jindal, originally supported the idea of CC, he sued the Obama administration on August 27, 2014, hoping to strike a blow against the controversial Common Core education standards. "The federal government has hijacked and destroyed the Common Core initiative," Jindal said in a statement. "Common Core is the latest effort by big government disciples to strip away state rights and put Washington, D.C., in control of everything." This was the first time that the federal government had attempted to control state education standards by holding grant money over their heads.

The New Hanover County School Board of Education (Wilmington, NC) passed a resolution on August 19 petitioning "the State Board of Education and the State Superintendent, June Atkinson, to request the College Board to delay the implementation of the APUSH Framework (AP history course) for at least a year." The board further requests the legislature to investigate further. Why did they do this? They found that, among other issues, "the Framework excludes discussion of the US military (no battles, commanders or heroes) and omits many

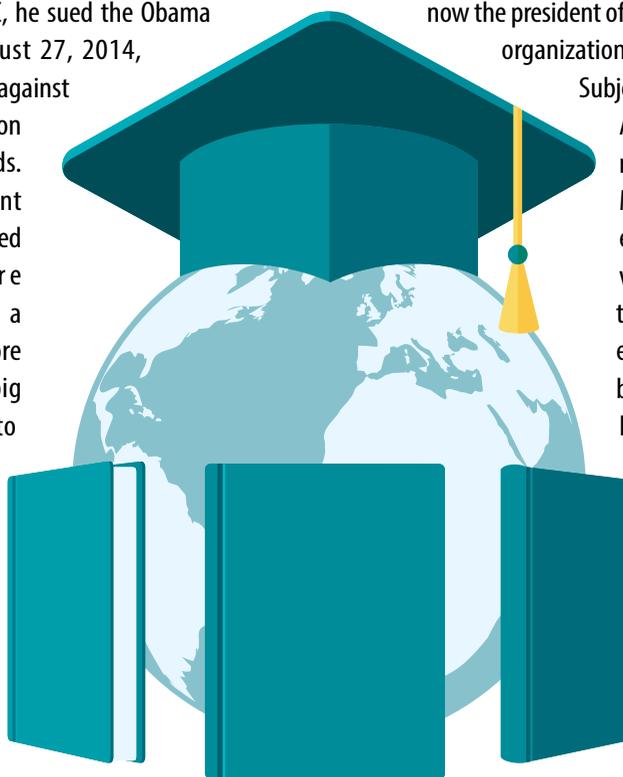
other individuals, groups and events that greatly shaped our nation's history (for example, Thomas Jefferson, Ben Franklin, George Washington, Albert Einstein, George Washington Carver, Rosa Parks, Dr. Martin Luther King, Tuskegee Airmen, the Holocaust)."

So far, only public school students in forty-five states have been directly affected by CC, but non-public students will soon be indirectly affected. Many assessment tests such as the Iowa Test of Basic Skills, Terra Nova, the SAT, the ACT and the GED are being modified to conform with CC. David Coleman, one of the driving forces behind CC, is now the president of College Board, the non-profit organization that publishes the SAT, SAT

Subject Tests, PSAT Tests, CLEP and AP courses and tests. Many news sources are reporting that Mr. Coleman is now aligning every College Board product with CC. The problem is that these assessments are moving even further away from the core beliefs of most homeschoolers. In order to score well on these instruments, homeschool students will need to answer the test questions with answers they know are not true.

It is estimated that 40% of all college students must take remedial math courses to prepare them for the more rigorous college

level math. State universities and colleges in CC states have signed an agreement that they will not require any student that has passed CC assessments to take remedial courses. Instead of state universities determining entrance requirements to public school students, the CC standards will dictate public university entrance requirements. This agreement will put pressure on the state universities to dumb-down their courses to accommodate students who have passed CC tests. Right now, private universities and colleges are not bound by this agreement, but they could



be pressured to sign on in the future. The bottom line is this, homeschooled students who have been well prepared for challenging college level courses, may find that they are disappointed and bored with their public university course work.

Every state has longitudinal databases in place to track their students' scores on assessments in place, and CC is pushing for the increased collection of student data from preschool through the workforce and the uniting of all the states' data into one database. The US Department of Education will have unfettered access without parents' permission to this data even down to students SSN and other personal information. Armed with this type of data on every student in the US, the Department of Education will have the power to usurp the parents' and students' ability to make decisions about their future. Central planning will have experts make decisions about what type of education the students would receive and for what type of job they would be trained. In the future, other government agencies could be granted access to the database making government misconduct a very real possibility.

CC standards have been developed with the goal of improving education standards throughout the US, and these standards may be imposed on non-public students in the near future. However, the academic success of homeschooling and school choice is ample evidence that competing standards that are developed or approved by parents are more effective in encouraging innovation and academic excellence than would be a monolithic national

standard that makes no allowances for students' individual abilities, desires or interests. CC is not just a concern for homeschoolers; it should be a concern for all citizens who care about our children and their education.

### What Can You Do?

First, thank NC legislators who sponsored SB 812 and HB1061. Senators are: Tillman, Soucek, Brock, Cook, Curtis, Daniel, Hunt, Krawiec, Randleman and Sanderson. Representatives are: Speciale, Holloway, Pittman, J. Bell, Brody, Dixon, Elmore, Ford, Hardister, Hastings, Hurley, Iler, Jones, Malone, S. Martin, McElraft, T. Moore, Presnell, Riddell, Stam, Steinburg, Stone, Warren, Whitmire and Younts. Both bills were designed to replace CC with a state developed standard, and SB 812 became law on July 22, 2014.

Contact your federal senators and representative and ask that they introduce legislation that will cut off Race to the Top funding and eliminate additional funding for CC.

Contact NC Superintendent of Public Schools, June Atkinson, to let her know what you think of CC.



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

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# NC: 60,000+ Homeschools, 150,000+ Students

## North Carolina Number of Homeschools by County

School Year: 2013 - 2014



by Spencer Mason

The NC Division of Non-Public Education released a report in August detailing the number of homeschools for the 2013-2014 school year. The numbers revealed 14% increase from the 2012-2013 school year. The increase was 3% greater than the increase from previous year. There has been some speculation in the news media that the surge in the number of homeschools may be related to the implementation of the Common Core State Standards. Parents are now discovering how Common Core will affect their children in the public schools. This development may have had a minor effect, but I believe the main reason for the growth is that homeschooling has continued to prove itself to be an excellent method of education.

### Sustained Growth

In January 1988, there were 381 homeschools in North Carolina. NCHC convinced the NC General Assembly to pass a favorable homeschool law that was ratified on June 20, 1988. Consequently, the number of homeschools began to grow rapidly. By the end of the 1988-89 school year the NC homeschool community had experienced a phenomenal five-fold increase, resulting in 2,325 homeschools. Since then, the number of homeschools in North Carolina has grown at an annual compound growth rate of more that

16%. In the last school year, the number of homeschools grew by 7,603 to a high of 60,950 schools.

### Estimated Number of Homeschool Students

The state estimates that there are about 1.6 students per homeschool, giving a total of 98,172 students ages six through seventeen. An informal survey of homeschools in Mecklenburg County several years ago concluded there were three students per homeschool. If, we use a conservative estimate of 2.5 students per homeschool in the state, we conclude there are more than 150,000 students being educated at home. To put this into perspective, consider that the largest school district in the state, Charlotte-Mecklenburg Schools, has a total student enrollment of 142,612, and the total private school enrollment in NC last year was 95,768 students.

Through the years, as more people become acquainted with homeschooling and homeschoolers, they see the advantages and consider this alternative. Also, there are more and more homeschool graduates going into colleges and into the workplace. The success of homeschoolers and homeschooling makes it more and more appealing to others. We expect the numbers of homeschools to continue to multiply.

# ADVICE FOR Homeschool Newbies

1  
Don't compare your family to others.

2  
Spend time getting to know your kids before starting formal lessons.

3  
Remember that you know your kids better than any teacher.

4  
Do what is best for you and your family.

5  
Stay away from negative people until you get your bearings.

6  
Find support that is real. Seek out veteran homeschoolers and join a homeschool group.

7  
If you know you are being led to homeschool, go into it with confidence, but expect a rocky road at the beginning.

8  
First time fear is normal, and we've all been there! It gets so much better!!! Just hang in there, breathe, pray, and OWN IT.

9  
Focus on learning, not grades, at least until high school.

10  
Give yourself time to get over your initial idealistic approach and figure out what really clicks for both you and your kiddos!



