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# GREENHOUSE

Nurturing Home Education in North Carolina and Beyond



## In This Issue



- Thoughts on the History of Education, Technology and Socialization
- The Value of Homeschool Community
- Homeschooling for Life
- Sitting Alone
- One Way to Remember How Blessed You Are
- The Strange Case of the Curious Child
- How to Increase Productivity and Reduce Stress
- Eight Reasons Kids Learn Best at Home
- Trophy Wives and Trophy Children
- Experience History in North Carolina!



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Authors of *Give Them Grace*



**Steve Lambert**  
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*Five in a Row*



**John Stonestreet**  
Fellow of the Chuck Colson  
Center for Christian Worldview



**Jon Erwin**  
Writer/  
Director of  
*October Baby*  
and  
*Mom's Night Out*

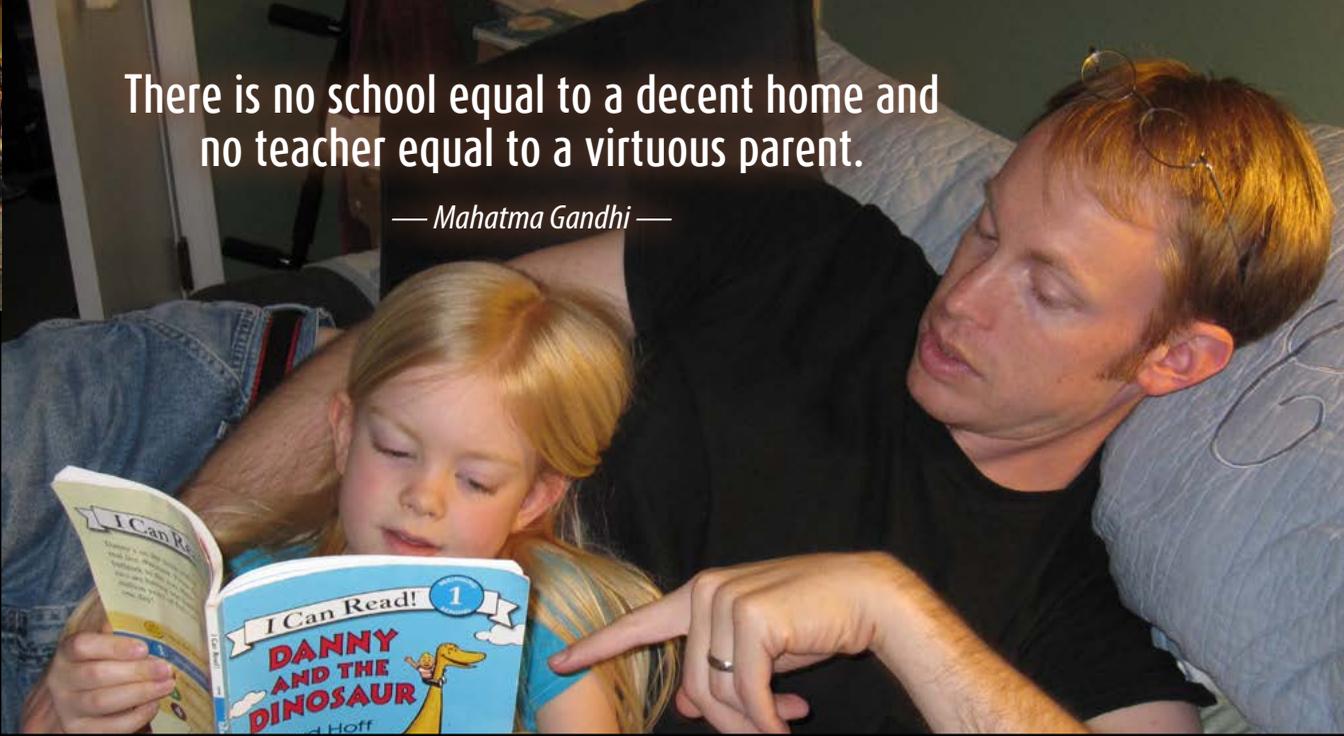
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There is no school equal to a decent home and no teacher equal to a virtuous parent.

— Mahatma Gandhi —



## About GREENHOUSE

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

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Spring - Apr/May/Jun	Feb 20	Mar 1
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# THOUGHTS ON THE HISTORY OF EDUCATION,

## Technology and Socialization

by Kevin McClain

This article is late to the editor and somewhat cobbled together (therefore, truly a kluge). Originally I was just going to write about the history of schooling, how changes in technology helped place new emphasis on socialization as a responsibility of schools. However, recent news has caused me to shift my focus slightly. Our children are impacted by the events of our society, and they are watching to see how we respond and looking to us for guidance. How we respond to the events shapes how our children will orient themselves to future events and to others. Some might refer to this as *socialization*: the process of learning how to engage others, how to listen and learn from others. Teaching how to interact with others is a crucial part of education, and it is the power and responsibility of parents to do this well. But of course, like all learning, learning how to engage and interact with others is life-long. So we adults need to continue to grow in this area, also.

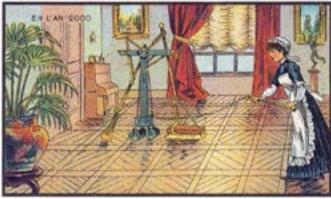
### Learning as Experiential and Relational

Let me back up first and tie in some history and technology. My original source of inspiration for this article is an image over a hundred years old. I found the image in my morning media feeds. Every morning I review various blogs and online resources and educational resources. Recently I came across an article about French postcards from the turn of the century. They were originally prepared for the 1900 World's Fair. These postcards represented artists' visions of the technologically advanced society of the year 2000.

Some of the ideas are fantastical. They include flying taxi cabs and underwater croquet. Some are whimsical, like a whale-bus! Some portray a society in which the mundane is made easy, like automatic cleaning machines and even high-speed rail. Some are even prophetic, like the video projected phone (Google Hangout anyone?).



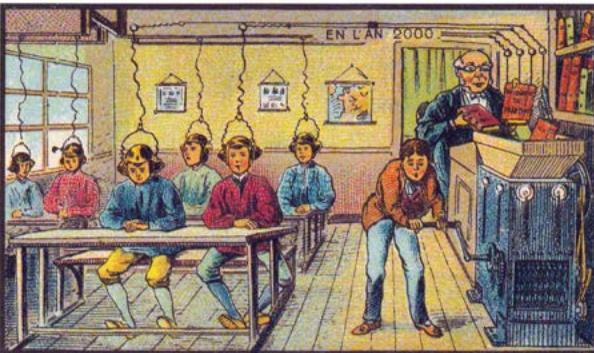
A Whales-Bus



Eleven Scolding



of technology. The teacher looks satisfied while not all the students look happy.



At School

I believe this image portends a major debate about knowledge and education that has been going on for the last 150 years. About the same time images such as these were being produced, philosophers and epistemologists, those who theorize about the nature of knowledge, became increasingly aware that scientific advancement and modernization was challenging long-held ideas about how knowledge and learning take place. Those long-held notions placed great emphasis on experience and the perspective of the student. While many uncritically celebrated the advancements science was bringing to society, these philosophers and educators were increasingly aware that a narrower view of knowledge was beginning to dominate.

Some apprehended that knowledge was increasingly seen as something which was merely informational, logical and purely objective. This type of knowledge might easily be controlled and directed, much like electrical pulses. In the French postcard, the students are receiving an education through technology that bypasses the senses! In some sense, this image is so fantastical, it seems laughable. But it is also foreboding. Today we live in an information-saturated society, and we have direct evidence that technologies, like television, computers and now, especially now, social media can powerfully be used to reinforce messages. Additional evidence shows that a person can be radically influenced, even trained (or brainwashed?), by the kind of information he repeatedly receives. Therefore, the idea that an education could be reduced to something that is merely transmitted is not so far-fetched.

What was fought against 150 years ago, and in some sense today, is the loss of learning as first and foremost *experiential*. Probably the most well-known advocate of experiential learning was the philosopher John Dewey. In his book *Democracy and Education* (1916), Dewey writes:

“Give the pupils something to do, not something to learn; and the doing is of such a nature as to demand thinking; learning naturally results.”

Charlotte M. Mason, a British educator, was another advocate of experiential learning. In her work *Home Education* (1935), she writes:

“But give the child work that Nature intended for him, and the quantity he can get through with ease is practically unlimited. Whoever saw a child tired of seeing, of examining in his own way, unfamiliar things? This is the sort of mental nourishment for which he has an unbounded appetite, because it is that food of the mind on which, for the present, he is meant to grow.”

At the root of the epistemologies of these and other educational philosophers is an awareness that knowledge is relational. A person must be in relationship if he wants to develop and grow wise. He cannot be passive and expect to grow. While relationships with the entities of nature are valuable, relationships with people are the greatest. Philosophers who emphasized experience also placed great emphasis on relationships with people and a person's

capacity to learn from others. There were varying degrees of confidence in the experience of others and in socialization, but each saw real value in being with others and gaining from others' experiences. Also in *Home Education*, Mason writes:

"None of us can be proof against the influences that proceed from the persons he associates with. Wherefore, in books and men, let us look out for the best society, that which yields a bracing and wholesome influence. We all know the person for whose company we are the better, though the talk is only about fishing or embroidery."

While Dewey writes in *Reconstruction in Philosophy* (1920) that relationship with others is characterized by participation and responsibility:

"Personality must be educated, and personality cannot be educated by confining its operations to technical and specialized things, or to the less important relationships of life. Full education comes only when there is a responsible share on the part of each person, in proportion to capacity, in shaping the aims and policies of the social groups to which he belongs."

