

Winter 2015

CHAP

Christian Homeschool Association of Pennsylvania



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The CHAP Magazine

Published quarterly by the Christian Homeschool Association of Pennsylvania. It is provided as an educational service for homeschoolers in and around the state of Pennsylvania. CHAP is solely responsible for its content.

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CHAP Magazine

Winter 2015 / VOL. 27, NO. 4 | © 2015 All rights reserved.

On Board with CHAP: *What's Next?*

This is a question that I have spent a great deal of energy asking myself over the years. I'll try to answer it on several levels by commenting on some of the changes I see coming in Pennsylvania, especially for the Christian Homeschool Association of Pennsylvania (CHAP), but I should first add a disclaimer. Any attempt to predict the future is foolhardy. It is not given to man to know the future.

One of the changes you'll notice at CHAP is that Steven Wayde has been elected chairman, a post I've held for most of the last 6 years. Steve will be a great addition to CHAP. He is a good organizer with strong computer skills, and he is highly committed to our mission. Perhaps most importantly he and his wife Ginger are actively homeschooling their six children. We have been praying for the next generation of homeschoolers to take over, and I believe Steve is part of God's answer to that prayer.

CHAP is reinstating memberships. We want to give you the opportunity to become more intimately involved in the ministry. We would welcome your input about membership benefits.

Did you know that CHAP is actually two different legal entities? We are incorporated as the Christian Homeschool Association of Pennsylvania, a federal 501 C4 corporation. We have a second entity, the CHAP Foundation, which is a federal 501 C3 corporation.

You are probably wondering what the difference is. Both are tax exempt. This simply means that we don't pay federal

or state income tax because we are a corporation whose goal is to serve the welfare of the people, rather than make money. The C4 is an educational corporation that can lobby for public policy changes and can have limited political involvement. The CHAP Convention is run by the C4.

The CHAP Foundation is the C3. It is a charitable organization that exists to do good works. We have helped homeschoolers who have experienced fire and floods to get back on their feet. The C3 can give tax-deductible receipts for donations, so when you want to donate to our work and you need a tax receipt it should go through the CHAP Foundation.

Recently we had a management consultant evaluate our ministry and offer suggestions. One of his observations was that we do not do as good a job of telling our CHAP story as we should. We are trying to do this better. One way you can help is to tell us how CHAP has impacted your life. If you would like to share your story, we want to hear from you. You can email us at staff@chaponline.com or call the office 717-838-0980.

I'd like to share two stories about how the ministry of CHAP has touched me.

Last year when I finished my "Getting Started" session at the CHAP Convention, a young mom came up during the question time and shared, "My mom said that she took this class by you when she started to homeschool me." This was the first time that I knew I

had a second-generation homeschooler in my class.

This year one mom shared with my wife that I had delivered her as a baby while I was doing obstetrics at the Hershey Medical Center.

These two stories remind me how important it is to be faithful in the small things and also showed me that we need to get the next generation more involved with CHAP. Will you step up to the challenge?

Blessings,
Bruce Eagleson

Dr. Bruce K. Eagleson was saved while in medical school. He is an emergency physician. He and his wife Mary Ann have exclusively homeschooled their four children. They have four high school at home graduates, and two college at home graduates. Dr. Eagleson sees himself as a homeschool evangelist. He is recognized as the founding chairman of the national homeschool advocacy group, The National Alliance of Home Education Leadership (The Alliance). Dr. Eagleson has served on the Christian Homeschool Association of Pennsylvania (CHAP) Board of Directors for twenty years. In addition, Dr. Eagleson is the author of the CHAP book Keys to Homeschooling in the Keystone State. Bruce has presented at many conferences including ENOCH of NJ, Mass HOPE, TEACH CT, CHAP, Sandy Cove's and Harvey Cedars' homeschool week, HSLDA's National Leadership Conference and the National Alliance of Home Education Leadership. He is the Recipient of the HSLDA Gregg Harris Homeschool Leadership award.

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Side by Side in Pennsylvania

Parents: Jen and Brian Wolverton
Children: Samantha (21), Krystal (12), Mercy(11), and Logan(5)
Hometown: Aspers, PA

Tell us a little bit about your family dynamics.

We are a relatively new homeschooling family with a telecommuting dad,

living in a log cabin on a Pennsylvania mountain. Our oldest just finished her bachelor's degree, and we love having her home again while she continues to plan her future. Both my husband and I are tech parents. I have an engineering degree, and Brian works as a consultant for Microsoft.



How long have you been homeschooling?

This is our third year. The first year it was just Krystal, then Mercy decided to homeschool when we moved, and now we are fully entrenched in it and LOVING our new learning lifestyle.

What was one of the main reasons you chose to homeschool?

At first it was only Krystal who homeschooled. With the changes in standardized testing came a lot of screen time. Krystal has difficulty with eye teaming, which results in dizziness and nausea after countless hours of online tests. For me it was easier and less stressful to manage her education myself then to fight the system that wasn't structured to handle her eyes.

After two years of acclimating to this new lifestyle, I have found it was a blessing in disguise. We all love being home together during the day. We enjoy family lunches together discussing everyone's work, even what dad is working on with Microsoft. What an incredible opportunity for our children to be privy to his work life and for a hard working parent to be immersed in his children's education.

In what activities does your family participate?

Krystal, Mercy, and I volunteer for the Audubon Society in Carlisle where they have a Stream Team program for chil-

dren. We dedicated one morning a week last spring to help teaching kids about macroinvertebrates and the local stream environment. Mercy worked with the Chesapeake Bay program in Virginia Beach before we moved, and now we are working in this program which feeds the same water system. What a tremendous learning opportunity for her to see cause and effects of humans from multiple states on a large body of water.

Krystal dances over 20 hours a week at the Central Pennsylvania Youth Ballet. She couldn't have devoted so much of herself to the studio if it weren't for homeschooling. Mercy enjoys tumbling and cheering for USA Stars in Carlisle. She also has wider interests in ice skating, baking, crafting, computers, and building. Logan just started learning to ice skate so he can play hockey someday when he gets bigger.

What have been your most helpful resources?

When I initially made the decision to homeschool, I didn't arrive there lightly. I was reading books weekly about homeschooling at the local library. I literally didn't know a soul who homeschooled, so I had no one to inquire about what it was like. The one book I bought after reading many, many resources was *The Latin-Centered Curriculum: A Home Educator's Guide to a Classical Education* by Andrew A. Campbell. With that book, I pieced together a classical education puzzle of courses, and no nausea or dizziness at all, might I mention!

What educational philosophy/curriculum do you follow?

The next year our family adventurously decided to move to a log cabin on a mountain in Pennsylvania! That year I discovered the national co-op, Classical Conversations, which had an amazing and rigorous program already bound so I could continue our Classical Christian Journey, but with less prep time for me!

So for now our plans are to utilize this school of thought into the next few years and possibly through high school, depending on where we live and what community college options are available to us in the teen years.

What has been one of the highlights for you in homeschooling your children?

A highlight has been my ability to learn alongside my children. I am amazed at how much I either forgot or never learned despite my engineering degree. Currently I love the opportunity I received to tutor the Challenge III kids at our Classical Conversations campus in Algebra II and Advanced Math. Brian has plans to build a 3D printer with the kids soon too. Homeschooling really has been a blessing to our entire family in more ways than I could have ever imagined.

What was your favorite field trip(s)?

My favorite field trips so far were the operas Mercy and I attended, just the two of us. While it's great to be together all day, it's also important to get out with each child individually once in a while. Mercy and I had a grand time dressing up, having dinner together, and driving into the city for the opera.

What was one of the funniest things to happen during a homeschool day?

Through homeschooling and the togetherness that it provides our family, we are learning to really know each other and to be there for each other no matter what the need, and humor is an important aspect to that. The five year old's needs are completely different than the 21 year old's needs. A good sense of humor floats us throughout our day with grace and love.

Last night we were setting up to watch a TV show in our cozy living room in the cabin. The kids are very particular

about where they sit, as the room is very small. Logan said to Krystal, "I don't want to sit by you..." so Krystal, with a big smile, said to him, "OK, I'll sit by YOU." And Logan smiled right back and said, "OK!"

What have you found to be a challenge in homeschooling? Any tips in dealing with that challenge?

One challenge we have is that none of our friends or family know what homeschooling is REALLY like, and it is quite a hard thing to explain. I compare my decision of going from public school (a lifestyle I understood) to homeschooling, to jumping into a big black hole. I didn't know what I was going to find. I just had to pray it would be better than the current situation. So I do understand the confusion within my non-homeschooling community.

