



homeschool iowa

A PUBLICATION OF THE NETWORK OF IOWA CHRISTIAN HOME EDUCATORS | WINTER 2018

Features:

**Finding Your NICHE:
Special-Needs Advisors**

**You CAN Teach
Homeschool Science**

**New Year's Resolution
or Life-Changing
Revolution?**

**Driving Circles in
the Cul-De-Sac**



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- Be eligible for membership in the NICHE chapter of the ESA National Home School Honor Society

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Your support helps provide an informative website, response services for homeschool questions, homeschool publications, a team of homeschool regional representatives, a statewide graduation, an annual conference with nationally-known speakers and Iowa's largest homeschool curriculum hall, legislative liaisons, Homeschool Day at the Capitol, assistance for homeschool groups and leaders, a statewide chapter of the Homeschool National Honor Society, and support for national homeschool research.

It's EASY to Join!

Scan the QR Code or register online at homeschooliowa.org. Your \$35 membership helps Homeschool Iowa serve Iowa's homeschooling families!



More about the HSLDA Discount

NICHE members are eligible for a \$20 discount on Home School Legal Defense Association membership (new or renewal). When you join NICHE, simply write the NICHE Group Discount Number (available by emailing niche@homeschooliowa.org) on your HSLDA application or renewal form. Pay only \$95 (normally \$115) per year. Or sign up online: www.hslda.org.

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 Contact us at ads@homeschooliowa.org.**

what’s the point?

The Homeschool Iowa Board believes that even more important than quality academics is eternal salvation from the penalty and power of sin. While we come from different church backgrounds, we, with all true Christians, agree on the fundamentals of salvation:

1. All people are in rebellion against the God who created them and deserve eternal punishment for that rebellion (sin).
2. God, in love, sent His sinless Son, Jesus Christ, who died on the cross as payment for the sins of sinful humanity, rising again from the dead.
3. Jesus’ death and resurrection provide forgiveness of all sin and reconciliation with God to any who repent and believe in Him.
4. Salvation cannot be earned by any act on our part; it must be received as a free gift by faith in Jesus Christ alone.

If you’d like to talk more with someone about your relationship with Jesus Christ, we invite you to write niche@homeschooliowa.org for a confidential and biblical response.



Did you know that your support matters?

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When you make a financial donation to Homeschool Iowa, you are supporting an organization that serves and supports homeschooling families all year long. Homeschool Iowa is a non-profit 501(c)(3) educational, religious, and charitable corporation. Donations to Homeschool Iowa are tax deductible. Thank you for your support!

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magazine

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our mission

To provide Christ-centered events, communication, and resources to better equip, inform, and encourage Iowa home educators to the glory of God!



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Homeschool Iowa Needs YOU

BY JOE BAILEY, PRESIDENT HOMESCHOOL IOWA

You could have heard a pin drop as my wife and I looked at each other, astonished but with smiles slowly spreading across our faces.

"We've decided to homeschool!" our schoolteacher friend had exclaimed.

We'd known this young couple for years, and this declaration was entirely unexpected.

Sometimes, as a homeschool father, I wonder just how much my work affects the lives of those outside my family. The daily grind of raising and homeschooling children is a joyful responsibility, but it doesn't often seem to influence others beyond my doorstep.

Yet, we had just received the startling but joyful news. This husband and wife, who were decidedly unlikely homeschoolers, had told us that knowing our family over the years had helped them make this important decision on how to raise their kids.

Really, I shouldn't have been so surprised.

Homeschooling is growing by leaps and bounds as people from all kinds of backgrounds and family situations are starting to homeschool. At Homeschool Iowa, we believe all parents have the God-given right and calling to raise their children, and we want to cheer parents on!

Homeschool Iowa is responding to the growing homeschool community.

• In 2017, we launched our Regional Representatives program to connect families with knowledgeable and experienced guides in their part of the state who can help answer questions like:

"How do I start?"

"Can I do this as a single mom?"

"What curriculum should I use?"

• This year, Homeschool Iowa expanded our services with Special Needs Advisors. We are blessed to provide this seasoned, caring team of consultants to assist homeschooling parents dealing with various learning challenges because we believe that children should have an education that fits their needs and giftings.

• We continue to serve families through our three annual events: Capitol Day, Graduation and the annual Conference, because we believe that parents who receive encouragement, support, and protection are best able to educate their children.

But we don't want to stop there.

Our board of directors and key volunteers have taken the forward-looking steps to consider homeschool needs unique to our state and to develop a 5-year strategy on how to address those needs and continue to build this great homeschool movement.