# THOUGHTS FROM A MOM NEW TO Homeschooling

by Tracey Rutter

Now that the decision to homeschool had been made, I was ready to fully embrace this new adventure. I decided I would attend the state homeschool conference. This was definitely new territory for me. My teen daughter and I went and knew absolutely nobody. I felt many new things, but as a former educator, lack of confidence was not one of them, nor was loneliness, boredom or lack of fun. I enjoyed all of it!

One huge negative weighed heavy on my mind, though, and took me by surprise—*guilt*, not just your ordinary, run-of-the-mill guilt—it was *mom-guilt*, the worst kind! I had tremendous guilt and regret for not making the decision to homeschool earlier. I wondered if anybody else felt like this. Certainly, I couldn't be the only one.

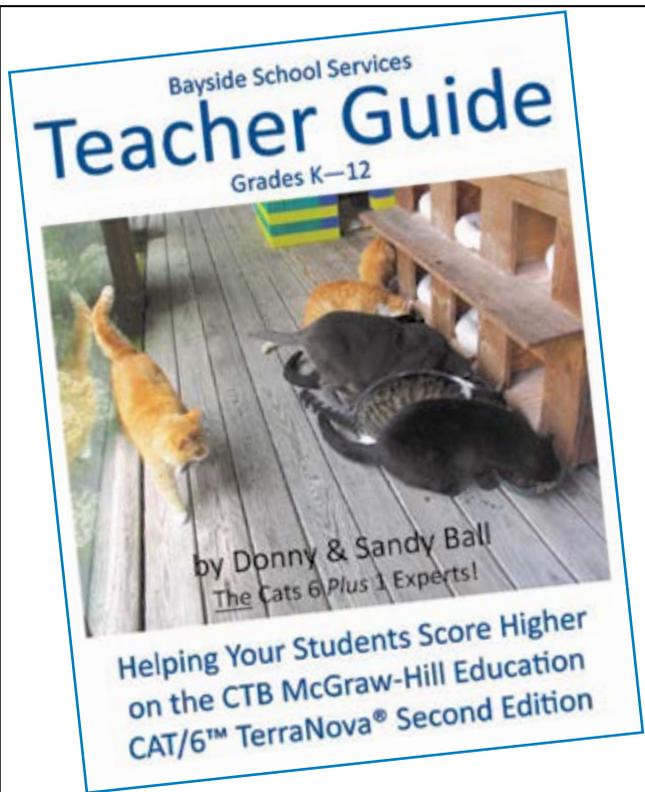
I was feeling down until I heard one particular speaker at the conference, and my thoughts turned to faith and family as he explained the basic values of most homeschool families. It was then that some of the guilt started to fade. I thought about the morning devotions that we did as a family before the kids rushed out the door to the neighborhood public school. I thought about those day trips we took as a family all around Arizona when our kids were studying their state. I recalled the times my husband taught our children many facts that he'd learned about WWII from all of his reading about it as a young man. Memories came to my mind of the numerous Bible stories we read to our children and about the times we discussed what they'd been learning at church. Then I remembered all the Bible verses our kids memorized. I also remembered the numerous times we told our

children about all our traveling in Europe when we both lived there because our fathers were in the military. *We* taught our children patriotism. *We* taught our children to respect their elders. *We* taught our children manners. *We* taught our children *many* things! We taught these things to our children at home. Could it be that we really weren't that different from homeschool families? We knew that even though our children were attending public school, *we* were their biggest influence. God reminded me, perhaps in a whisper, that although I chose a different path for educating our children, it was okay because I was still their first teacher. We were always involved in our children's education, we'd just partnered with the public school system. My husband and I had not failed them; we had not let them down.

So here we are now, finally homeschooling. Instead of using that word *finally* though, I've decided to just simply say, we are homeschooling. We will move forward in a new direction, a different path, but not with regret for the past. I will let go of those guilt feelings. There was more homeschooling going on than I actually realized. God leads us to different things at different times in our lives for different reasons. I am thankful that we are able to homeschool right now, and I look forward to this new adventure. And to any other homeschool parent that might be feeling guilt, I encourage you to let God show you how you've already been teaching your children—you might be surprised at just how much homeschooling you've already done!



*Tracey is a former elementary school teacher who has taught in Tennessee, Arizona and North Carolina. She grew up an Army brat, has lived many places in the South and also has deep family roots in Georgia, Virginia and North Carolina. After seventeen years in Arizona, she has finally moved back to the South and currently resides in Creedmoor with her husband of twenty-three years, a son who is a freshman at Southeast Baptist Seminary, and daughter—a newly homeschooled high school junior.* 🐾



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## Celebrating the *Teachable* Moments

by Lisa Bailey

What is your favorite thing about a to-do list? Is it the calming pursuit of listing; all the necessary tasks to be accomplished; the knowledge that you *will not forget* something important; or maybe the sheer symmetry of the bullet points? My favorite part of making a to-do list is crossing off items. In fact, I like that so much that I sometimes add things to my list that I have already done, just so that I can cross them off. (Don't roll your eyes; I'll bet you've thought about it too.) As a homeschooler, I have found to-do lists to be both blessings and curses. They are blessings when they are the means to help me focus on the tasks at hand; they become curses when they blur my vision, becoming ends in themselves and bringing me close to losing track of my priorities.

Like you, I suspect, I began homeschooling so that I could enjoy watching my children learn. I absolutely loved the *light bulb moments* and jealously guarded them for myself. My heart would flutter when my girls asked how clouds bring rain or why the neighborhood dog looked little when he was down the street but turned out to be a big dog up close. I loved hearing Sarah read her first story and watching Stephanie write her

first “book.” I would stop my work at almost any request to *read me a book* or answer a question that an inquiring mind wanted to know. Those teachable moments were nectar to me! I was as eager as they were to explore and dream and philosophize and debate. And, you know, my strategies worked! My girls became explorers of new ideas and dreamers of new worlds and thinkers of new thoughts and debaters of the status quo. I was happy.

But I was still a list-maker. As our lives became more complex, the lists grew and seemed more necessary—and more domineering. If I was to be a success at this homeschooling, I needed to be efficient, accomplishing more in less time every day. If I could just think of all the things that needed to be done and write them down in a systematic way and then work the system, life would flow and all

would be well. I thought I could determine what my girls needed to know, decide how to teach them and set a course of bullet points in the desired direction. My lists would ensure that there were no gaps in their education and that I, as their teacher, had provided everything they needed to succeed. However, I found that the fuller the list became, the less wiggle room it offered for *life*. Those questions that had once been so charming and exciting sometimes became a distraction and a speed bump on my highway of education. I realized that I had allowed the teachable moments to take a back seat to my to-do list!

I became aware that a faint frown would appear when one of the girls asked a question that had not been on my radar; chasing that rabbit might mean we missed covering something I had planned. Some days I hurriedly gave a *short answer* when an *essay* might have been more

meaningful. Some days I glossed over the interest with a “we’ll come back to that.” Then, one day, I noticed the girls didn’t seem as curious; they were more content to let me guide the lessons, not pressing to delve beneath the surface. I was shocked at how much I missed the act of joint discovery, of rabbit chasing! I realized the learning process that I wanted to model was the kind that celebrates questions, not squashes them. I want to raise life-long learners who ask questions forever and are eager to pursue the answers wherever the journey leads.

I am a recovering list maker now; I still operate most efficiently when I have a plan for my day and for our educational goals. My default mode is still to work the list, and sometimes I find myself moving from item to item without much thought. I am training myself to slow down and read my

daughters, though, and to be sensitive to those teachable moments. I know that they are what make homeschooling really rewarding, not a completely crossed out to-do list!



*Lisa has enjoyed more than a decade of teachable moments with her girls. With one daughter in her junior year of college and one in her senior year of high school, Lisa and her husband, David, relish the opportunity to minister to other homeschooling families tutoring, mentoring and speaking. Lisa currently serves Classical Conversations as the corporate speaker trainer and enjoys speaking to parents around the country about finding joy on the journey.*



# Sustainable Homeschooling Includes Rest!

by *Diana Waring*

When I began homeschooling in 1985, I was naively oblivious of the time commitment I was taking on—twenty years! But I immediately discovered that being a homeschool mom tends to be a full-time career. Our kids are always there, always needing something to be fixed, explained, picked up or cooked. Now, don't get me wrong—there are amazing benefits to this job that money can't begin to buy. But there are a few things that can make a real difference in whether you are able to finish what you have started. One of them is giving yourself permission to go off-duty at times.