I never expected to find myself in the amazing lifestyle I am now experiencing. We have peace, flexibility, education, family, opportunity, and control. I post about our journey on Facebook as much as I can to create a mental picture for my friends and family, but it can be challenging living such a different and misunderstood lifestyle.

What advice would you give to someone who has just begun homeschooling?

Homeschooling is an adventure, but more than that, it is a lifestyle. Since the cast of characters are your favorite people on Earth, your nuclear family, the adventure is a truly special one. In Classical Conversations, for which I am eternally grateful, I have learned that the main ingredients in life are "Truth, Beauty, and Goodness". If those are major ingredients in my homeschool, only good things can transpire! I love what homeschooling has created within my family and pray that anyone else who needs it will discover it as well.

Compiled by Jillian Spittle



SOCIALIZATION



YOU'RE KIDDING, RIGHT?

My wife and I started teaching our kids at home in 1980. At that time we didn't know of anybody else in the country that was doing so. I thought perhaps I had invented a new institution: home education, but within a year or two I began to hear about a few other families who were doing the same thing in other places across the country. Another bubble burst.

As the phenomenon grew and became a movement, people noticed. Questions

came. Some from detractors and some from parents intrigued with the idea and wondering whether they should try homeschooling for their family.

The first question involved legality. Will I go to jail if I try this? The second concerned teaching qualifications. Will I be able to do this right? The third became something of a mantra for critics: What about socialization?

The first two questions were long ago

laid to rest by empirical means. Laws were changed or clarified across the country in the 1980s and 90s. Test scores, scholarships, and earned degrees put to rest the concern about the ability of parents to teach. But, "What about socialization?" is still going strong. We've all heard it.

Still, things are different in some ways. Most people know kids who are being homeschooled that don't seem to be social degenerates, so there's not as

much concern on the part of the general public. The other thing that has changed is that the question seldom comes from the parents themselves, but mostly from their detractors.

In the early days, many parents seemed concerned that they might warp their children socially, but a year or two ago I asked a question to a convention audience that made me realize we've come a long way. The topic for the talk was socialization. As an introduction, I asked the moms and dads for a show of hands. "First, how many of you are here because you're honestly concerned that home education might not be good for your kids' social development?" Three hands went up. "Now, how many of you



are here because you're looking for ammunition to answer your parents or in-laws or church friends who worry about it?" The remaining eighty hands went up. No, most homeschoolers aren't worrying about social development nowadays.

Why not? Because we now have a track record in that, too. Homeschool kids have done quite well in relationships of all kinds. They do as well as anybody (usually better) in getting along with their parents and siblings. They relate to the neighbors just fine. They go to church and talk to other kids just like... well, like other kids. The most notable difference about homeschooled kids in church is that they are far more comfortable talking with the adults there than other children are.

Add to all that, the fact that an awful lot of homeschooled kids are now adults. They have worked at jobs, started businesses, won elective office, played on

sports teams, and joined the military. They have excelled at such demanding contests as debate and moot court competition in college. Thousands of them are now enjoying their own marriages and families. My eldest son got elected county chairman of our political party at the age of nineteen. Later, he and his friends helped an eighteen-year-old get elected chairman in a nearby county. By anybody's definition, that's not just involvement, but leadership. How much more social can a person get?

Let's put to bed the concern that not going to school deprives kids of the ability to learn to get along with people. A more useful question would be, "How did homeschool graduates get

work with teammates at work and play, learning wisdom from older people and sensitivity from those younger. All these social skills are available in our homes, churches, and communities. School keeps kids *out* of the real world.

Instead of the artificial world of grades, tests, speaking only with permission, working for no real goal, and being locked away from the old and young—the real life of a real community—home education sets kids free to explore the world in which they will be living as adults.

While other kids are learning the social "skills" of flirting, bullying, and competing for meaningless marks and numbers,

so socially skillful?" In a word, they did it by living life.

Don't listen to the nonsense that going to school exposes children to the "real world." I can't think of an environment less "real" than being locked up with people of your own age all day long and doing exactly what everybody else does in exactly the same way, working away to produce no product or service, but only to be evaluated on how you did the work. I can't see an employer paying anybody for that. As for the age segregation being preparation for the real world, my daughter has a response. She says, "Oh, sure. I shop at the thirty-to-forty-year old grocery store every week!" (I think sarcasm is her spiritual gift.)

Real preparation for adult relationships comes in doing the things that adults do every day. Navigating the challenging waters of family connections, buying and selling the things we use, learning to

homeschooled kids are busy elsewhere. They are reading real books, interviewing World War II veterans, serving as volunteers in worthy projects, going on missions trips, starting businesses, and getting to know their neighbors. They're working in political campaigns, planting gardens, making meals for the new mother at church. They're doing real things that real people do. They're building real social skills in real relationships. These are the kind of relationships, after all, for which you are trying to prepare them.

Live a real life, and take your kids along for the ride. That's growing up social.

To homeschooling parents, Rick Boyer is an author, speaker, and homeschool pioneer who speaks from over thirty years of experience with fourteen children. To homeschooled kids, Rick is "Uncle Rick," whose audio recordings take scripture, history and adventure stories and turn them into delightful and life-changing character lessons. www.CharacterConcepts.com

CONVENTION CORNER



Mark May 13 & 14, 2016, on your calendar for the 30th Annual CHAP Convention. Registration will open on February 1, 2016. Get alerted to the details as they unfold by registering for the CHAP eNews and checking www.chaponline.com regularly.

The 2016 CHAP Convention will have many of the qualities you have come to love and expect over our last 30 years.

- **Vendors** have started to register for the super large vendor hall – one of the largest in the country. We traditionally have over 120,000 square feet populated with around 200 vendors who rent more than 360 booths full of all kinds of curriculum and items to help educate your children. In February you will see the list of registered vendors on the CHAP website. Margaret Shaver is the CHAP Vendor Coordinator.
- **Speaker** invitations have been sent. We plan to have over 120 workshops - everyone can find topics relevant to his or her own needs. Our speakers upload their handouts to the CHAP website a month prior to the convention so you can see the outline and details of their session and print your own handout in advance. Information will be updated online as the speaker details are finalized.
- **The Used Curriculum Sale** returns. Sylinda and Rob Alfred, with the assistance of Greg

and Diana Merkel and many volunteers, have done a tremendous job with the Used Curriculum Sale. They have streamlined check-out for the buyers, as well as book distribution and retrieval for the sellers. Last year over 11,000 books and related homeschool materials were sold. In order to sell your used curriculum through CHAP, you must first register online for the CHAP Convention, then register your items for sale on the UCS website. When you buy used curriculum through CHAP, it is a all-win situation. You get gently used homeschool resources at discounted prices, your fellow homeschoolers make a little money, but most importantly you help fund CHAP so we can assist you and your fellow homeschoolers throughout the year.

- **Have you ever wished** your purchases could conveniently disappear only to reappear in your car? They can! Book Check is a service coordinated by Hillary LaLone. Hillary and her volunteers will store your purchases in boxes during the convention, deliver them curbside when you are ready to leave, and even load them into your car. Suggested donation: The first box is \$4, additional boxes \$2, and oversized items are \$1. Bring your receipt from Friday with you on Saturday and receive your first box for the same suggested donation as additional boxes!
- **Our Publications Team** of Carla Witmer, Tennille Good, and Leisa Campbell send and

post updates on the convention arrangements. Carla has been the editor of the CHAP Magazine, but she will be retiring as soon as a replacement is found. You'll want to read the spring issue because it will be full of articles written by the convention speakers. Tennille is the editor of the CHAP eNews; she edits and sends regular newsletters with current information. Leisa takes time out of her home-schooling day to post helpful information on the CHAP Facebook page as well as Pinterest. Tennille and Leisa keep everyone up-to-date via the worldwide web!