Planning for the future is important. Here at Homeschool Iowa, we believe Christ-centered home education develops the full potential of the next generation, and we want to promote and protect continued homeschooling freedoms.

One key component of this strategy is to build a stronger advocacy team. Although home education is well-established in our state, we are always just one election, just one legislative session, just one horrific child-abuse story away from losing our hard-won freedoms.

Another key component is making personal connections with homeschoolers, like you, across the state. We hope to do this by adding regional events and continuing to build up and partner with different demographic groups.

All of this will take volunteers and resources that we don't already have. And we are committed to doing all this without increasing the cost to hardworking homeschool families who need help.

That is why I am asking you to partner with us to make these dreams a reality.

Would you consider giving a one-time or recurring gift to Homeschool Iowa to help support homeschoolers across the state?

Most importantly, would you join us in praying for God's continued protection and blessing upon families striving to disciple their children at home? Especially pray for those who are struggling...that God would draw them to Himself and grant them grace to press on.



Joe Bailey, Homeschool Iowa Board President, his wife, and their family, all serve the Iowa homeschool community as volunteers, dedicating their time, creativity, and energy to promoting homeschooling in Iowa. Photo Credit: Hannah Bailey



Finding Your NICHE

New Resource: Special-Needs Advisors

An increasing number of parents are discovering that homeschooling can serve as an excellent means to provide for their children's special-education needs.

Many resources, tools, and services are available to meet special learning challenges, and the one-on-one environment is ideal for students with learning struggles. Our new Special Needs Advisors are one resource that Homeschool Iowa is happy to offer to our current Homeschool Iowa members! The Special Needs Advisors are available to assist you with your questions about homeschooling special needs children, but they are not able to provide diagnostic advice or design IEPs.



Kim has been married for 30 years and has two children who have both graduated. Even so, Kim notes that, for a special needs mom, the learning never ends!

She has encouraged both homeschool and public school special needs moms for many years. Kim also worked as a parent partner for the AEA, going with families to IEP meetings as an advocate.

KIM'S EXPERIENCE AREAS:

- Physical Disabilities
- Intellectual Disabilities
- Cerebral Palsy
- Sensory Processing Disorder
- Auditory Processing Disorder
- ADHD
- Autism Spectrum
- Accessibility Issues
- Special Needs Adoption
- Anxiety



Laura has been married for 28 years and has seven children. Some have graduated from high school and some have graduated from college. She has normal functioning children, children with learning disabilities, and a child with specialized needs.

Laura has been a local homeschool leader and also serves as a Homeschool Iowa Regional Representative. She has experience working with the AEA and advising homeschooling parents of special needs children.

LAURA'S EXPERIENCE AREAS:

- Down Syndrome
- Dyslexia
- Dysgraphia
- Language Processing Disorder
- ADHD
- Depression/Anxiety
- Sensory Issues
- Bipolar



Amy has been married for over 25 years and is an adoptive mom to a daughter with special needs, including speech, occupational, and feeding therapy concerns.

Over ten years of experience provide her with empathy and understanding for the struggles and challenges that parents of special needs children face.

She has written for several publications and served as the leader of a Bible study for moms of children with special needs.

AMY'S EXPERIENCE AREAS:

- Autism Spectrum Disorders
- Speech
- Fine Motor (Writing)
- Sensory Issues
- Learning Styles
- Love Languages
- Literal Thinkers



Adele has been married for 30 years. Her two children are in graduate and undergraduate school in California and Texas. One of her children is twice exceptional (2e) – both gifted and special needs.

Adele has been a homeschool supervising teacher, support group board leader, special needs coordinator for her local group, and worked for nine years for Homeschool Buyers Co-op. She has also presented sessions at the annual Homeschool Iowa Conference on giftedness and using games in your homeschooling.

ADELE'S EXPERIENCE AREAS:

- ADHD
- Tourette's Syndrome
- Profoundly Gifted
- Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder
- Anxiety/Depression
- Dysgraphia

HI Regional Representatives

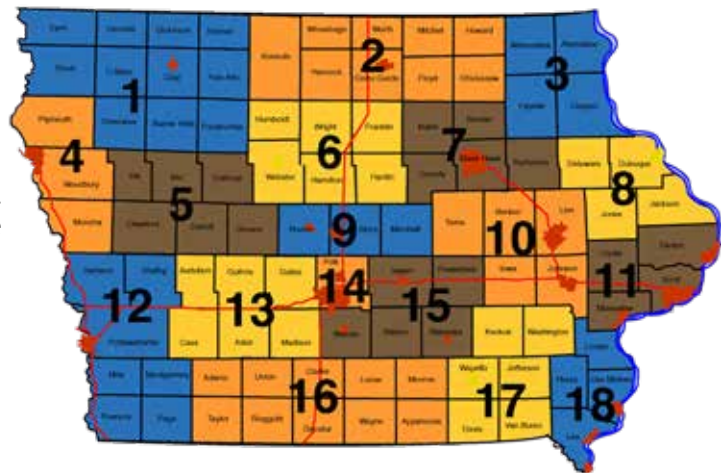
Our Homeschool Iowa Regional Representatives, serving in 18 regions around the state, offer localized assistance. These veteran homeschooling moms have extensive practical skills and wisdom that come from years of experience.