For me, one of the lifesavers of homeschooling was the hour-long quiet time we had after lunch. Once the dirty dishes hit the sink, we would each go to our rooms to sit on our beds! (You're dubious, right? But your wrigglers are no wigglier than mine, and you are already training them to sit for meals and church and car rides. We just took one more step.) As long as the activity was quiet, each of us could do what we liked. For some, it was the perfect time to build with Legos, for others, it was a treasured free reading time. For me, I could rest, read, chat on the phone or contemplate new thoughts over a cup of coffee—*all by myself*. If you can picture an oasis in the desert or see yourself in a Thomas Kinkade painting, you will know how much I valued this daily break.

Once a week I also had a time-out—an inexpensive date—with my husband, while a friend baby-sat. Sometimes we just walked and talked, other times we dined and discussed. It was refreshing, renewing and often exactly what was needed to give me much-needed perspective for the job.

And, for a time, I was scheduling a once-a-month visit at a lovely tea shop with a homeschooling friend. What insight and encouragement came from those times, when we would discover that, as moms, the problems we thought were unique weren't all that unusual.

I know that nowadays, interaction with other homeschoolers is as close as your Internet connection. But the luxury of tea served in a china cup, with a precious friend to share it, and the mini-vacation aspect of a few hours away still makes it richer and more deeply refreshing than our daily face time with a computer screen.

We all remember the old saying, "If Mama ain't happy, ain't nobody happy." Because this is true—daily, weekly, monthly—taking time for restoration and renewal is time well spent. It will pay huge dividends for you and your family.



*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 was a featured speaker at the 2014 NCHE Annual Conference.*



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# *Single Parent Homeschooling—* **Are You Crazy?**

*by Joanne Giff and Debbie Crawford*

Joanne

I have been a homeschool mom for thirteen years, the last eight of which I have been single, unfortunately, due to divorce. My grandmother on my mother's side had an expression that, from my now fifty-plus-year-old perspective, imbues great wisdom in its simplicity. She simply stated "Life is great if you do not weaken." As a single homeschool mom, these words come back to me daily. I believe her sage advice is appropriate for all—but especially those of us attempting the homeschool journey as a single parent. Her words are also biblically sound since basically she was drawing from her knowledge of the Bible that included Joshua 1:6-7, "Be strong and courageous because you will lead these people (children) to inherit the land I swore to their forefathers to give them. Be strong and very courageous." So, how do we travel this path and keep our sanity? First, and most importantly, with a great deal of faith and, per God's charge to Joshua, being strong. That strength draws from having a strong relationship with God as the foundation of your service ministry to your children.

Our relationship with our Lord is crucial as a foundation because in every sense, homeschooling is a ministry we have chosen. In my personal opinion, it is the most important

ministry we can be involved in at this time in both our lives and the lives of our children. And trust me when I say that the time is going to fly by. I currently have two in college, and it seems as if it was just yesterday that I was timidly beginning my adventure of homeschooling. If you doubt this is a ministry, take time to observe our today's youth. An alarmingly high percentage of youth who attend the local church are leaving the faith by the time they reach college age. So, not only do we need that daily connected relationship for the wisdom, strength and comfort simply to conduct our daily lives, but we are biblically mandated to raise our children so that they will not leave the faith. It is a daunting task, but one God will readily honor and enable us to do.

We live in a society in which parents abdicate a great deal of parental authority to outside institutions. We, as homeschoolers, have taken back the education of our children many times after having observed the failure of the public school system. Any biblical teaching or reference was long ago removed from the system. In my school, biblical teaching is first! For us, the Bible is the foundation on which all else in our lives is built. This is why I press on; though admittedly there are many days when I just want to give up and search for that perfect private school. To be honest, I have searched for that *perfect* private school. It does not exist. I have found there is no ideal school, private or otherwise (yes, including mine). But, at the end of the day, no one cares more about my children than God and their own mother. Yes, I feel absolutely crazy some days, but those days are alternated with days that aren't so crazy, and that can be downright wonderful! The relationship I have with my children is priceless, and it is our relationship with Christ as the head of our household that bears the eternal stamp.

## Debbie

Eleven years ago, we were in our first year of homeschooling when my husband passed away. I'm starting my tenth year as a single homeschooling mom, have graduated one and am in the home stretch with three years left in this journey. It's a journey I never expected to take—neither homeschooling nor doing so as a single parent, but it is well worth the struggles! Our school motto and my personal Bible verse is Philippians 4:13 "I can do *all* things through Christ, who strengthens me." I think that goes right along with Joanne's grandmother's

saying "We need to lean on Christ and trust Him to guide us in all things," including our homeschooling. Yes, there are struggles and days we want to give up, but with God's strength, we push on. The goal is in sight, and the rewards along the way keep us motivated! I've learned that there are some things that have to be let go of—a perfectly clean house, all of the trips I wanted to take with the kids and things we planned many years ago. What I've found instead is time to sit on my bed with my children and laugh, share and cry together—time to find joy in little accomplishments and peace from knowing that when they spread their wings they've been given faith that I hope will sustain them.

## New ministry to single homeschool parents

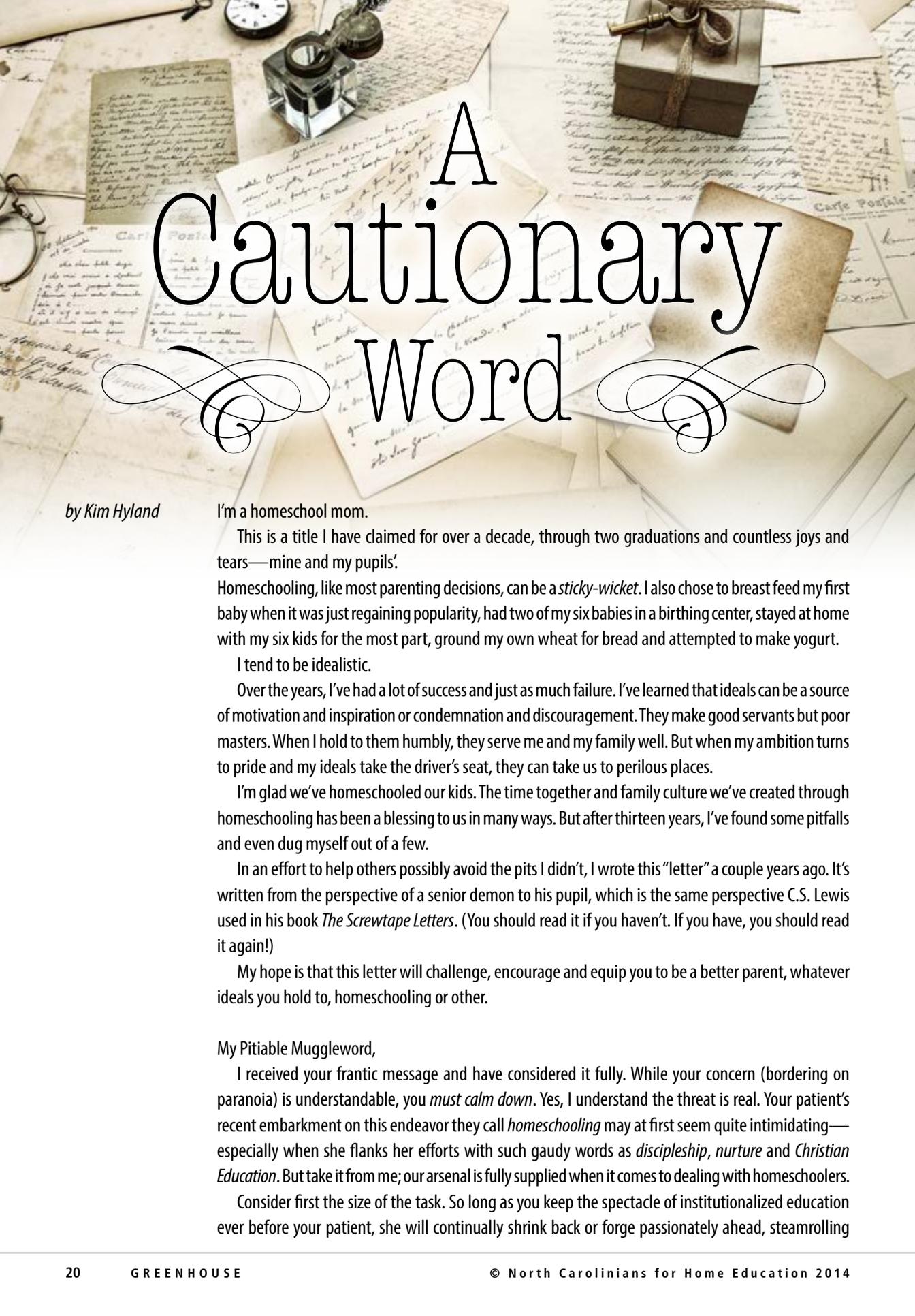
Together, we want you to be encouraged and to know that you are not alone. We are stepping out in faith to begin a ministry to single homeschool parents. More information will be coming soon. We are in the process of creating a website that will provide not only emotional support and encouragement but also practical help and advice. Stay tuned!



