

The *Inform*er

Winter 2016

a publication of the Indiana Association of Home Educators

Putting
PRESCHOOL
First

Homeschooling
IS HARD

5 Things I Wish I
HAD KNOWN
Before I Started Homeschooling

2017 IAHE
CONVENTION
INFORMATION
page 16

LESSONS LEARNED, MEMORIES EARNED

in Historic Corydon, Harrison County



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The Informer Core Values

- To be Christ-focused
- To be Indiana-focused
- To be encouraging
- To be a resource

IAHE

The IAHE is a not-for-profit organization founded in 1983 for the purpose of serving the Lord Jesus Christ by supporting and encouraging families interested in home education. We define home education as parent-directed, home-based, privately-funded education.

Our primary functions are maintaining visibility as home educators with civil government leaders, influencing the legislative process, sponsoring seminars for parent education, and publishing.

The IAHE is governed by a volunteer board of directors. Sixteen regional representative couples are in direct contact with local support groups across the state.

Our major source of income is our annual convention. With the growth of the home education movement, both our needs and responsibilities continue to grow, and we welcome your tax deductible contributions.

Indiana Association
of Home Educators
PO Box 217 Stilesville, IN 46180
317-467-6244
Fax: 317-467-6246
iahe@iahe.net
www.iahe.net
Find us on [Facebook.com/IAHEfb](https://www.facebook.com/IAHEfb)

BOARD MEMBERS

Steve & Penny Taylor
Phil & Debi Ketron
Mark & Tara Bentley
Greg & Kimberly Laskowski

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Tara Bentley

MANAGING EDITOR

Tara Bentley
informer@iahe.net

ASSISTANT EDITOR

Theresa Slinkard

DESIGN DIRECTOR

Amanda Runge
design@iahe.net

WRITING DIRECTOR

Tawnee Hinton

EDITING DIRECTOR

Cassie Bottorff
Copy Editors: Amanda Alexander
Misty Amstadt

COVER PHOTO

DepositPhotos.com:
#41667013

INTERIOR PHOTO

DepositPhotos.com:
#24028261

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Welcome

a note from the editor

In celebration of the 20th anniversary of *The Informer*, the last issue of the magazine focused on looking back at the history of our community.

Looking forward, it's clear today that the homeschool community is strong, vibrant, and growing like never before! According to the *Washington Post*: "approximately 1.8 million U.S. children were home-schooled [sic] in 2012, more than double the number that were home-schooled in 1999."

What an exciting statistic! The growth of homeschooling is an incredible testimony to the dedication and commitment of the families that went before us.

What does homeschooling look like today? Diverse!

From the kitchen table to the couch, and even in the great outdoors... learning takes place beyond the traditional classroom setting. We've done a round-up of different *Amazing School Spaces* on pages 24 through 27. Looking for a new educational adventure? Consider how you can *Make the Museum Part of Your Homeschool* (page 22).

Curious about the success of homeschooling? Read our article *Homeschool Alumni: Then and Now* from Indiana homeschool graduate, Jessica Lehman.

What about your family? How are you investing in the future of your homeschool? Join us March 24 & 25, 2017 for the IAHE Home Educators' Convention for a weekend of encouraging and educational workshop.


Executive Director
Managing Editor

<https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/education/wp/2016/11/01/number-of-home-schooled-students-has-doubled-since-1999-new-data-show-depositphotos.com:#57081817>

The Informer Magazine
The Informer is published quarterly by the Indiana Association of Home Educators (IAHE) to provide information, inspiration, and support to homeschool families. Circulation is 8,000 and subscriptions are FREE upon request. The mailing list for *The Informer* is never sold or rented.

The articles in this magazine reflect the freedom of home educators in Indiana to choose from a wide variety of homeschool philosophies and teaching methods. Opinions and attitudes expressed in articles do not necessarily reflect the beliefs of the Indiana Association of Home Educators. IAHE does not endorse or advocate any one method or philosophy. The Board encourages each home educator to seek God's will in determining what is best for him, his school, and his students.

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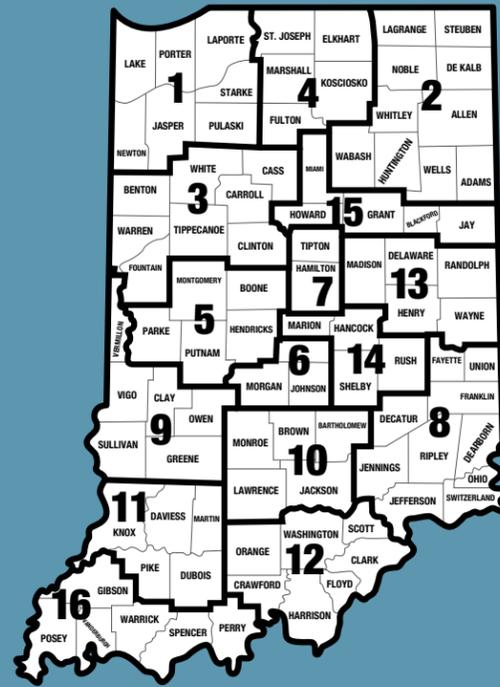
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IAHE Regional Representative Map



To reach your Regional Representative please call **317-467-6244** and dial your Region Representative's extension.

If you do not receive a response in a timely manner, please contact the IAHE office.

Regional Representatives serve the homeschooling community throughout Indiana. Each representative is a veteran homeschooler who can help answer the questions of a family just starting out. They also communicate with local support groups in their region and keep them up to date on changes in the law and activities throughout the state.

You can contact your regional representative for information about spelling bees, sport clubs, book fairs, curriculum advice, workshops, standardized testing and convention information. They can also help you find a support group in your area, or if none is available, they'll help you start one.

Region 1
Frank & Jessica Dunlap
Ext: #201
r1@iahe.net

Region 2
Kris & Stephanie Reckers
Ext: #202
r2@iahe.net

Region 3
Please contact the IAHE Office
317-467-6244
office@iahe.net

Region 4
Pat & Kathy Balke
Ext: #204
r4@iahe.net

Region 5
Dwayne & Melissa Sawyer
Ext: #205
r5@iahe.net

Region 6
Chris & Betty Broshers
Ext: #206
r6@iahe.net

Region 7
Shawn & Amy Canaday
Ext: #207
r7@iahe.net

Region 8
Doug & Tina Nelson
Ext: #208
r8@iahe.net

Region 9
Dwight & Marsena Hatfield
Ext: #209
r9@iahe.net

Region 10
Marty & Lisa Pieper
Ext: #210
r10@iahe.net

Region 11
Tim & Becky Zook
Ext: #217
r11@iahe.net

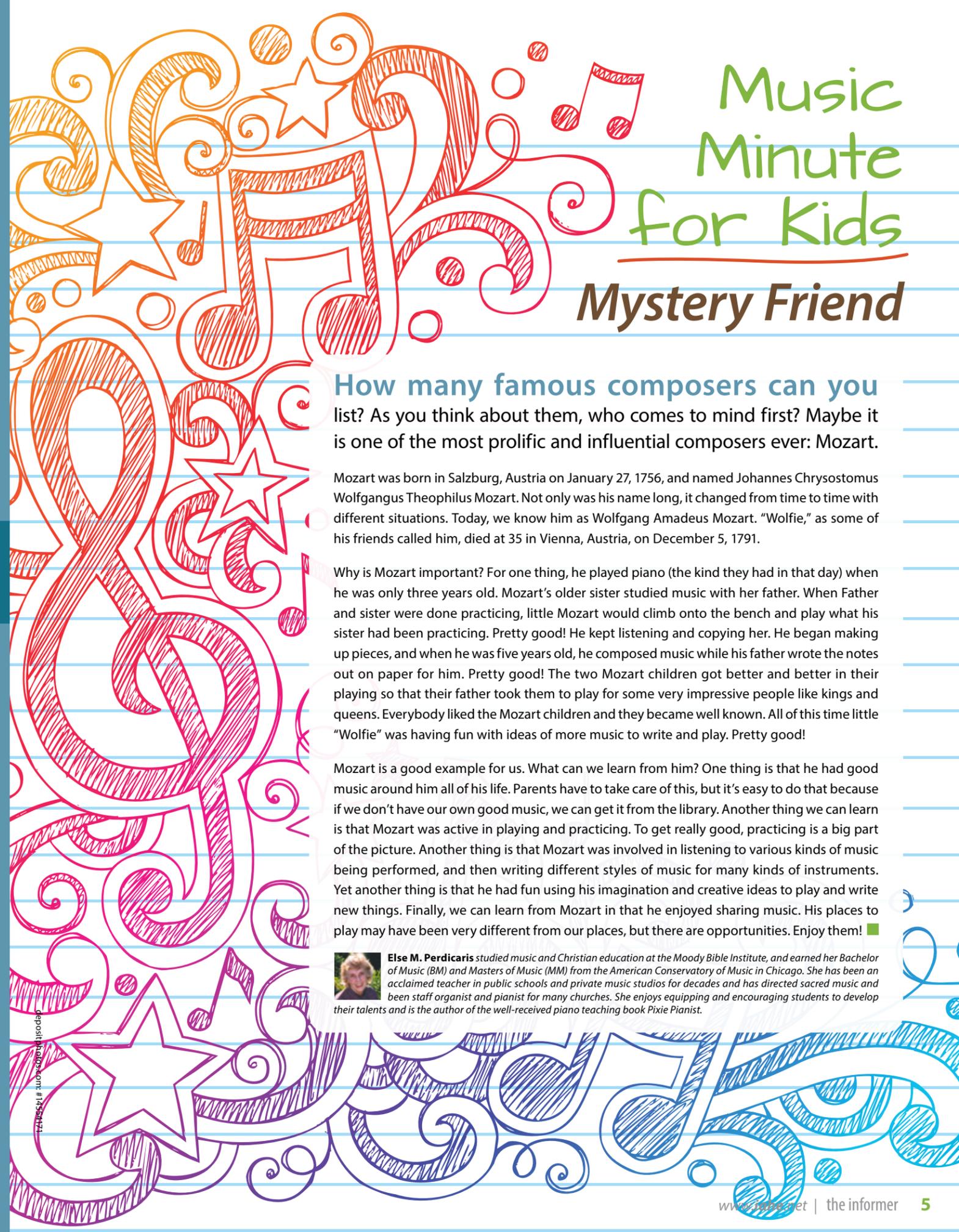
Region 12
Jeff & Millie Leis
Ext: #212
r12@iahe.net

