

GREENHOUSE

Nurturing Home Education in North Carolina and Beyond



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- Ten Things My Personal Trainer Taught Me about Homeschooling
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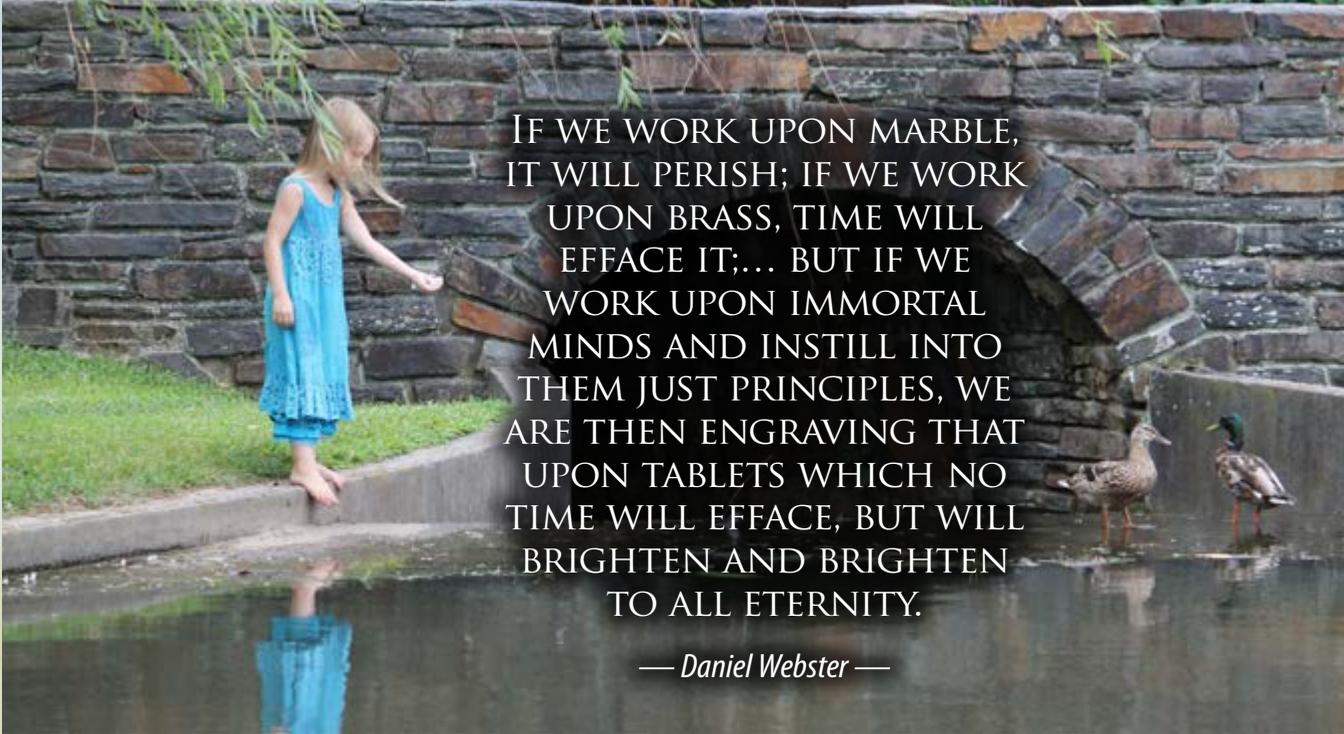
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IF WE WORK UPON MARBLE,
IT WILL PERISH; IF WE WORK
UPON BRASS, TIME WILL
EFFACE IT;... BUT IF WE
WORK UPON IMMORTAL
MINDS AND INSTILL INTO
THEM JUST PRINCIPLES, WE
ARE THEN ENGRAVING THAT
UPON TABLETS WHICH NO
TIME WILL EFFACE, BUT WILL
BRIGHTEN AND BRIGHTEN
TO ALL ETERNITY.

— Daniel Webster —

About GREENHOUSE

The GREENHOUSE is the periodical of North Carolinians for Home Education. It is a quarterly—four issues, plus a special graduate issue in May. 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 articles do not necessarily represent those of NCHE.

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REBOOTING

by Kevin McClain

It's the fall of 2015, the beginning of a new academic year. I trust you had a summer full of activities that took advantage of the great resources in NC, from our mountains to our beaches. I hope you were able to schedule an extended visit with family and friends. I hope you were able to read a good book and take in a summer blockbuster. I hope you were able to take a break from structured academics and that you were able to reboot.

I have been enjoying applying the notion of a *reboot* to the experience of home education and the human condition. For those of you who are not familiar with the term, reboot is a commonly used information technology term which has made its way into the more common lexicon. It originally referred to the process of turning a computer off and on again, with the hope that whatever issue was ailing the computer will be resolved. Often computers are asked to do so many tasks that they have difficulty prioritizing them all. The tasks start to compete against each other for the computer's limited computational resources and, in essence, thwart each other so that fewer and fewer tasks are accomplished. Eventually, the computer's processor starts to degrade in performance and some tasks are aborted. It is likely that we've all experienced the spinning hour-glass icon, or, the Apple spinning *rainbow wheel of death*. These icons tell you to wait, but also give you the sinking feeling that files are not going to be saved, and the computer might even crash. A reboot in some ways is an admittance that things have gone too far afield and it is not going to get better on its own. The hour-glass icon keeps rotating; the rainbow wheel keeps spinning, and an intervention is required. Best to cut one's losses. Reboot.

The notion of reboot has transitioned successfully to the cinematic arts, where it has been used, successfully, and less than optimally, according to the several teenaged movie-critics-in-residence at my domicile. In film, a reboot basically restarts a story. If you enjoy movies at all, it is likely you have experienced some blockbuster reboots, for example, *Amazing Spiderman* and *Star Trek*. There have been multiple sequels to the original *Star Trek* movie. The second installment, *The Wrath of Khan*, was a sequel that expounded on a story line from one episode in the original TV series. For all their success, however, there was a sense that the story had run its course but not necessarily

so, according to some. What was needed, rather, was a retelling that would bring the story up to speed with the now more sophisticated ways of doing film. For fans of a story, reboots can be both exhilarating and terrifying. Will the writers, producers, directors and actors all honor what the fans deem essential to a beloved character or sequence of particular events? Will the rebooting extend the inspiration received of the first telling, or will they instead undermine what is so captivating and possibly deliver utter disappointment? To take on a cinematic reboot is a bold and daring move for movie-makers. The stakes are in some sense higher, as they are not only charged with captivating the audience, but doing so in a way that honors the legacies of past artists. They could fail and be the scorn of an entire fan base. Or, they could succeed and essentially resurrect an entire storyline.

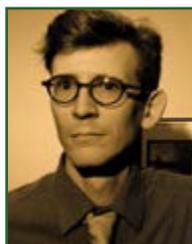
I recently read an article that argued that the concept of reboot is helpful for thinking about essentials of Christian doctrine, of creation and Christ's kingdom. In simplified terms, that means in the afterlife, we will not be sitting on clouds and playing harps all day but going about the labor we were made to do in a manner that is far better than we do today. I find this vision particularly exhilarating because there are many things I do really enjoy and even sometimes feel I do well. There are relationships to people and things, like my favorite song, that I don't want to lose. I believe it makes far more sense that heaven will include a way of honoring these things in the hearts of the redeemed, individually and collectively.

I find the notion of reboot useful for describing the homeschooling experience. Home educators see learning as integral to life. Life is, in some sense, a constant retelling of the story of one's learning. Sure, there are sequences in knowledge development. One learns certain things first and other things second—algebra before calculus, the names of colors before art theory—but in some sense, complex subjects are just more nuanced and sophisticated retelling of simpler subjects. It may even be that sometimes we have to re-learn how to do certain things because we have fallen out of practice, or perhaps the way we have been doing it something no longer meets our needs. In learning more, we are often re-learning something. At the beginning of the new year parents may find that certain skills a student possessed last year now seem to have disappeared! Urrg! Do we need to repeat a grade? Never fear—your student may need only to be re-engaged in a subject to have these skills ready to again be used in everyday activities. The knowledge and skills are intact, only a slight reboot is necessary.

The concept of reboot relates to homeschooling at even deeper level. North Carolina has caught the attention of educational

policy researchers by its rapid growth of homeschooling, with an average annual growth rate of approximately 20% since 1985. During the 2014-2015 academic year there were over 67,800 registered homeschools serving and estimated 169,500 students. This statistic is significant: in North Carolina, there are more students who are homeschooled than are enrolled in private schools. Although the Division of Non-Public Education has not yet released official numbers for 2015-2016 school-year, it seems the trend of homeschool growth is continuing. At the beginning of this school-year, there were over 70,000 homeschools listed with DNPE. Contrast that to 1985 when there were 381 schools. The 2015 academic year marks the thirtieth anniversary of the 1985 Delconte case, the North Carolina Supreme Court ruling that clarified that homeschooling is legal in North Carolina. Prior to the Delconte ruling, homeschooling parents risked jail. Homeschooling parents of that era tell stories of strategies to avoid detection. These parents were deeply dissatisfied with the status quo of education. For more and more children, education was being thwarted. The fundamental aspect of civilization, that of raising the next generation, needed a reboot. Educating children to be active, productive adult members of society involved them being active, productive members of their social unit, their family. Education systems that sought to teach children in a manner which did not acknowledge and respect the rights and values of parents had their priorities and responsibilities confused. Many children were not flourishing and advocacy efforts fell on deaf ears. Something had to be done. A small and devoted handful did not send their children to school but rather began to extend what they were already doing naturally, teaching their own children in their own homes. Today, roughly 70,000 families are benefitting from the actions of a few, and their commitment to start again, to sacrifice and risk for the sake of their conscience and the healthy development of their children.

The 2015 academic year includes roughly 4,000 new homeschools in North Carolina. If that is you, welcome to the reboot. Restarting can be challenging; it is hard work. I believe your family, you and your children, will find it rewarding.