*Debbie Crawford is a single, homeschooling mom of two. She is in her eleventh year of homeschooling. Debbie is also the office manager for her local martial arts studio. She is building her own health and wellness business. Debbie loves to read mysteries, surf the Internet and spend time with her family. She currently resides in Moore County, North Carolina with her children, father and cat.*



*Joanne Giff is the mother of four children ranging in age from ten to twenty-two. Prior to beginning a family, she was an intelligence analyst in the Washington D.C. area where she lived and worked for ten years. In her second life, she has been a home educator for over fourteen years. For the last seven years, she has been a single homeschool mom. She has been burdened for many years to reach out to other Christian women and homeschool moms who have experienced the unfortunate necessity of divorce.*



# A Cautionary Word

by Kim Hyland

I'm a homeschool mom.

This is a title I have claimed for over a decade, through two graduations and countless joys and tears—mine and my pupils'.

Homeschooling, like most parenting decisions, can be a *sticky-wicket*. I also chose to breast feed my first baby when it was just regaining popularity, had two of my six babies in a birthing center, stayed at home with my six kids for the most part, ground my own wheat for bread and attempted to make yogurt.

I tend to be idealistic.

Over the years, I've had a lot of success and just as much failure. I've learned that ideals can be a source of motivation and inspiration or condemnation and discouragement. They make good servants but poor masters. When I hold to them humbly, they serve me and my family well. But when my ambition turns to pride and my ideals take the driver's seat, they can take us to perilous places.

I'm glad we've homeschooled our kids. The time together and family culture we've created through homeschooling has been a blessing to us in many ways. But after thirteen years, I've found some pitfalls and even dug myself out of a few.

In an effort to help others possibly avoid the pits I didn't, I wrote this "letter" a couple years ago. It's written from the perspective of a senior demon to his pupil, which is the same perspective C.S. Lewis used in his book *The Screwtape Letters*. (You should read it if you haven't. If you have, you should read it again!)

My hope is that this letter will challenge, encourage and equip you to be a better parent, whatever ideals you hold to, homeschooling or other.

My Pitiable Muggleword,

I received your frantic message and have considered it fully. While your concern (bordering on paranoia) is understandable, you *must calm down*. Yes, I understand the threat is real. Your patient's recent embarkment on this endeavor they call *homeschooling* may at first seem quite intimidating—especially when she flanks her efforts with such gaudy words as *discipleship*, *nurture* and *Christian Education*. But take it from me; our arsenal is fully supplied when it comes to dealing with homeschoolers.

Consider first the size of the task. So long as you keep the spectacle of institutionalized education ever before your patient, she will continually shrink back or forge passionately ahead, steamrolling

all in her way. Keep her ignorant of the insidious fact that we have spent years trying to bury: that the Enemy created these pitiful creatures with both intellect and appetite, and given a loving environment, their intellect will grow as naturally as their bodies. You must endeavor to quickly make a home for the idol of academia in her house as we have in schools. Faced with the fear of failure, it has been my experience that mothers will bow, readily sacrificing relationships, faith and that sickening sense of peace in a home which a mother who trusts the Enemy so easily creates.

The weapons that serve these purposes are many. For instance, comparison that always leads the patient to weigh her weaknesses against another's strengths resulting in despair or her strengths against another's weaknesses, resulting in a false sense of pride. Strive to instill the sense of superiority so commonly found in homeschoolers, especially the novice. Follow this up quickly with inferiority when she inevitably encounters more experienced and superior homeschoolers. Superiority or inferiority, either state will serve our purposes and render your patient harmless.

Oddly enough, curriculum is another useful weapon. As the patient spends hour upon hour seeking the course of study that will be *just right* for her children, her dependence upon her choice will grow steadily. Add to that the considerable monetary investment, and this weapon becomes practically autonomous. For any human will defend and fight for that in which they are invested. As she comes to homeschooling with both time and money invested in her curriculum and then experiences the inevitable resistance of her children, she will in turn fight for and defend books. The passion we've known to motivate the self-sacrificial love the Enemy instilled in mothers since time began can easily be manipulated so that, instead of defending her children, she attacks them when they impede the plan she has so carefully orchestrated late into the night while her precious ones slumbered.

Goals. Turn all her sincere desires, both spiritual and academic, into lofty goals. In so doing, you will move her from a position of humble hope and prayerful petition to aggressive ambition and demand. Cause her to assume responsibility not only for her children's academics, but for their attitudes, character, obedience; all of which, while forever under her influence, are completely outside her control. Thereby, you will entangle her with frustration, anger and ultimately resentment.

Finally, fear. Fear, fear, fear. The Enemy himself knows how humans are given to fear. Over and over in His letter to them,

He placates them with the exhortation, "Do not fear." So you must scream it louder! Fear has the potential to undermine the noblest of your patient's efforts. Pervert the human instinct for self-preservation, and your patient will commit even heinous sin in the name of protection of her children. Fear is the fertile ground for every seed of destruction. Strife, screaming, abuse, even hatred will grow like weeds that choke the life out of a mother and a home.

But I must warn you, should your patient ever discover and, with putrid humility, embrace the truth that she is merely a vessel who has been chosen by the Enemy for a noble use, to pour out knowledge with grace, then you are in great danger. For it is this position, humble, dependent and even broken, in which the Enemy finds His most useful and influential vessels. You must keep your patient from this stance. Fill her with pride and ambition or guilt and despair. Either will work. But do not let her believe that there is anything relevant beyond her own plans and efforts and the unfettered cooperation of her spouse and children with said plans. For if she does, she will discover the despicable provision and love of the Enemy who is forever working His fiendish will in the midst of our patient's seeming successes and failures.

Be diligent, Muggleword. The influence of the patient upon her children is potent, due simply to the combination of being mother and the multitude of hours spent together. It is your duty to exploit this influence to the ruin of all involved.

Sincerely,  
Acadamius

*Originally published at [www.winsomewoman.blogspot.com](http://www.winsomewoman.blogspot.com)*



*Kim Hyland is a writer and speaker, the founder and host of Winsome, an annual retreat for women, and the founder of Five-Fifteen, an organization fighting human sex trafficking through corporate prayer. She is also Jeff's wife, a mom to five sons and one daughter, mother-in-love to three, and Amelia and Eli's grandma! Their family has home educated for fifteen years. Kim's passions are to love her family and friends well and encourage women through speaking and writing about her imperfect path and God's perfect plans. You can connect with Kim at her blog, [www.winsomewoman.blogspot.com](http://www.winsomewoman.blogspot.com) and on Facebook at Winsome Woman.*



# HOW DOES GOD WANT US TO HANDLE CONFLICT?

*by Matthew McDill*

Have you had a fight with someone you love this week? Unfortunately, most of us have. It is amazing how we can experience so much joy and so much frustration from one relationship! We can enjoy the fellowship and love and cooperation. But relationships are also difficult. We often do not agree. We hurt or are hurt by others. We act wrongly and this affects those around us.

What should we do when we are hurt or believe those around us are doing the wrong thing? God tells us how to handle it in the Bible. When we follow his ways, we will be able to faithfully love *and* uphold truth and righteousness.

Here are nine steps you can take (and retake) when you face these difficulties in your relationships.

## 1. GIVE SPACE.

When Dana and I were first married, I asked my older brother Michael to give me marriage advice. He said, "One of the most important lessons I have learned in marriage is that I am not my wife's Holy Spirit (and she isn't mine)."

We like to try to fix those around us. But that is not really our job. In fact, by trying to fix others, we can become an obstacle to their learning process. When I think someone is wrong, I am not going to try to take God's place in his or her life.

There is another reason we should not dive right into a *discussion* when we disagree. Some of us tend to speak before we think. Anger and frustration make this even worse. James advises, "Be quick to hear, slow to speak, slow to anger." (James 1:19)

So, the first thing I am going to do when I think someone else is wrong about something is nothing. With humility and patience, I am going to give the other person space to make mistakes and learn from them.

"But I can't do nothing! This is too important!" Don't forget, this is only the first step.

The second step provides another great reason we should not dive right into correcting others.