Within their regions, the Regional Representatives:

- Counsel new home educators
- Answer questions about local issues and opportunities
- Facilitate communications with local homeschool support groups
- Identify the needs and concerns of homeschooling families in their regions
- and more!

To connect with your rep, visit:

www.homeschooliowa.org/resources/regional-representatives



We will return to our regional focus with Southwest Iowa being featured in our next issue. I would love to have your input! Email me at editor@homeschooliowa.org with your tips on places to visit, pictures of activities, and attractions in the Southwest area of the state.



graduation 2019

May 18, 2019 | Berean Assembly of God | Pleasant Hill

Join us in this ceremony to celebrate homeschool graduates from across the state! We will offer both a morning and an afternoon ceremony. Registration must be completed by February 15, 2019.

Register at: www.homeschooliowa.org/events-page/graduation/



Daniel Craig
2019 Graduation Speaker

Our 2019 Homeschool Iowa Graduation speaker, Daniel Craig, is passionate about home education, discipleship, and the church. As a first-generation homeschool graduate, he has a great burden to build on his heritage of Christian home-based discipleship.

Married for three years, and now with two little ones in tow, he and his wife Megan are in the throes of learning what it means to raise a family to the glory of God.

Daniel operates an accounting firm and is also the founder of LifeLaunch, a ministry with the mission of launching the next generation into life through powerful mentoring relationships and real-life application.



You Can Teach Homeschool Science

BY MARCI GOODWIN



Just the mention of teaching science strikes fear in the hearts of many homeschool parents. That fear causes some to scan over or skip teaching science to their children altogether. It doesn't have to be that way.

When many people think of science, all they can see is visions of mathematical formulas, unpronounceable names, and dissecting frogs. Those things are part of science, but at its heart, science is much simpler. Science is in our everyday life. It's all around us. You are using it and are alive because of it right now.

I'm here to tell you that you CAN teach homeschool science. Not only can you teach homeschool science, but when you realize how simple science actually is, you might even grow to appreciate and like science!

Learn With Your Kids

When I talk with parents who are skeptical about their ability to teach homeschool science, their number one concern is that they do not have enough science knowledge and understanding themselves. How do you teach something that you don't know?

I have a degree in science and I still learn so much, right along with my kids, everyday. I read the same text as the kids and try to answer the study questions just like the kids do. When I don't know an answer, the kids see me look it up. They see me learning and enjoying it.

Homeschooling is not only a great way to teach children science at home, but is an opportunity to teach kids to love to learn so that they never stop! Letting kids see you learning and enjoying the process teaches them how to be lifelong learners. That's important because there is always more to learn.

Start Simple

If you are nervous teaching homeschool science, don't start out with a complicated curriculum that will take a lot of prep work and understanding on your part. Start out with something simple.

When we first started homeschooling, I wanted the kids to love science and not get bogged down in the details. We spent that first year doing simple experiments in experiment books we found in the library. (You can't go wrong with books by Janice Van

Science Resources for Homeschoolers:

Cleave.) The kids loved the hand-on aspect and seeing the results of their projects.

Good experiment books have a short explanation of the concepts behind the experiments. For the first years, that is usually good enough. But, of course, if your kids want to learn more, hit the library again for more books on that particular subject, and encourage your kids to dive deeper.

When you and your kids have this relaxed, fun introduction to science, it sets you both up to be excited about science as you move through your homeschool journey. It takes the scare factor out, and stirs curiosity and wonder.

Another simple science option is going for a scripted, all-in-one box curriculum. Just open the book and go. All you need is right there. No need to be a science expert.

Join A Co-Op

Co-ops are wonderful ways for homeschool students to learn from other parents and instructors that may have more experience in a subject area or at least have a higher comfort level teaching that subject.

Science is probably the number one reason co-ops are formed and the number one class kids take in a co-op setting. So a homeschool science co-op class shouldn't be hard to find.

Online/DVD Course

If teaching science on your own is just too far out of your comfort zone, consider an online or DVD course. There are great options available in almost every area of science.