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



*Spencer and Debbie Mason
with their four children
in the early years of their
homeschool journey*

NCHE Celebrates Thirty Years of **Legal Homeschooling in North Carolina**

by Brian Gilpin

In the spring of 1985, a significant victory took place in the long legal fight over home education in North Carolina. The North Carolina State Supreme Court ruled that under the current private school law, parents were allowed to educate their children at home.

Prior to this ruling, in some areas of the state, compulsory school attendance laws were being used to prosecute parents for teaching their children at home.



Spencer and Debbie Mason's children are now grown, but they continue to support homeschool families by serving on the board of NCHE.

The judgment in *Delconte v. North Carolina* reversed a lower court ruling and declared homeschooling legal. The 1985-86 school year was the first in which single-family homeschools were officially recognized as non-public schools in North Carolina.

Kevin McClain, president of NCHE and father of six homeschooled children said that NCHE is celebrating this milestone by remembering some of the early pioneers in home education in North Carolina.

"Most of us have had the good fortune to start our homeschooling journey after it became legal and socially acceptable. Home education in North Carolina has flourished since the North Carolina Supreme Court declared it legal in its ruling on May 7, 1985 in *Delconte v. North Carolina*," said McClain. "Although hard to believe in this day and age, Larry Delconte was actually prosecuted under compulsory school attendance laws for homeschooling his children. This set the stage for the judicial action that eventually led the North Carolina Supreme Court to reverse a lower court ruling and declare homeschooling legal."

Spencer and Debbie Mason were homeschooling parents in those early days. They decided to move to NC during the time this court case was being waged. The difficulty of homeschooling in NC at the time made this a hard decision. However, because their oldest was not yet five, they knew that it would be a couple of years before they fell under the compulsory attendance law. They hoped and prayed that the law would change before their daughter turned seven. They felt strongly that God wanted them in NC. As it turned out, they were still in the process of moving into NC when they heard on the news about

of a homeschooling family that was being taken to court. At first, Spencer thought it was a great idea, Debbie not so much. In the beginning, their main reasons focused on encouraging a love of learning in their children, allowing them to experience an individual education based on their interests and development and avoiding peer pressure,

the *Delconte* case win. Today they continue to support homeschooling by serving on the board of NCHE.

Like many parents they believed that homeschooling was a great alternative to the traditional, institutional schools, or even programs for the young such as mothers-morning-out. Their oldest was almost one when they first heard about homeschooling through news

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especially in the young years. As with many homeschoolers in those early days, the goal was to homeschool until the age of between eight and ten, but as those years approached, they fell in love with the process and decided to keep homeschooling.

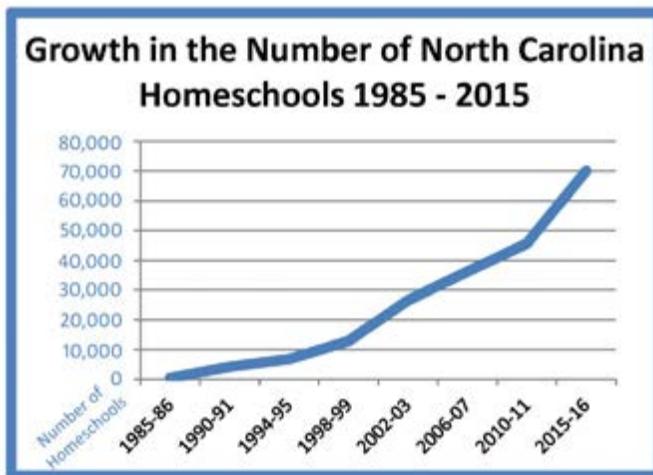
Debbie Mason recalls that there was a lot of anxiety and concern in those early years when parents

could be arrested for educating their children at home. "Before homeschooling was clearly legal, we had devised a plan that if my husband Spencer was arrested, I would take the children and flee to Tennessee where the grandparents lived." Other homeschooling families had similar contingency plans. Before the Delconte case decision, there were several families who were arrested because of homeschooling. While the threat of arrest was removed, it has not all been smooth sailing since 1985. As can be imagined, not everyone was happy with the Delconte decision, especially the NC Department of Public Instruction. Jumping off from a suggestion in the ruling itself, opponents sought to change the law to put heavy restrictions on homeschoolers. A hard-fought battle took place during the 1987-88 legislative sessions. NCHE rose to the occasion, rallied the troops and won a victory that gave us one of the best homeschool laws in the US.

The Mason's four children now grown include two married daughters (one is a homeschool mom with four children), an attorney and a computer engineer. "It was risky when we made the decision to homeschool in NC, but I am so glad that we did. The homeschooling life was a great life, and NC turned out to be a wonderful place to homeschool. I am really proud of our kids and the lives they are leading," Mason said.

McClain says that the Masons were true pioneers in an educational movement that has become incredibly successful. "The generation before us did the heavy lifting that made the many homeschool opportunities possible that we enjoy today," said McClain.

According to the North Carolina Division of Non-Public



Homeschooling in North Carolina has grown at an average rate of 20% a year in the thirty years since it first became legal to educate children at home in 1985.

Education (DNPE), after the NC Supreme Court decision there were 381 individual homeschools. Today they report that more than 70,000 NC homeschools.

McClain who has led NCHE for the past three years describes the growth of home education as phenomenal. He explains that the focus of their organization

has become broader in order to meet the needs of the growing homeschooling population. "Our goals at NCHE today include more than just keeping homeschooling legal but ensuring that we have a robust environment where home education is celebrated and continues to thrive. We provide a variety of services that include helping families to get started with home education for the first time, providing homeschool sports leagues and holding an annual conference that draws more than 7,000 people every year."

To learn more about NCHE and homeschooling in North Carolina, visit the NCHE website at NCHE.com or email them at NCHE@NCHE.com.

Resources:

Homeschool statistics in NC: <http://nche.com/stats> and <http://www.ncdnpe.org/homeschool2.aspx>

Homeschool history in NC: <http://nche.com/history>



Brian Gilpin and his wife, Kirsty, have been homeschooling their two children since 2009. He has a BS in journalism from the University of Kansas and an MS in management from the University of Maryland University College. He works as the CRM manager for Classical Conversations and joined the NCHE board in 2014, currently serving as marketing director.

I AM APOLOGIA SCIENCE

"The biblical worldview of the Exploring Creation series and its authors is refreshing. These are real scientists who present God's creation in all of its awe and splendor. References to God's handiwork are intertwined throughout the texts at appropriate times. As we learned science, we were reminded where the earth and all of its creations come from."

Sue Mercer
Homeschooling Mom

"Apologia Science was a great launching point that helped me succeed throughout college. I would absolutely recommend Apologia to parents and students looking for an effective and interesting science curriculum.

In fact, I already do whenever I meet homeschooling families!"

Allyson Mercer
Bachelor of Science in Food Science, Purdue University"





An Election Day Opportunity for HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS

by Diane Helfrich

In our homeschools, one of the great things we have is flexibility. We can engage in experiences that are sometimes hard within a traditional system because they require being away from the school. Thus, homeschoolers are frequently field-tripping and partaking of homeschool days at places like Tryon Palace or Old Salem. We visit museums and botanical gardens and glean educational value from just about every family vacation or trip to the beach. A very enlightening thing that we did recently was to sit in on courtroom proceedings for a couple of hours. It's eye-opening to witness our judicial and legislative bodies in action. A great way to experience the legislative side of our state is to serve as a page for the governor, the house or the senate. If you want more information on that program for students ages fifteen to eighteen, go to the NCHE.com website and look under the activities tab, where you will find a tab for the page program.

The opportunity I would like to highlight in this article is the Student Election Assistant Program. While this program has been available for a few years, many are unaware of it. It requires about two days of time, one for training and one on an election day and is for students age seventeen or older by the election day. Students are involved in many aspects of the day and duties change based on need at the time. The value is that they see all the ins and outs of an election-day process, which can be many! While most people just come in and vote, there are also many other things happening. Students may encounter people lobbying for their candidate, or may deal with other questions and issues that need to be resolved. Because being at a polling station is a *people business*, students will see all kinds of people with all kinds of agendas. For someone about to enter the world of adult voting, being an election assistant is a great way to gain experience and a broader understanding of the voting process.

As you know, in NC in 2016, we have two big election-related events: a presidential election and the first time voter identification will be required for voting. To keep the voting going smoothly, the State Board of Elections (BOE) anticipates needing many more hands on deck to deal with the multitude of questions and issues that will most certainly arise. The BOE has asked us to bring this program to the attention of our membership in the hopes that many students will volunteer to help on election day. It is a fantastic opportunity for our upper level high school students to participate in a civic role on landmark elections. Of course every election is important, so students can sign up now for elections happening this year as well as for next year.

Learning about our governmental systems and giving time to our country is a civic duty. We encourage homeschool students to take this opportunity and learn a lot in the process!

The following text is from the state BOE, providing what you need to know to get started.

STUDENT ELECTION ASSISTANT PROGRAM

In 2003, the North Carolina General Assembly passed a law allowing high school students to work in the polls on election day, if they meet certain requirements. The Student Election Assistant program affords qualified students the opportunity to play a direct role in the elections process while also building out their resumes and college application portfolios and potentially earning community service hours. Each county Board of Elections (BOE) is responsible for implementing this program for their polling sites.

This year, the North Carolina State Board of Elections (NCSBE) has partnered with North Carolina's 100 county BOE offices to push a statewide publicity initiative, inviting high school students

across North Carolina to work in the polls on election day as an election official.

In order to serve as a Student Election Assistant, a student must be a US citizen enrolled in high school (including public, charter, private and homeschools), a resident of the county in which they will serve, seventeen years of age or older by Election Day and in good academic standing. Students must also have permission from their parent or legal guardian and from their school principal or director. Students will need to be available for training in addition to being at an assigned polling place on election day.

Your local BOE office can provide more information about becoming a Student Election Assistant, including the required dates and hours. Applications can be found by visiting the "Elections: Get Involved" of the www.NCSBE.gov website and should be submitted directly to the appropriate county BOE office.

County BOE contact information can also be found on the NCSBE website.