## 2. CHECK YOURSELF.

Jesus warned, "Why do you see the speck that is in your brother's eye, but do not notice the log that is in your own eye? Or how can you say to your brother, 'Let me take the speck out of your eye,' when there is the log in your own eye? You hypocrite, first take the log out of your own eye, and then you will see clearly to take the speck out of your brother's eye." (Matthew 7:3-5)

Go ahead and say this out loud to yourself: "I might be wrong." Some of us really need to add this possibility to our thinking process. When I am in conflict and I choose to give space and check myself, I find that often the main problem is actually me! I get alone with God and ask him to convict me and help me understand the situation. He will.

It may be that there is still a legitimate issue in the other's life. But this is a great opportunity to make sure that I have discerned, confessed and requested forgiveness for any wrongdoing on my part. Getting things right from my end often clears up the waters for others to see their own issues. It also strengthens the relationship and clears the way to address those issues when the time is right.

Bottom line: do not go to your brother about his sin when there is unconfessed sin on your part in the relationship.

## 3. LET GO OF ANGER.

When we are hurt by others, or think that what they are doing is wrong, we often become angry. Trying to have a discussion when we are angry will rarely produce good results. Paul warns us not to allow anger to settle in our hearts. (Ephesians 4:26-27)

Forgiveness takes place at two levels. One is the relational level, when we extend forgiveness to a repentant person and the relationship is restored. Another is the heart level. Even if someone does not repent, we must not be resentful or hold on to anger. We can forgive them in our hearts even if the relationship has not yet been restored. This heart level forgiveness is how we let go of anger. We *can* and *must* forgive because we have been forgiven. (Matthew 18:21-35)

Bottom line: do not go to your brother about his sin when there is anger and unforgiveness in your heart toward them.

This sin on your part is a direct obstacle to your relationship with God. (Matthew 6:14-15)

## 4. LOVE.

When something goes wrong, our natural response is to withdraw. This is usually an attempt to protect ourselves or to influence the other person by expressing our disapproval of them. This is not love. Love is doing what is best for someone else, even when it costs us. Love does not choose its course of action based on personal hurt and loss. (Christ is our example.)

Jesus said, "Love your enemies." Even when we are hurt and our relationships are broken, we can love. The entire purpose of our lives is love and all the commandments of God are fulfilled in this one act of obedience. (Mark 12:30; Galatians 5:14)

When we choose love, we will not fight. "Love is patient and kind" (1 Corinthians 13:4-7). Focusing on our own desires is what causes fights (James 4:1-2). When we love, we choose to focus on others, instead of focusing on our own desires. "Love does not insist on its own way" (1 Corinthians 13:5).

Here is the challenge: go do something to express your love for the person you are in conflict with. Do it before things are resolved. Do it today. This will solidify your forgiveness toward them and will strengthen your relational foundation so you can deal with difficult subjects at the right time.

## 5. PRAY.

Do we really think we will be able change others? What do they need? Who can change them?

Jesus can. So talk to him about the situation. Pray for the work of the Spirit to convict them if you believe they are wrong about something. Pray about how and when to bring up the matter with them. Allow God to lead you in handling the situation. He might tell you to let him handle this one and be patient. (Matthew 5:44; James 1:5-8)

## 6. TALK.

At this point in the nine steps, I finally get to do what I've been chomping at the bit to do since the problem first began: *talk*. I



hope taking the other steps first has prevented me from making some major mistakes. If I have made it this far in the process and still believe that there is a legitimate issue that needs to be resolved, then it is time to talk. But how I approach this is critical.

First, *ask questions*. I should not come into the conversation with guns a'blazing, firing off my accusations. Here is a wise saying, "If one gives an answer before he hears, it is his folly and shame." (Proverbs 18:13)

Bring up the topic by asking for more information about what happened, how the other person feels about it or what motivated the situation. Listen to what they say.

Second, *be gentle and kind*. Even if we are asking questions, we are probably poking into a sensitive area. Another wise word, "A soft answer turns away wrath, but a harsh word stirs up anger." (Proverbs 15:1)

This open and gentle approach often gives the other person space to fess up to their own mistakes without having to confront them.

## 7. DISCERN.

Now that you have more information, the next task in the conversation is to discern what kind of issue you are facing. I will suggest two basic categories:

- a) those of a secondary nature, involving personal conviction or preference
  - b) those involving violation of central biblical principles
- Paul warns the Romans "not to quarrel over opinions." (14:1).

On these secondary issues, "each one should be fully convinced in his own mind." (14:5) "Each of us will give an account of himself to God." (14:12)

Not that I can't discuss questions of opinion or the best way to get something done. But I will do so with humility and patience. And ultimately, I will be willing to let it go and let the other person live according to his or her own conviction.

By going through these steps, you may discover that many of your problems are not legitimate issues. However, if we make it to this point, then it is necessary to take step 8.

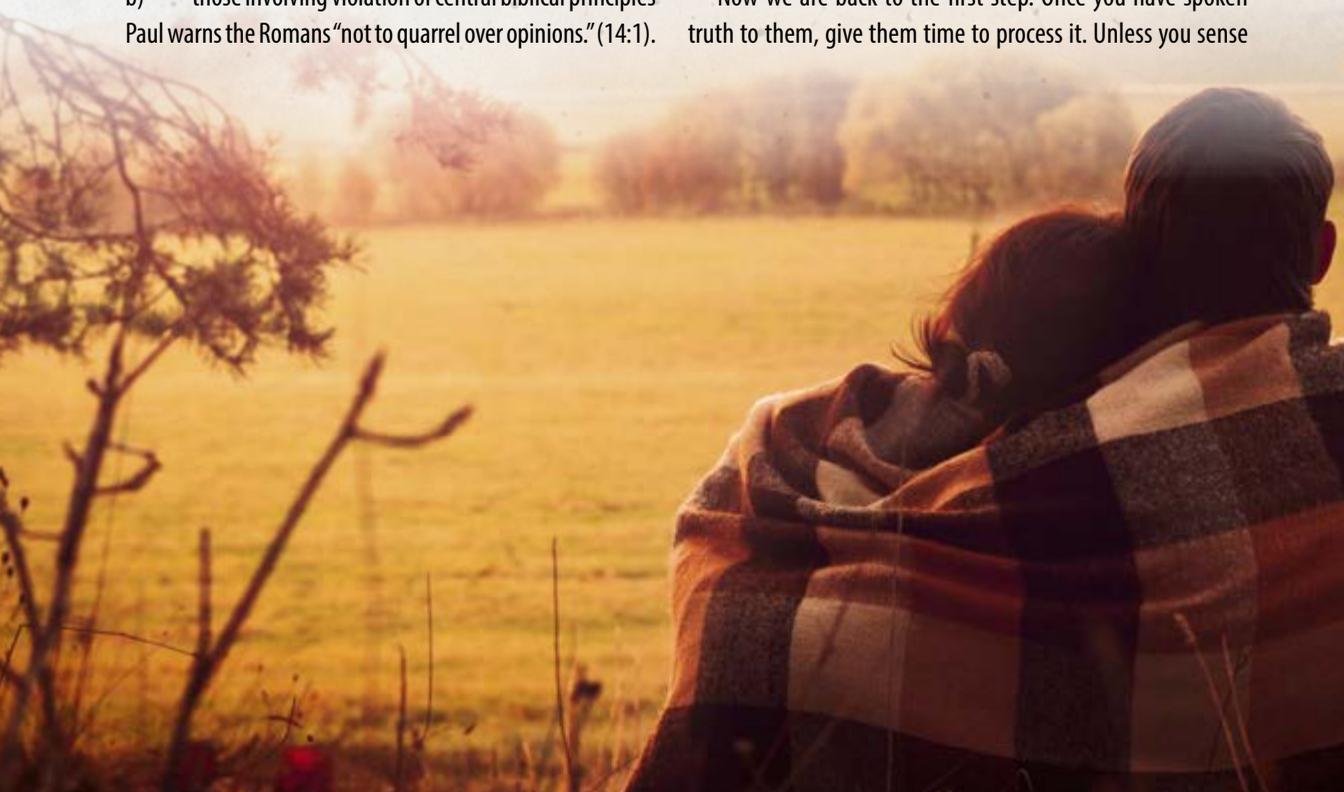
## 8. SPEAK THE TRUTH.

Jesus has given us the responsibility of going to our brother in the Lord and confronting him for his sin. (Matthew 18:15) This is for his good, so he can repent and avoid the harm that comes from sin. (James 1:15) How we handle this is important. Paul explains that we are to speak the truth in love (Ephesians 4:15) and "restore him in a spirit of gentleness." (Galatians 6:1)

There is much more to discuss here. What if they won't listen? What about the other steps in Matthew 18? How long should this process take? For now the point is to accept the responsibility and have the courage to take this important step to lovingly and gently speak the truth.