- **Do you have questions** about home education? Phil and Stephanie Mitchell coordinate the CHAP Booth where you will find homeschool help. Experienced homeschool moms and dads answer your questions – we call them “Mentors.” We will also have “Tour Guides” to take first-timers on a short narrated tour of the convention to help new folks get oriented and not be overwhelmed. If you have a prayer request, stop by the Prayer Booth area in the CHAP Booth where you can submit prayer requests or prayer with a caring volunteer.
- **Our Security and Set-up** Crew is lead by Bob Finley. Bob has tirelessly volunteered with CHAP for more than 20 years. Every year he places signs and information to help you find your way around the Farm Show Complex. We'd like to remind parents to instruct your children and teens to always stay with their group and not go into other areas of the Farm Show Complex alone. This is to ensure their personal safety. The Farm Show Complex is a large facility and due to site workers and other events taking place, it is not possible to secure the whole facility.
- **Jeremy Good** will be returning as Recording Coordinator. Jeremy ensures the recordings of the speaker sessions are up to professional standards. Once again, you will be able to download MP3 recordings of the speaker sessions to your phone, tablet, or computer shortly after the session is completed.
- **Darra McDowell** returns again as our Volunteer Coordinator. Darra is super at



matching up volunteers with jobs they want, at the times they need. When you register for the convention, don't forget to follow the link to sign up for a volunteer slot. We keep costs low with teams of homeschool parents who are willing to volunteer for four hours of convention time. Volunteering also benefits you, because your admission fee will be refunded to you after you serve.



Volunteers are the heartbeat of CHAP. If you would like to serve on the CHAP Convention Team in a greater capacity than a four hour timeslot at the convention, please contact Nada Rothgaber, the CHAP Convention Coordinator at nadachap@gmail.com. We have big and little volunteer jobs waiting for you!



Photos courtesy of Photos by Deb.

CONTESTS

Contest deadlines are March 15, 2015

Essays



Are you between the ages of 10-18?

Are you between the ages of 10-18? Do you like to write? Well, sharpen your pencil because the CHAP Essay Contest is back! This year's essay contest will be based on the CHAP Convention theme, "Renewing Our Minds," and Bible verse, Romans 12:2 "Do not conform any longer to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind. Then you will be able to test and approve what God's will is -- his good, pleasing and perfect will." Write an essay on what this means to you as a Christian and how it impacts your life.

The essay should not exceed ONE PAGE (typewritten and double spaced). The essay contest will be divided into two age groups: 10-14 and 15-18. Monetary prizes will be awarded for 1st (\$25), 2nd (\$15), and 3rd (\$10) place in each age group. All entries must be received online at chaponline.com by March 31st.

Winners will be announced during a brief ceremony on May 14th, at the CHAP Convention.

We can't wait to read about how God is renewing your mind!

Art



Unleash Your Creativity and Enter the CHAP Art Contest!

The annual Christian Homeschool Association of Pennsylvania (CHAP) Art Contest is open to all traditionally homeschooled students between the ages of 10 through 18. The art contest will be divided into two categories (artwork using pencil, pen, pastels, and paint) and then broken down into two age groups (10-14 and 15-18). Prizes will be awarded for 1st, 2nd & 3rd place in each age group. Entries must be submitted online by March 15, 2016. Entry fee applies. Winners will be announced during a brief ceremony at the CHAP Convention on May 14, 2016. Visit chaponline.com for more details and to enter online.

Scholarship



CHAP Leigh A. Genasevich Memorial Scholarship Contest:

We are honored to once again hold the CHAP Leigh A. Genasevich Memorial Scholarship Contest. Leigh was a cherished member of the CHAP volunteer team and will always hold a special place in CHAP's memories. Be sure to read the full article about Leigh, her commitment to homeschooling and the Godly legacy she left on p. 18.

A generous scholarship will be awarded to the first place (\$1,000) and second place (\$500) traditionally homeschooled, Pennsylvania senior, who will be graduating in the spring of 2016 and is a member of CHAP. Please visit the CHAP website at chaponline.com for the complete list of necessary components that must be submitted to enter the contest (i.e., application, personal testimony, future plans, transcript). Please include TWO copies of all components and mail to: CHAP Scholarship Contest, c/o 126 W. School St., Hatfield, PA 19440. Entries must be received by March 15th. Winners will be announced during a brief ceremony on May 14, at the CHAP Convention. All prize checks will be written out directly to the educational institution.

CHAP is excited to hear about your future plans and to learn about where God is leading you!

Attention Homeschool Students!

Here are the Top 10 Reasons why you should participate in the CHAP 2016 Contests:

10. Your mom is making you do it.
9. You could win prize money.
8. Drawing, painting, or taking pictures sure beats doing math.
7. You're a senior and could really use some scholarship money for college.
6. You could pick a science project that involves blowing something up.
5. You could create, research, or write while wearing your pj's.
4. You need something to put into your portfolio.
3. You could come mingle in the student gallery and prove that homeschoolers really do have social skills.
2. You actually like to write. (Shhhhh! We won't tell!)

And the #1 reason why you should enter the CHAP 2016 Contests is.....(drum roll please).....

1. CHAP loves nothing more than to showcase the work of talented homeschool students. Remember, CHAP is here for YOU!

We'll see you in the Student Gallery on May 13th & 14th!



CHAP Graduation

Be recognized for your achievements and hard work at the CHAP Graduation Ceremony to be held Friday, May 13, 2016, at 7 PM. We would like to extend an invitation to all 2016 Graduates to participate to honor your achievements.

Registration is now open please go to Chaponline.com for further information. Any questions can be directed to Angie Sellers at graduation@chaponline.com Please note that registration will close on February 15, 2016.

"Prayer lays hold of God's plan and becomes the link between His will and its accomplishment on earth. Amazing things happen, and we are given the privilege of being the channels of the Holy Spirit's prayer." -Elisabeth Elliot

When I was young prayer bored me. Of course it was because I didn't understand it. I had not been taught that I had the privilege of talking to the Creator of the universe and letting Him talk to me. As I got older I began to gain some understanding, and I also began to write my prayers in a journal. Those prayers were mostly self-focused; I'm so glad that God is patient and gracious.

As we grow in the Lord, we begin to recognize that God uses our prayer to teach us and to direct us. Prayer is not for God's benefit but for mine. I learn to depend upon Him, to turn to Him, and to be in direct communication with Him throughout the day or night.

Over the years we've made prayer a bigger priority in our family life. We want our children to learn to bring their requests to God, learning that He is not a magic genie to give us ev-

ery want, but to take their needs and the needs of others to Him, knowing that He is able to do abundantly above all that we ask or think.

We pray together at the end of the day, but for your family it may work better to pray at the beginning of the day. Regardless of when, I'd encourage you to spend some time praying together as a family. This helps our children to see that we truly depend upon God. We are very grateful to attend a church that makes prayer a part of the morning service. We've all been blessed to pray for each others' needs, and what a blessing to hear even young children pray for others.

I believe that we can teach our children to look to God for help with any difficulty, including schoolwork. Just the other day my daughter was struggling with a math problem, and I said, "You could pray and ask God to remind you how to do that kind of problem." A minute later she said, "Oh, I remember now!" Then she quickly did the problem and got it correct! It was a direct and quick answer to her prayer, and she learned that God cares about her struggles with math. He became a more per-

sonal God to her in that moment. She was beaming.

God doesn't guarantee us an easy life without troubles, but He does promise to walk with us through our days. He wants us to look to Him and have fellowship with Him every day. He wants to talk with us and share our lives. What an amazing thing!

As I've gotten older, I recognize that it is a privilege to pray for others, lifting them up before the throne of God. I've also learned that God always answers my prayers, just not always in the way I expect. His ways are higher than mine, and His purposes are greater than I could grasp, so oftentimes I find myself simply praying the prayer that never fails, "Thy will be done."

Deanna and Tim Rabe have been home educators for 20 years. They were involved in co-op leadership for many years, served on their county homeschool board, and have been long time CHAP Convention volunteers. A delight to Deanna's heart is in mentoring and encouraging home educating moms. She has six children, three who are homeschool graduates, and three who are still being homeschooled.

Confessions of a Type-B Homeschooling Mom

So yeah, I homeschool. And wow am I on top of it. I mean, I am so organized and detail-oriented, and boy do I know how to rock lesson-planning.

You all know I'm joking, right? Listen, lesson-planning makes me break out in hives. The mere mention of schedules with half-hour blocks and spreadsheets, and I'm standing in a foreign land where all I hear is, "blah blah blah." I don't know what you're saying!

I'm what you might call a Type-B homeschooling mom. I jot down my lesson plans on notebook paper (and I use the term "lesson plans" quite loosely), and I even sometimes follow them. I like writing up all the ways I'm going to homeschool my kiddos, and then I toss it to the wind (not necessarily intentionally), make hot chocolate, and look up YouTube videos with my kids on how astronauts eat in space. It's quite fascinating.