Diane Helfrich is an empty-nesting fourteen-year veteran of homeschooling. She is married to David, a civilian intelligence specialist for US Army Special Operations Command in Fayetteville. Her son, Ian, a graduate of UNC Chapel Hill and the Barcelona Graduate School of Economics in Spain, is now working on a PhD in economics at Indiana University. Her daughter, Anna, is at George Mason University as an honors college student double majoring in conflict analysis and resolution and law-based philosophy. Diane is the NCHC region 8 liaison. 🇺🇸

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N.C. SUPREME COURT DECISION

On May 7, 1985, the N.C. Supreme Court rendered a unanimous, landmark decision in favor of parental choice in education. Now North Carolinians, along with families of 38 other states, may choose home education as well as the public or private school alternatives. The Supreme Court ruled that parents may register home instructional programs as private schools. The ruling is based on the case of Larry and Michelle Delconte from Harnett County. The court said that the Delcontes complied with the law by educating their children at home. The court stated that the "Delcontes' home instruction meets all the express standards for 'qualification' as a non-public school under Part 2, Article 39, Chapter 115C."

We are grateful for the Delcontes' pioneering spirit, which they have displayed during their costly four-year ordeal. We are also indebted to the North Carolina Association of Christian Schools (NCACS), which spent about \$45,000 in defending the Delcontes. NCACS made a sacrificial stand for all of us who hold educational freedom as a priceless heritage. We encourage all of you to write to Dr. Ulrich, President of NCACS, and express your appreciation in a tangible way. Make your tax-deductible donations to NCACS, addressed in care of NCHE, P.O. Box 5182, High Point, NC, 27262-9998. Your response by June 1 is urgent.

THE DELCONTE CASE: THE FIRST STEP IN NC HOMESCHOOL FREEDOM

by Spencer Mason

For a quarter of a century, home educators in North Carolina have found it relatively easy to comply with our homeschool law. Anybody who has had much contact with the Division of Non-Public Education (DNPE) has learned that everybody there is homeschool friendly. This atmosphere goes a long way to make dealing with North Carolina state authorities a generally pleasant experience. It has been this way for so long that we forget, or perhaps, have never known about, the great sacrifices the homeschool pioneers made so that we can educate our children at home in relative safety from state intrusion.

Many of those pioneers learned about homeschooling when they heard Raymond and Dorothy Moore being interviewed by James Dobson on the Focus on the Family radio program or when they read John Holt's book *Teach Your Own* or his homeschool newsletter *Growing without Schooling*. The Moores were education specialists who had done research on early childhood education. Because of their findings, they tried to reform the school systems of America from within, citing their research. Their efforts were met with nothing but resistance, so they published a book for the general public, *Better Late Than Early*, in 1975, and continued to publish information about their research which promoted home education. John Holt was a classroom teacher who observed profound negative changes in children after they began to attend traditional school. He, too, tried to reform the system, but to no avail. He began promoting unschooling (a type of homeschooling). In 1977 his *Growing without Schooling* was the first newsletter dedicated to home education.

THE CLAMP DOWN

Homeschooling is now widely accepted in North Carolina as a good alternative method of education. It was a much different climate for home education in the early 1980s. Stories were told of homeschoolers living in rural areas who were able to stay in the shadows and exist without interference. However, those living in more urban areas did not have that advantage. In 1979, the Organized Christian Schools of North Carolina (CSNC) and the North Carolina Association of Christian Schools (NCACS) were successful in pushing through legislation that took the oversight of non-public schools away from the Department of Public Instruction (DPI) and placed the oversight in the Governor's Office Division of Non-Public Education (DNPE). The new law was much less restrictive for non-public schools because it eliminated many of the operating regulations that were in place when DPI had oversight. Prospective homeschoolers saw this as an opportunity to legally operate as private schools. Later that year, NC Attorney General Rufus Edmisten issued an opinion that homeschools, 1) can receive no funding from the state, 2) must be accredited by the State Board of Education or by the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools or be an active member of the North Carolina Association of Independent Schools, 3) must have students from more than one family.

In August of 1981, Larry Delconte of Harnett County, was denied the right to homeschool his children, so he sued the state for that right. The court agreed that his homeschool met the requirements of the compulsory attendance laws, but the state appealed the decision. This began a protracted battle in the courts.

In 1982, while the Delcontes were fighting their battle, Peter Duro, a Tyrrell County resident, was prosecuted for violating the compulsory attendance law by establishing a homeschool. He claimed that under the First Amendment, his religious liberties allowed him to educate his children with accountability to the state. A federal court agreed with Duro that he had the right to school his children at home.

The small homeschool community was stunned when the NC Court of Appeals overturned the lower court's favorable ruling in the Delconte case in December 1983. The Delcontes then appealed to the NC Supreme Court. Homeschoolers received another disappointment when in January, 1984, the US Circuit Court of Appeals overturned the lower court's favorable ruling in the Duro case. The Duros appealed to the US Supreme Court, but the Court declined to hear the case. During this time period, George Quick, of Stanly County, and Bob Groves, of Ashe County, were arrested and booked for homeschooling, and many more

were threatened. Carolyn Winslow, in her recollections of that time, said that fear was rampant among home educators. During school hours they drew the drapes and kept their children hidden indoors. At the same time, homeschoolers realized that if they were going to have the freedom to educate their children, they needed to learn how to influence their legislators.

Larry Cockerham was a biology professor at Campbell University while he was homeschooling his two children. A law professor at Campbell warned him that the Harnett County Superintendent of Public Schools, Mr. Alton Gray, who had started proceedings against the Delcontes, would probably get the authorities to shut down his homeschool as well. Larry was friends with a deputy on the local police force. He asked the deputy if she would warn him when a summons was issued so he would not be arrested in front of his children. Several days later, the deputy called Larry to warn him that a criminal summons had been issued to bring him in. Rather than waiting to be arrested, he had his family leave the house, and he went to the police station to turn himself in. They booked and released him. Next, Larry called Alton Gray, with whom he had already had many conversations about home education, and said, "Mr. Gray you have made a mistake." Mr. Gray agreed but said that it was Larry's fault because he was homeschooling. Mr. Gray explained that he had rescinded the summons. Later Larry learned that Mr. Gray had called the police station to cancel the criminal summons just after Larry had been booked and released. Apparently, the North Carolina Superintendent of Public Schools had called Mr. Gray to tell him to leave homeschoolers alone. After this incident, Larry and his wife, Lavonna, became active in lobbying for homeschooling. (He and his entire family were in the NC Supreme Court when the Delconte case was argued.)

NCHE BEGINS

Concerns about the arrests and court rulings against homeschoolers prompted the formation of North Carolinians for Home Education (NCHE) with the intention of encouraging and organizing homeschoolers across the state. They began with organizational meetings in public libraries in early 1984.

There was a meeting in Jamestown and those organizing it worked hard to locate as many homeschoolers as possible. They contacted Focus on the Family and the Moores to get names and addresses of people from North Carolina who had corresponded with questions about homeschooling. They sent out invitations, and that meeting—held at Solomon's Porch on March 31, 1984—brought together groups of homeschoolers from all over the state under the banner of NCHE. Three mailing

lists were developed based on geography. The families at the meeting didn't want a list with all their names that could possibly fall into the hands of the authorities. There was a panic when, during the meeting, it was learned that a reporter from the Charlotte Observer was present. People thought they would be reported to the authorities. It turns out that this reporter was only interested in homeschooling his family.

The first issue of the NCHE newsletter, the *Greenhouse Report* was dated May 1984 and was sent to the 100 home educators who were brave enough to add their names to the NCHE mailing list. The *Greenhouse Report* was created to keep readers informed about legal actions against homeschoolers, strategies to reduce the chances of being arrested, parents' legal rights and information on curriculum and legislation. Homeschoolers were encouraged to be politically involved, and NCHE printed brochures and educational packets for parents to use in explaining home education to a largely ignorant public and on planned trips to the NC General Assembly.

THE VICTORY

May 7, 1985, proved to be a fateful day. The North Carolina Supreme Court ruled in favor of the Delcontes. Under the current law, Chapter 115C, Article 39 of the North Carolina Code, known unofficially as the Private School Law, homeschooling would be allowed. "I remember... it was so exciting... we were all on the

porch of the legislative building when we found out, and we all just cheered. . . . We were euphoric, but we knew it was just the beginning of the fight." (taken from The Legal Battle for Home Schooling in North Carolina, by Jackie Burkhardt.)

The Delcontes did not set out to go down in history or become homeschool heroes. They were just a quiet family who wanted to educate their children at home and were willing to fight for that right. They didn't really want the limelight. As a result of their willingness to fight and put themselves in the public eye, a substantial step in the freedom to homeschool was made. While the Delconte name did go down in homeschool history, there were many other courageous families who sacrificed so that homeschoolers would have the freedom to homeschool in NC.



Spencer 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 law and policy director.

Editor's Note: This article was taken from A History of Homeschooling in NC, Parts I and II. For the rest of the history go to <http://www.nche.com/history>.



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Ten Things My Personal Trainer Taught Me about Homeschooling

by Jolene Kreiling

Self-doubt swam through my mind as I climbed the steps to the workout floor of my local fitness center. Would I be able to handle this? Could I do it? Would I throw up? After spending the summer dealing with an ankle injury, surgery to fix it and then recovery, I honestly felt like a slug. I knew it was time to exercise regularly, but I was afraid to do it on my own and re-injure myself. During a brave moment, I casually mentioned to my husband, Bill, that I was interested in receiving personal training sessions for my birthday in September. Being the smart man that he is, he instantly realized he needed to guard his words. He was literally frozen in disbelief as he pondered and tried to clarify how serious I was about this personal training idea.

Eventually the day arrived when I met Jon, my personal trainer. I had strong doubts regarding the success of our relationship. He was a competitive, twenty-something-year-old weightlifter while I was an out-of-shape homeschooling mom with eight children. Earlier that week, while talking with his supervisor to combat my apprehension, he assured me Jon would be the right fit.

Working with Jon over the course of several months taught me a great deal about healthy living, exercise and nutrition. What I didn't expect was what he taught me about homeschooling. Here are ten of his tips—with a homeschooling twist:

1. Allow for days off: The first thing Jon did was ask me what day I would most definitely *not* be going to the gym. I easily rattled off an answer to this query. He followed this by asking for a second day when gym exercise wouldn't happen. I had no problem answering this question either. He drew a schedule for the week and promptly marked in the two days I wouldn't be coming to the gym. Then he wanted to know what I could do instead. Now I had to think. What would I do when I wasn't at the gym? Could I incorporate a different type of exercising into my life?