## 9. GIVE SPACE.

Now we are back to the first step. Once you have spoken truth to them, give them time to process it. Unless you sense



they are ready to immediately repent, you might want to end the conversation with this question, "Will you please pray about and consider what I have said?"

*How long does it take to go through all these steps?*

Of course, there is no set amount of time these steps will require. You must walk through this depending on the Lord for wisdom and leadership. You should be willing for it to take much longer than you want it to. At the same time, do not assume because there are so many steps that it must take a long time. Many of these steps are basic to Christian maturity. It is possible that you have incorporated these behaviors into your everyday living and that you are able to process a conflict almost immediately.



*Dr. Matthew McDill and his wife, Dana, homeschool their nine children in Creston, NC. Matthew is the new NCHC region 3 liaison. He has a Bible teaching ministry, Truth to Freedom, is a pastor of Highland Christian Fellowship in Boone, NC, and regularly teaches marriage and family retreats. You can read his blog and listen to his podcast at [truthtofreedom.org](http://truthtofreedom.org). He is also president of High Country Christian Home Schoolers. He welcomes your feedback. You may email Matthew at [matthew@truthtofreedom.org](mailto:matthew@truthtofreedom.org).*

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# *Homeschool Artists:* **How to Prepare an Art Portfolio**

*by Socorro  
Hernandez-Hinek*

As a professor of fine art for over twenty years, I have often reflected on the most meaningful contributions of my career, asking myself, “What is the most worthwhile, and useful contribution I have given to young and hopeful art students?” Having worked with hundreds of young students, my answer is always: helping them develop a good portfolio. Often it’s also one of the last projects they ask me to review before they graduate. As an artist and educator, I hope that this article will help the homeschool community, and the many talented young artists and their parents by demystifying the portfolio itself, as well as the selection process. There is nothing more exciting than that acceptance letter to attend a university art school or institute.

## *Standards and Quality*

Today, art and design schools and institutes work diligently to uphold standards by looking to national agencies. The National Association of Schools of Arts and Design (NASAD) is the premier agency specific to the fine and graphic arts disciplines. A college program may apply to receive this specialized accreditation, although it is not mandatory. NASAD accreditation is optional, and there are many excellent quality art programs that exist without the NASAD stamp of approval. All accreditation agencies emphasize the development of a portfolio by every student as a part of their career-seeking resume.

To a prospective employer, gallery or museum, the portfolio will outweigh the business card, personality or outside influence. Portfolio in hand, a young art student is ready to move ahead with tangible proof of their talent and training. A sharp portfolio will make the case for acceptance into art school, win a prestigious scholarship or net a coveted job.

College art schools' sites regularly post specific portfolio criteria such as quantity, size and other guidelines and also announce *Portfolio Day* schedules and locations. If an art school is in your sights, do your research and keep a log of various criteria and several potential programs. Portfolio reviews are typically held during the spring semester, so that accepted students may be notified in the fall semester.

## *Evidence and Evolution*

For artists, a carefully and well-compiled portfolio is the key factor in moving up in the art world. Although there is never a simple formula for success, the portfolio is an excellent first step. A prospective reviewer cannot physically see you as you work. The portfolio is the representation of your talent, inspiration and drive. But keep in mind—it will always remain a work in progress. Don't strive for perfection; just strive for your best. Your portfolio is a combination first-impression, résumé, and creative endeavor. Because the contents of your portfolio should reflect both your personal and professional growth, it will always be growing and changing.

It's important to remember that the creative process is not magical. A body of artwork is the culmination of considerable time, effort and expense. For the artist, art-making has a built in personal satisfaction button. Subsequent praise from parents, family and peers is often followed by the anxious query, "Could I ever make a living at this? How do artists sustain themselves in the *real* world?" The answer to the first question is *yes*. Answer to the second question: Mainstream societies and economies all rely on a visual communication. Today is a very visual world. Still, launching into the arts is as daunting as it is rewarding. You should take some time to objectively review where you are as an artist, asking some key questions: "What type of artist do I want to become? Why?" Also, I believe the support of your parents can be key in this process.

Let's assume that homeschool parents and a budding artist are moving forward, that art-making is a true passion, and the student is ready to pack the college bags. Let's take a look at how to compile an art portfolio.

## *Portfolio Preparation Assessment*

Taking the most objective view one can muster,

begin with self-assessment. All students should ask themselves: "Where am I on the journey to becoming an artist—beginning, intermediate or advanced in the field?" "What foundational skills have I mastered?" "What skills do I need to refine or explore?" Students and parents should consider a consultation with an expert. There are numerous art services available in arts communities and art centers where you can find a career artist or professor who specializes in this type of service. An expert assessment is a valuable and helpful exercise that will help you pinpoint your strengths and weaknesses. North Carolina is home to an outstanding collection of museums and a vibrant arts community. From the Mint in Charlotte to Asheville's Biltmore, there is a wealth of fine art and art experts poised to nurture the homeschool community.

## *Inventory*

If you are and always have been a prolific artist, you or your parents have treasured every macaroni Eiffel Tower sculpture and hand print, this is not what you want to consider for inclusion in your portfolio. What you *do* need are your most recent, skillful, expressive and, most important of all, *completed* examples. Take stock of different categories of your work, such as pen and ink, pencil, graphics or portraits and landscapes. If you have a book on design fundamentals or skill instruction somewhere in your library, use this to separate the solid from weak examples in your collection. Also important are examples of truly personal and innovative style. Most often, this work can be found in your journals. The personal work illustrates the window into *you*, the passionate, aspiring, genius—still under construction. A personal journal need not be neat and tidy like the earlier examples but serves as an exciting banner of signature style and originality.

## *Engineering*

A professional zippered portfolio case with plastic sleeves for each artwork can be expensive; however, it may be worth the investment. If it is part of how you envision a confident entrance as you approach the review table, by all means make the investment. It may bolster your confidence during the oral interview. Keep in mind—it's what's inside that counts.

There are inexpensive alternatives, such as a nicely

covered duck canvas over two foam boards, hinged together and a gross-grain ribbon tie and handles. You may wish to personalize your case, but don't go overboard. A do-it-yourself portfolio using Velcro strips would easily resolve open sides and a roll of transparent medium weight Mylar would be great material for individual plastic sleeves. There are a number of methods to waterproof the cover. Again, it's all about what is inside.

During the portfolio review process, the portfolio is handled by the reviewer. The student may be asked to open or unzip the portfolio case for them. The portfolio must be easy for the reviewer to open, flip the pages back and forward and close. In order for a reviewer to easily appreciate a collection of artwork in the short time span allotted, the artwork should be grouped into categories or groupings. Ordinarily art titles or descriptions need not accompany the artwork. A reviewer's essential concern will be foundational skills.

I strongly recommend the following order: basic drawing (pencil or ink) or charcoal sketches (black and white), color studies (pencil, marker or paint) and then high impact graphics and/or photography and, of course, if you have one, your personal journal. You may consider the formal portfolio as the main meal; the personal journal is dessert!

## Portfolio Day

I highly recommend reviewing the scores of online clips that capture art portfolio events and arenas posted on YouTube (Marvel, Fashion Institute, Pratt Institute, etc.). You will note that regardless of the school or the reviewer, comments center around knowledge of basic skills, design and art history. In the arena of college competition, preparation is the key, so a little public speaking is a good skill to hone so that you can relax and be yourself.

## Finally

North Carolina's homeschool community extends its commitment to fostering excellence and love of learning to all areas of study, including the creative and performing arts. This is why the momentum behind homeschooling will not only produce tomorrow's finest scientists and researchers, but most assuredly, also its most talented artists.



*Socorro Hernandez-Hinek is an associate professor of fine art at Fayetteville State University. She is a leader of the foundation studies. Her experience includes working with museums and outreach projects in the community. She is an independent consultant, juror and exhibiting artist. This summer she was appointed to serve on the N.C. Arts Council Board by Governor McCrory. To learn more about her go to [socosart.com](http://socosart.com).*



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*Luke Arrowood: First place in the 9-10 year old Animal category of the Junior Beef Round-up Photography Contest.*

# Homeschoolers Provide Youth Leadership throughout North Carolina

By Claudia Whitaker



*Claudia Whitaker is a longtime member of her local county 4-H Advisory Board and the Forsyth County Extension Advisory Council. For fourteen years she and her husband Frank homeschooled their children Ellen and Vance, who now have their own families and are homeschooling their children, Ellen in Raleigh and Vance in Tampa.*

The 4-H program in North Carolina was founded in 1909 and is still fulfilling its mission to assist youth to become competent and contributing members of society by developing essential life skills through planned, learn-by-doing experiences. The program is based at A&T State and North Carolina State Universities. The latest figures show that more than 227,782 young people between the ages of five and nineteen participate in North Carolina 4-H activities each year with the help of 20,333 adult and youth volunteers. Many of these youth and youth volunteers are homeschooled.