Now before you get all worried that my children are fending for themselves in a wasteland of questionable education, I do actually teach them. About subjects. Like history and art and music and geography. Oh yes, we learn alright, we just do it in a...flexible sort of way. No half-hour blocks of time scheduled neatly in our house. Not that there is anything wrong with that at all. It's just not us.

And I'm finally okay with that.

You see I use to read homeschool blogs, and you know what I did? I compared myself to those moms. And I compared my kids. I was afraid I wasn't doing enough; I was worried I would fail my children. I got neurotic. I planned more. I tried harder. I cried, and I finally thought, "I am not Type-A enough to homeschool my kids."

I thought that in order to be a good homeschooling mom - in order to be a good mom - I needed to be a certain type of personality. It turns out though, I am fully capable of homeschooling my kids and being a good mom - *just the way I am*. And I'm not organized or detail-oriented or scheduled. I despise crafts. But you know what I have? I have heart.

I have heart and excitement and vision, and I love that I get to homeschool my kids. Love it. I love it because now that I'm comfortable with who I am and how God made me, I can walk in the freedom that God gave my children to me! He didn't give them to a Type-A mom, He gave them to Type-B me.

However, I do recognize that I have certain limitations, being detail-challenged and all. I also realize that my personality isn't an excuse to slack off - definitely not. Hot chocolate won't teach my children to communicate and interact well with the world. God has called me to steward their minds, hearts, and souls, and I intend to do just that as best I can.

Which isn't very best, so thank God I have the power of the Holy Spirit in me to help me and guide me and give me strength as I need it. Thank God for His grace and kindness and gentleness as He leads me by faith in all things, including homeschooling.

Grace to mess up in a million and one ways; grace to fall apart on the hard days; grace to knock down pride when I get self-righteous; grace to know that each family is different and has to figure out their own way. Faith and grace. All the way.

Sarah Mae is a wife, mom, homeschool teacher, and writer who encourages women to keep on. She is the author of Desperate - Hope for the Mom Who Needs to Breathe, a book for those who have ever whispered, "I just can't be a mother today." You can connect with her at sarahmae.com Sarah Mae was a speaker at the 2015 CHAP Convention.



Irrevocably Changed

How God Brought Forth Roses of Opportunity from the Ashes of Suffering

Nothing in twenty-five years of marriage and nine children could have prepared me for 2006. It was the darkest period our family had ever faced.

Our second grandchild, a spunky, blue-eyed blonde, had been born with a serious congenital heart defect requiring open-heart surgery when she was just six months old. Three months post-surgery, everything looked stable and hopeful – and then she was gone. I remember the shock, the horror, and the helplessness I felt as I watched my daughter – out of her mind with grief, and realized I could do nothing to fix it. It was like grief to the second power for Roy and me as we buried a grandchild, and then held our daughter and son-in-law so close that we almost willed their grief and pain into our own bodies to give them some peace.

Each member of our family of eleven dealt with grief in his or her own way. The faith of our teenagers would be sorely tested as they wrestled with the age-old questions of suffering, the authority of Scripture, the assurance of eternal life, and the absolute sovereignty of God. As we bore our pain daily, and sometimes minute-by-minute, I was so thankful for our homeschooling lifestyle which allowed us to hold tightly to one another day after day. I sometimes shudder to think how much more difficult this would have been for our children had they been piling onto a bus each morning dealing with the school culture in the midst of their grief, off in a place where Mom and Dad were not available to read the ever-changing barometer of roller coaster emotions.

I tried to busy myself with the tasks of daily living, but the days seemed void

and without form. I had always been so organized, and now I couldn't put together two simple thoughts. It was frustrating and sometimes frightening. Keeping up with the kids' schoolwork was an unbelievable challenge. Worst of all, I couldn't get myself to even care.

We had been a homeschooling family for over twenty years and up to that time, my passion had never waned. I looked forward to each new year with anticipation and excitement as I designed curriculum and spent hours poring over materials in the exhibit hall of our state homeschool conference. Homeschooling is a cradle-to-the-grave philosophy of family living in our home. It defines every aspect of our family life, and even when the academics went into "survival mode" in 2006 it was still defining us in new ways apart from math and spelling.

During a stay in our home, my mother noted that although our homeschool was constantly flexing, it gave our lives a framework that provided comfort, safety, and boundaries for our children. Mom's words flitted across my mind one day, and I began to pray that I could pull us back into some sort of normalcy. After tragically losing her husband in an accident a friend remarked that she felt a real sense of accomplishment just getting a load of laundry folded. I understood now what she meant. There can be great comfort in simply resuming a daily routine.

As I prayed my way through each day, I felt God urging me to focus on what I had, and not on what I had lost. I needed to be more emotionally available, especially to the younger children, who had been somewhat sidelined as we ministered to our oldest daughter. The path

I chose to reconnect us was the framework that our homeschool had always provided: We were due for a unit study!

We had always used units to spice things up when school got dull, and we usually made a big deal of it – like reading all of Marguerite Henry's horse stories, then going to Chincoteague Island for Pony Penning Day, or the unit we did on flight that we topped off with a trip to Kitty Hawk and The Wright Brothers Museum. As we live just outside the Historic Triangle of Virginia, I chose a unit on colonial life.

My plan didn't take off with a lot of fireworks. My heart really wasn't in it, but I kept plugging away. We read one day about colonial soap-making practices, and the two youngest girls asked if we could try it as a project. I felt so tired, so worn out, I really didn't want to

go to the effort, but I agreed and began gathering the materials.

Organic chemistry was nothing new to me. I have a degree in medical technology with a double major in chemistry and a minor in biology, so I was in comfortable territory; I just hadn't been here for awhile. I found myself getting a bit more excited about the project as some latent passions from my days in the lab were aroused. This also elicited some surprise among my offspring who had no idea that Mom had a life before children!

We decided to make a one-pound batch of lavender soap in a six-inch length of three-inch diameter PVC pipe well greased with petroleum jelly. Gloved and goggled we mixed our soap, coloring it with shavings of purple crayon. It did not turn purple. The more crayon we added, the more it resembled brown mustard. We gave up on the color, wrapped it in towels and set it to incubate. Before bed we couldn't resist a peek, so we pulled off the towels and were met with a lovely lavender fragrance and violently purple soap! We christened it "Electric Lavender," and we laughed and laughed.

For the first time in months, all of us together, laughing, and not feeling guilty about it. It felt so good to be enjoying something as a family again that we made another batch the next day, and the next, and the next... Three months later our soap looked good enough to give as Christmas gifts. After those initial gifts, friends from church remarked how wonderful the handcrafted soap made their skin feel and actually offered to trade us money for it! It was very flattering, and we kept experimenting.

A large family such as ours can go through a respectable amount of soap, but I was cranking out bars of various shapes, sizes, colors, and fragrances faster than even we could use it. It began to stack up at an alarming rate. Towers of cardboard flats filled with curing soap appeared in every corner. It was at this point that Dad suggested it might

be time for a new unit study – maybe marketing and entrepreneurship? Well, why not? Maybe we could actually sell our soap and generate a small amount of pocket change; something always welcome in the large, one-income family.

We named our venture Virginia Soaps & Scents and went into business. I even thought of the perfect place to get started. Our state homeschool convention had always been such a high-water mark for us each spring; it just seemed a likely launch pad for an up and coming homeschool family business.

We manned our maiden booth at June 2008 Home Educator's of Virginia (HEAV) Conference in Richmond. It was the first time we had done anything so public since the baby's funeral. I knew we'd be running into many friends and acquaintances, and I wasn't entirely sure how we'd handle it. I need not have worried. That weekend was a healing experience for us. It was like a revival for our tired souls. Surrounded by the love and encouragement of our homeschool community we expanded our vision for our little business and reveled in the realization that we had found our market. In fact, we had been a part of our market for over twenty years!

Bolstered by the success we enjoyed so early on, we began to expand into a full line of bath and body products. We still considered ourselves an outgrowth of our homeschool and an educational endeavor, so we laid some ground rules. All products were to be handcrafted. We designed all our own recipes and required that everything be done "in house". We would not outsource to printers, computer experts, or marketing agents.

Everyone contributed according to his or her own gifts and talents. Roy's expertise as a hobbyist woodworker would prove to be invaluable as he designed and built all of our soap molds, as well as the equipment used for cutting and beveling. He also built all of our displays for our sales booth and designed our poplar soap dishes. If we didn't know

how to do something, we had to learn – from getting bath fizzies to fizz to cosmetic labeling laws.