These courses allow your student to get instruction from experts, but you have control of the grading and the experiments (which is the fun part anyway). This will take the pressure and stress off of you!

Look for one with a format and instructor that your child enjoys. Online and DVD courses are, also, a great way to expose your student to a branch of science that is totally new to both of you but that captures their attention.

Just Do It!

You CAN teach homeschool science! Don't be scared. You will do great. Choose the method that fits your style. Jump in and have fun!



Marci Goodwin considers herself a guide, helping homeschooling parents teach science to their kids. She runs the website: TheHomeschoolScientist.com, and her mission is to equip and encourage homeschool parents by taking the fear out of and putting the fun into science education. Her goal is to help parents and students become a Homeschool Scientist.

...at its heart,
science is much
simpler. Science
is in our everyday
life. It's all
around us...

The Homeschool Scientist

Experiments, articles, and a store! Don't miss the monthly science calendar - making monthly science easy for the homeschooling parent to plan! Learn more here: www.thehomeschoolscientist.com.



Home Science Tools

Science curriculum kits for Abeka, Bob Jones, Lifepac, and MORE! I purchased the kits for Abeka 6th and 4th grades this year, and I love how easy it has made it for my kids to do those experiments in our curriculum! Additionally, Home Science Tools has many other resources. Learn more here: www.homesciencetools.com

Answers in Genesis

Resources for teaching creation science! Get more details here: www.answersingenesis.org/education/

Other Websites:

How the Body Works: www.kidshealth.org/en/kids/htbw/

Kids Health in the Classroom: www.classroom.kidshealth.org

How Science Works: www.science.howstuffworks.com

CK12: www.ck12.org/student/

NASA For Educators: www.nasa.gov/audience/foreducators/

and: www.science.nasa.gov/ems

The Vega Science Trust: www.vega.org.uk

Math Science Nucleus: www.ms-nucleus.org

The Physics Classroom: www.physicsclassroom.com

NOAA ~ the weather: www.noaa.gov/education

Iowa Department of Conservation: www.iowadnr.gov/Conservation/For-Teachers/Classroom-Resources

And so many more! Do you have a favorite science resource? We'd love to have you share it on our Facebook Discussion group at: www.facebook.com/groups/HomeschoolIowaDiscussionGroup.



Become a Member Today!

For only \$35 a year, YOU can help us continue to protect and promote home education in Iowa while also encouraging and equipping homeschoolers across the state!

Members enjoy:

- Access to the Members Portal of our website with helpful tools and resources, including our homeschool resource guide and fillable (type-in) homeschool forms, transcript forms, a field trip guide, and more.
- Members are invited to include events and activities in our monthly calendar.
- Discounts from Schoolhouse Teachers, HSLDA, our state conference, and more!
- Eligibility for our honor society and the opportunity to participate in our annual graduation service.
- A bi-monthly e-newsletter full of tips and encouragement.
- Access to our Special Needs Advisors.
- Educator discounts and MORE!

Visit our website to join us TODAY! homeschooliowa.org



DISCOVER YOUR **PASSION** AT WALDORF

TRADITION // PASSION // COMMUNITY // SUCCESS

Come see what **Waldorf University** is all about with an Open House specifically for homeschool students and their families!

Located in Forest City, Iowa, at Waldorf, you'll find your home away from home. We offer students:

- // A **small, supportive** campus environment. With an average class size of 15, and a faculty-to-student ratio of 11:1, you will excel academically and will get valuable, hands-on experience in your major.
- // Our professors will not only teach you, but they will also serve as **academic advisors**. You will work closely with a professor in your major to make sure you are planning your courses and are on the right track to graduate.
- // Our **campus ministry** program is very active and engages students with their spiritual development on campus. We are not affiliated with just one denomination, nor with just one way to worship. "Like Fire" meets weekly with high energy Christian music and deep discussion. We also have Mass and Rosary services, as well as The Bridge which is connected to our local Baptist church. We understand that faith is a journey and it's one you can continue at Waldorf.
- // Not only will you learn at Waldorf, you'll also have fun and be involved! With over **35 student led clubs and organizations** on campus, you'll have the opportunity to pursue what you love most. Ninety-eight percent of our students are involved in at least one co-curricular activity on campus!

These are just a few of the highlights at Waldorf University! You'll learn more about Waldorf at our Open House on **April 5, 2019**.

For more details, including an agenda and how to register, please visit: waldorf.edu/Homeschool-Open-House.



106 S. 6th St. Forest City, IA
waldorf.edu // 800.292.1903

Perfect Partners

BY JOHN DESAULNIERS, JR.