Region 13
Steve & Rebecca Barnes
Ext: #213
r13@iahe.net

Region 14
Jeremiah & Amanda Alexander
Ext: #214
r14@iahe.net

Region 15
Jeff & Tammy Hierholzer
Ext: #215
r15@iahe.net

Region 16
Shawn & Theresa Slinkard
Ext: #216
r16@iahe.net



Music Minute for Kids

Mystery Friend

How many famous composers can you list? As you think about them, who comes to mind first? Maybe it is one of the most prolific and influential composers ever: Mozart.

Mozart was born in Salzburg, Austria on January 27, 1756, and named Johannes Chrysostomus Wolfgangus Theophilus Mozart. Not only was his name long, it changed from time to time with different situations. Today, we know him as Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart. "Wolfie," as some of his friends called him, died at 35 in Vienna, Austria, on December 5, 1791.

Why is Mozart important? For one thing, he played piano (the kind they had in that day) when he was only three years old. Mozart's older sister studied music with her father. When Father and sister were done practicing, little Mozart would climb onto the bench and play what his sister had been practicing. Pretty good! He kept listening and copying her. He began making up pieces, and when he was five years old, he composed music while his father wrote the notes out on paper for him. Pretty good! The two Mozart children got better and better in their playing so that their father took them to play for some very impressive people like kings and queens. Everybody liked the Mozart children and they became well known. All of this time little "Wolfie" was having fun with ideas of more music to write and play. Pretty good!

Mozart is a good example for us. What can we learn from him? One thing is that he had good music around him all of his life. Parents have to take care of this, but it's easy to do that because if we don't have our own good music, we can get it from the library. Another thing we can learn is that Mozart was active in playing and practicing. To get really good, practicing is a big part of the picture. Another thing is that Mozart was involved in listening to various kinds of music being performed, and then writing different styles of music for many kinds of instruments. Yet another thing is that he had fun using his imagination and creative ideas to play and write new things. Finally, we can learn from Mozart in that he enjoyed sharing music. His places to play may have been very different from our places, but there are opportunities. Enjoy them! ■



Else M. Perdicasaris studied music and Christian education at the Moody Bible Institute, and earned her Bachelor of Music (BM) and Masters of Music (MM) from the American Conservatory of Music in Chicago. She has been an acclaimed teacher in public schools and private music studios for decades and has directed sacred music and been staff organist and pianist for many churches. She enjoys equipping and encouraging students to develop their talents and is the author of the well-received piano teaching book *Pixie Pianist*.

Putting Preschool First

— Tawnee Hinton



Do you homeschool a variety of grades in your school? Do you have a preschooler in the mix? You may be trying to figure out how to get it all done in your busy day with a preschooler who is demanding a large chunk of your attention. One of the best things you can do to make your homeschool successful is to put preschool first.

Now, I know you may have heard many discussions and varying opinions on how to start your day. But I'm here to propose putting preschool first might be the answer to your prayer for a smooth homeschool day.

Many experienced parents will tell you a good practice for homeschooling multiple ages is to give your time working youngest to oldest. So naturally when schooling at home, it is best practice to begin with your preschooler.

One of the primary reasons that beginning with your preschooler each day is a good plan is that your older children can typically take care of some of their assignments and responsibilities independently while you give your attention to preschooler, which he certainly needs from you. This can provide you the time you need with your preschooler and your older children the opportunity to work on things that don't require your attention to complete.

If you are working with a preschool curriculum, begin with it with your preschooler each day. If it is something you want your other children to listen to or take part in, that's ok, but focus your attention on the preschooler. Even if you are not using a curriculum, spend some quality time with him. Have him on your lap, work on a skill he needs work on, build something with him, play a game with him, or read a book he chooses. Spend quality time with him first. This focused attention will give him the quality time he needs with you to help get the day going in the right direction.

Once you have spent some dedicated time with your preschooler, you can then move on to some focused time with your other children – again, working up by age. Your older children may be working on assignments independently, doing chores, or practicing other skills or instruments during this time you are working with your preschooler. Once you have moved on to your older children, hopefully, your preschooler has gotten a good dose of attention so he may be able to play independently for a while. Remember to have a realistic expectation on how long your preschooler can play by himself.

This independent time your preschooler spends is a great time for him to create something, build something, or play with educational toys. This is the perfect time to insert busy bag activities. Consider having a box or bag dedicated to school time activities only—educational toys your preschooler can only play with during school hours. This will make them more special when you bring them out and hopefully help keep his attention a little longer.

Putting preschool first can be an excellent way to get your school day started on the right track and help bring organization to your day. By spending dedicated, purposeful, and quality time with your preschooler first thing each day, you will most certainly find that your school runs smoother and your preschooler is more content throughout your homeschool day! ■



TAWNEE HINTON and her husband live with their four children in Central Indiana. Tawnee is a Support Manager for Classical Conversations and an officer in the US Navy Reserve. She has been a copy editor for *The Informer* for a year and blogs about her family's homeschooling adventures at *Adventures in Homeschooling*. You can find it at www.adventuresinhomeschooling.com.

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Are homeschool rights important to you?

Let your legislators know. What is the best way to show them? Attend IAHE's Home School Day at the Indiana Statehouse!

IAHE has events for the whole family. The day will begin at 9:30 a.m. The Rally will be held at 12:00 p.m.

Events include:

- Guided Tours
- IAHE Legislative Impact
- Historical Re-enactor
- Scavenger Hunt
- Letterboxing
- Prayer Walk
- And More!

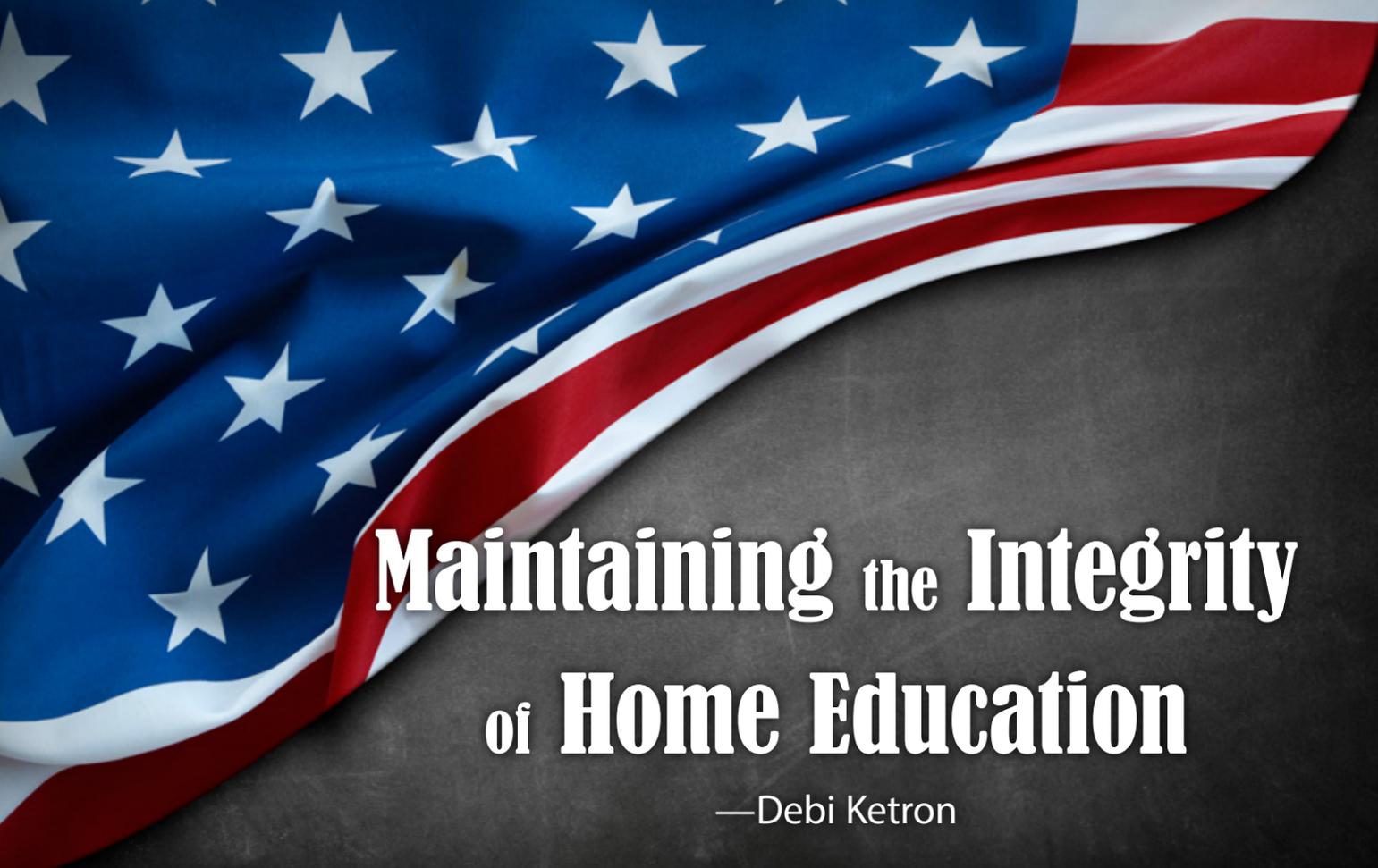
Visit the IAHE website for an updated schedule and to register:

www.iahe.net

Page for A Day Program

Families with students ages 13 and older may like to be a Page that day. The Page for the Day program is an excellent way for your students to gain a first-hand glimpse of how the legislative process works at the Indiana Statehouse. During IAHE's Home School Day, the rest of the family will have other events in which to participate while your Page serves. This program fills up quickly, so check the IN.gov website for details and deadlines.





Maintaining the Integrity of Home Education

—Debi Ketron

Indiana Association of Home Educators (IAHE) and IAHE Action protect Hoosier parents' autonomy to direct the education and upbringing of their children.

We know one of the biggest threats to our liberty is entanglement with government funding. When we hear of the government trying to "help" homeschoolers, we are very cautious as not to jeopardize our liberty. We remember the wise words of our second president, John Adams, "Liberty once lost is lost forever."

Common Schools

Although Common Schools are mentioned in the Indiana Constitution, we wonder if the State remembers the history of Common Schools? According to E.G. West author of *Education and the State*, the Common Schools were only for those families who did not desire to take responsibility to educate their children privately.

Before these government schools began in America, most families were privately educating their children in brick and mortar schools or at home. The Common Schools were first formed in the rural areas for those who did not have access to private brick and mortar schools. Common Schools were not universal, compulsory, or free. Parents had to pay to send their child to a Common School.

Those who benefitted economically from the Common Schools were the ones who advocated that schools become universal,

compulsory, and free. Of course, human nature being what it is, people soon flocked to the "free/taxpayer funded" schools and the private options eventually withered. Today, most do not even realize that at one point in our nation's history most everyone was privately educated, and public schools were basically non-existent. The United States had a very high literacy rate prior to the advent of Common Schools.

We have come full circle. Today, some advocate for the government to have control or "accountability" for all forms of private education through "school choice." The state of Indiana has accountability requirements for private voucher-accepting schools that require the students to take ISTEP and to collect intrusive student data. Vouchers were originally "sold" to the public as having little to no regulation. Now some private school families whose school accepts voucher students feel like it was a "bait and switch." Their private school feels compelled to follow the state standards that resemble Common Core in order to do well on the state test to protect their school rating.

This is a valuable lesson for us to remember. Home educators must fight hard to maintain our liberty for our families and our posterity.

Universal Education Scholarship Accounts and Liberty

Today's use of the acronym ESA is different from the privately-funded Education Savings Accounts such as a federal Coverdell. Current ESA programs are focused on reclaiming tax dollars from the state treasury and are often referred to as an Educational Scholarship Account.

Should these universal ESAs concern homeschoolers? Yes, according to attorney Jane Robbins of the American Principles Project. In her July 19, 2016, article, "New GOP Platform: The Good, the Bad, and the Very Concerning" she writes, "Now for the troubling parts. The platform focuses a great deal on choice in education and endorses the concept of "portability" of education funding to be used for many different types of schooling (private or parochial schools, homeschooling, etc.) and with many different funding mechanisms (tax credits, vouchers, etc.). While efforts to shatter the government monopoly on education are laudable, extreme caution must be exercised to ensure—if this is even possible—that when government money follows the child, government regulations don't follow as well. For example, a state that grants vouchers (such as Indiana) may require the private schools that accept voucher students to give the state Common Core-aligned test, which means the private schools will pretty much have to teach Common Core.

"Choice" that results in all schools', whether public or private, having to teach the same thing is no choice at all. The platform would have done well to acknowledge this danger."

Ms. Robbins reminds us that "school choice" has the potential to trample on individual liberty. Universal government programs do not take into account the liberties of the individual even when they assure us that they will.

Nevada Homeschool Network learned this first-hand with Nevada's ESA bill. There was an attempt to use their homeschool statute as the vehicle for the ESA bill. They were told they didn't have to accept the ESA money if they didn't want it. They fought too hard to gain their homeschool freedom after many years of bad homeschool regulations to take a chance on it. As we have recently seen in Indiana, confusion between virtual charter school students and home educated students has resulted in a threat of increased regulations for the homeschoolers. ESAs would cause increased confusion.

Homeschoolers always need to be concerned about guarding liberty and parental rights when dealing with elected officials and bureaucrats who think they are responsible for the education of all children and for determining how that education should present itself. IAHE has spent 33+ years protecting our rights. Whenever a government "freebie" is accepted, there is ALWAYS a risk to liberty.

Indiana is a Leader in Home Education Freedom

We have excellent laws in Indiana that protect a parent's right to educate their children. The Indiana Constitution provides for schools that are open to all, but it does not say that all must be educated in a Common School under government control.

"Liberty once lost is lost forever."

Homeschoolers do not accept state funding and do not have to register with the State; although, we may report enrollment. We have the freedom to direct our children's education and are not forced to submit test results to the State. As homeschool parents understand, we do not need to have a standardized test to inform us of our child's progress. Teaching our children on a daily basis enables us to know how they are progressing. The Superintendent has the ability to check on students by requesting attendance records. Indiana also has educational neglect and truancy laws to deal with any issues that may arise.

When we are not entangled with the State, we have the ability to do what is the best for our children. We have the freedom to teach in the manner that best suits their needs. As Dr. Karen Effrem of Education Liberty Watch shares, Indiana is rated an "F" on the Private School Choice Freedom Grading Scale due to the regulations associated with

vouchers in the Hoosier state. The schools that take vouchers must administer ISTEP; therefore, many schools feel obligated to teach Indiana's version of Common Core in order to do well on the test.

In order to be reimbursed for ESA expenses, families must submit receipts for expenses. Would homeschool families eventually be at risk for using faith-based or non-Common Core curriculum? Would the State decide we are not providing an equivalent education since they would have the ability to evaluate our curriculum? The State ultimately decides which "choices" are acceptable. The State in charge of deciding which curriculum or providers are acceptable is a very troubling proposition. Homeschoolers currently have a real choice that is not limited by the State.

Home education works! Hoosier homeschoolers have proven that families of all income levels can successfully homeschool apart from government involvement. Leave us alone! The fact that families take this responsibility without State involvement should be encouraged.

It increases self-respect and self-sufficiency. The IAHE Testimonial page is a source of encouraging stories of Hoosier families who have educated their children without government assistance.

Over the course of the past three decades, Hoosier home educators have proven it does not take a lot of money to educate a child. Many have had the experience of eventually having children who end up being better educated than their parents. It takes a dedicated parent and not an exorbitant amount of money to educate a child.

There are a variety of types of ESAs. We will assess each one that is introduced in the 2017 legislative session. ■



DEBI KETRON and her husband graduated four children from their home school. They were involved in homeschool leadership in Dearborn County, IN for many years. She was a former IAHE Region 8 Representative with her husband Phil, and currently serves as the IAHE Director of Government Affairs and on the Board of Directors for Indiana Association of Home Educators (IAHE) and IAHE Action.

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2017 IAHE
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Homeschooling is Hard

—Linda Crosby



Homeschooling is hard. Really hard. But we are not called to do easy things. (Jam. 1:2) God called us to raise children who love and know Him. (Deut. 6:5-9) Lovingly, He doesn't give us anything so hard that we cannot overcome with His help! (1 Cor. 10:13) Be encouraged to know that all homeschool moms fail from time to time. It's okay to admit failure too, because in our weakness God's strength can be shown! (2 Cor. 12:9)

Be free to be the woman and homeschool mom God called you to be. Don't compare yourself with others, especially those who seem to have it all together. They don't. Trust me. You were placed on Earth for such a time as this and you are the only one who can fulfill God's call for your life. Isn't that freeing? Just be YOU!

Don't be fooled by flowery homeschool blogs that show happy, well-dressed children skipping through the woods with clean paper and peeled crayons in their fists looking for a tree to do rubbings on bumpy bark. It probably took that mom a morning full of math meltdowns, another load of laundry after the blender blew while full of berry smoothie, and a trip to the vet with a dehydrated dog to get to the point of "giving up" and going outside. It is a fluke that all the kids just happen to be clean at the same time. The only reason there is a picture for her blog is because she probably has allergies and grabbed her backpack for Kleenex and sinus meds and the camera just happened to be in there too. It is NEVER as wonderful as it seems in other people's pictures. EVER!