Committing our finances was a necessary part of our undertaking. I had never been much of a risk taker in that category, but launching a business would take a significant chunk of capital. I couldn't understand why it wasn't bothering me now until I remembered a quote from mother of twelve, Lillian Gilbraith, of the classic story *Cheaper by the Dozen*.



Her children never saw her become frightened or overwhelmed after her husband's death, as they often had when their father was alive. When the children questioned her about the change in her demeanor, she responded that the worst thing she could imagine had already happened to her. There was nothing more to fear. Maybe that's where I was now. The risks that would have previously caused me no end of worry I now shrugged off easily. I was ready to launch into wherever God wanted the business to go. It was His business, not ours, and convinced that He had a plan for us, we held on for the ride!

Part of that plan was revealed one afternoon while the house was unusually quiet and I was just getting started on a few batches of soap. Something inside said, "Look. Watch. See what you're doing." In front of me was a bowl of warm oils. Oil – the biblical symbol of anointing and healing. Into the oil, I poured a hot, caustic solution of lye – a symbol of suffering? As I mixed the solution, the

oil and the alkali combined to create a new substance. Unlike our lotions or lip balms, which, with the proper equipment and knowledge can be separated once again into their component parts, saponification, the soaping process, is an irreversible organic reaction in which both oil and lye are permanently changed.

After the mixture was well emulsified and thickening I added color and fragrance. I poured the soap into a mold to give it the desired shape, wrapped it in layers of towels and set it aside to incubate. This incubation period would allow the reaction to continue for several hours, during which all that caustic lye would be consumed and neutralized. Twenty-four hours later I would remove the soap from the mold, cut and trim the bars, and after three to six weeks cure time this organic synthesis we call "soap" would be ready to go into circulation with a new purpose: to remove dirt and grime from daily life and leave behind a pleasing fragrance.

I saw it. My eyes were blurred, but I saw it. Those humble bars of soap all over the house were an allegory of the path our lives had taken. We were the oil, the anointed and blessed of God, accepting the burning pain of suffering as it was poured into our lives. We became one with our suffering as it engulfed every waking moment. As time went on we accepted the suffering, bearing it daily, and we were irrevocably changed by it. We would never again be as we were before. Our suffering was an inseparable part of us, and we were changed forever by it. Yet, after a time of mourning, separation, and quiet, healing would begin until finally we could come forth as something new and fragrant to be used by God in a new way.

I was stunned by what had transpired in my mind and heart in a few short seconds. As I shared my story with the family, I started referring to it as "My Soap Devotional".

Tragedy was to strike our family yet again in 2011 when our oldest son Sam

and his fiancé Stephanie were critically injured in a car accident. Every vertebra in Sam's back was broken and every internal organ in his body was damaged. He was not expected to live through the night. We spent months in a trauma hospital in Norfolk, Virginia, as our boy had to learn to breathe on his own and walk again. The orders for the business never slowed as our customers kept us going financially throughout the trial, adding messages of hope and prayers for strength to their soap orders! We were overwhelmed as this network of God's people said masses for Sam in Vienna, Italy, and held vigils for him in neighboring churches. The "Soap Devotional" carried us once more.

Now in 2015, our little unit study project is a thriving home-based business. Our ever-growing webstore connects us with a customer base that spans all 50 states and 3 foreign countries. Our travels take us on a yearly circuit of homeschool conferences from Massachusetts to Georgia and as far west as Ohio and Tennessee where we exhibit as an entrepreneurial homeschooling family. Added to the handcrafted shows we do predominately during the Christmas season, this puts us on the road roughly 24 weekends out of the year! When the company where Roy had been employed for 17 years closed their doors almost two years ago, Virginia Soaps & Scents became our primary income. God had uniquely prepared us, and we made the transition almost seamlessly.

Our family business has always been so much more than selling our products. It was God's way of getting us through some very tough times, and it has allowed us to share a very important truth: God does bring forth roses of opportunity from the ashes of suffering.

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Richelle Spargur has been married to Roy for 34 years. They began homeschooling their eldest of what would become nine children in 1987. Together they run Virginia Soaps & Scents from their home-based production shop in rural southeastern Virginia. To see more of what the family creates together please visit their webstore at www.va-soaps.com



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LEIGH GENASEVICH Memorial Scholarship



Finding ways to fund higher education is challenging to say the least. Scholarship possibilities abound, but the competition is fierce, so the Christian Homeschooling Association of Pennsylvania (CHAP) is pleased to once again offer a scholarship just for homeschoolers. Seniors, if God is calling you to pursue further education, you'll want to read this.

The "Leigh A. Genasevich Memorial Scholarship" was started by the Genasevich family in honor of wife, mother, evaluator, minister to families, and champion of homeschooling. You may have known Leigh from hearing her speak at the CHAP Convention, from using her as your evaluator, or

from reading the "Side by Side in Pennsylvania" article in the Fall 2012 edition of the *CHAP Magazine*.

Perhaps you did not know Leigh, so I'd like to give you an opportunity to read her beautiful testimony (as told by her husband Gary and friend Michele Hebal), reflecting the amazing grace of God.

Because their parents were friends, Leigh and Gary were playmates at four to five years of age. In eighth grade they became reacquainted, and soon after that became high school sweethearts. After college they became soul mates. Gary revealed that as newlyweds they were not saved, but God spoke to their

hearts about homeschooling. "He spoke directly to our hearts. 'You only have to homeschool for one year,' He told us. We heard that same voice every year since then." In hindsight Gary sees how this was all part of God's plan of drawing them to Himself.

Gary shared, "Leigh's coming to know Jesus came directly from homeschooling. Leigh would tell the story that she loved to listen to other moms pray in the homeschool group, and she wanted what they had."

This group, Hazelton Area Homeschoolers, was where Leigh and Michele Hebal met. "She and I joined the Hazelton Area Homeschoolers

group within a year of each other, both new to homeschooling and both eager to learn all we could about our new venture," explained Michele. "When Leigh joined our group, she was not a believer. She had the plan to homeschool her children, and the Lord used that plan to bring her and her family to Him."

"It didn't take long for us to become friends," Michele remembered. "If you met her, you would have immediately been taken in by her warm personality and infectious laughter! We clicked, and it wasn't too long after that when she began asking questions about 'being a Christian' and 'having a relationship with the Lord.' He stirred her and used

the godly women in our group to witness to her. Leigh committed her life to the Lord!"

Both Gary and Michele described Leigh as a willing vessel, using her God-given talents to serve God and His people. "Leigh planned and led support group meetings, wrote and taught co-op classes, spoke to other homeschool groups, and did every imaginable 'leader' job behind the scenes." Leigh not only evaluated other students, but also prayed with families, encouraged their perseverance, and cheered them on to success. She even wrote a favorable homeschool policy that the local school adopted.

Her main priority in all this academic work, according to Gary and Michele, was not temporal reward but eternal gain. "Homeschooling was simply the vehicle that the Lord gave her to reach people for Him. She would try to take a new mom each year to the CHAP Convention. I remember how excited she would get when the new mom, often unsaved, would start asking her questions as they walked through the exhibits or attended seminars.

We would then pray for the Spirit to quicken the right words to her mouth so she could say what they needed to hear," explained Michele.

"The most important thing Leigh did was to witness to others, always expressing her joy in her salvation, always urging others to a deeper relationship with Him. Even through her illness she was a testimony to hundreds of people, both in the words she spoke and in the unspoken faith you could see in her. Her life was a testimony to God's grace, love, goodness, and faithfulness," shared Michele. On April 30, 2013, three days after their twenty-second anniversary, Leigh went home to be with her loving Savior.

Wanting to honor Leigh's memory and extend her passion for helping homeschoolers, Gary decided to create "The Leigh A. Genasevich Memorial Scholarship." "I knew that I was going to have a scholarship in Leigh's name," revealed Gary. "Giving a scholarship to a homeschool student is fitting. Leigh constantly gave of herself to the homeschool community. Giving help to go on to the next level of education would be great. Homeschooling was her passion, mission, and ministry in life." Gary also expressed that Leigh would not want the limelight on herself, but that she would want the glory to go to God for this scholarship opportunity.