This year's State 4-H Congress, held in Raleigh June 21-24, attracted 541 youth and their adult leaders for activities that included competitions in 4-H presentations on a variety of subjects, leadership and citizenship training, service opportunities and 4-H officer elections. Two of the four officers elected to the 2014-15 State 4-H Council are homeschooled.

Many other youth have served and are currently serving as district officers and youth leaders throughout the state. Homeschoolers have received recognition on the county, district, state, regional and national levels. This article will spotlight 4-H award winners whose families are members of NCHE.

**Alamance County.** Alamance County 4-H Horse Bowl Teams from the Southern Alamance Horse Club won victories at the North Central District Horse Bowl competition on Feb. 22. Both the junior and senior teams won their divisions and advanced to the state competition in Raleigh on March 1. On the state level, Mary Rezin was a member of the first-place-winning junior team; Rachel Rezin was a member of the senior team which placed second. At North Central District Day, Malik King won a silver medal for his 4-H presentation in Health and Fitness, ages 11-13. Mason King received a silver medal for his 4-H presentation in Science and Technology, ages 11-13. District Project Record winners included Christopher Sanchez, who won a bronze medal in Healthy Lifestyles, ages 11-12.

**Forsyth County.** Novice, junior and senior teams won first place at the NC 4-H Horticulture Judging Contest held this year at the JC Raulston Arboretum in Raleigh on May 3. The senior team will advance to the National



*Forsyth County Horticulture Judging Teams won the North Carolina Competition held at NC State University in the senior 4-H team, junior team, junior individual and novice team categories.*

Junior Horticultural Association judging competition in Kentucky this October. Team members included Alex Arrowood, Hope Arrowood, Luke Arrowood, Samuel Barrick, Jady Hooker and Andrew Pledger. Grant Wise was selected to attend the sixty-seventh NC 4-H Electric Congress at Western Carolina

University, July 14-16, all expenses paid. He placed first in the county for his 4-H Electric Project Record book.

Lindsey Hooker was inducted into the 4-H Honor Club, one of the highest honors a 4-H'er can achieve. Membership is based on service, leadership, moral standards, 4-H activities and project achievement. Lindsey has been active in the 4-H program for ten years and is a member of two 4-H clubs, the Trailblazer Teens and the Carolina Inspirational Artists. At the 4K for 4-H event at 4-H Congress, Forsyth County youth raised \$570 to benefit the Winston-Salem Rescue Mission.

On Saturday, April 12, twenty-two 4-H members participated in the North Central 4-H District Activity Day with 160 other youth from the twenty-county district. Youth ages 5-18 presented 5-12 minute 4-H presentations, speeches on a variety of topics. Seven youth won gold medals, four won silver awards, and four took home bronze medals. Two cloverbuds earned green ribbons for participating. They were Natalie Bohanon, who presented on animal bones, and Cana Hooker, whose topic was "How to Build a Snowman." Emily Bohanon presented on the art of yarn, and Samuel Barrick educated his audience on the different types of soils. Luke Arrowood gave an informative talk on burrowing owls. In addition to presentations, two youth were chosen to participate in the district 4-H Entertains event. Grant Wise and Laurelyn Ridge both performed piano solos.

All of the district gold and silver medalists earned the right to compete in finals at State 4-H Congress. District gold medalists in 4-H presentations included Tate Keener and Allison Wise. Austin Wise won a silver medal in state competition at 4-H Congress in Citizenship and Community Service, ages 11-13. Grant Wise was also awarded a state silver in Careers and Entrepreneurship, 14-18. Hope Arrowood won a state

gold medal for her presentation in Fisheries and Aquatic Resources, 14-18. Alex Arrowood received a state gold medal in Forestry and Wildlife, ages 11-13. Jady Hooker was a district silver medalist and also won a state bronze award in Small and Companion Animals, ages 11-13. Sidney Hooker and Aleksandrea Ames both received district bronze medals.

The 2014 State 4-H Photography Contests yielded several winners from Forsyth County. In the junior division of the Nature's Beauty category, Luke Arrowood received honorable mention, and he also won second place in Silhouettes. In the senior division Alex Arrowood won first place in Nature's Beauty, and Lindsey Hooker won first place in Silhouettes. Hope Arrowood was awarded second place in Silhouettes, and



*Alex Arrowood: First place in the senior division of Nature's Beauty category of the NC Photography Contest. (tulips)*

Sydney Hooker won third place for her photo of 4-H in Action. Luke Arrowood won first place in the Junior Beef Round-up Photography Contest in the Animal category, ages 9-11.

Each January 4-H members submit records of their project work from the previous year, which include their yearly goals, accomplishments, a story and a scrapbook. Youth ages 11-18 also include their activities in citizenship, leadership and community service in these 4-H records, and they are judged on the county and district levels. District winners included Alex Arrowood, who won a gold medal in Communication Arts, 11-12, and a silver in Environment and Natural Resources, 11-12. Hope Arrowood received a gold award in Environment and Natural Resources, 13-15, and a bronze in Communication Arts, 13-15. Samuel Barrick was awarded a gold medal in Plant Science, 13-15. Sidney Hooker won a gold award in Communication Arts, 13-15, and Jady Hooker received a bronze in Communication Arts, 11-12. Andrew Pledger won two silver medals, one in Healthy Lifestyles, 11-12, and the other in Plant Science, 11-12. Stephen Pledger received two gold

medals, one in Discovery, 9-10, and in Healthy Lifestyles, 9-10. Kierstyn Smith was awarded a bronze medal in Communication Arts, 9-10, and Austin Wise received a silver award in Citizenship and Civic Education, 11-12.

Youth ages 13-18 compile three years of project work into a 4-H portfolio that is judged on the district level. The winners from each of the five extension districts advance to state competition. Forsyth County had an outstanding record of awards in 2014 in the 13-15 age division. Grant Wise won a state gold in Science and Technology, and Samuel Barrick received a state gold in Plant and Horticultural Science. Hope Arrowood won a state gold in Forestry and Natural Resources and a state silver award in Expressive Arts. Sidney Hooker received a state gold award in Expressive Arts. David Allen Pledger won a state silver in Health and Safety and a district silver in Citizenship and Community Service.



**Henderson County.** Two junior teams from Henderson County placed first and second at the NC 4-H Wildlife Habitat Evaluation Program state competition. Their senior team boasted the first place senior with the top overall score. The first place junior team included homeschooler Alexander Hedrick, and the second place junior team included Thomas Bloemsmas. At 4-H Congress Kathryn Worley was awarded a gold medal for her 4-H presentation in the Fisheries and Aquatic Resources category, ages 11-13.



*Henderson County Wildlife Habitat Evaluation Program team group*



**Tyrrell County.** The Swain family has been very active in 4-H this year. Grace Swain was recently elected president of the Northeast District for 2014-15. She was the state gold winner in Family and Consumer Sciences, ages 16-18, and received the Eloise Cofer Family and Consumer Sciences Trophy. During State 4-H Congress, Grace was inducted into the State 4-H Honor Club. She also participated in the ARIE competition and won an expenses-paid trip to National 4-H Congress in Atlanta, Georgia. JonMark Swain was the state silver winner in the "Cecil and Leonard" 4-H Presentations category, ages 11-13. As a 4-H Project Record winner in the Electric category, he

won an expenses-paid trip to 4-H Electric Congress at Western Carolina University this summer. Lydia Swain was awarded a district silver medal for her 4-H presentation in the Breads category, ages 9-10.



**Wayne County.** A brother-sister team is serving together as Southeast District officers. Hannah Lee is the Southeast District reporter, and Micah Lee is serving as the district vice-president. Hannah won a state silver award for her 4-H portfolio in Leadership, Citizenship and Community Service, ages 16-18. She is also the recipient of the \$1,000 Ray Wilkinson 4-H Communication Scholarship. She received district gold awards for her 4-H Project Records in Environmental and Natural Resources and in Personal Development and Leadership, ages 16-18. Hannah won first place in her county dairy poster contest and also won a NC Achievement Medal.