The Bible teaches that God created two relational institutions: the family, and the Church. While God also created the institution of human government, its purpose is more judicial rather than relational. Both the family and the Church are given responsibilities and instructions for care, nurturing, support, and reproductive growth of their respective entities. Government, in its proper biblical role, defends against evil, ideally making society safe for both the family and the Church to flourish.

While the two are distinct, there are so many parallels between the Church and the family, that Gene Getz described the family as “the church in miniature” (*The Measure of a Family*, p. 13, 1976, G/L Publications). The apostle Paul also used the imagery of family to describe the Church (e.g., *Galatians 6:10, Ephesians 2:19, and 1 Timothy 3:15*). And within the framework of God’s plan for people, their missions are parallel: to educate and disciple their members.

Jesus gave what we call the Great Commission to the Church (*Matthew 28:18-20*). As the Church, we are to go into all the world, make disciples of all the nations, baptize those disciples, and teach them to observe Christ’s commands. As parents, we are to bring up our children in the nurture and admonition of the Lord (*Ephesians 6:4*). Paul’s command is no different than the command given through Moses to the people of Israel in *Deuteronomy 6:6-9*, or the admonition of Asaph in *Psalms 78:5-8*.

In other words, the family does in miniature what the Church does on a larger scale - integrating faith and Christian practice into every aspect of life and learning. For the family to do so rightly and well, the family must be a part of a larger, local expression of the Church. It is the Church that is the pillar and support of truth (*1 Timothy 3:15*). It is the Church that is given the role of evangelizing and discipling the world. And the reality is, if we are in Christ, we are part of the Church.

The family does not replace the Church, and the Church does not replace the family. They are partners, sharing in the responsibilities of discipleship. It is because of the recognition of this biblical partnership that Homeschool Iowa, the Network of Iowa Christian Home Educators, is excited to launch its church and pastoral relations initiative. While home-educated students make up a rather small percentage of the K-12 population (2.3 million, or just over 4%, see www.nheri.org/research-facts-on-homeschooling/), the integration of faith and academics in an organic learning setting represents a miniature replication of how the Church organically matures believers by speaking biblical faith to every area of life.

As homeschooling caught hold in Christian families in the ‘80s and ‘90s, it can’t be denied that there were some bumps in the road and, at times, strained and even broken, relationships with local churches and their leaders. This is unfortunate, though a somewhat common theme in zealous movements throughout history. But the good news is that history also records how God’s work continues, how relationships are restored and strengthened by God’s mercy and grace, and how iron sharpens iron for the benefit of all concerned when the Spirit is given control.

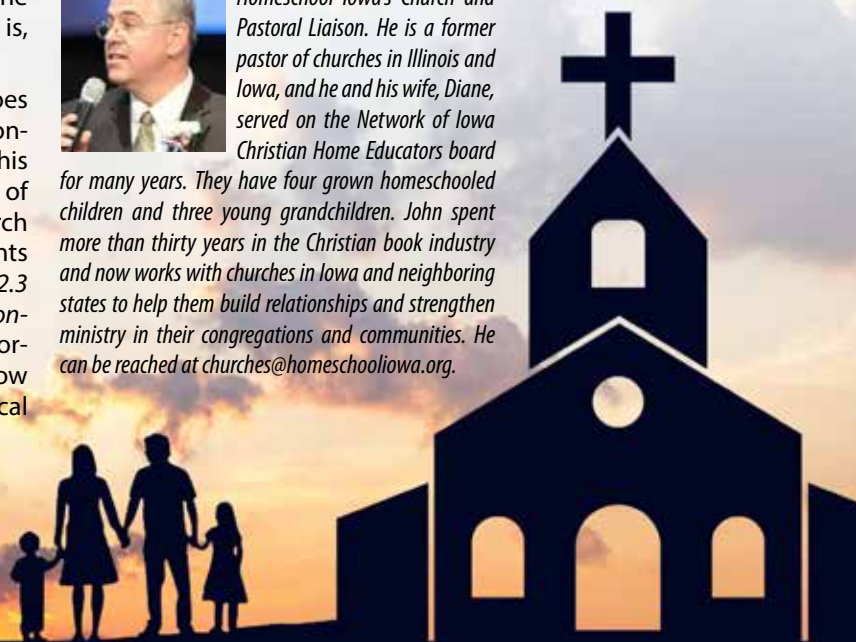
...the integration of faith and academics in an organic learning setting represents a miniature replication of how the church organically matures believers by speaking biblical faith to every area of life.