Take the time to plan for days when you won't be doing school. Your children will still be learning; it just won't be book work. Maybe you enjoy spending birthdays together as a family. What about holidays? Do you need extra time to prepare for an event? Would you like a longer vacation? Plan now and enjoy that time away from the books doing lifestyle learning.

2. Do what you like to do: Jon encouraged me to choose activities at the gym I enjoyed doing. He told me it would be nearly impossible to commit to something I detested. I was glad to take swimming and cycling classes off of my list.

Choose a curriculum you enjoy and preferably one your children enjoy as well. If you don't like it, the likelihood of your using it on a regular basis greatly diminishes. Do you prefer curriculum that is a straight-forward textbook approach, literature-based, a unit study or something else? There's not a right answer to this question. Choices abound for curriculum options!

3. Make a plan: Jon wrote out a weekly schedule that included all of my training activities.

For homeschooling, I use a planner in which I write the material and assignments my children will be working on over the course of the week. In addition to this information, I also add a weekly menu, appointments, field trips and a running list of needed science supplies.

4. Assess the current situation: After we made a plan for when I wasn't going to exercise and what I would do when I did exercise, we headed toward the *human performance*

laboratory where I was weighed, measured and given a fitness test. By learning my starting point, I would be able to see the progress I made.

Likewise, with your students, assess the situation. Know your children's strengths as well as areas which need improvement. Everyone starts somewhere. It's where we go from there that's important.

5. Set S.M.A.R.T. goals: Next, we determined reasonable long and short-term goals for my fitness. My bigger goal was to run a 5k race in March. Smaller goals included number of times going to the gym each week, amount of weight I would lift and classes I would attend. The goals we set were S.M.A.R.T.—Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Realistic and Time-Bound.

Maybe this is the year your child learns those multiplication facts, develops a mastery level in keyboarding, reads a certain number of books or actually publishes a self-written book. No matter what the subject, set some goals so you will all know where you are going and when you've arrived.

6. Prepare for setbacks: We discussed things that would prohibit me from coming to the gym. Some of my suggestions for excuses included: appointments, bad weather, sick children or just plain laziness. He gave me alternatives to try at home in case I didn't make it in. He told me if all else failed, to come to the gym the following day and to not stress myself out about missing a day.

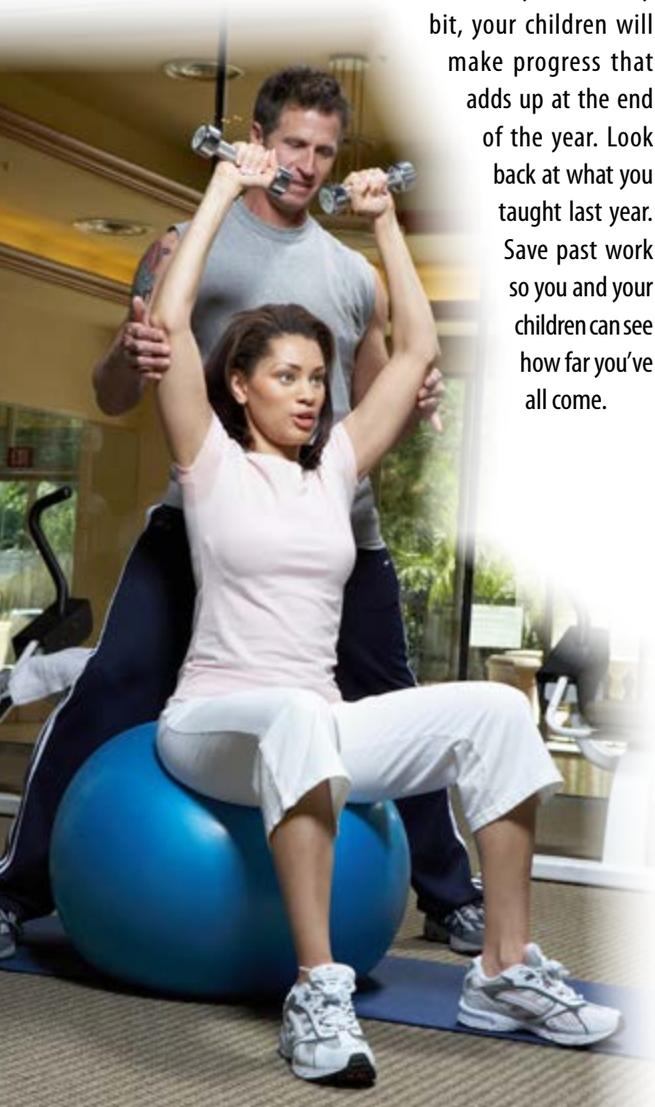
The same thing applies to homeschooling. There will be days when nothing goes right. My beautifully-written lesson plans don't match those days when none of us feel like doing school, the dog has to go to the vet, the washing machine breaks or I'm sick. It will happen. Plan for educational activities your children can do without your help—a movie you find on a historical event, a craft to make, a story to write. Our children are capable of learning a great deal without our direct, every minute of every day, instruction.

7. Balance is critical: Jon taught me regularly about cardiovascular fitness, flexibility, strength, and nutrition. If I had my choice, I would do cardio every day. I love watching the numbers change on the machines and calculating the calories I'm burning. I set mini-challenges up for myself as I tried to beat my past records.

In homeschooling, I'm great at teaching some subjects. Sometimes it's because they're easy for me to teach; other times it's because my curriculum is easier to use. At any rate, I need to utilize balance and teach multiple subjects—not just those that are our favorites for one reason or another.

8. Small improvements add up: Jon had me bring in a notebook. Every time we trained together he wrote down the workout along with my statistics like weight, repetitions or distance. As I exercised over the months, it was gratifying to see the documented improvement. He told me even if I made only a one percent improvement each week, over time all those one percents would add up. My perfectionistic self had never looked at it that way.

Throw away your desire for perfectionism and realize that little by little, bit by bit, your children will make progress that adds up at the end of the year. Look back at what you taught last year. Save past work so you and your children can see how far you've all come.



9. Consistency is the name of the game: It didn't matter if I went to the gym all day every Monday. If I didn't go the rest of the week, I would never see the type of results I was after. Cold, rainy days and those mornings I didn't want to get out of bed, let alone go to the gym, didn't deter me from going to the gym. Sometimes I had to remind myself to think about how I felt when I walked out of the gym knowing I had accomplished yet another step toward my goals.

There are many days I don't feel like homeschooling. I can guarantee my children also experience that same struggle. Yet, we march on. We know this is a path we are called to travel. Some days the scenery is beautiful; the day is sunny, and everything goes right. Some days we head down that same path knowing we are continuing to get to our destination.

10. Celebrate success! After working hard all week, it was a wonderful privilege to enjoy date night with a restaurant splurge, purchase a new item of clothing or even save up for a massage. In addition, the comments of encouragement from my friends and family definitely boosted my motivation to continue to work hard.

Celebrate your children's success! We encouraged one child to learn to read by promising a giant Lego prize at the finish line. We've gone skating, cooked creations, played with friends and a myriad of other things. Take the time to celebrate both for them and for you. You all deserve it!



Jolene Kreiling lives with her husband and best friend, Bill, in Fayetteville, NC. Together they actively parent eight children ranging in age from twelve to twenty-five. Jolene serves on the NCHE board as secretary.



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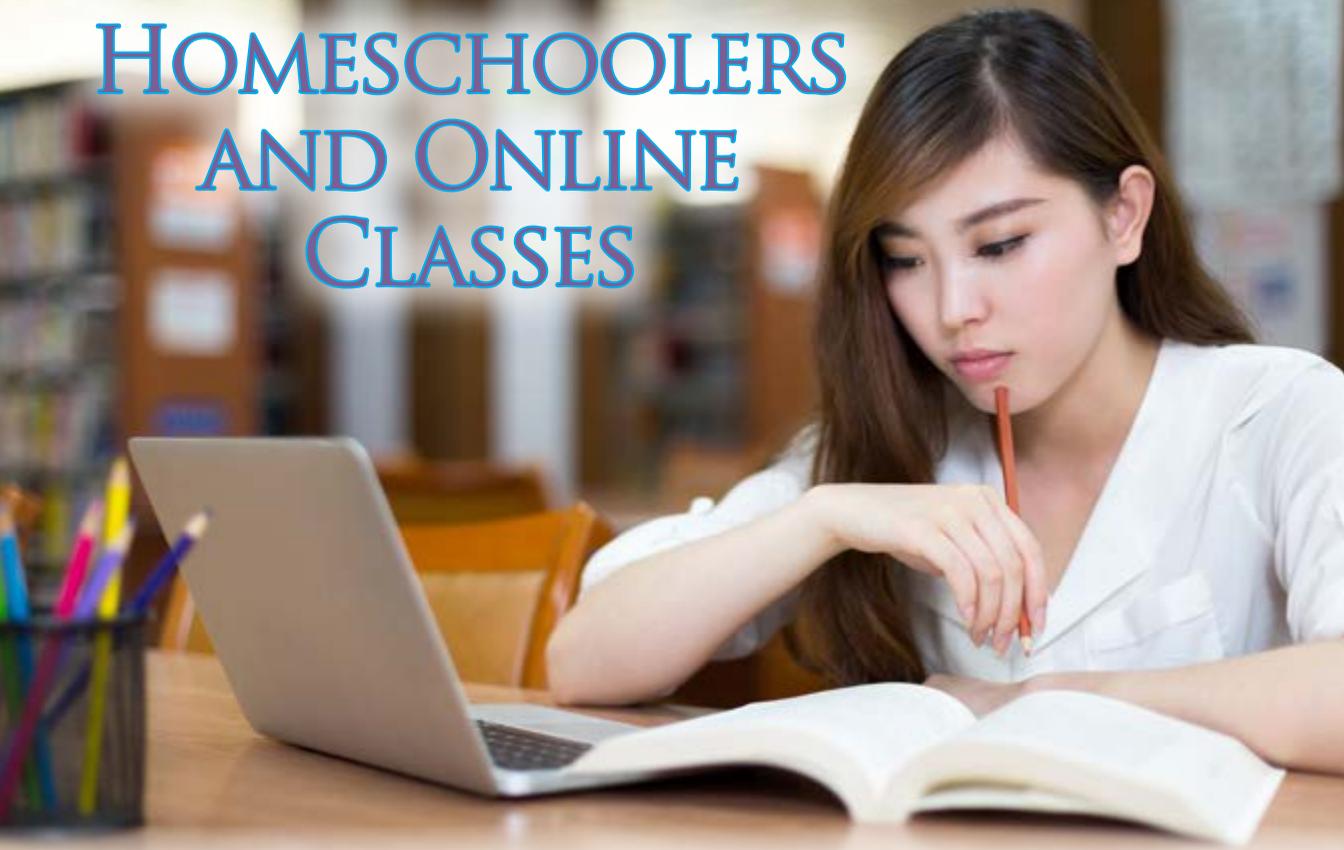


“Our journey at the University of Mount Olive has been one full of learning and adventure. Having an advisor who is familiar with homeschooling has made our transition from studying at home to a college campus a smooth and positive experience.”