These philosophers and educators ultimately made the case that being a part of and influencing groups around them was crucial in a person's education. Socialization was, in some sense, the very essence of education. They argued that one must be in active relationship with others in order to truly learn. They advocated that learning must be *more* experiential, not less. We should not simply read words on pages; rather, we should engage nature and others in order to engage our minds. Home educators need no convincing of this stance.

### Hope for the Future: Home or School?

Sadly some, like Dewey, also theorized that in a society in which there are people from different backgrounds and with different experiences and values, that the hope for society was the school, and the professional educator was best equipped to facilitate healthy interactions and to guide the development of the habits of the next generation. In an article entitled *My Pedagogical Creed*, published in 1897, he writes:

"I believe that the school is primarily a social

institution. Education being a social process, the school is simply that form of community life in which all those agencies are concentrated that will be most effective in bringing the child to share in the inherited resources of the race, and to use his own powers for social ends. I believe that education, therefore, is a process of living and not a preparation for future living. . . . I believe that the teacher's place and work in the school is to be interpreted from this same basis. The teacher is not in the school to impose certain ideas or to form certain habits in the child, but is there as a member of the community to select the influences which shall affect the child and to assist him in properly responding to these influences."

This is in contrast to Mason, who advocated that teachers have a lesser role. While some, like Dewey, placed great hope in the school and sought to elevate the professional educator as the arbiter of human society, others, like Mason, criticized the growing hubris of the teacher in the modern school and instead recognized the value of parent educators:

"Teachers mediate too much.—Everything is directed, expected, suggested. No other personality out of book, picture, or song, no, not even that of Nature herself, can get at the children without the mediation of the teacher. No room is left for spontaneity or personal initiation on their part."

"Mothers seldom talk down to their children; they are too intimate with the little people, and have, therefore, too much respect for them: but professional teachers, whether the writers of books or the givers of lessons are too apt to present a single grain of pure knowledge in a whole gallon of talk, imposing upon the child the labour of discerning the grain and of extracting it from the worthless flood."

In these two educators, we can see similar appreciations for education characterized by experiential learning and by relationships with nature and society. Although in Dewey, we discover an overestimation of the quality of social interactions found in the relationships of teacher and students. In Mason, we detect a willingness to critically assess teachers and an appreciation for the power of the parent-child relationship. Both, however, have a view that says a student develops by way of experiences and in relationships.

It is perhaps one of the greatest ironies of educational history that the characteristic of being anti-social has been associated with home educators. This is a persistent myth and is often the main issue raised by those who question the wisdom of home education. I am glad that research is being increasingly published that indicates that homeschooled children are socially active and are more involved in their communities than their peers from traditional classrooms. We should be striving to develop the next generation of true citizens, those who take responsibility for the character of their communities and who consider public service (benefiting their neighbors) as one of many valid vocations. I think the research linking home educators to positive interaction with their community is easily attributed to the emphasis placed by these families on a more experiential learning. There is real value in active participation, getting children outside, interacting with their environment and with the members of their community.

### Modeling Socialization in a Diverse World

It is also ironic that in an age of multitude of social media platforms, like Facebook, Twitter, Pinterest, etc., we risk becoming less and less socially conscious. I want to turn my attention to current events, events of social and political significance, with the goal of encouraging you, the home educator, to become involved with others in a manner becoming of a responsible member of pluralistic community. If you confess Christ as Lord, as I do, you have all the more reason to engage your neighbors and learn from their experiences.

It seems that not a week goes by without an event of national significance that draws attention to our social institutions and practices. For example, President Obama's executive action concerning immigration and the events centered in Ferguson, Missouri, have sparked considerable debate. We see just how differently people of different circumstances view the significance of these events. This difference of perspective tempts me to despair, and to hide, or to rationalize and to wipe my hands of the whole thing.

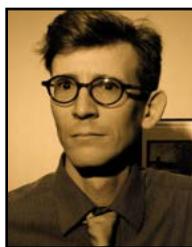
It is increasing clear in our media-saturated society that our media is very partisan. There are media outlets advancing a liberal view of the events, and there are media outlets advancing a conservative view of the events. I do not think that this partisan character of media is abnormal. Even at the beginning of our country, clearly identified partisan papers existed. Different people have different views. What I think is different today is the high degree by which I can segregate

myself physically from others, especially from others who have views with which I am not comfortable. I can focus my social media feeds to hear only what I want to hear and hide everybody else. In some sense, I have the ability to put on a helmet (or just earbuds) attached (wirelessly) to a larger system and become a passive recipient of information that reinforces what I think. I feel myself wanting that. It would be so much easier. But that is not what I think our humanity requires of us. Nor do I think that would be honoring to Christ. Instead, I think I must be open to an ongoing growth and participation in society. I must practice what I preach to my children about lifelong learning.

This is not to say that all responses to events at Ferguson, or elsewhere, are valid. Violence, like rioting and looting, should not be rationalized or excused. Rather, I should want to listen to others as they attempt to describe the experiences that so often tempt them to lose hope. I do believe that seeking to be in relationship with others who are different will serve to deepen my understanding of others, of myself and of God.

The picture that Christ gives of his kingdom is a place of rich diversity, a table at which sit those from every tribe and every nation. The call of the Christian life is to make manifest in this life the power of Christ to restore brokenness. We are, in the words of the poet Wendell Berry, to *practice resurrection*. I think part of that is giving heed to our neighbor's cry for justice, in order to show him or her mercy. Our children will not learn from us something we are not modeling.

In closing, I want to encourage you in your role as the primary agents of formation of the next generation. I want you to understand the importance of this task. Our children are listening as we respond to the news, watching as we like posts on our Facebook wall and reading our comments. They are looking to us for guidance in how to respond. How we respond is part of their education; it is part of their inheritance. Let our response to the broken world be one characterized by acts of mutual support and of hope. Let us seek to be in relationship with others so that we might better learn to serve.



*Kevin McClain, NCHE'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.* 🍀



# SURVEYING THE SITES

by Lorie Codispoti

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

## Articles of Interest

**"What to Tell Yourself When You Want to Quit Homeschooling" by Rebecca Capuano**

<http://www.thehomeschoolmom.com/tell-youre-ready-quit-homeschooling/>

"I'm going to give you the pep talk I give myself when I get there. . . at that place of being ready to throw in the towel." (RC)

**"Homeschooling in a Crisis—Life IS the Lesson" by Sarah of Joyfilled Life**

<http://www.myjoyfilledlife.com/2013/03/14/homeschooling-in-crisis-life-is-lesson/>

"Here are 10 little pieces of wisdom that I have learned during our family times of 'crisis.'" (Sarah)

## Teacher Feature

**Montessori Inspired Winter Activities**

<http://livingmontessorinow.com/2012/01/09/montessori-monday-montessori-inspired-winter-activities/>

Here are some great learning ideas that relate to snow, ice, snowmen, cold weather, and/or animals in winter. There are lots of things to help everyone enjoy those long winter days.

## PRINTABLE MAP OF THE USA



### Printable Maps of the US

<http://www.mrprintables.com/printable-map-of-the-united-states.html>

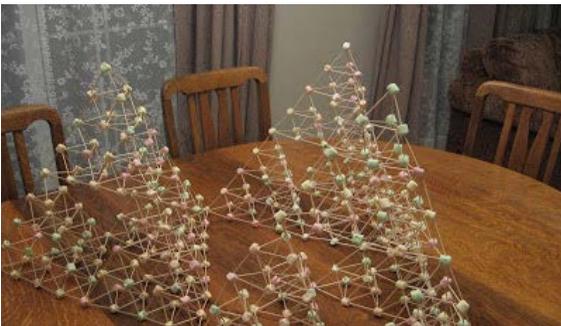
Here's a website that gives you a variety of free US maps for all your geography needs.

### It's Elementary

#### Christmas Tree Science

<http://we-made-that.com/christmas-tree-science/>

Teach your kids about capillary action with this fun tree growing experiment. Using green food coloring turns the experiment into a Christmas tree craft. It's easy and your kids will love it.



### Building A Bigger Pyramid—Marshmallow and Toothpick Tetrahedrons Take II

<http://almostunschoolers.blogspot.com/2011/12/building-bigger-pyramid-marshmallow-and.html>

Tetrahedrons, anyone? Here's a great indoor building project everyone will enjoy participating in. See if you can keep from eating all the marshmallows!

## High School and Beyond

### Expository Writing: Your Hometown Travel Guide

<http://blog.writeathome.com/index.php/2013/01/expository-writing-assignment-your-hometown-travel-guide/>

Use this writing assignment to create an interesting travel guide for your hometown. Who knows, during your research you may discover new things about your town



## 36 COOL DIYS FOR TEENS



### 36 DIY Projects for Teenagers

<http://diyready.com/diy-projects-for-teenagers-cool-crafts-for-teens/#>

This website gives you some really cool ideas for the crafty teens in your house. The site has everything from creating thumb tack letter art to making coasters out of your favorite Instagram pictures.

*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](mailto:GatesOfEllore@gmail.com). 🇺🇸



# THE VALUE OF Homeschool Community

by Tanya Dickens

The only thing better than the family you're born in is the family you choose. Born an only child, I learned to be content entertaining myself. Not one to surround myself with an entourage of friends, I'm completely comfortable shopping, dining and traveling alone. Interestingly enough, my mom is very much like me in the sense that she has always had very few and distant friendships as well. Therefore, it was an easy decision for me to abandon the comforts and familiarity of my hometown and relocate to a city nearly nine hours away that I had visited only a few times in my life to pursue a fulfilling career. I literally relocated without the certainty of a full-time job.