Please pray for Gary, their three sons – Jarod, Wade, and Nolan – as well as other family members and friends. The greatest legacy that Leigh has left is no doubt her children. I'm told she always taught Jarod, Wade, and Nolan that "Your actions speak louder than your words." She taught and lived I John 3:18: "My little children, let us not love in word or in tongue, but in deed and in truth." Leigh's legacy of love will continue on through her own sons, her "homeschool children" she evaluated, her spiritual children, and the children who will benefit from her scholarship.

Let's also heed Leigh's wise advice: "Remember, you are teaching a child, not a curriculum." When asked, "What advice would you give to someone who has just begun homeschooling?" Leigh answered: "In a word, relax. You will never teach your child all there is to know. God will lead you to teach them what He needs them to learn for His glory. **Cherish every moment, because even though the days may seem to drag, the years fly.**"

The above article was compiled by Stephaney Mitchell, who was blessed to have heard, read, and written about God's grace in Leigh's life. To learn more about this scholarship opportunity, visit chaponline.com.



The Family That Serves Together, Grows Together

I sat back in my chair and looked across the table at my husband, watching his face closely. The pizza parlor buzzed with conversation, but I didn't need to hear his words to see from his expression that he was open to my going on the mission trip. It was a dream come true, using my Spanish skills for two weeks interpreting for a medical clinic in the Dominican Republic.

It made no sense that I stayed so unexcited as I prayed about the opportunity. For many years our children had been too young for me to leave them at home. The missionary nurse's words echoed in my memory, "You turned me down years ago and told me to come back to ask you when your kids were older. So here I am!"

Soon it dawned on me: Now that my kids were old enough to be left, I wanted them to go with me. I turned down the individual trip, and we sought a way to go as a family.

This wasn't an original idea; we have supported our homeschooling friends the Andersons who for years had bravely traveled together with their young children to Guatemala on short trips. So we joined them on a great nine-day mission adventure and discovered that families that serve together definitely grow closer. In the process, my husband Glenn and I showed our teen daughters the "visual aid" of our involved hearts. When I asked my daughter Hannah what impacted her most about our family mission trip, she replied that it was watching me and her father serve others together, "You and Dad were a team, even though what you did was really different." On my end, I was impressed with both of my daughters' flexibility and compassion while in Guatemala.

The Andersons are a good example of how the faith of each family member gets tested and strengthened when moving beyond comfort zones. Their many trips have included plenty of panic moments: fearing one of the kids drank contaminated water, lacking a car seat for the three year old, watching their older son become miserably sick with mono, and staring as huge spiders crept along the walls of their bedroom. Often fears kept Heidi awake and praying. She recalls, "I don't remember calling out to God and relying on Him quite like that in the US."

It's instinctive for us to protect our kids from danger and pain, and sometimes we don't even consider going together when they are young. However, if we stay tucked away in our American rural or suburban locations, then we rob them of the opportunity to develop compassion for others who face poverty, abuse, illness, and hardship.

Alex and Brett Harris, who as teenage homeschoolers co-authored *Do Hard Things* (2008), confirm that stepping out of one's comfort zone results in significant growth:

As silly as they may seem, each of those achievements proves something very important: If we take a step despite

feeling uncomfortable, afraid, or inadequate, our comfort zones expand. We grow in strength and skill. What we consider normal for us changes, sometimes radically. (pg. 67)

As parents it is not enough to expose our kids to people in need; we need also to frame their experiences. Experienced missionaries and service workers offer their wisdom to help us understand how to reach out appropriately. The Andersons highly recommend the free online program "40 Day Mission Minded Family," one of the many rich resources offered by www.harvestministry.org.

Families can effectively serve those in need on a local level as well. My family was introduced to Karl Beardsley who for 15 years had driven the Bethesda Mission van on weekend nights along the same route of rendezvous points in the city of Harrisburg. The homeless men and women who live under the bridges and in alleys count on his reliable, caring presence and what he brings them: sandwiches, coffee, packages of socks, and blankets in the cold months. Karl knows all of their names.

I helped Karl twice, but my husband was the braver one, taking our son Luke when he was only 14 to volunteer on numerous Saturday nights. Karl and my husband showed our son how to be kind and non-judgmental toward those who are homeless.

Luke, who is now 21, remembers how Karl treated those he helped, "He was really good at not making people feel embarrassed when they came up to the van. He cared more about them than about the fact that they were homeless. Karl taught me that everyone gets to that homeless condition in a different way. He was consistent; they knew he cared. I learned to make eye contact and be myself."

Even at young ages, our kids can contribute. Heidi Anderson reflected that the Guatemalan people felt more comfortable when her kids were with them, "Several times on our trips we had the opportunity to visit a hospital for people with severe special needs. It was priceless to glance over and see my kids interacting with a child in such a special way, especially because often I'm not even sure quite how to interact. Kids have a way of connecting when there is a language barrier. It's almost as if people can see their compassion."

Rande and Heidi Anderson have heard people say, "Oh, we should take our kids on a mission trip so they will appreciate things more here!" In reality when they come home they get caught up again in the daily routine. Yet, each time, God works to expand their hearts, giving them more compassion. Rande

claims, "So much of our US culture is about 'me'-what can I get, how can I get ahead. When we go on a mission trip, the focus shifts from 'me' to 'others'."

Many homeschooling families have paved the way to great opportunities for service and missions for the rest of us. My brief survey of 400 homeschooling members in my metropolitan area yielded many family-oriented service options, which included: delivering Meals on Wheels, cleaning up at county

parks and wildlife centers, assembling care packages in large warehouses, visiting nursing homes, helping with pro-life campaigns, tutoring inner city kids, and handmaking socks and scarves.

Homeschool mom Chelle McIntyre-Brewer has seen her children grow through their service, "My son's organization, Socks for Vets, helps about 12,000 Veterans and Wounded Warriors annually. We collect handmade thank you cards from people all over the world to distribute at the National Mall in DC on Veteran's Day. The Army recognized him as the Military Child of the Year. My daughter, who makes compression heart pillows for pediatric open-heart patients, won the Kohl's Care National Scholarship this year."

Helping the less fortunate is scary and faith stretching. If we serve alongside our children, we can expect a lot from them, as well as prepare them for what they will experience. It is worthwhile to help others. Comfort zones can be left behind.

Emma Anderson, who just celebrated her sixteenth birthday, accompanied her mom on her first overseas mission trip when she was only nine. Now, five trips later, Emma claims, "Once you go, you can't stop going back. It's like an addiction to Guatemala. I think that's God."

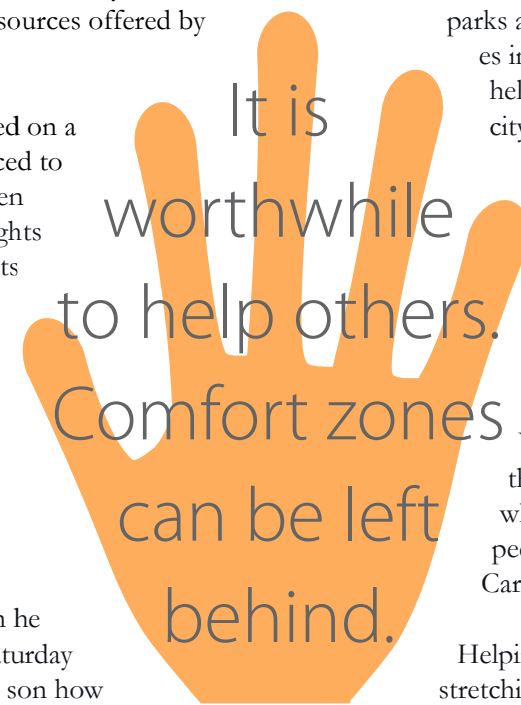
"We can do no great things. Only small things with great love." - Mother Teresa