— Hannah and Micah Lee

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HOMESCHOOLERS AND ONLINE CLASSES



by Spencer Mason

In recent years, homeschoolers have been receiving solicitations from a variety of online school programs. There are a number of *online homeschools* such as A Beka Academy, K12 Homeschool, Liberty University Online Academy and Keystone School Online. In 2012, some public school districts began to offer virtual classes to homeschool students, and now, NC virtual charter schools are recruiting students for the 2015-2016 school year. When opting for online classes, it is important to understand the NC homeschool law. It is easy to be out of compliance with the law if care is not exercised. This article will answer the question, “How can a student participate in these programs and still be considered a homeschool student?” First we need to be clear on what a homeschool is in NC. Homeschool laws are different in each state.

DEFINITION OF HOMESCHOOL IN NC LAW

Home school means a nonpublic school consisting of the children of not more than two families or households, where the parents or legal guardians or members of either household determine the scope and sequence of academic instruction, provide academic instruction and determine additional sources of academic instruction. (Contained in Part 3 of article 39 Chapter 115C of the NC statutes.)

TYPES OF ONLINE CLASSES

First let’s look at the different types of online class opportunities.

PRIVATE ONLINE HOMESCHOOL PROGRAMS

Many of these programs (A Beka Academy, Apologia Academy, BJU Press Homeschool, K12 Homeschool, Liberty University Online Academy, Keystone School Online, Enlightium Christian Academy, etc.) advertise

that they provide accredited instruction. They can handle all instruction and measure student progress for each grade. All the parent needs to do is sign the student up for a certain grade level and help the student with their assignments. The NC homeschool law says that parents, legal guardians or members of the household must determine the scope and sequence of instruction, which classes students take and when they take them. Parents who enroll their children in virtual schools where the school administrators make those decisions are not in compliance with NC law. Also, many parents enroll their children in these programs because they are accredited. Remember that NC homeschools are not and cannot be accredited.

Some online schools allow the parent to pick and choose when their children will take online classes. By picking and choosing classes for their children, parents are determining the scope and sequence of instruction per the NC law.

NC VIRTUAL CHARTER SCHOOLS

These schools are like brick and mortar charter schools, except all classes are taken online via the Internet. They are chartered by the NC State Board of Education, have a non-profit board of directors independent of the local school district, and they are public schools. NC approved the North Carolina Virtual Academy (with curriculum supplied by the for-profit K-12, Inc.) and the North Carolina Connections Academy (with curriculum provided by the for-profit Connections Education, LLC, which is owned by the UK-based Pearson PLC). While K-12, Inc. also provides virtual homeschool curriculum, there is no connection between the North Carolina Virtual Academy and homeschooling. Even though they are taking all their classes at home, students in these schools are public school students and can't be homeschool students for three reasons.

1. The state provides funding for every student in the virtual charter school. The qualification that allows homeschools to operate as nonpublic schools is stated in Part 2 of article 39 Chapter 115C of the NC statutes. "It receives no funding from the State of North Carolina. (1979, c. 506; 1981, c. 423, s. 1.)"
2. The scope and sequence of academic instruction is not determined by the student's parents, legal guardians or member of the household as required by the state definition of homeschool (contained in Part 3 of article 39 Chapter 115C of the NC statutes.)
3. There is no provision in NC statutes allowing a student to be dually enrolled as a public school student and as a nonpublic school student.

The bottom line is that students enrolled in NC Virtual Charter Schools are public school students and cannot be homeschool students.

NC VIRTUAL PUBLIC SCHOOL CLASSES

These classes were designed for NC public school students, but there is a provision in the statute that allows nonpublic school students to take these courses. Enrollment can be through local school districts that opt to allow for nonpublic school students to enroll for classes, or it can be through the NC Virtual Public School website.

Option 1) Through Local School Districts

If a homeschool student enrolls in a class through the local school district and wants to maintain his homeschool status, he is limited to one class per semester, and the homeschool must pay the tuition for the class. If the student enrolls in two or more classes through the school district, the tuition for those classes will be paid for by the school district using state per-pupil funds. By receiving funding from the state, the student is enrolled as a public school student and is not a homeschool student.

Option 2) Through NC Virtual Public School Website

By enrolling for classes via the NC Virtual Public School website, the student can sign up for as many classes as he can handle (normally four classes is considered a full load). The homeschool will pay the tuition for each class the student takes.

The best option for homeschool students wanting to take NC Virtual Public School classes is to enroll via the website, <http://www.ncvps.org/>.

COMMUNITY COLLEGE DUAL ENROLLMENT

The question often arises about how homeschool students are allowed to take community college classes tuition free since they are then taking money from the state. Dual enrollment statutes were passed after the nonpublic school statutes were passed, and the dual enrollment funding was specifically designated for all high school juniors and seniors, public and nonpublic students, who qualified for the program.

PROBLEMS ENCOUNTERED

I have received frantic calls from several homeschool graduates who received their diplomas from virtual schools. The problem

is that none of those schools are listed by DNPE as NC schools. Therefore, sometimes the diplomas are considered to be worthless. More employers and colleges are checking the veracity of the applications they receive and determining if the homeschool was in compliance with the law. If a student's credentials are investigated, a diploma from Liberty University Online Academy, for example, is only good if that student applies for admission to Liberty University. If the student applies for admission at any other university, the diploma may be of no value.

While most students who take online classes never encounter any problems, there are several who do. Here are some examples of problems that have been encountered.

- One problem involved a homeschool graduate who had taken more than one NC Virtual Public School class through the Statesville Iredell Public Schools in his junior and senior years. Because he was enrolled as a public school student, and he didn't graduate from the public school, the NC Department of Public Instruction had classified him as a dropout. He did not get the job because his homeschool diploma was not considered to be valid.
- Two homeschool graduates were not hired by one particular corporation because their diplomas were not from a NC recognized school. The corporation also wanted proof that the students had taken the annual nationally standardized test. Both graduates had diplomas from online schools outside of NC, and they could not provide proof they had taken the annual test.
- A brother and sister applying for city government jobs were rejected. When their diplomas were investigated, they were determined to be dropouts because the online school that issued their diplomas was not in the DNPE list of open schools.
- Others have been denied admission into the College of Charleston, the US Marines and the US Air Force for the reason cited above.

AVOIDING PROBLEMS

Parents who take advantage of online instruction can do four things to avoid some of the problems that some homeschool graduates have encountered.

1. Parents should determine the scope and sequence of instruction for their children and choose the classes that fit that scope and sequence.
2. Parents should keep a transcript of all the instruction that their children receive, including online classes. Even if the online school provides a transcript, it is important that they keep their own homeschool transcript up to date. The homeschool transcript can include how and where instruction outside the home was received. This is especially important for the high school years.
3. The homeschool should issue a diploma to the graduating homeschool student. Make a copy of the diploma and retain it in the student's records. Your child may receive a diploma from an online school, but it is not legally valid. Your homeschool diploma is the only valid one.
4. Keep the records of your graduates indefinitely. Your school administration office is the only place those records can be found. NCHE and the NC Division for Non Public Education (DNPE) receive numerous calls from homeschool graduates wanting copies of their diplomas or transcripts. Neither NCHE nor DNPE ever receive these records.

In NC, we have a wonderful homeschool law that gives homeschool parents many freedoms in selecting educational resources to put together the best program for each student. Online classes can be used as part of this program. However, when using online resources, we need to be knowledgeable about the NC homeschool law and how to use these classes wisely.



Spencer 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 law and policy director.

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Newbie Confusion and the Value of Connection

by Diane Helfrich

When I starting homeschooling in the dark ages (really only sixteen years ago, but it now seems like a lifetime ago!) I launched into something I really knew little about. I knew that the public school system was failing us and that we needed another solution. Financially, private school wasn't a viable option for us. I tried my best to work with the school teachers and staff to make things better, but there came a point where we could go no further, and we were quickly losing ground with our son. I had executive experience and was a successful person with a degree, and I could perhaps school at home. I could do this. Could I? Maybe. A few days later, I was at the library and mentioned to the person at the checkout counter (Beth) that we were considering homeschooling. It turned out she was a homeschooling parent, and she gave me the name of a local group and a person to contact about homeschooling. Long story short, she was an answer to prayer and gave me the confidence that homeschooling was the direction we were going to choose. I tucked her contact and support group info away for future reference. We withdrew our son at the end of the next year-around trimester and entered what I will call the *deer in the headlights* phase!

How to begin? I wasn't a teacher. I had no training. I didn't know how to know what to teach at each grade level. What if I was totally inept as a teacher? I decided to start by pondering what I wanted my school to look like—where would we study, what would we study, when would we study. Of course, my only association with schooling was through the public system. It was how I was raised, and it was where my son was enrolled. So, naturally, my goal was to re-create that environment in our home. I planned to start the morning every day at 8:00 a.m. with a prayer and a pledge to our little flag on the wall. We would sit down and work together, take a break for outside romping and resume our schooling, trying to be done by around noon. We would have an hour for lunch and then spend an hour of quiet time for napping or reading. In the evening, I would prep for my next day. We would have the afternoon for field trips, playtime, shopping, etc. My plan seemed perfect! I had moved from deer in the headlights to feeling optimistic and slightly confident. Of course we hadn't started anything, but directions were forming, and I felt less confused because I had a plan.