Since I had become a workaholic at a very young age, even before I had relocated, I rarely made time for meaningful relationships beyond the traditional childhood friends I had already established. When I relocated to North Carolina, the move further isolated me, because I traveled a lot for my job, which included international assignments lasting up to a month at the time. When I worked from the home office, I worked seven days a week in some shape or form. In order to feed my ambitions, however, I eventually left that job to start my own business. As I developed my business, I found myself constantly surrounded by clients and employees, and from the outside looking in, I appeared to be an extreme extrovert with an abundance of friends. Sure, I was popular in various circles

and invited to many events, outings and client's homes, but in all honesty, it all felt so superficial and mechanical. Although I presented this extroverted facade that earned me success as a business owner, my preference was to go home at the end of the day, draw the curtains and turn off the phone. The crazy thing is that I rarely felt lonely. My ambitious desire for worldly success took the place of both family and friends.

When I became a mom, however, I realized that my support system was severely lacking, and for the first time, I desired to develop meaningful relationships not just for me, but for my kids. What I once ignored became a huge spotlight that revealed my lack of personal connections. I found myself scrambling through an array of unbalanced and mismatched friendships in search of a meaningful support system. Once I was introduced to homeschool co-ops, I began to meet people with similar family structure/dynamics and belief systems. Through these co-ops, the family interactions became a welcomed outlet not just for my kids, but for me as the mom's nights out became something I actually anticipated doing. My husband jokes about how I rarely miss an opportunity to hang out with my homeschool sisters.

As I look back over the last five plus years of my life and the evolution of my homeschool family, I'm overjoyed. Like blood relatives, we can be dysfunctional. We don't always agree about things like politics, historical perspectives, whether we should we celebrate Halloween, or a host of differing parenting styles, but the upside is that we are joined by a common bond and a common purpose that binds us together through this amazing homeschool journey.

I can understand why some homeschool families may want to limit their interactions to only their immediate family. Why should they expose their family to the possibility of rejection? Why should they expose their family to the untoward influences that could derail their desire to buffer their children from the inevitable horrors of this wicked world? I know it's a cliché, but the benefits are worth the risks. I have only to look at the loving and supportive relationships that our family has developed through our decision to take this leap of faith and manage these risks. In fact, instead of protecting your children by isolating them from these risks, I have found that you protect them better by putting them in a supportive

environment where not only they, but you, have the support to face these risks collectively as a group. I feel that we are all more able to effectively navigate this toxic world with a community that has embraced us through the good, bad and the ugly.

Now, you might ask, do our kids have dozens of BFFs? No, but they do have a handful of loyal caring friends and a community of pretty amazing playmates. Are we dropping our kids off for sleepovers? Absolutely not! Do we ditch school work to meet friends for lunch, go to our favorite bounce house or field trip outing? Absolutely!

I'm writing this article to thank my entire crazy, loving, homeschool community that saw past our differences and loved and embraced us with a godlike love. I want to thank all of you who challenge and motivate me to be the best I can be. I want to thank you for looking past my faults and forgiving me for all the times I've made mistakes. Thank you for the unconditional support and encouragement you have shown me as we navigate this thing called life together. I realize homeschool support groups and co-ops are not for everyone, but I suggest you open yourself to the possibility of giving and receiving what God created us to be to one another.

The final question that I would like for you to consider is, how can we be the hands and feet of God to a lost and dying world, if we are isolated from everyone around us? I know you often hear this question when people realize you have chosen homeschooling over traditional school; but from where I sit, there are plenty of people struggling with their faith and family in our own homeschool community that simply need someone to come alongside them and be the hands and feet of God.



*Tanya and James Dickens have been married for nearly seventeen years. They both were workaholics driven by the possibilities of building an empire. However, God had a completely different idea of success for their lives. After nearly ten years of marriage, they decided to adopt a child, but God thought it better that they adopt two. One year and three preschools later, homeschooling became the perfect solution for the Dickens family. They are now the parents of five, ages four to nine. Tanya serves on the NCHE board as treasurer.*

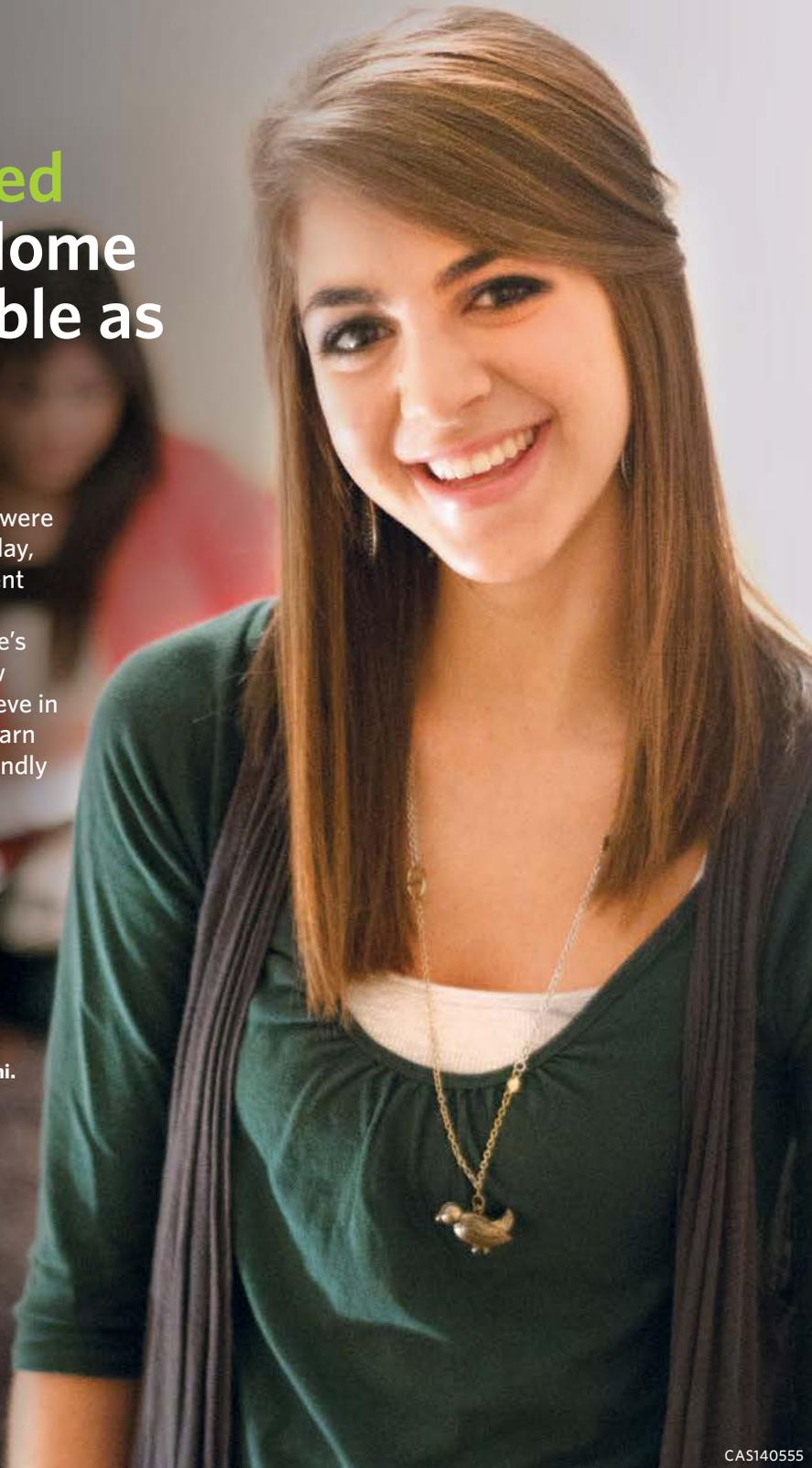
# A Top-Ranked Academic Home as Remarkable as Her First