Those days happen over and over again. But in the midst of the mayhem we are building relationships with our family members and teaching them how to deal with the chaos that life throws at all

of us. God planned your family and chose your exact kids for YOU, mama! And He chose YOU to be the mama for those specific kids. (Ps. 68:6, Ps. 139:13) God doesn't make mistakes.

For good reason, there are some "cherished" times that exist only in our homeschool mom memory banks. We don't usually take pictures of miserable children, haphazardly dressed with wild hair hiding behind the couch during spelling to show as an example of our successful homeschool journey. Remember, though, it's not just homeschooling that brings these "cherished" times, it's raising all kids. Homeschool mamas are simply given more opportunities to shape our kids' lives.

James 1:2-4 reminds us, "Count it all joy, my brothers, when you meet trials of various kinds, for you know that the testing of your faith produces steadfastness. And let steadfastness have its full effect, that you may be perfect and complete, lacking in nothing."

steadfast [sted-fast] adj. 1. fixed in direction; steadily directed. 2. firm in purpose, resolution, faith, attachment, etc. 3. unwavering, as resolution, faith, etc. 4. firmly fixed in place or position.

Are you fixed in one direction? Are you firm and unwavering in your faith? Obviously, God wants us to be focused on Him, not only for our kids' sake, but for ourselves.

Have you figured out yet that God called you to homeschool so that every area of your life that needs to be sanded down, rubbed off, glued back together, or brought to light can be accomplished through living life with your children? That's the gospel truth, right there. When I first started teaching my kids 16 years ago, another mom told me that homeschooling requires flexibility and a receiving, open heart. I thought she meant the kids. Nope.

My eldest daughter asked me once, "Mom, when you go speak to other moms, do they laugh?" I let her know that they usually do. Then she flung this zinger at me, "Why are you never funny at home?" Nice. My immediate thought was, "I'll show you funny!" but I simply smiled... feebly. Note to self: bring some fun into school so we all enjoy it!

My eldest son, Austin, has caused this mama more prayer time on my knees than my other three kids combined. He couldn't read until he was nine. N I N E. That hurt my homeschool mom feelings and self-esteem in a big way. He didn't seem to care at all. When he was seven, after I had shown him the letter F for 63 straight days without any recall or even recognition, I quit. I typed out my homeschool teacher resignation letter and handed it to our principal when he got home from work. He read it and laughed. LAUGHED! Right in my face... then he ripped it up.

My husband assigned affirmations to me to repeat to myself each morning during my parent-teacher conferences in the bathroom mirror. "I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me. Children are a blessing from the Lord. God does not give me more than I can handle with His help. I can teach Austin to read." Every morning before I faced the children, I read these multiple times to myself to build mental fortitude. Speaking God's word aloud creates an atmosphere where earthly circumstances change! Do you need to write out some affirmations for yourself?

Lastly, we are not meant to homeschool as Lone Rangers. God created us to thrive in community. Find your peeps! Most likely, there is a support group in your area that you need and that needs you! An older homeschool mom told me that she was too old for park day. I let her know, kindly, that there were so many young moms at the park who need her wisdom and guidance so they don't quit! We all have something to give.

Don't be afraid to ask for help. God will surround you with the people you need if you ask Him. (Matt. 7:7) Be real. It's okay to cry too. As homeschool moms we need to stick together and be transparent!

Gather with other homeschool mamas for a movie night with popcorn. Encourage each other. Lift up one another. REALLY find out how your friends are doing and pray for each other. If you know of a fellow homeschool mom who is struggling, figure out how to help her. Show up with two or three mom friends and clean her house. Make dinner for her family by doubling what you are already cooking for your family. Send a little note in the mail about how great you think her children are! Offer to have her kids over for a play date. Do something! ■



Linda Crosby is gifted at transforming the daily God-moments from her life into unforgettable, hilarious, practical lessons to which people can relate. She has a heart for God and a desire to encourage others to laugh in the center of the chaos and noise that children create. She considers motherhood the most important calling on earth.

Song credits: Mandisa. "Overcomer." Rec. 2012-2013. Overcomer. Sparrow Records, 2013. Mandisa.

A Note from the AUTHOR:

I encourage you to go to [youtube.com](https://www.youtube.com) and listen to Mandisa sing our homeschool fight song,

"You're an Overcomer"

You're an overcomer
Stay in the fight 'til the final round
You're not going under
'Cause God is holding you right now
You might be down for a moment
Feeling like it's hopeless
That's when He reminds You
That you're an overcomer
Everybody's been down
Hit the bottom, hit the ground
Ooh, you're not alone
Just take a breath, don't forget
Hang on to His promises
He wants You to know
You're an overcomer
Fix your eyes on the One who holds your life
There's nothing He can't do
Don't quit
Don't give in
You're an overcomer!





2017 IAHE
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SPEAKER

5 Things

I Wish I'd Known Before I Started Homeschooling

— Heidi St. John

With changes rapidly happening in our public school system, more parents than ever are considering the very viable option of homeschooling. If you're one of those, read on. I'll never forget our first year of homeschooling. I sort of "fell" into homeschooling, and so, admittedly, I was not as well prepared as some of you dear readers will be. In fact, I was about as green as green could get—but I was trying—right down to the flag salute and scheduled recess time. Like many new homeschool moms, I was trying to imitate what I remembered about school. And the school that I attended as a child had a flag salute. So we did, too. As you are probably guessing, our first year was tricky. The neighbors thought we were crazy, my parents wondered out loud about my "ability" to teach our children, and I had no idea how to get dinner on the table and still teach math, reading, and science. Or, maybe I didn't need to be teaching science to our second grader? The opinions on teaching science to second graders were mixed, after all.

Can you relate? Oh, the things I worried about!

I needed a class for homeschool rookies, but unfortunately, there were no such classes around.

Homeschooling is the best decision we have ever made with regard to how we would educate our children. But I won't lie to you—those first few years were especially challenging. If I could start again, I would do a few things differently.

But even so, God has a way of working all things together for good as we trust him. Here are just a few of the many things he's taught me over the past fifteen years:

Education is Discipleship

"A student is not above his teacher, but everyone who is fully trained will be like his teacher." (Luke 6:40) Education is discipleship. This simple sentence has become the mission statement of our homeschool. The Lord has taught us the simple truth about education through

homeschooling. And the truth is that ALL education can be summed up in one word: discipleship.

Because the Bible tells us that students become like their teachers, we know that our children are modeling us in every area of life. Luke 6:40 bears special meaning for homeschooling parents. It reminds us that no matter who is teaching our children, they are being disciplined; and it compels us to examine our own lives, because our children are very likely going to be just like we are.

The culture we live in has made academics the "main thing," but I beg to differ. Academics pale in comparison to teaching our children what it means to be men and women who are sold out for Jesus Christ, ready to give an answer for the Hope that lies within them. Education is simply the opportunity to shape the hearts and minds of our children. There can be no greater goal than to teach our children to follow hard after Christ.

Manner is More Important Than Method

As a new homeschooler, I was bombarded with academic opportunities. Dozens of programs and curricula overwhelmed me at the homeschool conference. I studied my options, poring through homeschool catalogs and investigating different companies. Our coffee table overflowed with flyers and curriculum samples.

If I could start over (which I can, each year, by the way!), I would have spent more time praying and preparing for the manner in which I would be known for teaching our children, rather the method I chose. At the end of the day, my kids remember much more about how I taught them, rather than what I taught them.

As you begin homeschooling, take some time to think about how you want your kids to remember their homeschool years. I have learned that the relationships I foster with my children are much more important than the books I choose.

Fruit Grows Over Time

No one ever plants a fruit tree and expects mature fruit to appear overnight. Yet, for some reason, homeschool parents often feel pressure to "out-perform" in almost every area of parenting, even when children are very young!

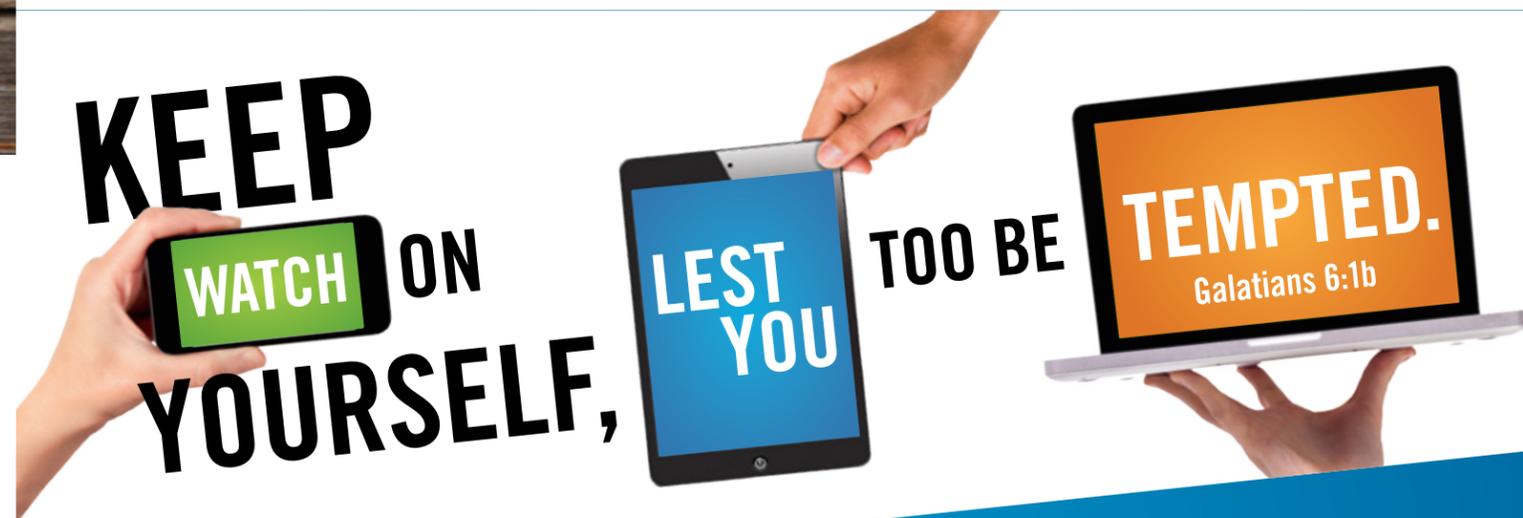
Your kids don't need to be seen as geniuses. If your neighbors ask your fourth grader what the capital of Texas is and he answers "Oregon," don't panic! Remind yourself that good fruit takes time to grow. The results of good homeschooling take time to see.