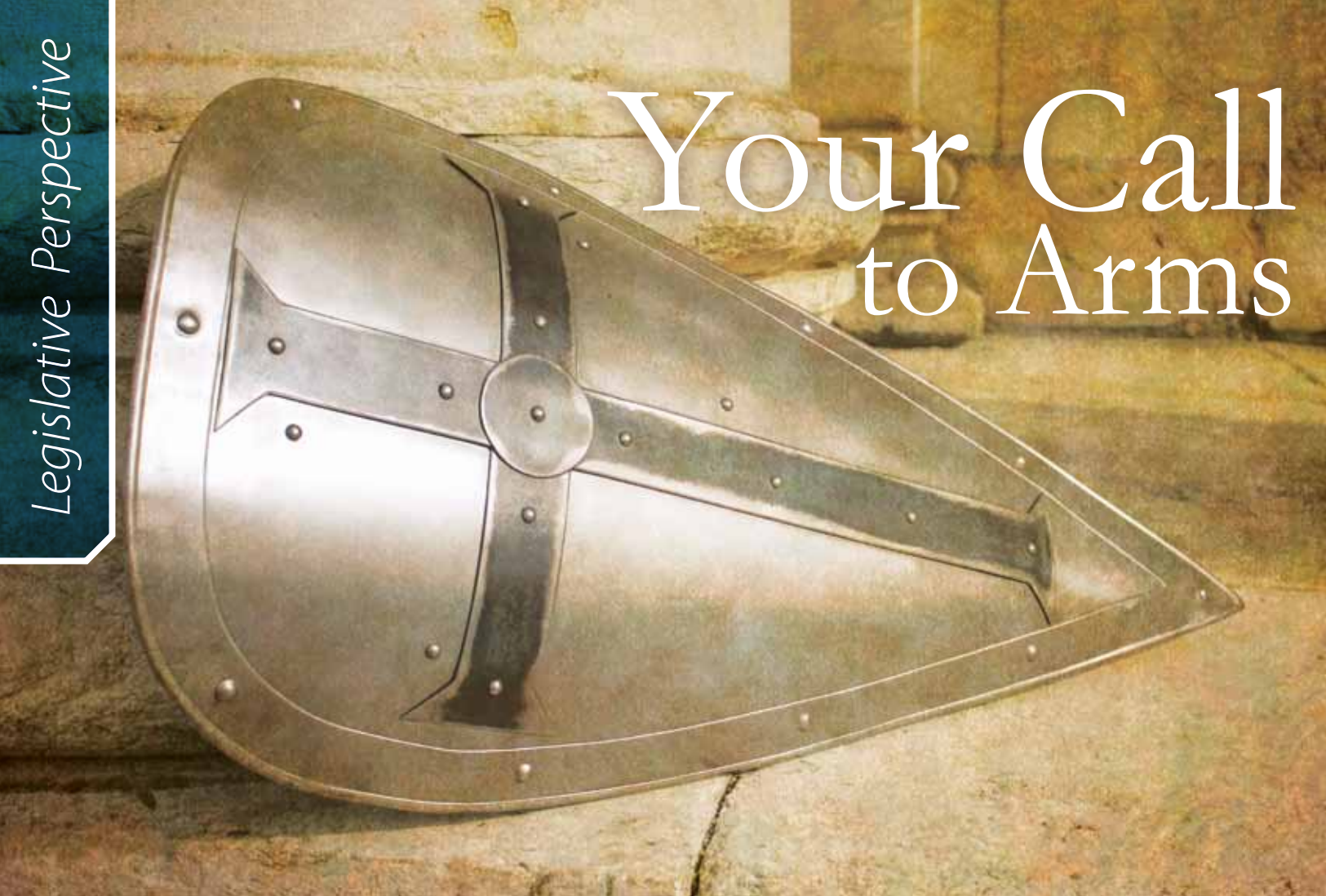
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In the past few years, veteran homeschooler Laure Covert has reactivated her Spanish language and cross cultural gifts to travel to Guatemala and Mexico and to become an interpreter for local residents who need help understanding doctors and teachers. She continues to homeschool two high school age daughters, and teaches Spanish in her local co-op. Laure Covert is a freelance writer who blogs on literacy and inspiration for living: www.pineneedlesandpapertrails.com and www.bluebirdsalwaysfly.wordpress.com.





Your Call to Arms

“I thought this would never happen in our small town,” said a friend recently about the news that the high school in his town will soon be providing special bathrooms for transgender students. “I knew it was happening in other places, but I did not think it would happen here. At least not so soon,” he said.

So often we tend towards this same line of thinking. Isolated and comfortable in our Christian homeschool sphere we see the advances of an unbelieving world afar off and find it difficult to imagine how it could affect us. However, while we raise our children – doing our best to pass on our values through solid Christian education, protecting them from damaging influences, and praying for the salvation of their souls – the unbelieving world is doing everything in its power to undo it all. You see, they are waging a war, and the battle line is not in some distant land. It’s here – in our towns and knocking on our doors.

The attack is on multiple fronts. While the family is being torn apart and refashioned into something distorted and Hollywood-approved, parental rights are being stripped away. We see new examples of this all of the time and all over the world. There is an ongoing struggle for parental rights in the medi-

cal field. Loving parents, seeking nothing more than a second opinion for the care of their children, have lost custody to the state that thinks it cares more about our children than we do.

The parents of Justina Pelletier were accused of medical neglect by a hospital over a diagnosis dispute concerning their daughter; the hospital asked the state to take custody of her. The parents did not get her home for nearly a year and a half. The state of Illinois took Isaiah Rider from his mother because she sought multiple opinions for treating her son’s pain. It is illegal in some states for teenagers struggling with same sex attraction to seek therapy, even if the teen, the professional counselor, and the parents all agree on the desired treatment.

Parents of public school students have no say once their children walk through the doors of the public school. In Tennessee, a dad was arrested trying to pick up his special needs daughter at the end of the school day. A mom was banned from her child’s public school in Georgia because she posted a photo online of her new concealed carry permit. Significantly, parents have no constitutional right to prevent a public school from providing its students with whatever information they wish to provide. The school determines what is appropriate, not the parent.

These are battles taking place in a town near you, possibly even your town. There are many more around the globe. This should cause concern since the U.S. courts have increasingly used international law and foreign court decisions, rather than the Constitution, to interpret U.S. laws and find authority for their rulings.

German Chancellor Angela Merkel and Facebook CEO Mark Zuckerberg discussed filtering what they call “hate speech” on Facebook in response to the influx of Syrian refugees into Germany, noted an article on RT.com. Local media reported that individuals who choose to share “radical” opinions on social media would risk not only losing their jobs in Germany, but their children as well. The report suggested that controversial political or religious sentiments from a parent would have a direct impact on the rights of the child, thereby endangering the child’s welfare. A family court would have to clarify whether an action endangering the child’s welfare would necessarily result in termination of parental rights. Since U.S. courts are looking to international law to interpret U.S. laws, is it unrealistic to envision a U.S. court case in the near future where “controversial discussions” on social media are deemed “radical” and dangerous to children, resulting in termination of parental rights?

Homeschooling is illegal in Germany. The Romeikes, a Christian German family, wanted to teach their children at home, but were forced to flee their homeland to escape crushing fines, criminal penalties, and even the seizure of their children. The family argued in U.S. courts that the right of parents to direct the education of their children is a fundamental human right, and denial of this right constitutes tyranny. The Department of Justice under Eric Holder argued that no such right to homeschool exists, and that if it does, its infringement by the government is still acceptable. The battle to protect the right of parents to direct the education of their children is not over.

Public support for parental rights is strong, and 90% of parents want to be the primary decision-makers for their children.¹ One group which understands the need for parental rights protection is the African-American community. Black families are 40% more likely to be broken up by Child Protective Services and 40% less likely to be reunited.² Parents with disabilities is another group which faces extremely high rates of child removal and loss of parental rights, from 40-80% depending on their disability.³ The erosion of parental rights hits every

segment of society. It does not discriminate. Parental rights is an all-American issue.

What weapons do we have to defend against this assault? Join the mission of the Parental Rights Organization (PRO) in their fight to pass the Parental Rights Amendment to the U.S. Constitution and prevent ratification of the U.N. Conventions that threaten parental rights. The battle plan is to secure citizen support for the Parental Rights Amendment, secure cosponsors in the U.S. House and Senate, pass state resolutions in support of the Parental Rights Amendment, secure legislative protections in the form of state statutes in the States, and secure U.S. Senators to oppose the U.N. Conventions. Parental Rights PA, the Pennsylvania arm of the PRO is working to secure cosponsors for the Parental Rights Protection Act – House Bill 1512, sponsored by Representative Will Tallman who is currently on the Children and Youth Committee – and spread the word about this issue to secure citizen support for the bill.



“Behold, children are a heritage from the Lord, the fruit of the womb a reward. Like arrows in the hand of a warrior are the children of one’s youth. Blessed is the man who fills his quiver with them!” Psalm 127:3-5a (ESV). Children are like arrows; parents are the warriors. We must not shrink back from this obligation to stand firm and fight for the right of all Americans to raise our children as we see fit.