Then we went to our first NCHE conference in Winston-Salem in May before schooling was to begin. We walked into a lively environment of thousands of people and what seemed like thousands of options for books. It was exciting—maybe even thrilling. We were in the midst of so many people doing what

we were planning to do. We listened to speakers and were filled with enthusiasm for our choice. I zoomed down to the book fair between every speaker session to work my way through the crowd to browse another curriculum. About mid-way through Friday afternoon, my brain started to shut down. The choices had become like plowing through thick mud. I was tired and confused. Return of the *deer in the headlights* existence! What had I been thinking? We were committed but now I was somewhere between out and out scared and feeling totally inadequate and unprepared. HELP! I essentially closed my eyes, bought curriculum that seemed like it might work and went home to detox from what was a completely and utterly overwhelming, yet incredibly important experience.

When I got home I remembered my conversation with Beth at the library and went to find the information she gave me that I had squirreled away. I called the person she had recommended to me with the sincere hope of a lifeline. It turned out there was an open house in a few weeks where I could talk with people locally who were doing what I was doing, and this group even had a co-op day to consider. The day came, and off to the meeting we went. Although a smaller version of overwhelming from the May conference, we walked into a room at a recreation center that was so packed you could hardly move, and you could hardly hear. Clearly what we were doing was not one of a kind! I browsed the tables and signed up for a few things that I thought would be interesting, turned in my form and money for a membership and hoped like crazy that this would all sort out.

About two weeks later, we went to our first co-op day. We started whole-hog with a one-hour class that met every other week for one semester. Whew! In retrospect, it was a good way to begin as it got us tied in, but in a time where everything was new, it didn't overload us. What it did do was put me in a position to hear conversations in the halls and on the playground.

I learned about testing philosophy, favored curriculums, events in the community, places to go for fun outings, ways to save money. I heard their struggles and their successes. I learned that I didn't need to re-create the exact environment that had failed my child in the public schools and that we could relax into what worked for us. I hung on every word, every conversation that could give me insight about doing this most important job of all jobs better—and I got better at doing that job. We became less regimented. We studied in our PJs and took our books to Barnes & Noble or the park for a study day. We took days off to go to the beach and found ourselves learning there, too.

Through our connection with other homeschoolers, we morphed into a lifestyle of learning rather than having a school

at home. My goal changed from doing everything the way I had been raised, to that of creating a love of learning. I stopped worrying about what we were learning and celebrated everything we were excited about learning. I was part of a cloud of witnesses who shared. We laughed and cried together at our successes and failures and made each other better homeschoolers. While my kids gained friendships, I gained a world of support, knowledge and friendships that would sustain me through the rest of our years of schooling and beyond. I became more involved with the co-op and began teaching classes that were of interest to me and my kids. I served on the board and became a mentor many times over to those beginning to homeschool who were in my former state of blank stares. Now, I serve the state level as a liaison for region 8—I am the glue between support groups in my region and the NCHE board; NCHE serves the state body of homeschoolers from being legislative watchdogs, to putting on our fabulous Thrive! conference, to providing a network of sports opportunities across the state. You all have a liaison, and you can find yours on the NCHE.com website. You can also find a support group near you on the same website.

Results? Our kids are thriving. One is a PhD student of Economics at Indiana University. The other is in the honors college at George Mason University in Virginia earning a degree in conflict analysis and resolution with a goal of working in the massive world issue of human trafficking. I am thriving. I love learning and continue to do so. What I know now is that in the absence of the initial life-line that Beth gave me, connecting me to a wonderful group of families, our journey would have been less rich.

I encourage you to be part of a support group. Be a giver as well as a taker. Teach classes, organize field trips, serve on a board! You and your children's education will be better for it. I used to ask how I could ever find the time to be involved. I now know that the best part of our journey was exactly that investment of time.



Diane Helfrich is an empty-nesting fourteen-year veteran of homeschooling. She is married to David, a civilian intelligence specialist for US Army Special Operations Command in Fayetteville. Her son, Ian, a graduate of UNC Chapel Hill and the Barcelona Graduate School of Economics in Spain, is now working on a PhD in economics at Indiana University. Her daughter, Anna, is at George Mason University as an honors college student double majoring in conflict analysis and resolution and law-based philosophy. Diane is the NCHE region 8 liaison.



Make Your Priorities a Part of Your Reality

by Amy Sloan

It is probably not hyperbole to say that there is one thing that has transformed our homeschool in the past year. A simple 30-45 minutes each day revolutionizes our perspective. It provides the framework for my ultimate goal in education: raising people who believe what is true, honor what is noble, stand uncompromisingly for what is just, keep their desires pure, love things that are lovely and relish those things that are praiseworthy (Philippians 4:8). As we resume our intellectual endeavors this fall, it is a thing that lends great joy to this crazy homeschool life.

In years past I had a great goal list. I wanted to incorporate things of beauty and intrigue into our daily life, memorizing poetry, Bible verses and creeds, famous speeches, Shakespeare and key facts of history, math, etc. The goal list looked great, but I never figured out how to make it fit into an actual day. By the time we finished math and grammar and our other *essentials*, I was exhausted; the laundry piles were screaming; the kids were done with anything that didn't come on a screen, and something needed to be thawed for dinner. Those interestingly beautiful things gathered dust on my to-do list and led to increasing despair that my vision for a lovely education was being trounced by *reality*.

Last summer, I was inspired by the work of educators like Sarah Mackenzie (author of my current favorite homeschool book published by Classical Academic Press: *Teaching from Rest*), Mystie Winckler and others to incorporate something variously called *Morningtime* or *Circle Time*. I'm a little bit of a rebel who prefers to improvise on a theme rather than follow a strict recipe both in my cooking and in my life. Thus, we have used their ideas as a jumping off point rather than an exact model. I will share what it has looked like in our own homeschool life, but I definitely do not want to take the credit for something that is done much more thoroughly, professionally and certainly originally by others who are wiser and more experienced than I.

During morningtime in our home, we have incorporated many things that otherwise seem to get left out. Generally it falls in our schedule immediately after breakfast and chores, but I know other families have found that lunchtime or even afternoon works best for them. Even the young children participate, as

morningtime becomes another piece of our family culture. Last year, I eased in with an abbreviated routine, valuing consistency over aiming too high and possibly failing. This time quickly became a favorite part of the day for both the kids and me.

This year, we are becoming a bit more ambitious, adding a few more areas of interest and lots of fun things to memorize. For most of this memory work, we use a box system inspired by Simply Charlotte Mason (<https://simplycharlottesmason.com/timesavers/memorysys/>) that helpfully incorporates both daily review for new memory work as well as cyclical review based on day of the week and day of the month. My favorite part of this looping review is that we can never get behind; we just do the work assigned for Thursday even if we neglected to do the work on Wednesday!

This is what morningtime currently looks like for our family:

After opening our time in prayer, I begin by reading a Bible story aloud. Next we focus on our new Bible memory passage, questions and answers summarizing Christian doctrine and review verses based on the day of the week and day of the month. We conclude this portion of our morning by singing the Doxology. Even the non-readers love to add their vigorous voices at this point!

Now everyone stands up and giggles through a geography song with ridiculously fun motions helping us memorize the major lines of latitude before doing some map tracework. I printed the maps and placed them inside plastic protector pages so the kids can use wipe-off markers for tracing each day.

Then comes a favorite portion of our morningtime: memorizing poetry and other famous passages! Rather than spending lots of time on any one item, we read (or sing) them enthusiastically in unison one after the other. It is amazing how even after just a few weeks the kids are already gaining so much confidence and recall from mere daily recitations. This fall, we are focusing on the preamble to the US Constitution, portions of the Declaration of Independence, a list of the presidents and their dates of office (mangled to fit the tune of "If You're Happy and You Know It"), "The Charge of the Light Brigade" by Tennyson, and "Nothing Gold Can Stay" by Frost. Using our memory box system we review previously memorized poems and creeds. We also have songs assisting us in learning a history timeline and skip counting for math.

Finally, we go around the table from youngest to oldest for individual prayers. It is an especially favorite time of mine to hear



lisping voices pray for often obtuse but always earnest matters. In conclusion, I lead us in praying the Lord's Prayer.

Is morningtime right for your homeschool? While it most certainly will look different for every family, the basic concept will assist you in developing a family tradition based on the true and lovely and praiseworthy. If we are, as Philippians admonishes us, to "think on these things," morningtime can help us incorporate that which lines up with our individual family's values and interests. Our current American history studies mean we are learning the list of presidents, but perhaps your family wants to memorize the periodic table of elements, enjoy some art study, or relish a particular composer this year. Do not try to make your morningtime look just like anyone else's. Start small and simple and just do it every day. When the habit is formed, try adding in something that will bring delight to your own heart. By sharing something that fills you, the teacher, with joy, you are giving your students a vision for a future filled with new delightful things to learn even when *school* years are over.

Morningtime is as simple or as complex as you want it to be, but its greatest gift is the perspective it lends. Because as often as we tell our children that education is more than checking off the boxes and plowing through the books, too often that ends up being all we actually accomplish, and they are left with a philosophy of learning based much more on what we do than on what we say. By using morningtime to fill their minds and imaginations with things that delight and inspire, we fan the flames of a lifelong love of learning.



Amy Sloan and her husband, John, are second-generation homeschoolers by grace alone to five children ages four months, three, five, eight and ten. They adventure in Holly Springs, NC.



Math and the Young Child

by Debbie Mason

Because I love math (and majored in it), it was my favorite subject to teach. Now that all my kids are grown and my homeschooling days have passed, I really miss teaching math, especially algebra. One of the reasons that I chose to homeschool was that it provided the freedom to tailor the education of my children around their unique interests, abilities and the family's priorities. When homeschooling parents adopt the institutional approach to education, they miss out on so many of the beauties of homeschooling. If you are going to homeschool, take advantage of its advantages. Three of the goals that I had for my homeschool were that my children would love to learn, know how to learn and be allowed to learn at their own pace. I saw many problems that were caused by children being pushed

to do something before they were developmentally ready. We often think of children being pushed in reading, but it also happens with math.