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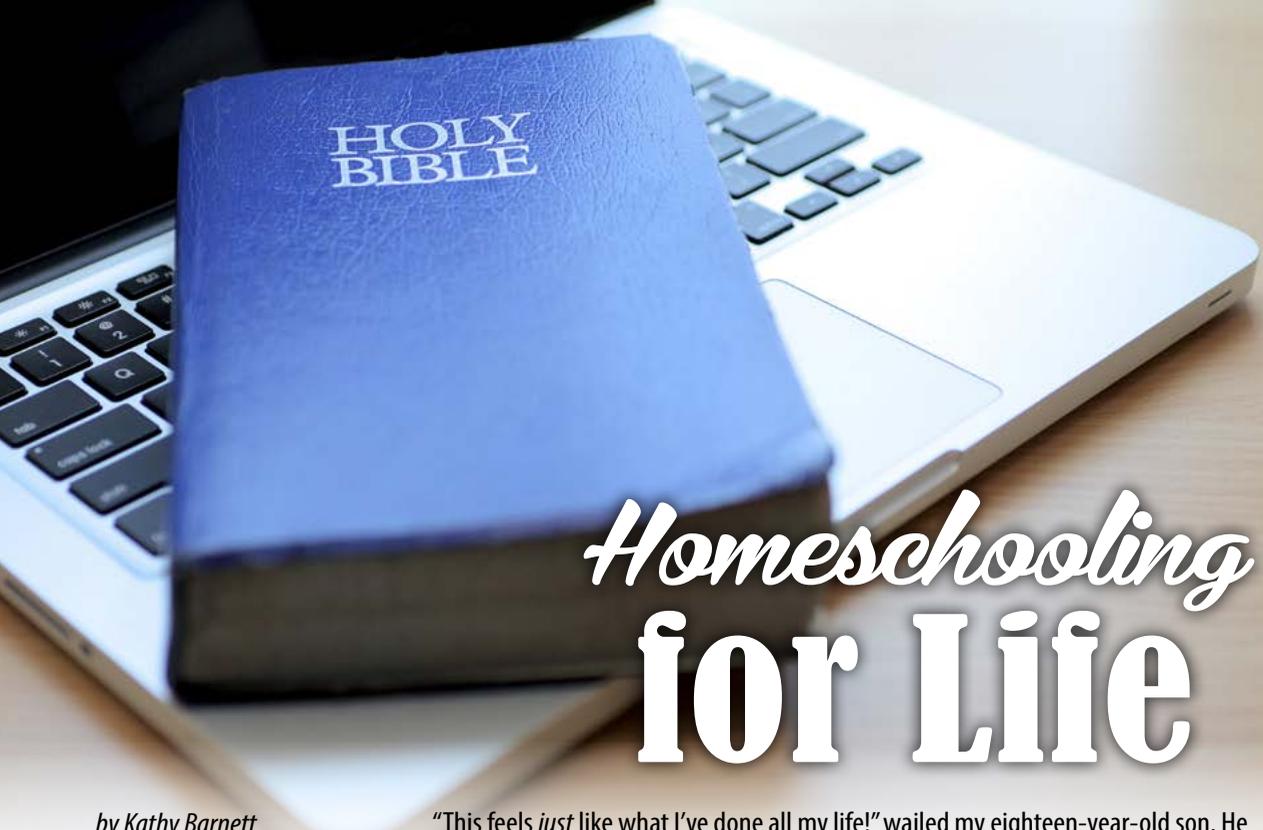


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# Homeschooling for Life

by Kathy Barnett

“This feels *just* like what I’ve done all my life!” wailed my eighteen-year-old son. He was working on an assignment for an online college history course that he was taking the fall after high school graduation.

I could only sigh and pray for God to give me some words to encourage this disgruntled young man sitting before me.

“Well, yes, I can see it may look similar to homeschooling—but it isn’t. It is college, and you are accomplishing work that will earn you a degree. And it is only for this year. Next year you get to *go* to school, but you know you can’t afford it yet, and God will bless your efforts here. This is just a season, a stepping stone, to what is next in your life. It will be worth the wait and the work here. You’ll see.”

“I just feel like I’m *always* waiting, working and wasting my time and life somehow—I just want *out!* I just want to feel like I’m living *life!* It feels like no matter what I’ve done, I’m not going anywhere. . . .” and his voice trailed off in his frustration.

Seasons. Stepping stones. Waiting. Working.

I knew how my son felt. I could remember so many years of homeschooling him, and my other children, and thinking I was getting nowhere. The time seemed to stretch endlessly in front of me with no real promise of success for my efforts.

The laundry was never done. The daily grind of math and reading bled from one day to the next with no real apparent change in ability. We confronted the same multiplication tables, the same vowels and consonants, the same parts of speech. Nothing seemed to ever change.

These are the ways of life. This is the homeschool life. There have been many despairing moments in this life when I have cried out to God just as my son cried out to me—wondering if I would *ever* see the fruits of my labor. Could all this mundane monotony bring about the amazing, eternal, supernatural outcomes I had so hoped and believed it would? Sometimes I just wanted out. Sometimes in the midst of the next diaper change and the next sink of dishes, I just wanted to feel like I was living life. There were many

days I felt like I was going nowhere and getting nothing of lasting value done.

But then God would answer me in my cries of despair. He whispered a deeper truth to me than my circumstances were shouting.

It matters. Those precious little people that He entrusted to me are worth it. The value is there—in them and in me. *In Him!* I would rise with the early rising of that eastern sun, and I would read from the ancient history book that was unchanging but somehow breathed life change into my heart. It was alive and reading it made me alive also. The truth of the Word permeated into the depths of my heart and mind and spoke fresh hope. The light would pierce the darkness of my despair as the sun broke fresh mercy onto this anointed day of grace. I would find my joy in Jesus and His finished work on the cross. I found my strength there. I found the love and purpose God had for me, and I believed He was going to finish His work in me—and my children.

Another day would come and go in grace, in love for the ones God placed in my life, in hope for the future generations that would come after them, in joy knowing that eternity was set into my heart and theirs. I set my face towards the prize in Christ Jesus calling me homeward, and I learned God was good. Grace was enough. Life was abundant.

I had no way of expressing that lifetime of truth into my son's moment of despair, but I didn't need to. Where I had spent a life teaching him, God had been teaching me. I knew God wasn't done with him yet. Just as God had gently led me and proven faithful to me, He would do so for my son. And this schooling that we had both undergone was going

to continue—no matter the season. His Word and promises were true, and the waiting and the working were worth it. This lifetime of learning to live was worth it. The love and grace poured out from heaven into our hearts was worth it.

Seeing my son there, finished with homeschooling, full of energy and hope for a future he couldn't yet grasp, I was able to see the fulfillment of all my toil and time invested. And just as God could see beyond my limited scope of vision in that earlier season of my own life, I could see beyond this stepping stone for my son. Life was here and now, and yet, the unseen that stretched out before him was full of abundance and promise.

I took his Bible from under the history book on the desk and gently laid it across the computer keyboard in front of him.

"This is the history book you need to study from, I think," I smiled encouragingly and left him to his studies, knowing his Teacher would not fail to instruct him well.



*Katherine Barnett has been married to her husband Sam and his military career for over twenty-four years. They have nine children, currently homeschooling seven, and have been homeschooling for fifteen years. Their oldest son, twenty-two, is preparing for seminary, and their youngest son, four, is working hard at learning his alphabet. She is co-author of the book *The Warrior's Bride: Biblical Strategies to Help the Military Spouse Thrive*.*

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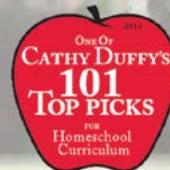
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# I AM APOLOGIA SCIENCE

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## Virginia Stilwell

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





# Sitting Alone

by Amanda Garner

My husband is the full-time pastor at our church where we have been serving for nine years. When the Lord first called us to this sweet congregation, we had only three young children (four, five and seven). As most of you know, getting small children dressed, fed and ready for church is nothing short of a weekly miracle. Add to that exercise the pressure of being *on time*— because you're *the preacher's wife*. About a year after taking this church, we welcomed our fourth child, and Sundays became an all-out athletic event. By the time we arrived, dropped off the baby in the nursery and claimed our designated pew, I was usually exhausted! My task for the next hour was to keep three wiggly bodies still, quiet and reverent. I was convicted with every tired fiber of my being that they needed to be in church at a young age, but I silently wondered if there was any benefit for any of us!

As happens so often, time has a way of silently slipping by when we've got our hands full of diaper bags, PB&J sandwiches and story books. Gradually those things were replaced by purses, Bibles and Sunday school books. Before long, the youngest was old enough to join us for service, and once again, I was shushing loud whispers, catching hymn books before they could crash to the floor and generally trying not to cause a scene. Our Sunday line-up had my youngest on my right side, followed by child two, then one and next-to-youngest on my left. This seating arrangement was strategically designed to minimize fighting between my darlings and also provide the fastest escape route if I needed to make a quick exit. It seemed the task of curtailing distractions was my eternal lot. But little by little, week by week, I heard more of the sermon and less noise. I spent more time worshipping and less time wrestling.

A few weeks ago I sat down in *our* pew, settled my purse and Bible and read through the bulletin. Hearing the music that cued the start of the service, I suddenly realized I was sitting alone. I remembered my oldest son was in the back, running the audio-visual equipment. I smiled, proud of the fact that he was already serving his church at a young age. Glancing around, I spotted my oldest daughter sitting with a new teenage girl from

another country. She went out of her way to befriend her, knowing how hard it is to find a place where you fit in, even in church. I noticed my younger son, just promoted to the youth group, sitting with a couple of older boys. Had he really been hardly more than a toddler when we first came? And then there was my youngest, my baby girl, just promoted from the preschool department to the children's, sitting a few rows up by her best friend, whispering and doodling. My smile quickly faded as I suddenly realized they were growing up. My first instinct was to enact a new family law stating that we must all sit together on Sunday mornings. Just as quickly I realized that they needed this freedom and that it was both right and good for our family. The reality of the fact that I am now in a new phase of parenting, however, stung my mamma's heart just a bit.

I also realize this same shifting of seasons is unfolding in our homeschool. Days of phonetic readers, tears over handwriting, counting with blocks and messy art pictures have passed. I have one independently navigating algebra and biology. My middle two children don't need my help much, except for math. My youngest is just starting to read, and I am savoring every minute, knowing that in

just a few short years, she'll be the only one left at home when her older siblings are off in college. Then a few quick years after that and the last of my chicks will leave the nest empty. The books and papers will be gone, the house will be tidy, and I'll sit alone at the kitchen table that was once the school table. I fully expect to look into the lives of my young adult children with pride and gratitude for the years we had together, but I'm sure there will be a few tears, too.

So, as difficult as it sounds, enjoy the hard days. Savor the struggles. Embrace the season you're in and treasure the moments you've been given.