We can place undue pressure on ourselves and our children when we saddle ourselves with expectations that do not come from the Lord. See his expectations and live up to those. The rest either don't matter or will come in time. There will never be a teacher more devoted to the success of your child than you are.

Child Training Trumps the A-B-C-s

Is your child disobedient? Whining? Ungrateful? Rebellious? If so, then "real" school has begun.

Training your child to be obedient is more important than teaching addition. Don't be afraid to stop formal schooling to teach the greater lessons of life: obedience, respect, truthfulness, graciousness, and love. I have met many parents over the years who miss the true



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opportunity of homeschooling by focusing solely on academics. Their children suffer for it. The parents suffer too, but it's usually later down the road.

Consider Eli, who served as a priest in Israel. His unwillingness to discipline his sons brought dishonor to his family, and ultimately, grave punishment to his sons and himself.

You will not have done your child any favors if he or she is fluent in three languages, but cannot speak a single one in a loving and respectful way. When we honor God's ways first, the rest will follow.

Learning Style Matters

Take the time to discover both your primary learning style and the learning styles of your children. Moms who know their learning style have an easier time choosing curriculum and a far greater success rate in teaching their children the best way.

Your preferred learning style will guide the way you learn, and it will greatly influence the way you teach!

For example, I know that I am a visual learner. If I had taken the time to discover this earlier in my homeschooling, I would have avoided many of the curricula that I chose, because I would have known that I would probably not enjoy teaching it.

Generally, you will find that you and your children fall into one of these learning styles:

- Visual (spatial): You prefer using pictures, images, and spatial understanding.
- Verbal (linguistic): You prefer using words, both in speech and writing.
- Physical (kinesthetic): You prefer using your body, hands, and sense of touch.
- Logical (mathematical): You prefer using logic, reasoning, and systems.
- Social (interpersonal): You prefer to learn in groups or with other people.
- Solitary (intrapersonal): You prefer to work alone and use self-study.

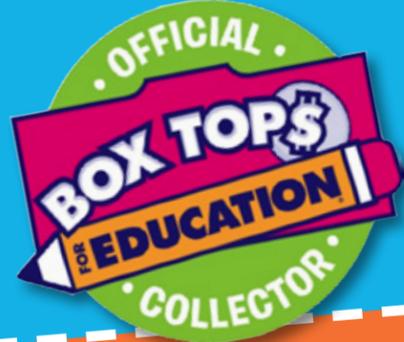
There are many books and websites dedicated to learning styles. Check them out! You'll be glad you did.

It's been many years since I took my first steps as a new homeschool mom. Last month, we graduated our son, who never went to "regular" school. Like his two sisters before him, Skylar is ready. He graduated in June from our homeschool, and as he did, he was likely to catch a glimpse of two wide-eyed parents staring at him in a cap and gown ... not because they couldn't believe he graduated, but because they couldn't believe it went by so fast.

With four more children coming up, we are learning just how fast it goes—and how worth it the journey is. ■



HEIDI ST. JOHN has been married to her husband, Jay, since 1989. Together they have seven children, from toddler to adult, and have homeschooled all the way through high school. A favorite conference and radio speaker, Heidi approaches marriage and parenting with humor and grace. Her passion to encourage moms and set them free to be who God has created them to be will bless and encourage you.



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2017 IAHE
CONVENTION
SPEAKER

*“Daddy, Come
and Push Me!”*

—Mark Hamby

When my daughter was about eight years old she would often

call for me to push her on the rope swing. She could stretch the rope all the way to the porch and jump off swinging high into the air and then deflect the tree with her feet, spinning like a top.

It wasn't often that I could push her as I was in Seminary full time and also raising 70 sheep and 22 horses. Trying to give my children the perfect childhood and at the same time accomplish my career goals with my Type A personality, took a toll on my health. Anger started to surface and as my health started to deteriorate, I found myself demanding more from my family to help with the chores and demands of the farm. I ended up with fibromyalgia, chronic fatigue, ulcerative bleeding colitis, and severe depression. God was slowly removing my ability to control anything so that I would learn to be totally dependent upon Him. I knew in my head that unless the Lord builds the house, we labor in vain who build it, but this truth hadn't reached my heart yet.

My health continued to deteriorate, and finally, I was at the point when I could hardly get out of bed. I will never forget the calls of her childhood—“Daddy, please come and push me.” I didn't have the energy... I would give her a quick push, and that's all I could muster. It took thirteen years for me to learn that His grace is sufficient and His strength is made perfect in our weakness. When I finally gave God back the reigns of my life, my health was restored... and on Jennifer's 16th birthday, I built a rope swing in her bedroom. It's still up today and serves as a reminder that it's not by strength, nor by might, but by God's Spirit, says the Lord. ■



Mark Hamby is founder and president of Lamplighter Publishing and Lamplighter Theatre and the Lamplighter Guild. To request a catalog or receive information on Lamplighter's popular collection of inspiring, biblically based, character-building stories, please visit their website at www.lamplighter.net or call toll free 1-888-246-7735.

"For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand that we should walk in them."

— Ephesians 2:10



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is a time for encouragement, ideas, advice, workshops, and curriculum shopping. The keynote speakers provide encouragement and inspiration. You have your choice of a multitude of workshops ranging from preschool to high school and everything in between. Want to know how to teach math? Have a special learner? Check the workshop schedule. Speaking with veteran homeschoolers and shopping at the many different exhibitors can build confidence in your decisions.

REGISTRATION

Early Bird Now–December 31
\$40 Individual | \$65 Family

Pre-Reg January 1–March 4
\$45 Individual | \$75 Family

At-the-Door March 24 & 25
2-day \$55 Individual | \$90 Family
1-day \$40 Individual | \$65 Family

WHAT CAN I EXPECT AT A HOMESCHOOL CONVENTION? I'VE NEVER BEEN TO ONE.

"You can expect your heart and your mind to be filled to overflowing. Loads of awesome information to help you in your homeschool journey, vendors who will help you make curriculum choices and answer your questions and lots and lots of other homeschooling families who share in your vision to educate their children in the way they see fit. The IAHE Convention is the highlight of my spring! It feels like a breath of fresh air and gives me the boost I need to finish strong."

- Amy C.

MEET OUR SPEAKERS!

HEIDI ST. JOHN

The Busy Mom

Heidi St. John has been married to her husband Jay since 1989. Together they have seven children and two grandsons! The St. Johns children range in age from early elementary school to adult. They have homeschooled the kids all the way through high school. A favorite conference and radio speaker, Heidi approaches marriage and parenting with humor and grace. Her passion to encourage moms and set them free to be who God has created them to be will bless and encourage you.



STEVE DEMME

Demme Learning

Steve and his wife Sandra have been married since 1979. They have been blessed with four sons, three lovely daughters-in-law, and three grandchildren. Their fourth son John has Down Syndrome and lives with them in PA. Steve addresses a variety of topics at conferences and churches to encourage parents as they seek to build families of faith. Steve is the author of Math-U-See and the founder of Building Faith Families.



MARK HAMBY

Lamplighter

Mark Hamby, founder and president of Lamplighter Ministries, serves with a dedicated staff to make Lamplighter Publishing, Lamplighter Theatre, The Guild, Life-Transforming Seminars, and a Daily Radio Broadcast a reality. It is their mission to make ready a people prepared for the Lord by building Christ-like character...one story at a time.



ZAN TYLER

Apologia Press

In 1984, Zan Tyler was threatened with jail time when she began homeschooling. After years of fighting for the rights of her family and other homeschoolers, Zan founded and presided over the South Carolina Association of Independent Home Schools for ten years. She has received several honors for her work advocating for homeschooling and parental rights, including the Chris Klicka Lifetime Service Award, as well as the Order of the Palmetto from the governor of South Carolina. Zan's greatest privilege in life was the twenty-one years she and husband Joe spent homeschooling their three children from kindergarten through high school.



I USUALLY BUY MY CURRICULUM ONLINE. WHAT IS THE ADVANTAGE TO SHOPPING IN THE EXHIBIT HALL?

Shopping on-site gives you a once-a-year experience to talk with authors and curriculum publishers and get all of your questions answered. Many offer special convention discounts! Exhibitors invest a great deal of time and money attending homeschool conventions for up to six months out of the year. Shopping onsite shows your appreciation and keeps our Exhibit Hall full year after year.