In her book, *An Easy Start In Arithmetic*, Ruth Beechick says there are three modes in which children think about math: manipulative, mental and abstract. These modes also correspond to the developmental stages of a child. First, young children learn through the manipulative stage. They need to touch, feel and move. When you, as an adult, see the problem $2+3=5$, you think in the abstract mode. You understand the concept of two and three. You do not have to see and touch two blocks and three blocks. You don't even need to picture two blocks and three blocks in your head. Preschoolers cannot do this; they are in the manipulative stage. Later, during elementary school, they develop the ability to do math in the mental mode. They can picture the number and the addition process, but they are still not able to understand the abstract concept of a number. This ability to understand the abstract concepts of math develops around age twelve. While every child grows through different developmental stages at different ages, there are some generalities about these stages.



It is best for a homeschooling parent to keep these developmental stages in mind while teaching math. During the early years, math concepts need to be taught with things that the child can touch, feel and manipulate. This need usually corresponds nicely with the real life of the child. Children need a lot of real-world, concrete experiences before they can internalize the meaning of numbers, arithmetic operations, geometric shapes, proportion and all the other terms, ideas, processes and relationships that are a part of mathematics.

One of the best things a homeschool parent can do is to get a good elementary math book and read it themselves. Learn the terms and concepts, and *then apply these terms and concepts to your child's everyday life*. Many homeschool parents hate math and do not feel very competent to teach it. If this is true of you, you need to do some homework. The more you understand the concepts yourself, the better off your children will be.

Children come into contact with math every day. When children play with building blocks, puzzles, toy cars, when they have a need for counting, patterning, comparing, estimating, etc., they are building a repertoire of concrete experience. Helping mom in the kitchen or dad in the workshop offers many opportunities for real-life math. Gardening, playing a musical instrument, grocery shopping, setting the table and playing board games are all examples of activities that provide children with context and a frame of reference for future math learning. All of these things can count as school time.

It is so important that your children have these experiences *before* they start a formal math program. I actually didn't start a formal program in a consistent way until third grade. Until that time, I did real-life math, read math books, did math activities and played math games while sporadically throwing in a few math lessons. I may have worked through a math book, but it was not a priority to get through it. Depending on the learning style of the child, aptitude for math and interest in it, they may be ready for a math program during these years. If they enjoy the process, it is fine to let them work out of a math book. A book that is fun to use during the elementary ages is *Family Math*. Also, the library is full of picture books with a mathematical theme. Once a child has the developmental maturity of a third grader, he is able to cover kindergarten through second grade math rather quickly and can then move on to the third grade math. A student who has had a life rich in mathematical experiences will be better able to understand the math exercises that he is now asked to do. During this stage, he is able to do mental math. He doesn't

always need the manipulatives because he is able to picture them in his head. Manipulatives are still sometimes helpful, especially when learning a new or difficult concept or process. However, be careful that you don't expect him to be able to do the abstract thinking that is required for many math processes. He is probably not ready for that yet.

During these early years, it is much more important that they acquire an understanding of mathematical principles through real life experiences than it is to spend time in a math book. This foundation will help them to have better success in their future math studies. So, put down that math book and go play a game.



Debbie Mason, along with her husband, Spencer, started homeschooling in 1981 and has now graduated all four of her children. Debbie and her husband, Spencer, have been on the NCHS board since 1988. She is the currently the NCHS events director and GREENHOUSE editor.



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Giving Thanks for an Abundance

by Kathy Barnett

I was recently doing morning devotions with my children, pondering the upcoming holidays. I was trying, like all good homeschooling moms, to weave in some wonderful history lesson that would help bring meaning to the Scriptures, and also somehow benefit the rest of our homeschooling lessons. I was thinking about Thanksgiving and how much I wanted to not only make my children aware of the reason for our American holiday—to celebrate the pilgrims' first harvest—but to also show the greater reason for rejoicing that day. Our forefathers were not only thankful for the meager crops that were gleaned that first year of breaking and working this new land's hard soil, they were also thankful for the new relationships formed with the natives living in the land who had selflessly helped them. Also as they remembered the suffering that they had endured, they were grateful to have ultimately survived.

They weren't sharing in their abundance of food, but of life. They really didn't have an overabundance of crops that first harvest. They barely had enough, and compared to what they had one year prior, it was much to be thankful for. That first year had brought the death of one out of every three people that had journeyed to that new colony. Every person that sat at that first celebratory table was grieving the loss of a family member. Many had lost their entire families through that first harsh winter and the year of back-breaking labor. But the ones who sat at the table that day were alive. And they knew the abundant life that Christ had promised. They had set their hearts toward the freedom promised in following after God's word and truth, and after great suffering, they now sat in the fullness of knowing the reality of God's promises.

Beloved, think it not strange concerning the fiery trial which is to try you, as though some strange thing happened unto you: But rejoice, in as much as ye are partakers of Christ's sufferings; that, when his glory shall be revealed, ye may be glad also with exceeding joy.
1 Peter 4:12-13 (KJV)

As the colonists sat there, they were celebrating a turning point in their journey. They were no longer wayward pilgrims setting out to find a place to worship their God without persecution. They were setting down roots in a place where they were able to freely worship. They were able to rejoice in all their suffering, both through the persecutions that had driven them to this land and the loss that

had accompanied the journey. Through suffering, they had seen God's glory and experienced His grace. Their newfound freedom wasn't just in a new land—it was in a new life. A life filled with persecution and pain, sorrow and loss, hard work and harvest. A life filled with the hope of eternity set into their hearts regardless of their surroundings or circumstances. They had sought after their God and had been rewarded with an abundance of *Him!*

Consider it pure joy, my brothers, whenever you face trials of many kinds, because you know that the testing of your faith develops perseverance. Perseverance must finish its work so that you may be mature and complete, not lacking anything. James 1:2-4 (NIV)

The pilgrims were experiencing an abundance of life in Christ, which Jesus had promised. This life is also promised to us today. When we can give thanks to God for wherever we may find ourselves in life, we will experience the great power of the Holy Spirit of God allowing us to live life abundantly. We can begin to move in the fruit of that Spirit which is the harvest of thanks given unto God for the trials we endure.

I looked at the year my own family has just lived out. We have had many blessings, and much pain. We've buried those we loved very much. And we have welcomed new family members with rejoicing. We have seen dear friends move away and faced the uncertainty of my husband's retiring from the military. But through it all, regardless of whether it seemed we had pain or plenty, we have plodded along rising each day trusting that our God has a plan for us. We have, as a family, chosen to give thanks to God regardless of our circumstances.

Thanksgiving, the holiday, seemingly is the thanks for the pilgrims' first harvest. But I would suggest that the thanks given by the pilgrims to their God, brought about the harvest of the fruit of the Spirit within their lives! We do give thanks for the many gifts of God, but more often than not, giving thanks brings forth the greater gifts—the gifts of love, joy, peace, patience, gentleness, kindness, faithfulness, goodness and self-control. These are the things that I think were celebrated that day, so many years ago. The sacrifices and sufferings of Christ first laid down that we might know how to walk in the way He calls us to walk through our own trials. As we walk through trials, we might learn to give thanks and find our strength for our journey through His Spirit with an abundant harvest.

As we seek the harvest of the fruits of the Spirit within our own lives and the lives of our children, let us purpose to give thanks this holiday season. May we rejoice in our lives, wherever we are. May we purpose to set an example to our children as we set our tables this season—just as our forefathers did so many years ago. Give thanks and watch the abundant fruit grow forth and the fields ripen with the harvest we are called to work and enjoy.



Kathy Barnett is a twenty-five year veteran military wife to her husband, Sam, and sixteen year veteran homeschooling mother to their nine children. She is co-author of The Warrior's Bride: Biblical Strategies to Help the Military Spouse Thrive. She has a passion to encourage women who are wives and mothers and especially those in the homeschooling and military community.

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Competitive Debate: More Fun than You Think!

by Theresa Jones

In 1999, we made the single best decision of our homeschooling experience. We decided to get involved in competitive speech and debate.

With an open slot in my schedule at the NCHC conference and on a whim, I walked into Teresa Moon's workshop on competitive debate. I had heard of debate, of course, when I was in high school. My impression was that it was difficult and time-consuming. All that was about to change as she walked me through the benefits you receive from debating.

She pointed out that debaters learn critical thinking skills. Her example was that they learn that nuking everyone is the not the best choice. I already recognized how important critical thinking skills were in this fast changing world. In this information age, the ability to evaluate is essential.

Public speaking was next on her list, and we all know how important that is. It was recently pointed out to me that everyone will find themselves at some point or another in a class or job or committee where someone will need to speak up or present for the group. The person who volunteers will be seen as the leader. I wanted to raise leaders. So okay, I was on board.

She mentioned research skills. Hmm. Writing college papers and essays, knowing which information to listen to and what information is worth repeating is a much needed skill. Since you probably know how this ends, I will tell you that all four of my children have said researching was one of the more important skills they learned. If you've ever been on the Internet trying to sift through all the conflicting information, I'm sure you've wished you were better prepared.

Debaters learn to write. They learn to summarize, to write concisely and clearly.

They learn to think on their feet. All students struggle with this, but I've seen the transformation too many times to doubt that it is going to take place with every student.

Reading and comprehending difficult material becomes second nature. Their vocabulary goes through the roof.

History is covered as background to how we arrived at this particular policy, lots and lots of history. They know more about government and how it works than any high school government course will teach you. They learn economics with real world applications. Dining room conversations go to a whole new level as you may discuss marine natural resources, trade policy with Africa and the Middle East and, my favorite, electronic surveillance.

They learn the Law of Unintended Consequences.

These were the skills I wanted my child to have when they graduated. And the part I really liked as a homeschooling mom—I never had to nag or push or prod. Because there was competition involved, they were motivated and did it on their own. I was sold.