*Amanda and her husband, Wes, serve in full-time ministry in Oxford, NC, where they live, love and learn together. Married for twenty-one years, they have home educated their four children for the past decade. Amanda also enjoys*

*encouraging other homeschool moms via her blog: [www.dropsodelight.weebly.com](http://www.dropsodelight.weebly.com). *



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# The Strange Case of the Curious Child

by Matt Bianco

When my children were little, I remember watching my wife sitting with one of them in her lap and flipping through the pages of a book. My child would point to a picture in the book and ask, "What's that?" My wife would reply, "A cow," then turn the page. With each turning of the page, my child would repeat the process by pointing and asking, and my wife would complete it by answering and turning the page again. Often, the picture would be of the same thing, in this case a cow. This process of repeating the same question and the same answer over and over again confounded me. Why didn't my child just learn the first time?

Some time after one of those episodes, we were taking a family trip across the country, driving from Florida to Iowa and then to California. I don't recall in which state it happened, but I remember my son pointing at a real cow standing in a pasture and exclaiming, "It's a cow, a cow!" Having discovered his first real cow after only seeing them drawn or pictured in a book brought joy radiating from his face. His eyes were big like saucers. His smile ran from ear to ear. He was glowing. This expressiveness continued with every new discovery: a horse, the color purple, a tractor-trailer. It continued, even as he grew older, with new discoveries: an oak tree, a swallow, a turkey vulture. It continues even now, with my oldest, who is a freshman in college. He calls me weekly to tell me about what he is reading and discussing: "Dad, we read Plato's *Meno* this week. Socrates was discussing the definition of virtue, and my classmates and I were discussing it as well. Do you think virtue can be defined as...?"

My own education experience was so very different from my son's. Most of my classmates, including me at times, were bored with learning. If we enjoyed going to school, it was because we enjoyed seeing our friends and maybe a certain teacher here and there. Sometimes we enjoyed a specific subject, but rarely did I meet someone with the same intense level of curiosity as my son and some of the children in our homeschooling group. I began wondering if these children were naturally curious; or was curiosity somehow created in them?

My initial instinct was to think they must be special—naturally curious. Then, thinking further, I decided that curiosity had been created in them. There were too many *different* children among the homeschoolers I knew. I've finally concluded, though, that the answer to both questions is no. What I've come to realize is that all children are born with a natural inquisitiveness. They are all filled with questions that constantly flow out of them and they are always ready to point and ask, "What's that?" It wasn't the *different* child who was curious or the child who had been taught to be curious who was curious. Every child demonstrated this curiosity. So what happened to me and my classmates?

If every child is born with that natural inquisitiveness, those who are no longer demonstrating it must have had it taken from them. This, I believe, explains why the curious children were so numerous among the homeschoolers I knew. When a child is cooped up in a classroom, assigned busy work and forced to complete worksheet after worksheet, it can deaden the desire to know. There is, moreover, something stultifying about the way many children are taught new information in modern schools.

The young child is naturally armed and loaded with questions as ammunition. "What's that?" or "How does it work?" or "Why?" and any other number of questions. And we respond, answering the questions they've asked. As they get older, learning changes from an act of discovery, by which they discover the answers to their questions by comparing and concluding, to an act of imposition, by which they are told what to know and when to know it, whether or not the answers they hear are to questions they've asked.

These children are retrained so that they no longer think of learning as an act of discovery, but rather as the time during which a teacher lectures to them and gives them answers they aren't asking for, then gives them busy work and worksheets. When learning becomes so unnatural

to them, it stultifies and deadens the curiosity that so enamored them previously. The good teacher, however, is aware of this (at least subconsciously if not consciously) and is able to conduct the learning experience in such a way that he or she provokes the questions he or she needs to answer, thereby avoiding the imposition of new information and cultivating the discovery of new ideas. These are the teachers that my classmates and I would have described as our favorites. They are also the reason why we would generally have only identified one subject as a favorite rather than all of the subjects.

The homeschooling parent can cultivate this kind of learning experience. The typical schoolteacher is limited by the nature of the school classroom and its goals. The environmental difference explains why I find far more curious children among homeschoolers of all ages than I ever remembered from my own education experience.

One last observation: curious children can remain curious in all subjects, even those they may not like or that do not come easily to them. They can do this if we are willing to provoke questions from them, as the good teacher does. We do this most easily by modeling the process back to them. Our children ask questions about everything else, so we ask questions about this subject. Rather than waiting for them to ask, we simply ask the questions. With some practice, we can discover the right questions that will lead our children to new questions, and their curiosity is again inflamed.

It seems the strange case of the curious child is not so strange after all. It may have been strange to us because of the circumstances of our education. It does not, however, have to remain strange. Curiosity is not so much a trait that *different* children are born with, nor is it so much a trait that we create in some children. Rather, it is a trait that all children are born with and that we can nurture and cultivate. As we learn how to nurture and cultivate curiosity, the strange case of the curious child may become the strange case of the *incurious* child.



*Matt Bianco, a homeschooling dad of three, lives near Pinehurst, NC. He and his family use Classical Conversations for their homeschooling curriculum and community and have graduated their oldest. Matt is married to his altogether lovely high school sweetheart, Patty.* 



# Community Service: Get Involved (and Keep Records!)

by Diane Helfrich

I recently wrote a post to the NCHC Facebook page on community service, and it sparked such an interest that I decided to expound a bit more in this article for GREENHOUSE. Community service is an important part of living. For Christians, it is an act of faith that strengthens our relationships here and above. As with all selfless acts, the benefit is infinitely more within us than to those we help, and we grow through serving. Building a strong sense of civic duty and an ability to see needs in our community is an important part of educating our children—an important part of growing up. As I look at my own life, I can see that my work ethic and many of my values were formed by participating in acts of community service: values including attention to others, completing projects on time, working well on a team, working out of my comfort zone, finding creative solutions, and being a leader. The list could go on, and it is clear that all these things are valuable in most life situations. So, it's not surprising that colleges and universities put a premium on students with a wide range of community service. Students with a broad background come to the collegiate environment much more ready to address the rigors of school and deal with the variety of

people they will encounter than those coming with purely academic experience. My son, Ian, worked off and on for the admissions department at UNC Chapel Hill the entire time he was in school, and he would immediately attest to the advantages of the community service in acceptance at the university. Community service can be one of the few things that make your transcript really stand out from the crowd. Both of my children had in excess of 3,000 hours of community service by the time they graduated. That probably sounds like an inordinate mountain to many, but you would be surprised at how quickly it builds.

As homeschoolers, we have easy opportunities to build community service into our schooling. I was a middle school volleyball coach. My son loved volleyball, but there really wasn't an outlet for him to participate. He started hanging out at the gym with me while I was coaching and took to the floor at every opportunity. It soon became clear that he had some talent, so I asked the staff if they would let him be my assistant coach. The girls loved him, and he learned quickly how to get them to respond to his coaching. He accrued approximately three to four hours of time per practice, so he easily acquired over two hundred hours in one season!

OK, you don't coach a team. Do you have homeschool park day or field day for kids? Could your older kids organize and lead games? Do you have an acting group? Perhaps your student could direct a one-act play or assist a director as a stage manager. I'm sure your church has a list of shut-ins. Call the church and ask who needs a visit so you can spend some time with those who don't often have visitors. Does your church need help in a nursery?—sounds like community service to me! Many church activities, such as singing in a choir, acolyting, or helping with a sound board can be considered community service. Does your child do martial arts? Most programs require rising black belts to teach others and that is countable time. Does your co-op have a class day? Many teachers would love to have student assistants and all of that time counts. We counted work on a yearbook staff for our co-op, which also led to leadership positions as editors—and editors contribute tons of hours! During Christmas time, there are many programs to help get gifts out to underprivileged kids or families of prisoners. There may be a Salvation Army Love Lunch you can help with periodically. Maybe you have an older neighbor who needs help walking a dog, raking leaves, or putting up Christmas lights. Serving neighbors is absolutely community service! Schools, particularly in

underprivileged areas, are often looking for people to come and read to students and help them with assignments; all you have to do is ask. Every one of these activities comes with a wonderful learning benefit.

So, what way is best to go about creating a community service record for your high schooler that can translate into entries on a college application? There is no right or wrong way—just get involved and count the hours! We simply kept a list of activities on the computer in a Word file. Once a week or once a month, we updated the list with things we had accomplished. When it was time to do a college application, all I had to do was total service numbers and record them. There isn't a lot of space on our transcript to list community service; there might be only one line for four years of a given activity so we made it very concise. You can also create a separate sheet with this information to add to your transcript. For record keeping, you could create a chart or an excel worksheet, or a good old-fashioned hand-written chart works just as well. Since your kids are high schoolers by the time counting service hours matters, let them figure out how they want to tally them! In short, you should keep track using the method that works best for you!

The dividends of teaching your family the value of community service are countless. The benefit of this service to your children when applying for colleges is also really important. So remember, sometimes, you just need to look at what you are already doing and see the areas of community service.



*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, is now working on a master's degree in economic policy at the Barcelona School of Economics. Her daughter, Anna, is at George Mason University as an honors college student majoring in conflict analysis and resolution and history. Diane is newly elected to the NCHC region 9 liaison position and is excited to serve a larger area of homeschoolers.*





# One Way to Remember How Blessed You Are

by J. Mark Fox

Cindy and I shared some ideas about building a strong marriage with younger couples in the church recently, and I told this story from Greg Smalley:

One of the things that I appreciate most about my parents is the honesty of their marriage. They've never claimed to have a *perfect* marriage and aren't afraid to disagree. At one point, my parents got into a huge argument. They were so frustrated that they each ran off to a different part of the house. I let the situation calm down for a few minutes before I knocked on my father's office door.

"Come in," he reluctantly replied.

As I walked into his office, I found my dad sitting behind his computer reading a document titled *Why Norma Is So Valuable*. (My mom's name is Norma.)