CURRENT EXHIBITOR LIST AS OF NOVEMBER 2ND, 2017

Visit our website at www.iahe.net for updates!

A Joyful Noise Dulcimers
Abeka
Allon Books
Apologia
BJU Press/HomeWorks by Precept
Busy Mom, Heidi St John
Christian Light Education
Circle C Adventures
Compass - Finances God's Way
Creating a Masterpiece
Demme Learning
Eternity at Stake
The Etiquette Factory
Explorer's Bible Study
Foreign Languages for Kids by Kids
Grandpa's Tree Reading Corner
The Harp School, Inc.
Highhill Educational Supplies
HSLDA
Indiana Creation Science Association
Lamplighter
Larry Winkleman Microscope Service
Lions Homeschool Football, Inc.
The Medical Transcription Service
Memoria Press
Miller Pads & Paper
Nature's Workshop Plus
Notgrass History
Piano Solutions
Rainbow Resource
Right Start Math
Solomon's Secrets
Sonlight Curriculum
Teaching Textbooks
TeenPact Indiana
Total Language Plus
Young Entrepreneurs of North America
YWAM Publishing



HOTELS!!! BOOK EARLY!!!

These are the hotels with IAHE room blocks available at a reduced price until the deadlines listed. Rates quoted do not include tax.

NOTE: Be sure to mention "IAHE" when you book your rooms to ensure our special convention rates

Hampton Inn – NE/Castleton \$106/Night

Reservations deadline: March 2, 2017

21 min./ 8.7 miles from Fairgrounds
6817 E. 82nd Street
Indianapolis, IN 46250
(317) 576-0220

"Free hot breakfasts, clean and fresh Hampton bed, free high-speed internet access in every room, gym/fitness center use"

Staybridge Suites Indianapolis-Fishers \$114/Night

Reservations deadline: February 23, 2017

18-22 min/10 miles from Fairgrounds
9780 Crosspoint Boulevard
Indianapolis, IN 46256
(317) 577-9500

"On-site Guest Self-Laundry Facilities, Complimentary Breakfast Buffet, Standard Wireless Internet service is free for all members, On-Site Fitness Center Available"

Please note: Changes to reservations can be made up to 24 hrs. prior to arrival date. Cancellation of the entire reservation after 3 days prior to arrival will result in a fee in the amount of 1 night Room + Tax.



The Marten House Hotel \$95/Night

Reservations must be made February 27, 2017 to receive the room rate, subject to availability

18 min / 9 miles from Fairgrounds
1801 W. 86th St.
Indianapolis, IN 46260
(317) 872-4111

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Baymont Inn & Suites \$84.99/Night

Reservations deadline: 3/9/2017

14 min. /9.7 miles from Fairgrounds
9790 North by Northeast Blvd.
Fishers, IN 46037
(317) 578-2000

Guests will have until 6pm 3 days prior to arrival to cancel without having to pay a penalty of 1-night stay.



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at the Indiana State Fairgrounds
MARCH 24TH-MARCH 25TH, 2017

Registration Type: Individual Family

ATTENDEE INFORMATION

Please print clearly.

Name _____
First Last

Spouse's Name _____
First Last

Total Number of Children Attending # _____

Names of Children Attending (ages 4 and up) TEEN CREW 4:12 (ages 13-19)

_____	_____	<input type="checkbox"/>
<small>First</small>	<small>Last</small>	
_____	_____	<input type="checkbox"/>
<small>First</small>	<small>Last</small>	
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CONTACT INFORMATION

Address _____

Phone () _____

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Attending Grandparents' Names

Must not be the primary home educator.

FOR MORE INFORMATION ON OUR TEEN CREW 4:12 OPPORTUNITY, VISIT OUR WEBSITE AT IAHE.NET!

CAN I BRING MY CHILDREN?

Absolutely! Bring the whole family. We have fun activities for children in Learning Express, and a volunteer program for teens, Crew 4:12. Or, leave the kids at home and make it a couple's weekend!



WHAT ABOUT LUNCH?

To provide the best value for all of our attendees, we've created a jam-packed workshop schedule for the convention. Concession stands will be available all day long or you are free to bring a cooler with you. Picking and choosing which session to attend is always a tough decision, so plan to purchase workshop recordings before you leave the event.



DO WE NEED TO ATTEND THE CONVENTION TO PARTICIPATE IN THE EXPRESSIONS! CREATIVE ARTS CONTEST?

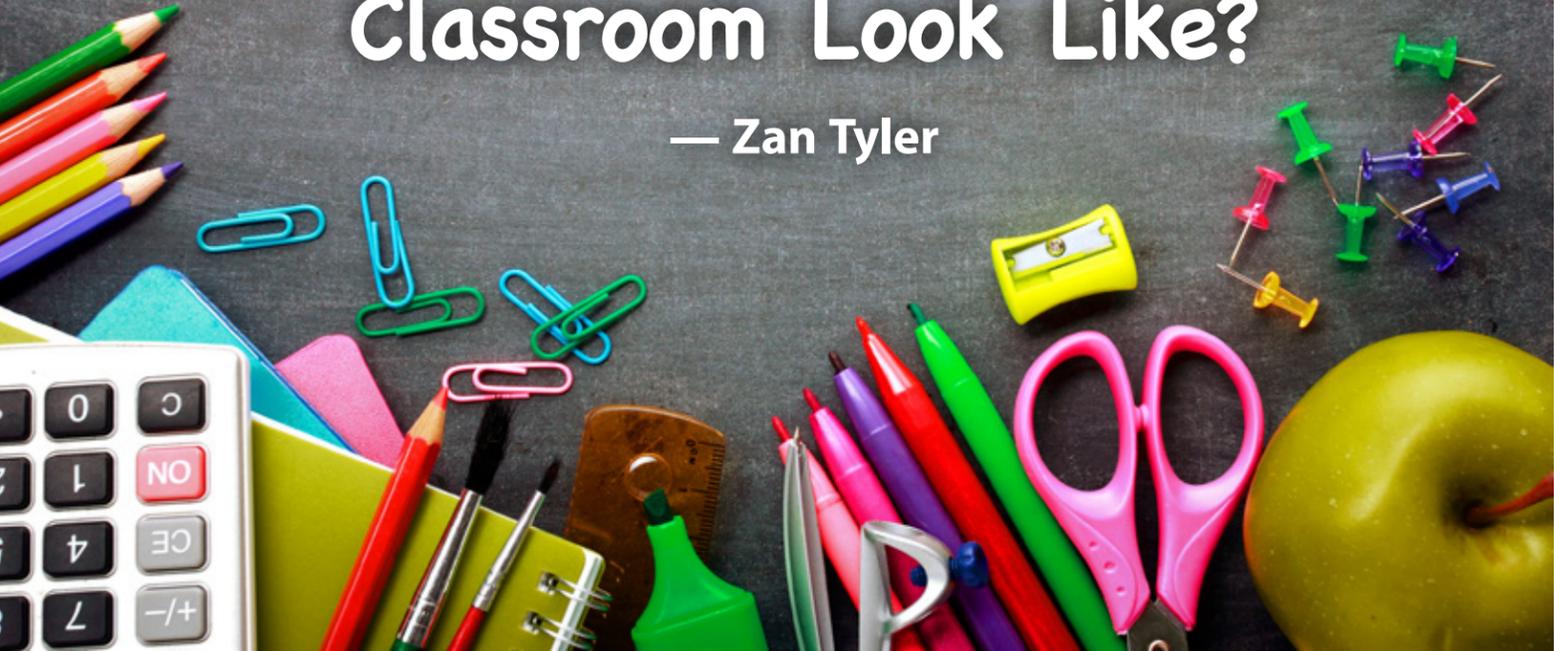
No. Our Video, Art, Photography, Essay contests are open to anyone. Projects are displayed at the convention for attendees, but the contest is open to non-attendees as well.

<http://www.iahe.net/expressions>



What Should Your Child's Classroom Look Like?

— Zan Tyler



- 2) For homeschooling families, the world truly becomes your classroom. Field trips, travel opportunities, mission trips, and internships expand your child's horizons far beyond the walls of the most beautifully appointed classroom.
- 3) Time with immediate and extended family abounds because your child is not confined to a school schedule or classroom, beautiful though it may be.
- 4) One-on-one education that focuses on the needs and giftedness of each student empowers children and encourages them to become life-long learners.
- 5) In the homeschool environment, dialog and constant interactions are the norm—and number in the hundreds daily. In the traditional classroom environment, the child has personal interaction with the teacher on average about eight-to-ten times a day. Constant dialogue is crucial in developing critical thinking and leadership skills.
- 6) In the homeschool, education and "real" life intersect on a daily basis.
- 7) Homeschool families are free to pray, read the Word of God, and incorporate a biblical worldview into all of learning.

God is the Ultimate Superintendent of Education. He orchestrates opportunities for our children beyond our abilities to imagine or

provide. The presence of the living God transforms the most humble home into a holy place of powerful learning and growth.

The Answer to the Question

What should a homeschool classroom look like?

Henry Ward Beecher, a pastor in the 1800s and brother of Harriet Beecher Stowe, said this: "The mother's heart is the child's school-room."

Proverbs 24:4 says, "By knowledge the rooms are filled with every precious and beautiful treasure" (Holman Christian Standard Bible).