Now all I had to do was sell my kids. I went home and presented it to my ninth-grader and twelfth-grader. After I finished, I looked at them expectantly.

“No.”

But I wasn’t finished. I went over their head to the superintendent. We decided to make it non-negotiable. One year, participating cheerfully and willingly, and then it would be their

decision. Eventually all four participated in speech and debate and ultimately decided on their own to continue. All four of my children will tell you that it was the best thing they participated in as part of their education and, no, college was not the choice for each.

I think most students are not encouraged to take debate, because the parents are intimidated. If I can do it, anybody can.

You should research this! Christian Communicators of the SouthEast offers Team Policy Debate for ages 14-18, Public Forum Debate for ages 12-14, Varsity Speech for ages 13-18, JV Speech for ages 9-12, and Junior Speech for ages 5-8. For more information, go to: ccofse.com, or contact me at: theresajones@gmail.com



Theresa Jones has two sons and two daughters and homeschooled nineteen years. She is currently beginning her thirteenth year as coach of the Fayetteville speech and debate club and her sixth year on the leadership team of Christian Communicators of the SouthEast. Since her retirement from homeschooling, she is thoroughly enjoying the next phase as a grandma. 




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Top Five Free Online Resources for Your Homeschool

by Debra Bell, Ph.D.

I want to point you to some of the most amazing online sources of support for your homeschool, but first, I want to tell you why these resources are free. The A2K movement (i.e. access to knowledge) is a global social justice movement that argues in the new economy (created by the Internet and globalization) access to a world class education should be available to all—free. Wikipedia was just the first prominent outworking of this mindset. (To learn more about this movement just search on open knowledge movement, open culture or A2K.)

While most of us have not heard about A2K, all of us have come to expect information to be free: free downloads, free podcasts, free blogs, free news, free e-books. This ubiquitous sea of free data is a blessing and a bane, though. Finding the best sources of content is very time consuming and the Internet is yet to be well organized, though that is certainly the goal of companies like Google and Wikipedia.

While those two and others are completing that task, here's a quick tour of some of the best places to find free content that you can use in your homeschool:

1. *Learner.org*—I used to pay \$400 or more for the courseware now available free as streaming video at Annenberg Learner's website. These professionally-produced courses in many disciplines were originally broadcasted on PBS, so they are by far the most engaging lessons you will find anywhere on the web. My daughter used French in Action, I've used the literature courses for my online AP classes, and the families in my co-op used the world history together. You will find the companion textbooks often available used at sources like Amazon, Half or Follett Educational Services.



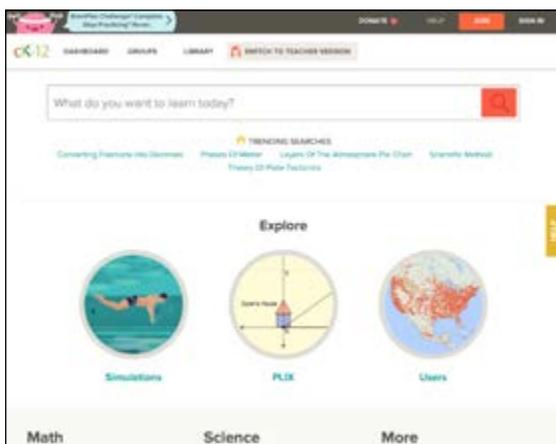
2. *Khan Academy*—this is the best source of supplemental videos for math and science (with additional subjects coming online every day). Even more beneficial, students can work through practice exercises which are scored and stored under the student’s account. Parents and teachers can access this information and track student progress—all at no cost.



3. *Math.com*—a great source of well-organized, incremental math exercises and short explanations of key math topics (an indispensable source of knowledge for a non-math teaching parent!).



4. *CK-12.org*—the best source of organized and reviewed open textbooks for STEM (science, technology, engineering and math).



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5. *Academic Earth*—a curated (managed) source of free video courses from top scholars and top universities around the world. It’s all here: from trigonometry to poetry to western civilization.

Can it get any better? Yes it will. Individuals and foundations are already starting to organize all these sources of a free world-class education into certificate and degree bearing ventures that will be accepted by forward-thinking twenty-first century employers. Just search on *MOOC* if you want to see what the future looks like. In the meantime you can get your kids ready to participate in this emerging global economy by showing them how to be self-educating with the free tools now a few keystrokes away.



Debra Bell, Ph.D., is the executive director of Aim Academy and the best-selling author of the award-winning Ultimate Guide to Homeschooling, Ultimate Guide to Homeschooling Teens, and the Ultimate Planners for moms, teens, and students (Apologia Press). Writers-in-Residence: A Writing-Focused Language Arts Program and Readers-in-Residence: A Literacy Program will be released in 2015. More information about her online classes and curriculum is available at DebraBell.com. Debra Bell was a featured speaker at the 2015 NCHE conference.



SURVEYING THE SITES

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

by Lorie Codispoti

"How to Homeschool Multiple Ages" by Jolanthe

<http://www.homeschoolcreations.net/2013/06/how-to-homeschool-multiple-ages/>

"We're gearing up for our eighth year of homeschooling and while we are tweaking and adjusting our schedule each year, there are few key things that make the process of homeschooling multiple ages and children easier." (J.)

"Why We Still Homeschool"

<http://www.1plus1plus1equals1.net/2015/07/why-homeschool/>

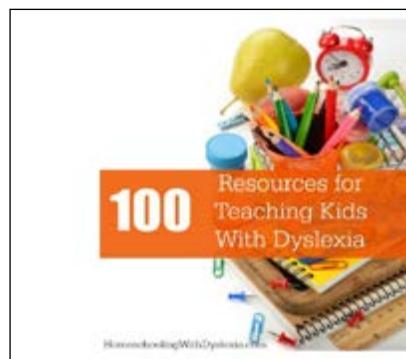
"I was never really for or against homeschooling, just didn't have any thought about it at all. I didn't know any homeschoolers and certainly didn't plan to be one. Funny how God works." (1plus)

Teacher Feature

100 Resources for Teaching Kids with Dyslexia

<http://homeschoolingwithdyslexia.com/100-resources-teaching-kids-dyslexia/>

This website gives you a host of information on books, courses, websites, articles, games, apps, curriculum, and much more. This site will encourage any parent in need of navigating the waters of dyslexia and give you the confidence you need to take the next step.



5 Ways to Teach a Kid That Fidgets

http://lemonlimeadventures.com/how-i-teach-a-fidgety-child/#_a5y_p=2433274

Teaching fidgety kids can be a challenge. These tips will serve you well if you are looking for ideas that will help both you and your child survive and thrive in their academics.

It's Elementary



Leaf Identification Cards

<http://wildflowerramblings.com/nature/leaf-identification-cards-free-printable/>

There's nothing quite like the fun of taking a nature walk through the woods. The smell of the forest and the crunching leaves underfoot. Have your kids collect a variety of leaves and then use the print outs from this website to teach them about the different kinds of trees in your area. There are thirty identification cards for you to create a variety of activities.

Fall Leaf Printing with Markers

<http://www.123homeschool4me.com/2014/08/fall-leaf-printing-with-markers.html>

And, what do you do with all those leaves after you've identified them? Make leaf prints, of course. Pull out the markers and extend the fun by creating some fall artwork for your walls with this activity. (Here's a related bonus site, just in case you like crayons more than markers.)

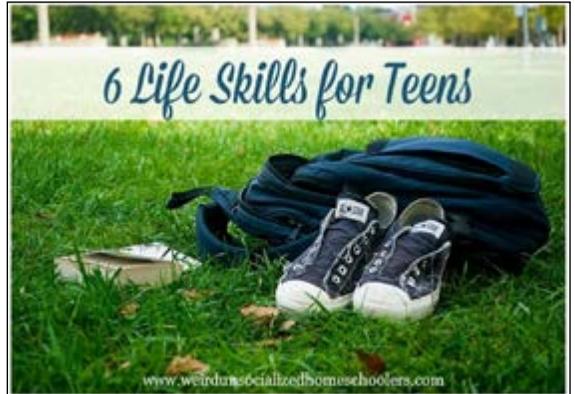
<http://www.kcedventures.com/blog/art-and-science-of-leaf-rubbings-nature-activity>



High School and Beyond

Six Life Skills for Teenagers

<http://www.weirdunsocializedhomeschoolers.com/6-life-skills-for-teenagers/>



Sometimes we're so busy trying to make sure that our teens are prepared for life that we can overlook some of the simple things they need to know. This short list is helpful, and may even serve as a springboard for remembering some of those helpful basics.

How to Keep Records in Your Homeschool High School

<http://www.sweetness-n-light.com/how-to-keep-records-in-your-homeschool-high-school/>

Part twelve in a series about homeschooling high school, this installment is filled with some great ideas and tips for keeping good records on each child during their high school years. While some of it reads like an advertisement (and it is), even that includes some good information for you.



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 GatesOfEllore@gmail.com.

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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

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

NCHE Membership

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

BULLETIN BOARD



Thrive! The NCHES Homeschool Conference will be June 2-4, 2016, at the M.C. Benton Convention Center in Winston-Salem, NC.

4-H Spotlight Article. The annual 4-H student achievement article will be featured in the winter issue of GREENHOUSE. If you would like for your student to be included, send specifics (county, age division, subject and parents' names) to nche@nche.com by November 1. The student's family must be an NCHES member to be included.

The NCHES Summit for Teaching Exceptional Children. The first NCHES conference of this type will be held on November 13, 14, 2015, at Christ Covenant Church in Matthews, NC. For more information go to nche.com.

From Our Friends

Todd Wilson to Speak. Make plans to join Forsyth Home Educators (FHE) for a night of reinvigoration and challenging with funny guy and "The Familyman," Todd Wilson as he shares the impact you make in the world when you're teaching math facts. This free event will be held at 7:00 p.m., October 8, Ardmore Baptist Church, Winston-Salem, NC (a love offering will be taken).

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<http://www.nche.com/greenhouse/giveaway>



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- Becoming Your Child's Favorite Teacher by Steve Lambert
- Seven Things about Homeschooling I Have to Keep Re-learning by Kristen Eckenwiler
- Getting Off to a Great Start by Mike and Ronda Marshall