Micah Lee received a state gold award for his 4-H portfolio in Expressive Arts, ages 16-18. He is the recipient of the \$1,000 4-H Development Fund Scholarship and a NC Achievement Medal winner. Micah won two district gold awards for his 4-H Project Records in Communication and Expressive Arts and in Healthy Lifestyles, ages 16-18. Elijah Lee was the Wayne County Soil and Water Poster Contest winner in the 5-8 age division. He received a 4-H Club Report Achievement trophy and a Cloverbud Achievement trophy.



**Wilson County.** The 4-H Envirothon Club has once again brought home awards on the county, area and state levels. Arran Walton and his five-member middle school team, Low pH, placed first at the NC Envirothon area competition on March 21. They advanced to the state competition on April 26 and came back with a second place state win. Ethan Walton and his five-member high school team, Mighty Minkles, was awarded first place at the NC Envirothon area competition. They placed second at the statewide competition in April. Arran and Ethan have also been active in 4-H presentations. Ethan won a district silver medal in Public Speaking, ages 14-18, during District Day competition on March 29. Arran received first place on the district level and advanced to State 4-H Congress on June 21, where he won the gold award in Careers and Entrepreneurship, ages 11-13.

If you would like more information about 4-H and the educational opportunities it offers, contact your local county Cooperative Extension Service office. Visit [www.nc4h.org](http://www.nc4h.org) for a list of county offices.





# SURVEYING THE SITES

by Lorie Codispoti

We've been busy surveying the Internet for websites that you will enjoy. Our goal is to provide something for everyone so we've organized these fun, informative, and educational sites into four categories for you to explore.



## Articles of Interest

**"10 Things I'd Change if I Could Have a Homeschool Do-Over"** by Kris Bales  
<http://www.weirdunsocializedhomeschoolers.com/10-things-id-change-if-i-could-have-a-homeschool-do-over/>

"...it's sometimes fun to daydream about what you'd change if you could have a do-over.... If I could have a homeschool do-over, I'd..." (KB)

**"Stepping Outside the Grade Level Box"** by Sarah Small

<http://simplehomeschool.net/stepping-outside-the-grade-level-box/>

"That hallmark of traditional schooling—the passing from grade to grade—isn't of utmost importance in homeschooling. The age/grade correlation just isn't necessarily present." (SS)

Stepping Outside the Grade-Level Box

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quick trick: magnetic letters (how to use them with your kids!)

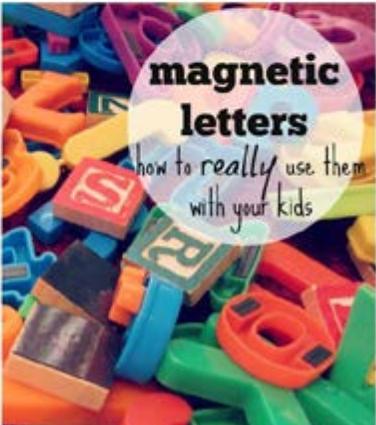
Dec 1, 2010 // 26 comments // Categories: early literacy, sight words // Tags: 0-2 years, 2-3 years, 3-5 years, early literacy, family time, phonics, phonological awareness, printable, reading, sight words

This post contains affiliate links. 

Holiday time is here, and things are sure to be nutty around our house—and everyone else's—for the next few weeks.

Although I know it's going to be hard to sneak in a little bit of learning each day while we're busy decorating, making gifts, wrapping, and eating sweets (which we do a lot of over here!), I do have a little something up my sleeve. I threw our magnetic letters on the fridge this week just to squeeze in a little word learning when we're able.

This Quick Trick has been used by millions of homes all around the world, but I'm sharing just a few of the next steps for moms and dads out there.



## Teacher Feature

**Magnetic Letters—How to Use Them with Your Kids**  
[http://teachmama.com/quick-trick-magnetic-letters-how-to-use-them-with-your-kids/#\\_a5y\\_p=1759433](http://teachmama.com/quick-trick-magnetic-letters-how-to-use-them-with-your-kids/#_a5y_p=1759433)

I would venture to guess that this manipulative is a staple in every homeschool. But, what you may not have is a great collection of various ways to use all those colorful letters. This author solves that problem as she fills the page with all kinds of exciting ideas.

**Cleaning Schedule for Homeschool Families**  
<http://www.freehomeschooldeals.com/cleaning-schedule-for-homeschool-families/>

This homeschool mom says, "Our house is clean enough to be healthy and dirty enough to be happy." She shares a host of great ideas for recruiting every family member, and as a team, successfully reaching the *clean and happy* goal.

**It's Elementary**  
*The Sign of the Beaver*

<http://jerryshollywoodland.blogspot.com/2013/05/full-movie-sign-of-beaver-1997.html>

For those of you with students reading *The Sign of the Beaver*, here's a link to the full movie version. Why not

have your students compare the book and movie after a family movie night?

**Revolutionary War 3—Declaration of Independence**  
<http://www.123homeschool4me.com/2012/08/revolutionary-war-3-declaration-of.html>

It's that American History time of year again and this website includes some great resources for your studies. My favorites are the DIY spy cipher you can make with your kids, and the free download for the Revolutionary War timeline and lapbook.



**High School and Beyond**  
**7 Pinterest Ideas for High School Writing**  
<http://www.writeshop.com/blog/7-pinterest-ideas-writing-teens/>

This collection of articles will enlighten and encourage those of you who understand the need for good writing skills, but need a little help developing that skill. It covers everything from note taking skills and writing a college essay to art journaling and vocabulary play.

**Idiom of the Day**  
<http://idiomoftheday.org/#homePage>

Idioms anyone? The Society for English Learning Through Biblical Literature wants to grow your biblical *knowledge as well as your vocabulary by posting a biblical idiom of the week*. The page includes the idiom, the scripture reference, its origin, meaning and application.

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



Lorie Codispoti is retired from homeschooling after successfully graduating her two children. She and her husband, John, are former NCHE board members. Lorie can be reached at [GatesOfElloree@gmail.com](mailto:GatesOfElloree@gmail.com). 



# Mollie Hensley Wins Writers Award Four Years in a Row



Mollie Hensley, age nine, was recently named the first place winner of the third grade entries in the 2014 UNC-TV's PBS KIDS GO! Writers Contest. She has won first place in her grade for the last three years and won second place during her kindergarten year. This writing competition encourages North Carolina children, kindergarten through third grades, to create original picture books. First and second place winners will have their stories animated on-air and online. UNC-TV submits the first place winners from each grade to PBS for the national competition. Mollie's North Carolina winning submission titled, "My Special Granddaddy," also won second place in the national PBS Kids Writers Contest. It is a true story about her grandfather, John R. Riggs of Lenoir, NC, who is suffering the effects of Alzheimer's disease. Mollie wrote about memories she has of the fun things she and her granddaddy did together before the disease progressed to its present stage. She also chronicled some of her granddad's accomplishments, for example, fighting in WWII, being a loving leader of her family and being a devoted man of God who still remembers how to pray and who gives God all the glory for what He has done. Contest officials surprised Mollie with her first prize award on Wednesday, April 30, at Roll About Skating Center in Burlington, where she was with all of her homeschool friends who are members of Alamance County's Welcome Homeschool Group. Footage filmed at this event is currently being aired. Mollie's animated and narrated book will also appear on UNC-TV. Molly is very active in ballet and liturgical dance and a member of Kinnett Memorial Baptist Church where she enjoys participating in Word of Life Olympian Club and singing in the KIDZ Choir. Homeschooled since kindergarten, she is the daughter of Alan and Kara Hensley, of Mebane. 

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**Thrive! The NCHC Homeschool Conference** will be May 21-23, 2015, at the M.C. Benton Convention Center in Winston-Salem, NC.

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## ***From Our Friends***

**Homeschool Historical Ball.** Time to dust off your dancing shoes and plan your costume! The Jacksonville area Homeschool Historical Ball is coming up on November 15. Prices are low, merriment high and the music is terrific! Join us for this family-friendly, wholesome event. Alums are welcome. Call Lydia Carroll at (910) 340-7081 for details.

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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.

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Membership in NCHE is available to all residents of North Carolina who pledge to uphold the ideals of NCHE and comply with the North Carolina homeschool law. Membership is obtained by donating any amount to NCHE (suggested donation is \$25). The service of NCHE is made possible by the generous and consistent contributions of its supporters. 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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# I AM APOLOGIA SCIENCE

"After homeschooling through high school, I pursued a Bachelor of Science Degree in Equine Science and Management with a minor in Biology at the University of Kentucky. I plan to be a veterinarian, and Apologia Science gave me a solid foundation for my college studies."

## Virginia Stilwell

College graduate, Bachelor of Science Degree in Equine Science and Management



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