The long-term goal of our church and pastoral relations initiative is to develop a better, mutually supporting network of churches, church leaders, and homeschool families in the state of Iowa. Many churches have developed resources that help families in education and discipleship of their children. Many homeschool families have found their churches far more supportive than they first knew or expected. Homeschool Iowa wants to help build bridges between these two perfect partners -- the local church and the homeschooling family -- to help strengthen Christ-centered education and discipleship for generations to come.

If you are a pastor or church leader, I’d love to connect with you. If you’re a homeschooling parent with a supportive local church, let’s talk. If you’re either a church leader or parent who’s having a bit of a challenge with “the other side,” I’d like to visit as well. God’s plan is for the Christian family and the Church to both demonstrate faith, hope, and love to the world and to one another until Christ returns. I hope you’ll join me in this new venture of intentionally and strategically working together toward that end.

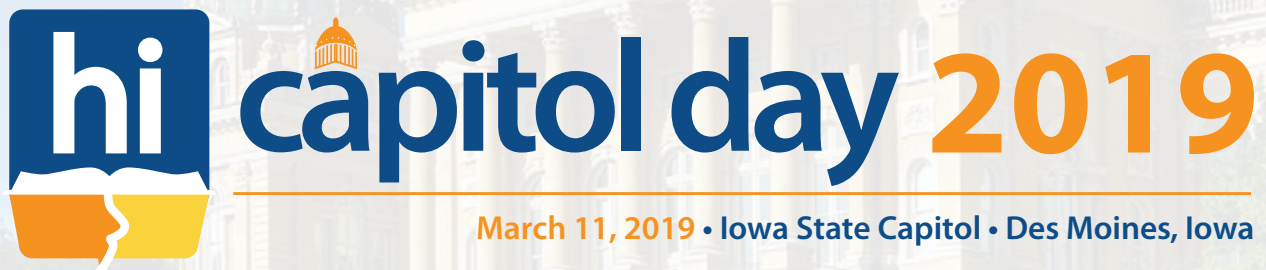


John Desaulniers, Jr. is Homeschool Iowa’s Church and Pastoral Liaison. He is a former pastor of churches in Illinois and Iowa, and he and his wife, Diane, served on the Network of Iowa Christian Home Educators board for many years. They have four grown homeschooled children and three young grandchildren. John spent more than thirty years in the Christian book industry and now works with churches in Iowa and neighboring states to help them build relationships and strengthen ministry in their congregations and communities. He can be reached at churches@homeschooliowa.org.



Join Us

March 11, 2019, at the Capitol
as we stand for continued
Educational Freedom in Iowa!



March 11, 2019 • Iowa State Capitol • Des Moines, Iowa

Rally in the Rotunda
Tour the beautiful Capitol building
Meet & talk to our legislators
and MORE!

Pre-Register at:
**[homeschooliowa.org/events-
page/capitol-day](http://homeschooliowa.org/events-page/capitol-day)**
(registration is free)



The Children's Program: a Work of Love

BY HANNAH KRATZER

Homeschooling has been a part of me forever. It could practically be written into my DNA. The same could be said of my husband, the Nebraska transplant. When it comes to homeschooling, we are both convinced that children learn best when they use creativity in the environment around them all the time. This was part of what has drawn us to direct the children's program for the Homeschool Iowa Conference.

It all began eight years ago when our second child was three weeks old and the current children's program format was in its baby stages here in Iowa. A team came from the Nebraska homeschool children's program. And since my husband, Scott, had been involved there previously, he was a natural fit to help transition the program to Iowa.

As I said, our second daughter was just a few weeks old, and we were immersed in a world of song, drama, laughter, friendship, and JOY! It was a lot to take in at the time, but over the years, we have found our feet and an outstanding team! We now have four daughters, three of whom attend the children's program. As a result of our own daughters being a part of the program with us, it drives us to excellence even beyond what we aspire to give to other homeschool children. To summarize so far, we are in this for the long haul, we absolutely love it, and our standards are as high as the sky.

Perhaps you are reading this and you know what we do. Your children have come home exhilarated and delighted that there are so many other fun kids like them! For those of you wondering what exactly the children's program does, I would love to take the chance here to answer frequently asked questions.

1. Why the Children's Program?

We aspire to provide children with their own conference, their own sense of a broader community of a bigger homeschool world that they are part of. While parents are being encouraged, strengthened, and challenged at the Homeschool Iowa conference, we seek to do the same for your children.

Our volunteers work right with your children in a VBS-style environment, so they take time to engage with your children and care for them during the conference. Every volunteer goes through multiple screening processes, so we can ensure the utmost accountability and safety for your child.

2. What can my child expect at the Children's Program?

We use a custom curriculum that is brought to life through a multi-part drama. Each drama scene connects to a lesson taught in the classroom to engage each child's mind to think about the Bible, life, and character qualities in a Biblical way.