"What are you reading?" I asked.

"Well," my dad began, "a number of years ago I started a list of why your mom is so valuable. So when I'm upset with her, or when we've had a fight, I've learned that instead of sitting here thinking about how hurt or frustrated I am at your mother, I need to make myself read through this list."

The document contained literally hundreds of words and phrases describing my mom's value.

"When I first start to read through the list, I'm still upset," explained my dad. "I usually get to the first three or four items and think, 'What was I thinking?' or 'This one is no longer valid!' or 'I'm definitely going to erase that one.' But then the farther down I read, the faster I realize that you have an amazing mom."

This is the best idea I've ever heard of recognizing someone's value. Talk about creating safety. It's also what my father does to get his heart back open. Jesus explained why it is so powerful when He said, "For where your treasure is, so there will your heart be also." In other words, your heart will be open to what you value. One way to keep your heart open and your spouse feeling safe with you is to focus on her value.

We can create this honor list for our spouse as well. Take several minutes to list all the reasons why your spouse is so valuable. For example: a character trait, a faith pattern, values, morals, parenting skills, spirituality, the roles he or she plays that you appreciate, etc. And don't keep the amazing list to yourself—share it with your spouse. Let her know that you recognize her value. (*Fight Your Way to a Better Marriage*, Dr. Greg Smalley)

As I think about my wife's birthday coming up in a few days, I remember the column I wrote in 2011 entitled, "Fifty Reasons Why I Love Her." I normally ask Cindy to proofread my columns before I send them to Madison Taylor, but not

that one. I sent her a decoy that week, and on her birthday, which happened to be a Saturday, I cut the column I had written about her out of the paper and brought it to her at the breakfast table.

"Look," I said. "The *Times-News* printed a different column this week." Cindy gave me a funny look, but after she had read the first few sentences, she started to cry.

It was one of the best presents I have ever given my wife. I encourage every person reading this column to do something similar. Then keep that list in a place where you can read it often, especially when your marriage is going through a storm.

You and your marriage will be blessed.



Mark and Cindy Fox have been homeschooling since 1988. They have seven children and only one more graduate to go. Mark pastors Antioch Community Church in Elon and writes a blog at [www.jmarkfox.com](http://www.jmarkfox.com). Mark has led numerous seminars, including ones for pastors, men and couples. Email Mark at [markfox@antiochchurch.cc](mailto:markfox@antiochchurch.cc).



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# HOW TO INCREASE PRODUCTIVITY AND REDUCE STRESS

by *Matthew McDill*

Have you ever been doing laundry and thought, “I really should be doing school with the kids right now?” Have you ever been talking with your children and realized that *you* were not really listening? Instead, you were thinking about other tasks or projects you feel that you should be doing.

We may be tempted to think, “I wish I could be in two places at one time!” The reality, though, is that we end up being in no place at all.

Two very costly things happen when we often find ourselves in situations where we cannot stay focused.

1) We are *stressed*.

It is stressful to feel trapped doing one thing when you feel that you ought to be doing another! Our minds and bodies put up with the constant tension of trying to be in two places at once. Our minds and hearts are not where we are!

2) We are *unproductive*.

I recently heard this statement: "Love is attention." When someone is talking with you, and his or her heart is not in the conversation, you can tell! The relationship is not growing and the conversation is not effective. This is not a good use of time!

Another example is the daily experience of being continually interrupted when we have to accomplish a task that requires attention and thought. How frustrating! We lose time and energy when we have to refocus ourselves on the task after the interruption. We also lose momentum!

Paul wrote to the Ephesians, "Make the best use of the time, for the days are evil." (Ephesians 5:16 ESV) One of the major ways we make the best use of time is to *focus*! The reason we need to keep our focus is that *the days are evil*. We are in a spiritual battle and there is much at stake. We cannot afford to squander our time!

One of the keys to giving something your full attention is to be convinced you are doing the right thing. Here is the rest of the verse:

"Look carefully then how you walk, not as unwise but as wise, making the best use of the time, because the days are evil. Therefore do not be foolish, but understand what the will of the Lord is." (Ephesians 5:15-17 ESV)

Here are ways to get a better focus and use your time more wisely.

1) Carefully select the best and most important thing to do at the time.

Be willing to say *no* to the many other things that you could be doing. When you find yourself doing something that is not the Lord's will or the best for the moment, *stop*.

2) Give yourself fully to what you are doing.

This can be done because you have a conviction that you are doing the right thing. Give your whole mind and heart to it. (Your children will be able to tell when you are really listening!)



3) Relentlessly resist distractions.

Sometimes this is difficult. We often have to say no to important things. But it is worth it to stay focused. There may be an important or urgent interruption that trumps the current activity. A person who has clearly delineated his priorities and goals will quickly be able to assess what takes priority. But most things can wait.

Ah! What peace to know that I am doing what is best and giving myself wholly to it. So much can be accomplished when I am focused! Try these suggestions and I believe you will have a peaceful and productive day!



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



# Eight Reasons Kids Learn Best at Home

by Debra Bell, Ph.D.

After I finished homeschooling our kids, I headed back to school myself to complete a Ph.D. in educational psychology. I wanted to know how kids learn best. Wouldn't that be helpful information for homeschooling moms and dads?

Boy did God blow my socks off! I can sum up what I found in one sentence: ***If we built a school from the ground up based on what the research shows as how kids learn best... we'd build a home.***

How's that for some liberating good news? And doesn't it make complete sense? The best learning environment for any child is the one God designed: a family.

Here's why:

1. Kids learn best when they believe their teacher and fellow students ***care*** about them.
2. Kids learn best when they have opportunities to pursue their ***interests***.
3. Kids learn best when they can make ***choices*** and decisions about their learning.
4. Kids learn best when they can ***observe*** other students who model what success looks like.
5. Kids learn best when they have a teacher who is available to provide ***feedback*** and encouragement.

6. Kids learn best when the work they are asked to do is matched to what they are **ready** to learn.
7. Kids learn best when they can **experience** what they are studying firsthand.
8. Kids learn best when they have plenty of physical activity, sunshine and **fresh air**.

Think of all the obstacles kids have to overcome in a traditional setting to have these eight needs met. Even the most dedicated classroom teachers would be hard pressed to provide these opportunities regularly for all their students. But you can and probably do so without giving it much thought.

No one cares about a child more than Mom and Dad. Both can regularly be available to answer questions and encourage a child's progress. Older siblings and mixed age groups in many of our co-ops provide those models of success and friendship. At home kids have plenty of free time to pursue what they are interested in and to be outside soaking up all the benefits of nature. Opportunity for field trips and firsthand experiences abound. Parents can adjust their expectations and methods quickly to match what each child is ready to learn. We can let our kids choose what books they read, what topics they study and what curriculum they prefer. We encourage them to take ownership of their education when we attend conventions and homeschool rallies as a family.

The catch is we have to see God's design at work here and maximize the advantages He's given us. I hope I can help with that by unpacking exactly how we can leverage all the opportunities a family uniquely provides each child.

I'm looking forward to talking with many of you at the upcoming NCHC annual conference in May 2015.



*Debra Bell homeschooled her four children K-12 and holds a Ph.D. in educational psychology. She is the author of the award-winning, best seller The Ultimate Guide to Homeschooling along with The Ultimate Guide to Homeschooling Teens published by Apologia Press. She is a popular convention speaker, and will be speaking at the 2015 NCHC annual conference in May. She may be contacted at [www.debrabell.com](http://www.debrabell.com).*

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## EXPERIENCE HISTORY IN NORTH CAROLINA!

*by Michael Hardy*

Smoke drifts from a campfire, mingling with the smells emanating from a black kettle suspended above it. A group of children of diverse ages draws near to what appears to be a vision from the past—someone dressed as a Civil War soldier or maybe an eighteenth century longhunter. “Are you going to eat that?” one young scholar inquires. “Did you really sleep out here last night?” “Is that gun real?” The questions often come as quickly as they can be answered, and one answer can

generate another host of questions. At a meticulously conserved historic home, a docent in period dress guides a group on a tour into the daily life of another century, patiently explaining details ranging from profound questions about infant mortality to more prosaic concerns about bathing practices. On a decommissioned military vessel, a volunteer depicting a sailor from a bygone era guides visitors through the operations of weapons once used by the greatest generation. On any given weekend, students across the state have a chance to understand and experience a variety of time periods by interacting with historical interpreters and volunteers at our many historical museums and sites. For homeschoolers, these sites are tremendous resources.



*The Hardy family volunteering as interpreters at the Carson House  
near Old Fort.*

North Carolina is blessed with hundreds of museums across the state. These sites can give students and adults alike a firsthand glimpse into the past. They range from local history museums to national parks. Visitors can explore everything from Native American culture to pirates, from the development of aviation to Revolutionary and Civil War battlefields. We even have a restored World War II battleship moored here in the Tar Heel State.

North Carolina has ten National Parks. The Blue Ridge Parkway is one of these sites. While most people see the Parkway as a road for a drive or a place to hike, there are plenty of opportunities for hands-on history as well. There are five campgrounds along the North Carolina section of the Parkway. Each has an amphitheater, and in the late spring, summer and early fall, programs for the public take place on Friday and Saturday evenings. These programs, always free, cover a range of topics, from local history to plants and animals. As an added bonus, there are annual events, such as the Civil War Living History at Linville Falls in June and the Overmountain Men living history at the Mineral Museum in September. In the east is Moore's Creek National Battlefield, commemorating an early Patriot victory in the American Revolution. There are special tours and demonstrations throughout the year. To the north of Moore's Creek is the Wright Brothers National Memorial. This site has a small entrance fee. There are artifacts in the museum, reproduction hangers and a commemorative flight line.