Adolf Hitler said, “He alone, who owns the youth, gains the future.” If we want our children to have a future in which they are free to live, worship, and raise their own families as they see fit, it is time for us to wake up, suit up, and rise up against the infringement of parental rights. This is your call to arms!

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Five Reasons

Why Art Should Be a Priority in Your Homeschool Curriculum

“I’d like to teach art, but there are too many subjects to teach and only so much available time in our school day.”

I hear that frequently from homeschooling parents. Couple that with the fact that many parents find it difficult to teach art, and it’s no wonder that art instruction is shifted to the back burner - or left out altogether - in many homeschool curriculums. This situation is not unique to homeschoolers either. As budgets tighten in public and private schools, often the arts are the first things cut.

That is unfortunate because from both an educational and spiritual standpoint art instruction brings many benefits to the table. I could list quite a few, but here are five key reasons why I believe art should be given a place of priority in any homeschool curriculum. Art instruction helps in the following ways:

Improves Observational Skills

When students begin to draw and paint, they learn how to observe. When I began painting landscapes, I didn’t realize that I was honing my observational skills. As a matter of fact, I thought I was doing it to relax. But one day I was outside and saw a distant stand of trees. For the first time I observed that the trees weren’t merely “green” but that there were several different shades of green visible in that one group of trees. It was as if a light switched on inside my head. From that point forward, I began to notice the details of the world around me.

Develops Creative Problem-Solving Abilities

Many of our educational efforts are directed toward the logical and analytical sides of our children. We train them in mathematics, science, history, worldview, etc., because we see these as essential for their future in the world. However art instruction cultivates creative and problem-solving abilities. As I wrestle with a composition or try to figure out how to portray a scene on canvas, I am engaging in problem solving. It’s very easy to become frustrated with a drawing or painting and want to quit, but I’ve discovered that I learn much more by finishing a project than I will by abandoning it. Teaching our children to draw encourages them to cultivate the discipline and ability to solve problems, a skill that will be useful throughout their lives.

Appreciation of Creation

Art instruction encourages a child to explore and appreciate God’s creation. God is the supreme artist. As He observes His creation, He stands back, as it were, and says, “It is very good.” Likewise, when we teach art, we’re teaching our children to look at what God has done and say, “It is very good.” There is no better way to develop a sense of wonder in our children than to get them involved in drawing or painting the world around them. As they slow down to look at creation (a necessity if you’re going to draw it) they can’t help but be awestruck at the beauty that they see.

Develops the Whole Person

God created us in His image. That image includes creativity. Instruction in the arts in general and art in particular encourages the expression of the imago Dei (image of God) in our children. Whether it’s drawing, painting, sculpture, writing, or music, when we encourage our children to become involved in creative activity, we are helping them to develop into whole, well-rounded individuals.

Connect with God

The two previous points combined produce a third. By using art to encourage your children to appreciate God’s creation and to be creative, you are giving them two powerful tools for connecting with God. We are told to worship the Lord in the “beauty of holiness.” In cultivating an appreciation of beauty and aesthetics, we are giving our children the means to cultivate hearts that worship Him.

There are many other reasons why art should have a place of priority in your homeschool curriculum. These focus on the “big picture.” As you plan your school schedule, be sure to keep the big picture in mind and include art, even if it’s only one day a week. You’ll be glad you did.

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James Pence is a former homeschooling dad and the author or co-author of nine books. He is also a performance chalk artist and blogs twice weekly for See The Light, producers of the DVD-based “Art Class” series.
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Due to a printer's error, the Fall 2015 CHAP Magazine was mailed with the wrong page 23 which meant you only got to read half of this excellent article by Karena Flynn. We are reprinting the article here (in its entirety!) as a courtesy to the author and our readers. Thank you for your understanding.



The Online Option

“How will I ever homeschool my children through high school?”

Has this thought ever crossed your mind? Does it plague you? When my oldest daughter was nearing high school, the thought certainly plagued me. I knew that I was not qualified to teach every subject she would need to take, and though I knew she could simply read the textbook for a few courses, like health, I agonized over a plan for her core academic high school classes. We had tried

using DVDs for some subjects in the past, but the lack of student interaction and accountability made me hesitant to turn to them again.

In eighth grade my daughter took part in a local Latin class that was excellent, so I considered enrolling her in other classes offered locally or through co-ops. However my investigation turned up few local classes that were both rigorous and taught by qualified instructors. Transportation was also an issue. At that time

I had four other children to homeschool and little ones besides. I could not afford to spend hours driving my oldest daughter to multiple classes. I needed a plan that would provide my daughter with a high quality high school experience without sacrificing the education of my other children.

That is when I decided to search for classes on the Internet, having no idea what I would find. I was surprised and excited by the many online options avail-

able. My husband and I decided to enroll our daughter in live, interactive online classes in biology, geometry, and great books (a combined history and English course) for her freshman year. She continued to take Latin locally. The bulk of her coursework was covered, and I was free to teach my younger children. Discovering online classes was the key that allowed our family to homeschool through high school.

That year opened my eyes to many benefits of online classes that I was not necessarily expecting. My daughter, who had never enjoyed science, found her biology class fascinating. The fact that she had to present proofs in geometry class pushed her to understand them fully and gave her experience in communicating to a group. The discussions in her great books class opened her eyes to the many varied ideas and opinions of her classmates. She learned that to debate effectively, she had to defend her position with facts.

Since her online classes only met once or twice a week, she still learned independently for the most part, a valuable aspect of the homeschooling experience in my estimation. This, however, was augmented by the interactive classes, professional feedback on written assignments, and access to a knowledgeable instructor when she had questions. My daughter enjoyed a new level of independence that year while meeting fellow students from across the country. I, on the other hand, was pleased with my new role as cheerleader rather than task master.

Now that I have had five of my children take dozens of online classes from a variety of sources, I have found that not all online classes are equal. For the most part we have been very pleased, but at times we have been disappointed. Once we enrolled two of our children in classes taught by a man who clearly did not hold the same values as our family. Though he assigned papers, he did not grade them, and students received no grade for the courses he taught. Classes

were primarily lectures, and although students could make comments in the chat box, they did not participate in actual discussions. I learned then to do my homework before enrolling my children in online classes.

When wading through the many options available, I recommend that you look for the following characteristics:

1. Live and interactive class. Seek classes that involve the student in lessons taught in real time. Students are less likely to daydream if they know they may be called on to answer a question. They cannot fast-forward part of the lesson that they think they don't need to watch, and they can ask questions if they feel lost or confused. Participating in discussions and considering the input of fellow students are vital aspects of a solid educational experience.

Discovering online classes was the key that allowed our family to homeschool through high school.

2. Qualified teacher and materials.

Consider the teacher's credentials and experience. If possible, contact the teacher before signing your child up for a class. Do you get the sense that the teacher will interact with students on a personal, individual level? Does he communicate clearly and thoroughly? Will he be a positive role model for your child—someone you will want your child to emulate? Also, read reviews about the text; does it have a solid reputation?

3. Well-organized website. Take the time to navigate through the website of the organization offering the class. The website often reflects the classes offered; if the information on the

site is not logically arranged, classes may be hard to follow as well.

4. Positive Testimonials. Read testimonials of those who have taken the class before. If possible, talk to people who have taken the class you are considering. Were they pleased? Why or why not? Were the students prepared for the next step in their educational pursuits?

5. Solid Technical Aspect. Try to determine whether the teacher uses an appropriate platform for the class. Some platforms allow for intricate graphics or small group discussions, which can add to the experience when appropriate. Also, the class should not be plagued with technical issues.

6. Flexibility. Will your child have access to class recordings if he is unable to attend class? In case of a prolonged absence, either planned or unexpected, will the instructor be flexible? If you know of scheduling conflicts, ask the instructor how they will be handled.

If you have never considered using online classes for high school, I would encourage you to consider doing so. Online classes can enrich the educational experience of your students and make homeschooling through high school manageable for you. That certainly has been the case in our home!

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Karena Flynn has homeschooled all of her eight children, beginning kindergarten with the oldest in 1998. Three have graduated and made a smooth transition to college, due in large part to their participation in online classes during high school. Karena teaches online high school math classes herself through Liberty Tutorials (www.libertytutorials.com). She received a Bachelor of Science degree with a major in mathematics and minors in education and English from James Madison University, maintaining a 4.0 GPA in her math classes and graduating summa cum laude.



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