Children also need plenty of movement and activity, so we work creatively to incorporate group games and team challenges. Teams are also encouraged to earn points by having clean spaces, cheerful attitudes, verse memorization, and working together.

3. How can I get involved with the Children's Program?

Currently we have a team of year-round volunteers that assist with the planning components of the children's program. However, it simply doesn't happen without volunteers during the conference! We accept volunteers ages 14 and up, with our requirements being that you support homeschooling, love the Lord Jesus, and love to bless children and families. We provide the curriculum, classroom supplies, teacher training, and our advice and support throughout the conference.

There are several volunteer roles to fill, and we are amazed every year at how God brings exactly the right people each time! If you love to act, please consider joining our drama team. If you love to play games and are sports inclined, we would love to have you organize some of the game time for the kids. If you know sign language, or are good at memorization or simply have a heart to teach, your skills may be used to teach verse memorization during our large group sessions. As in every other role, we will work with you and coach you and delight in how your skills can be a blessing to others.

This year is going to be another amazing program! The 2018 Homeschool Iowa Children's Program theme is SHALOM: Jehovah Reigns! We will follow the lives of Christians in Rome and how Jehovah God is faithful yesterday, today, and forever. Whether you join us as a volunteer or we see your children there, we are excited to have you join us!

Hannah Kratzer is a homeschool survivor and thriver, happily married to Scott for 10 years, and homeschooling four precocious daughters, aged 9, 7, 5, and 3. She has been involved with Homeschool Iowa nearly forever and loves working with her local support group as well.





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Israel Wayne is an author and conference speaker who has a passion for defending the Christian faith and promoting a Biblical worldview. He is the author of a number of books, including *Full-Time Parenting* and *Answers for Homeschooling*. He and his wife, Brook, are raising their nine children in SW Michigan. familyrenewal.org



Megan Scheibner is the homeschooling mother of eight beautiful children. She has been married for 29 years to her college sweetheart, Steve Scheibner. Megan has authored several books, including *In My Seat*, the story of Steve's 9/11 experience. Megan and her husband share a strong desire to equip today's parents to raise the next generation of character healthy leaders. characterhealth.com



Steve Scheibner served as a pilot in the Navy for 8 years. During that time, he married his wife, Megan, and they started their family. After retiring from active duty, he was hired as a pilot for American Airlines. Even while keeping a busy flight schedule, Steve was able to earn a Doctorate of Ministry and founded Cornerstone Baptist Church in Maine. Steve is a highly sought-after trainer and motivational speaker and has co-authored books with his wife. characterhealth.com



"The conference was a great experience, and I am walking away feeling encouraged, equipped, and excited. Refreshed indeed. Transformed."
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New Year's Resolution or Life-Changing Revolution?

BY MEGAN SCHEIBNER, 2019 HOMESCHOOL IOWA CONFERENCE KEYNOTE SPEAKER

Do you ever wonder if you're really accomplishing anything with your busy days?

Do the hours, days, and years just seem to be slipping by with nothing to show for them?

How do we slow down long enough to ensure that our lives will make a difference?

It's so easy to just go about our daily lives checking the block and doing whatever comes next. One day runs into the next with no time to evaluate and recognize our own personal change and growth. Without a concerted effort to stop, look back, and acknowledge the positive changes we have developed in our lives, we run the risk of discouragement and hopelessness.

The start of a New Year provides a great opportunity to take the time for some self-evaluation. Learning to ask ourselves good questions, such as, "What new things have I learned this year?" and "How have I proven myself as a friend and family member?" or "How has God worked in my life this year?" will help us to find satisfaction in our past, as well as providing impetus for future growth and change.

While New Year's resolutions too often set us up for failure and guilt, a pro-active plan to grow and learn new life-stretching lessons will enable us to see real and tangible change.

Take a few minutes, or an hour, or a whole day, if necessary, and make a list of the things you would like to learn this year. Make another list of areas of personal growth you would like to establish. Your list might include such things as: more time in the Word, memorizing scripture, volunteering more often, building new friendships, or developing a new skill or talent.

The lists aren't a written-in-stone law to enslave you, but, rather, helpful tools to encourage positive change.

Growth and change are always more fun with friends!

Invite some friends over for cookies, hot chocolate, and goal-setting. Encourage them to come prepared to share what they have learned in the previous year and how they hope to grow in the upcoming year. Choose partners and commit that you will encourage and pray for one another as you diligently pursue your plans for positive and pro-active change. There is strength in numbers. And knowing that you're not alone in your pursuit of growth will make change an easier proposition.