North Carolina has twenty-seven historic sites and forty-one state parks, spread from Roanoke Island to Asheville. A place to start, and one place every person should visit, is the excellent North Carolina Museum of History in Raleigh. The centerpiece is the 20,000 sq. ft. exhibit entitled "The Story of North Carolina." From Native



*The 1840 capitol building in Raleigh has been returned to its mid-nineteenth century appearance.*

American history through the Civil Rights movement, the story of our great state is presented. There are permanent and rotating exhibits, from the North Carolina Sports Hall of Fame to an exhibit on North Carolina's military heritage. Across the street from the Museum of History sits the 1840 state capitol. Visitors can tour the building, from the old General Assembly chambers to the state library and state geologist's office. The capitol still houses the offices of



^ *The Harper House on the Bentonville Battlefield served as a field hospital in March 1865.*

< *One of the many excellent displays at the North Carolina Museum of History.*



*Fort Defiance in Caldwell County, built in 1792, was home to General William Lenoir.*

the governor and lieutenant governor, and if neither is in, visitors can get a peek inside the offices where they work. Both the museum and the capitol are free. From time to time, the Museum of History brings in special exhibits that do carry a small admission charge.

The state has a wealth of other resources as well, from Town Creek Indian Mound in Montgomery County, the Alamance Battlefield in Burlington, the transportation

museum at Spencer, Civil War sites such as the Zebulon Baird Vance Birthplace near Weaverville, the Bentonville Battlefield near Smithville and literary sites, including the Thomas Wolfe House in Asheville. State parks that have good history-related museums include Mt. Mitchell, the USS *North Carolina*, and Forts Fisher and Macon. Some of these sites charge admission and some do not. It is best to check before you go, as many sites offer discounts and special programs for homeschoolers that you can receive only if you make arrangements in advance.

Across North Carolina are several regional museums that are of high quality. These include the Museum of the Cherokee Indian in Cherokee, the Greensboro Historical Museum in Greensboro, and the Museum of the Cape Fear Historical Complex in Fayetteville. These museums all charge admission, but the quality of their fantastic exhibits is well worth the price. Sometimes, you can purchase a package ticket for several sites, such as in Cherokee, and receive a discount, but it is also a good idea



*An OS2U Kingfisher spotting plane on the deck of the USS North Carolina in Wilmington.*



One of Junior Johnson's early race cars, at the Wilkes Heritage Museum.

to contact the site ahead of time for special homeschool opportunities.

Last, but certainly not least, are a century's worth of local history museums. Almost every county has one or two or more. They contain stories of the past of that particular area. The artifacts are as varied as the counties themselves, and often they are housed in significant historical buildings. Once again, some have free admission and others charge a small fee.

The programs and services offered by these museums are as varied as the sites themselves. The Museum of History in Raleigh has events for all age groups, including an American Indian Heritage Education Day in November and an African-American Cultural Celebration in January. Other events are often going on, such as costumed historic interpreters just hanging out in the lobby, ready to talk with visitors and answer questions. For the past year, an exhibit on Blackbeard's *Queen Anne's Revenge* has been touring the state. The North Carolina Maritime Museum in Beaufort offers programs on whales, lightships and light towers and even boatbuilding.

Many of the museums across the state have homeschool days, encouraging homeschoolers to get out and explore these sites. Often there are interpreters demonstrating some skill of old. At times, young people are encouraged to join in, working in a garden, weaving or making a craft. Having these experiences are great for people of all ages. History is more than just words on a page and by visiting these sites, people can see the past, touch it, smell it and even taste it. Since homeschoolers are known for a love of experiential education, the volunteers and staff of historic sites often look forward to having homeschoolers visit and will cater to the particular students' interests.

For people who want to get even more out of the great

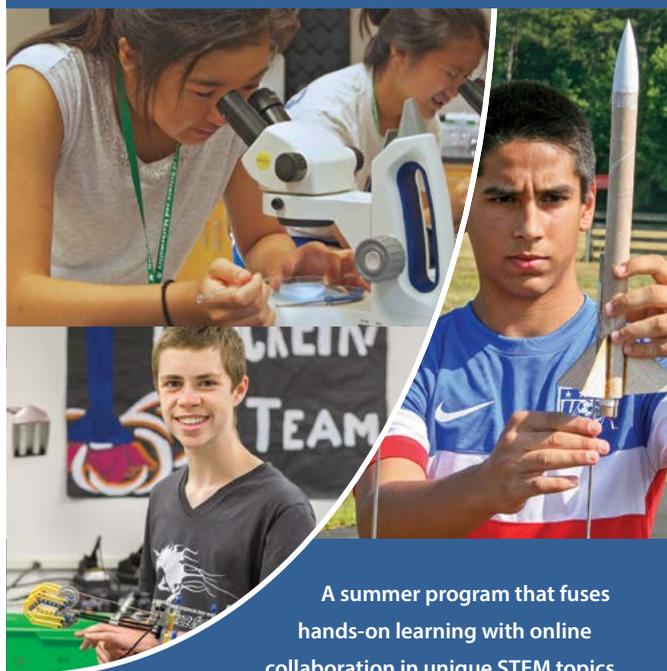
historic resources in the state, every one of the hundreds of sites in our great state are looking for volunteers. This is a way to make sure that your children not only have a hands-on experience, but is also a way to give back to the community at large. After all, as homeschoolers know, knowledge is a gift to be shared, and our state historic sites can allow homeschooled students to both earn and to share their knowledge. Our historic sites may be the most interesting classrooms any student can visit.



*Michael and Elizabeth Hardy made the decision to homeschool their children about the time their son was born thirteen years ago. Elizabeth is a senior instructor of English at Mayland Community College, and Michael is the author of nineteen books, mostly dealing with North Carolina*

*history. The entire family serves as National Park Service volunteers, and Michael serves as chair of the Avery County Historical Society and Museum. He has spent thirty-two years participating in Civil War re-enactments.* 🇺🇸

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# Trophy Wives and Trophy Children

by Steve Lambert

We're all familiar with the term *trophy wife*. This term usually involves the rich, worldly man who chooses to marry not for love, but rather to show off a suitable trophy among his friends and business partners. The *trophy* is a beautiful woman, beautifully dressed, perfectly coiffed, manicured and lavishly bejeweled. Love never enters into this arrangement; it's purely about image.

Did you know we can also have *trophy children*?

When we raise *trophy children*, it's always about image—how we want to be perceived by others. We want to have the brightest, most talented, best-behaved children among our peers. Love may not even enter into the equation. We want to show off what we have that they may not have. We project the thought: Your children are disrespectful, lazy, underachievers; but look at *my* children! See how perfect they are? See how great I am? See how perfectly we raise our children? Don't you wish you were like me?

Now that's the cold, ugly side of it, of course. Few of us are that cold-blooded. But where does *wanting the best for our children* end and *look at my children—they're perfect* begin? Sometimes the dividing line is narrow.

We all know about *t-ball dads* or *cheerleader moms* who live vicariously through their children, insisting that their children be the best player on the team or the best cheerleader on the squad. Their children become an extension of their own ego, and their focus less about who their children were created to be and more about how they want the world to see them as parents.

For some of us the temptation to raise *trophy children* is about academics. We want them to read before they're three, speak French before they're five, have the winning science experiment and make it to state finals in the spelling bee.

But for others it's about raising spiritual *trophy children*. We want children who are active evangelists at seven, little Bible scholars at eight and number one in Sunday school attendance every year. We saddle them with expectations that none of us could possibly live up to. How many among us can say we never fell victim to any kind of sexual sin? How many of us can say we spent our youth praying and meditating on how to bring purity to Hollywood, holiness to Washington and revival to Europe? How many of us can say we listened only to Christian music in our youth? Yet these are the expectations we have for our children.

Don't misunderstand. I am *not* saying that praying and meditating, listening to Christian music, etc., are bad. I am *not* saying we shouldn't encourage our children toward righteousness and away from sin. Of course we should. But we should recognize that our children are no different than we are and that *they* need a Savior, too. They *will* fail. They *will* make poor choices. And God still wants to meet them right where they are—just the way He met us in our sin.

My encouragement to you today is this: help your children achieve academic success and spiritual growth. Help them become the man or woman God created them to be. But never confuse *your* desire to *look good* with your job as a parent to help direct your children. The moment our child's achievements and behavior become all about our *looking good*, we have lost the battle, and we *may* lose our children. Children have an innate sense about these things and know when they're being used as pawns in an ego game.

Wives aren't trophies. Neither are children. Both are to be loved and honored, cherished and nurtured. Both are to be served by us, rather than becoming servants for us. They *do not* exist to make us look better or feel better about ourselves. Through them, we are given the opportunity to

embrace self-sacrifice as we lay our lives down for others.

It never hurts to check our heart—to check our motives. Ask the Lord from time to time, *is this about them, or is this about me?* He'll answer. He is faithful.

Those of us who homeschool often feel everyone is watching, including friends, family, neighbors and even the government. We *want* to succeed. We *want* to see our choice validated and to prove that our sacrifices have been rewarded. We *want* to present bright, well-educated, cheerful children with a deep sense of purpose and spiritual maturity beyond their years. But they're still just children, just like we once were.

The answer isn't to simply let children wander aimlessly without academic goals or spiritual objectives. Rather it's to check our hearts and test our motives. It's easy to slip over the line and begin raising trophy children without even knowing it.