From these two sources, we learn that our hearts, which are "the child's school-room," must be appropriately decorated. If we allow Christ to be our Interior Decorator, He will create the most fabulous schoolroom imaginable for our children—a room that is furnished with "precious and beautiful treasure."

My prayer is that God will provide you with an eternal vision for developing vibrant, effective homeschools and families. And to remind you that as you seek Christ daily, He will decorate your lives and homes with precious and beautiful treasures from the storehouse of His unfathomable riches and grace. ■



Zan Tyler, is the Director of Apologia Press, a division of Apologia Educational Ministries. She is the author of 7 Tools for Cultivating Your Child's Potential. Zan and husband, Joe, homeschooled their three children from kindergarten through high school, for a total of 21 years. Zan founded the South Carolina Association of Independent Home Schools in 1990 and served as its president for 10 years. In 2015, she was awarded the Chris Klicka award by HSLDA. Zan serves as an ambassador for the Home School Foundation, which exists to serve homeschoolers in need and formerly served as the National Grassroots Director for ParentalRights.org.

Some of the most traumatic memories I have of our first few years of homeschooling (1984-88)

involve standardized testing. These nightmarish memories rank right up there with the threat of jail from the State Superintendent of Education when my husband and I first decided to homeschool Ty, who was then six-years-old.

During those years in South Carolina, homeschooling parents were required to have their children take standardized tests in classrooms in the public schools for which they were zoned. I have vivid memories of taking my sweet little boys (Ty and John) to these schools and handing them over to teachers they had never met, to sit in a classroom full of children they didn't know. They were required to take these important year-end tests in totally unfamiliar and, sometimes unfriendly, environments. Rather than serving as helpful diagnostic tools, the test scores became a large part of the criteria our local school board used to determine whether or not we could continue homeschooling.

While Ty and John were testing, I spent a good deal of time wandering around the halls of the schools, examining the facilities, as well as the samples of artwork and schoolwork that were displayed on the walls in the various corridors.

The schools in our public school district are expensive and well-kept. Every year I would experience a new round of angst and depression as I surveyed those first-rate facilities that my sons were "missing out" on. The grounds were well-kept. The playgrounds were well-equipped.

There were art rooms and music rooms; the cheery school cafeteria also doubled as an auditorium with a stage for performances and programs.

In those early years I often wondered if our modest home could come close to offering our children the same opportunities that our school district's multi-million dollar facilities offered.

Lessons Gleaned from My Wanderings

After homeschooling my own children for twenty-one years and being involved in the homeschooling community for over thirty years, I no longer worry about these things. I have seen and continue to see the amazing fruit born in children who are taught at home. Here are some discoveries I made during our homeschooling journey that often surprised me, but always encouraged me. I hope they will be a blessing to you as well.

- 1) **Facilities, no matter how expensive or beautiful, do not educate or teach.**

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Make the Museum Part of Your Homeschool

—Ruth Agbolosoo



Most cities have some sort of museum. Some are tiny museums that are free but encourage donations. Some museums are pretty pricey. Some of them are best suited for older children and some for smaller children. There are also several types of museums. There are Science and Technology-focused museums, Art-focused and many more.



Planning ahead is the best course of action to almost guarantee everyone has a good time.

Planning ahead is the best course of action to almost guarantee everyone has a good time. Here are some things that may work for you. Check the museum's website. Find out how far it is and what their facility offers in addition to what the exhibits are. You may find that certain exhibits would not work for the majority of your crowd. I would skip those if I were you. There may even be teacher resources on their website that you can use with your students. Most can be adapted to use for your homeschool. It can be a great way to supplement what you are learning at home as well as cover a totally new topic.

For bigger museums or ones farther away from home you may end up needing to provide a meal or two. The ones that offer food tend to be pricey. You can pack the main meal and several snacks and drinks for a break during the day and the car ride. Packing lots of food may seem like a waste of time and effort but is well worth it when your food options are slim, and you have several mouths to feed. If possible have a group trip with another family. It usually works out great because you can split up the different age groups and tailor the trip to accommodate each one.

If you are visiting a museum with very small children, I'm sure I do not have to tell you that the excitement may run out really quickly. Of course, every child is different. However, can you imagine your little one having a melt down before the rest of your family has finished seeing the museum? Having a stroller to push the little ones around is a great for idea. It is a great resource for several reasons. First, you could strap your runaway toddler in to avoid chasing him around. Second, the little toddler or baby can sleep while you walk around and do activities. Third, the stroller can serve as a great place to carry the bags.

Do you want to visit a museum during its free day or free time slot? There are some positives and negatives to doing that. It is a great way to save money. You may still have to pay for special exhibits or programs, but the cost is greatly reduced. On the flip side, if you decide to take advantage of the huge discount expect the place to be crowded. For many, that is a major disadvantage. Lines are usually longer. The cafeteria tables usually get filled up faster. Pushing the stroller around is harder due to the crowding. If you have a larger family or group it may be harder to keep track of everyone. There is

also a strong possibility that you and or your child may get bumped into is a great possibility. The last time I went to the Creation Museum during a free day a few years ago, it was very crowded and it took a while to get to do activities. However, we tried to keep positive and ended up really enjoying our day. You get to decide whether it is worth it for your family.

Having a museum membership is a great investment. Usually, you can find discounts for many museums in your local paper or online during the fall. There are many benefits you can get from having a membership. One benefit that you may experience is that you do not have to feel pressured to see the whole museum in one day to get your money's worth. Each time you visit you could focus on another section and hop around if you want to. That could work really well for little children because once they get involved in an activity they really like, they have a hard time stopping. Another benefit that some memberships give is advanced screening of special exhibits. When you have a membership you may find that even if you only went a few times for the year it was worth it.

If your family is really into Science and Technology you may want to join the Association of Science-Technology Center's ("ASTC") Passport Program. I have not joined it personally but other homeschooling families have found it to be beneficial. Through that program, you can visit participating museums without paying the general admission fee. Visit their website: www.astc.org/passport/ to read all about it. There are some restrictions.

Lastly, another way to see several museums within Indiana for a deep discount is to obtain an Access Pass. It is a program for families who qualify for certain government programs. You can gain entry to participating facilities for a \$1 per family member. Visit this page www.childrensmuseum.org/visit/hours-and-admission/access-pass for more information. Whatever museum you chose and whatever you end up paying for entry, you will find that going to a museum is a great outing for your family. What museum will you visit next? ■



Ruth Agbolosoo has homeschooled for 14 years and loves museums. She is mom to a seventeen-year-old girl, and three boys, seven, five and two. She holds a Masters Degree in Marriage and Family Therapy, is a home-based therapist, real estate investor and book seller at www.c4507.myubam.com.

depositphotos.com: #76171295 & #1942327

Amazing School

spaces

As a homeschooler, we all know that no two homeschoolers school the same way. And the same can be said for our school spaces. Where we homeschool can vary as dramatically as our teaching styles.

Yet we are all intrigued by other homeschoolers. What does their school space look like, how do they “do school?” We are captivated by stories of other homeschoolers’ days, and we drool over Pinterest images of pristine school rooms and organized bookshelves. And we wonder, does everyone have a more organized schoolroom than me? Does everyone have a dedicated school space? Does anyone homeschool like we do?

The answer comes in many forms. The amazing spaces we all homeschool in may be a Pinterest inspired image, or it may be your kitchen table, complete with cinnamon toast crumbs. It may be a dedicated school room in your basement, or it may be your living room couch or back patio.

So we thought we would share some of the amazing spaces other Hoosier Homeschoolers use to “do school!” Typical families who have found what works for them. Because, in the end, it’s not about having amazing spaces in which to homeschool our kids; it is about the amazing discoveries they make as we all learn together, no matter where we do that learning. ■



TAWNEE HINTON and her husband live with their four children in Central Indiana. Tawnee is a Support Manager for Classical Conversations and an officer in the US Navy Reserve. She has been a copy editor for The Informer for a year and blogs about her family’s homeschooling adventures at Adventures in Homeschooling. You can find it at www.adventuresinhomeschooling.com.



School at our house happens wherever my kids want to plop down. When they were little, we tried the “ideal” schoolroom. A small bedroom in our house was converted into our schoolroom, complete with desks, charts, and maps hanging on the wall, and a big chalkboard. I had a nice little closet to store all our school supplies in and everything. But after the first year of using the “school-room,” we started gravitating to the living room. I had a preschooler and a toddler at that time, along with the two that I was schooling, and keeping the little ones out of trouble became too much of a challenge; so more subjects were done at the dining room table and on the couch. Eventually, we nixed the school-room and turned it back into a bedroom. Yes, we had to clean “school” off the table every day. But this wasn’t all bad, it taught the kids to clean-up after themselves. If we had some big project that we couldn’t move, we had a picnic on the floor or some other creative place.