Think about this. We want our children to be the best-behaved among all their friends. Perhaps we want our children to be the best groomed or the best at serving others. Maybe we want them to be the best at Scripture memorization.

But there can *only be one best!* Everyone else is not *the best*. Odds are that your child won't be the best at geography, the best at history, the best at Scripture memorization, the best at math, the best at soccer or the best at caring for those who are younger or weaker. Only one child can be *best* at any of those areas.

But your child can be *good* at some of those things. He may even be pretty good at *most* of those things. And that's good enough. God encourages us, His children, to grow, but he always loves us right where we are. I encourage you to do the same with your children.



Steve Lambert and his wife, Jane, began homeschooling in 1981, and today all six of their grandchildren are also being homeschooled. Jane Claire Lambert wrote the award-winning curriculum "Five in a Row" and together they have been traveling the country and encouraging homeschoolers for more than twenty years. Each year Steve speaks to thousands of homeschoolers offering the perspective, wisdom and insight that comes from nearly forty years in the homeschooling field. Steve is a featured speaker at the NCHC 2015 annual conference. 



# GO FISH



by Herb McClintick

*Go Fish!* is a children's card game I played a couple times in my youth, around sixty years ago. For my father, *Go Fish* was not a card game, it was an adventure. He loved to fish. When I was a boy, he went fishing whenever he could. He took me fishing one time when I was very young. On this trip, he did everything for me. He found the worms, baited my hook and even put my line in the water for me. I caught a fish—or at least a fish swallowed the worm with my hook in it. My dad pulled the fish out of the water, and placed it on to the river bank, where it flipped and flopped in front of scared little me. It was a Crappy, he announced to no one in particular, as he took its wriggling little body off my hook.

My mom and dad split up five years later. I have been haunted over the years by the opportunities I missed to share more fishing trips. I never got to hear about the joy of fishing that lived inside my father. I never knew if I did something wrong that day or not, but we never went fishing together again.

During that one fishing trip, my dad neglected to share a single word regarding why he enjoyed fishing, where his favorite fishing spots were located, what his most exciting fish was to catch, and so on. These were all things I longed to know as I grew older without him to talk to and learn from. That empty spot inside of me has remained all my life. Boys and girls need to hear their father's voice sharing with them the answers they have found to little mysteries that they now pass on to them on as keepsakes.

I now have two grandsons who have no father living in their home. I have taken it upon myself to teach them at least some of the things I wished my father had taken the time to teach me. I had to learn nearly every important thing by trial and error and error and error. It was a sorrow-inducing, fright-producing, painful, tumbling path to the source of knowledge, wisdom and self-confidence.

Today my eldest grandson accompanied me on an outing to the lake just around the corner from our little hobby farm. Last night I showed him how to set the lawn sprinkler to water the front yard to encourage the worms to come to the surface and hide in the grass. When the time came, we took our flashlights and quietly walked the yard picking up the slimy, wiggling little worms necessary for fish bait in the morning.

Later, I showed him how to help me carry my beat up old canoe. We slid it into the bed of my faithful Ford F150 and tied it securely in place. I shared each step and sacred procedure for unloading, launching and sailing out into the lake. I told him the location of the hidden keys to the truck before we launched our craft.

I coached him through the agonizing procedure of turning around in a canoe seat to face the opposite direction, feet and all.

We got caught in the rain in the middle of the lake. We caught no fish but saw one jump nearby us. I had told him the location of the keys earlier but now he saw what it took to get to them. This was my secret hiding place after all, and now he knew it, too.

He said it was the most fun he had had this summer. He goes a lot and does a lot. So I took it as a genuine compliment.

I will attempt to share my little observations, joys, challenges and fears with both of my grandsons. I plan to share during private times I create for each of them. My goal is for them to have memories to look back on and cherish as they grow older. And I would be thrilled for them to do the same with their sons one day.



*Herb McClintick started his professional life after attending Bible college. In 1966 Herb became a student pastor in the hills of Southeastern Ohio. As pastor he also taught elementary school. In 1970, he and his wife were recruited to help start a children's home in Ontario, Canada.*

*In 1980 he returned to the United States and has pastored churches in Pennsylvania and North Carolina. He, his wife, Sylvia, and daughter Fiona, are in their second year of home education just north of Winston-Salem, North Carolina, with their youngest grandson Caleb.*



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# Stickel Family Excels in Artistic Gifts



Christiana Joy Stickel joined her father and three older siblings when she earned her first Best of Show in youth crafts at the 2013 NC State Fair. She knitted a complete outfit for an eighteen-inch doll. Younger sister, Jubilee, earned all blue ribbons for projects she sewed and actually competed for the Best of Show award against her sister!

Over the last few years the family has earned state fair top awards. Sean won three Best of Show ribbons for paintings as well as two top awards for high school paintings. Rachele won five Best of Shows for knitting and homespun projects. Daniel won Best of Show for an elaborate origami dragon.

Sean's painting was also on display this past year in the US Capitol in Washington DC; he was the first homeschool student to win his district's Congressional Art Competition. In 2015 he and his dad will both have paintings in Splash 16, a selection of art from artists around the world.

These competitions have helped the Stickel family to excel in the artistic gifts given them by God. There are many competitions at the NC State Fair that homeschoolers may want to enter. NC State Fair information and applications are online. The registration deadline is in September. 

# BULLETIN BOARD



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

**NCHE's Capital Fest 2015** is scheduled for March 3 in the North Carolina Legislative Building. Mark your calendars and plan to attend. This is an opportunity for you and your family to advocate for homeschooling with our elected officials and to learn more about our state government.

- Meet lawmakers from your area
- Introduce your children to elected officials
- Attend workshops on the three branches of our state government
- Take a tour of the North Carolina State Capitol

**Stay Informed.** Since NCHE uses email for much of its communication, we need your email addresses to stay in touch. If you would like to receive our weekly emails, you can go online to [nche.com](http://nche.com) and sign up for the weekly email.

**Correction.** In the article about 4-H award winners that was in the GREENHOUSE Fall issue, Micah Lee was incorrectly identified as a boy. We apologize to Micah and her family.



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

## ***From Our Friends***

**2015 HINTS Annual Book Fair** will be held July 10-11, 2015, at Christ Covenant Church in Matthews, NC (Charlotte area). The HINTS Book Fair will feature educational vendors, dynamic speakers and informative workshops. For more information, visit [hintsonline.org](http://hintsonline.org).

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## North Carolina Homeschool History

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

## About NCHE

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

## NCHE Membership

Membership in NCHE is available to all residents of North Carolina who pledge to uphold the ideals of NCHE and comply with the North Carolina homeschool law. Membership is obtained by donating any amount to NCHE (suggested donation is \$25). The service of NCHE is made possible by the generous and consistent contributions of its supporters. The NCHE ideals are: educational excellence, parental authority and responsibility for education, protection and promotion of the family, diligence in moral and ethical instruction, responsible citizenship, freedom of choice among educational alternatives, and defense of constitutional rights.

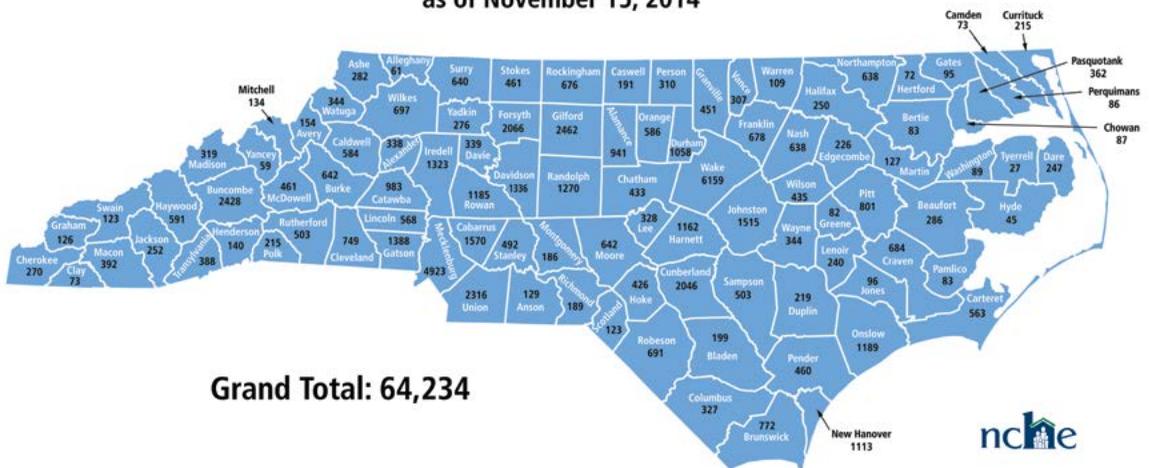
Visit Us Online at [nche.com](http://nche.com)

# NUMBER OF HOMESCHOOLS IN NC CONTINUES TO GROW

In the fall issue of GREENHOUSE, we reported on the growth of homeschooling using the numbers reported by DNPE for the school year 2013-2014. Homeschooling continues to grow as it has done every year since 1985-1986 when DNPE started recording numbers of schools. As of November 15, 2014, 3,284 new homeschools have been opened in the state. NC now has 64,234 homeschools. Since DNPE does not count the number of students, only estimates of attendance numbers are available. Using 2.5 students per homeschool, there are over 160,000 home-schooled students in the state.

When homeschools began to be counted in 1985, many people predicted that homeschooling would hit a plateau and then decline. As you can see by looking at the numbers, this has not happened! For a current list of homeschools by county can go to our website at [nche.com/stats](http://nche.com/stats).

## North Carolina Number of Homeschools by County as of November 15, 2014



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