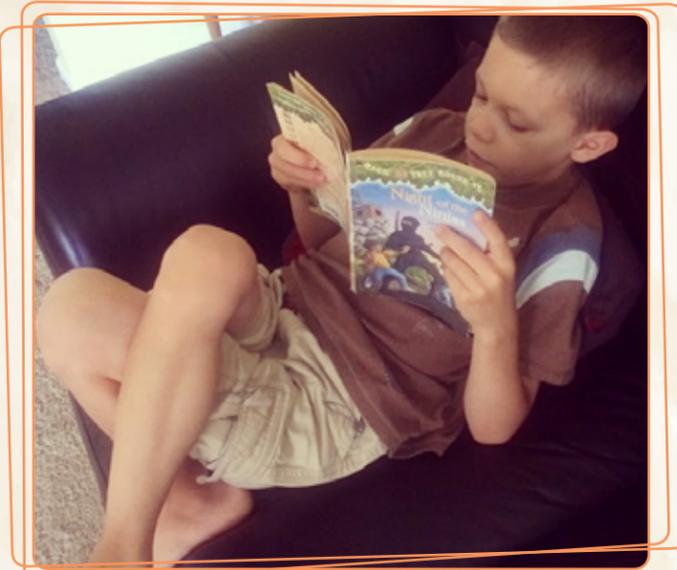
We learned that having a space to do school meant doing school where we were. It works for us. The key to successful homeschooling is doing what works for YOUR family. It will not look like other homeschool families, and that’s ok. ■

STEVE AND REBECCA BARNES have been married for 29 years and have four daughters. They have been homeschooling for over 18 years, graduating 2. They live on a small farm in rural Randolph County. They have been serving with the IAHE for the past five years.

My boys (8,11) and my nephew (7) do science and nature study with their Grandma, Peggy Smith. The outdoors will become their classroom as she teaches them about a variety of topics. This hands-on style of learning seems to work for all three of the boys. They look forward to these special times of learning “outside of the books.” ■

BECKY ZOOK is a homeschooling Mom of two curious boys. They are beginning their fifth year of homeschooling in Jasper and are looking forward to a great year full of learning outdoors and indoors.

Amazing School spaces



We have seven kids, and we will begin our eighth year of homeschooling. We are definitely relaxed homeschoolers with a hint of classical. When we were first considering homeschooling we were at a nature center in one of the state parks. There were puzzles, books, posters, and brochures all about the bald eagle. I remember my then three little boys playing, discovering, and absorbing so much about these beautiful birds in a matter of minutes. I realized, "This just makes sense! We can do this whole homeschool thing, and I think it's going to be pretty fun." We haven't looked back since that day, and it has indeed been a ton of fun!

My husband and I believe in providing an environment that encourages lots of self-lead exploration and, that in doing so, learning happens quite naturally. We belong to a Catholic Schoolhouse community, where I tutor, and find that using quality memory work as our spine is a great way to motivate the kids to want to learn more about a variety of subjects. Encouraging the older children to read to and work with the younger ones really keeps our personal one-room schoolhouse running. ■

SARAH KOPLIKU lives in Fishers with her husband and seven children. She's been homeschooling for eight years and highly recommends coffee, naps, date nights, and not taking things too seriously.

Lexi, a homeschool graduate herself, home educates her six young children with the help of her husband. Their family recently moved to Indiana from Texas and have enjoyed getting involved in the thriving local homeschool community. Lexi has homeschooled her children beginning in the preschool years and is now entering her 6th year of formal homeschooling. She follows a classical approach to homeschooling, teaching history chronologically as well as studying Latin alongside her children. Her favorite part of the day is reading aloud to her children from one of the many books in her ever-growing homeschool. ■

Lexi Henegar is a homeschool mom of 6 little people who are ages 10 and under. She is a lover of books, connoisseur of curriculum, and allergy-free mama to several children with food allergies. Lexi homeschools in the classical style with a focus on wonderful read alouds. She and her professor hubby make their home in Indiana. You can read more about her homeschool adventures and growing curriculum collection at Lextin Academy.



Homeschool Alumni: THEN & NOW

—Jessica Lehman

Maybe you worry if homeschooling works. Maybe you want to know if you are doing this thing right. Or maybe you wonder if homeschool graduates are happy and thriving adults. Well, now you can know—meet four homeschool alumni, ranging from recent college graduate to homeschooling dad.



Elizabeth Liechty: Building Relationships

Elizabeth Liechty enjoyed being homeschooled all the way through. “[My brother] and I would have so much fun together,” she said. Sometimes they did not get their schoolwork done as quickly as their mom liked because they would sit for an hour and talk. “[Talking with my brother] was awesome because we have such a solid relationship now, and we probably wouldn’t have had that if we hadn’t been homeschooled.”

Throughout her school years, Elizabeth volunteered with a disability ministry in Fort Wayne, participated in drama camp and drama productions, was involved in

4-H, and helped with various community events.

She still made time for academics. Elizabeth’s mom taught most of her classes, and she also attended a co-op for other classes, such as chemistry. In her senior year of high school, she enrolled in college classes, which helped prepare her for college.

“Homeschooling in general prepared me really well,” Elizabeth said. “It taught me to be independent and develop good study habits and time management.” The self-motivation and love of learning she acquired in homeschooling paid off, as she graduated this spring from Indiana Wesleyan University with a degree in nursing. She plans to move to Lexington, Kentucky to be a nurse.

Though homeschooling is a lot of work

for parents and can be scary, Elizabeth says parents can also make it exciting because homeschooling gives them an opportunity to influence their kids in a big way. Spending time at home allowed her to develop genuine friendships with her siblings and parents. “Because of that, I can walk into other areas of life and know what strong relationships look like and know how to be a good friend.” Elizabeth knows how to love people well because her family loved her at home and taught her how to love others.



Brent Neuenschwander: Following His Passion

Homeschooling allowed Brent Neuenschwander to dig deep into the subjects he was

passionate about, such as music, which he now does for a living.

During homeschooling, he started early in the morning and used the extra time in the afternoon to explore his interests. He enjoyed music and English, but math was difficult. “I had to work really hard at it,” he said. His mom helped him with math, and they persevered until he got it. “I loved having the one-on-one attention from the teacher—my mom—and all the help I got with that,” Brent said. “For me that was the best part of homeschooling.”

He also enjoyed studying with his siblings and learning right along with them, especially when his younger sister tried to learn above her grade. After high school, he worked for two years at a bank and then at a hardware store. He went on to study music at a few different schools and earned a music degree and then a master’s degree in music. Now he is a music director at a church in Findley, Ohio, where he conducts choirs and plays the organ.

Brent learned the importance of hard work and self-motivation through homeschooling. Both are important skills when studying and when working in a work environment with other people.

“[Homeschooling] definitely works,” Brent said. “It’s a lot of work on the part of the parent... Having watched my mom, I can say it’s not the easy way out. But if the parent puts the time into it, I think it’s one of the best education forms there is.”



Sarah Steffen: Making People Smile

Sarah Steffen always wanted to help people and brighten their days, and now this homeschool graduate works as an R.N. at a long-term care facility in her hometown.

“The curriculum my family used was a bit of a patchwork quilt,” Sarah said, but they always covered the basic subjects. Her parents also encouraged her involvement in extracurricular activities, which led to choir, piano, soccer, voice, riding, and fencing lessons for various years.

For a while, Sarah’s grandparents helped with homeschooling, too. After regular schoolwork, Sarah’s grandma taught her how to knit, bake, and sew. Sarah also hunted and fished with her grandpa. Over lunches of hot Campbell’s soup, Sarah listened to her grandparents tell stories of their childhoods.

After high school, Sarah earned an associate’s degree in nursing through a cooperative program at Grace College and Bethel College and a CNA license. She married Jonathan and has now worked for two years to support her husband through nursing school. After that, Sarah is not sure what they will do, though she is considering a return to school to become a nurse practitioner.

When she is not working, Sarah still enjoys reading classics and

baking new things. “Much of what I liked about homeschooling was that it really focused on preserving excitement about learning... This enthusiasm for life has certainly increased my enjoyment of adulthood as boredom is never an option.” She recognizes that homeschooling is not a magic cure, and a child’s ultimate decisions are his responsibility.

However, Sarah feels blessed to have the family she does. Her parents loved her so sacrificially that they would dedicate every aspect of their lives to helping her grow. “That legacy is something I cherish dearly, and it inspires me to become like Christ every day.”



Israel Wayne: Speaking and Writing

When Israel Wayne’s mom started homeschooling him and his sister in 1978, no one supported them. They did not know any other homeschoolers, and neither their church nor their family encouraged them. They faced the courts over truancy charges, and Israel’s mom had to put him in a private Christian school for two years.

Homeschooling enabled him to spend time with his family, avoid the negative pressures his friends faced, pursue his interests, and work according to his learning style. “Homeschooling was an overwhelmingly positive experience for me,” Israel said.

He graduated high school before age sixteen. “I worked about a dozen different jobs and found about a dozen different things I didn’t want to do with my life,” he said. Israel considered college then began working for his mom’s publishing company, where he ended up staying for twenty years.

Though his mom did not initially homeschool him because of religious reasons, Israel believes that God wants parents to be responsible for the teaching and discipling of their children. He and his wife homeschool their nine children.

Three years ago Israel started his own ministry and business called Family Renewal. He speaks around the country, and his latest book is *Pitchin’ a Fit! Overcoming Angry & Stressed-Out Parenting*, which he wrote with his wife. He is grateful for the opportunity to encourage families and teach what God says about parenting, marriage, and family discipleship.

Israel also urges families to support homeschool organizations. “They have provided such a phenomenal array of services to the Christian homeschooling community,” he said. “State homeschool associations do so much work behind the scenes,” and he is worried some homeschoolers might not notice that until it is gone. ■



Jessica L. Lehman is a homeschool graduate and freelance writer. She blogs about reading and writing at jessicallehman.wordpress.com.

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