As a follow-up, perhaps you could host a "halfway" summer barbecue. Providing your friends with an opportunity to share the growth they've experienced "so far," will strengthen all of you to push through until the end of the year. Besides, it's a great excuse for another get-together with friends!

Change is an inevitable part of life. However, change with no forethought too often becomes change for the worse. Take the time to look ahead, pursue your dreams, and pray for change that is spiritually positive and growth oriented.

No more guilty New Year's Resolutions... Let's plan for success!

Megan Scheibner, is wife to her college sweetheart, Steve, and mom to eight awesome kids. Megan loves writing, cooking, reading, running, tennis, and feeding teenagers. Megan's personal goal is to continually bring glory to God through Christ-like, character healthy decision-making. That's her goal for her kids as well. Sometimes they succeed, but sometimes, not so much. We are looking forward to having Megan join us as a speaker at our 2019 Homeschool Iowa Conference.



Reaching Out to Those with Special Needs

BY KIM STILWELL

We have a 23-year-old son who experiences special needs. Though Joseph can handle a full-time job as a custodian, relationships are a challenge for him. He doesn't always know what to say or how to respond. Usually when someone talks to him, he will say a few words, but not many. He often has to stop to think a few seconds about his response. Some people do not wait. The silence makes them uncomfortable, and they either talk again before he can respond (to break the silence) or they give up and walk away. Over the years, Joseph has made great progress. He used to not be able to look people in the eye or to respond at all. However, it is still hard to have a deep relationship with him because he rarely responds in much depth at all.

Sometimes Joseph's silence makes people think that he is not perceptive. They would be surprised to know how very perceptive Joseph really is. He notices what goes on around him. He senses when he is loved and accepted. He knows when someone doesn't like him. He knows if he is ignored or left out. If someone takes the effort to know him, they will find that he has well-thought-out opinions and beliefs. They will learn that he has a sweet and gentle spirit. They will learn to enjoy his delightful, dry sense of humor. They will come to realize that he has a very generous heart. Having a relationship with Joseph takes a lot more time and patience than it does to have a relationship with most people, but I truly believe those who have made the effort would say it was worth it.

Most of us love and appreciate people who love our children. It means the world to us when someone reaches out to them, shows interest, and loves them in spite of their imperfections. This is even more true when one has a child who is socially awkward and/or experiences special needs. I would like to talk about four people who have invested in Joseph. Circumstances have led to a closer relationship with a couple of these people, but, whether a more minor relationship or a deeper one, reaching

out to Joseph has still required effort, love, and Christ-likeness on their part. What do these four friends have in common? I see two main commonalities. All four respect Joseph as a person and they all continued to talk to him and reach out to him, even when they received little or no response.

There is a young man in our church who is three months older than Joseph. Austin has been a good friend to Joseph for many years. After church services, Austin will often purposely seek Joseph out and talk to him. If Austin is bothered by how one-sided the conversation is at times, you would never know it. The lack of response has never kept Austin from seeking Joseph out the next time. He has even taken Joseph shooting. Austin is now married and has a baby, but he continues to take time to be with Joseph. Recently, when I thanked Austin for being a good friend to Joseph, his answer surprised and humbled me. He said that Joseph is a good friend to him, too. Austin has seen behind Joseph's quiet awkwardness and values him as a friend. Joseph thinks the world of Austin and has said that if he gets married, he wants his brothers and Austin to be his groomsmen.

Joseph's cousin recently married a young man named Kyle. From the time Kyle met Joseph, he has reached out to him. It didn't seem to bother Kyle in the least that Joseph didn't respond to him in the same friendly, joking, outgoing manner that my other kids did. Kyle engages Joseph in conversation, jokes with him, calls him "My Man Joe" and reaches out to him every time he sees him. Sadly, Kyle and Rebekah now live out of state, but Joseph remembers Kyle's friendship and mentions him from time to time.

Our daughter-in-law, Alissa, married our oldest son, Joshua, five-years-ago. She accepted Joseph as a brother. She treats him just like she treats our other kids. She listens respectfully when he talks. She teases him. She laughs at his jokes. Joseph feels very comfortable with Alissa. When he is with Alissa and Josh, he acts just as he does when he is with just our immediate family. In

fact, Alissa is one of the few people, besides his siblings, that Joseph feels comfortable teasing.

Our chiropractor, Rob, also happens to be a personal family friend. Because of Joseph's custodial job, which includes vacuuming, cleaning windows, and other repetitive jobs, his shoulder and arm bother him periodically, so he goes to Rob's office on a regular basis to be adjusted. Rob always talks to Joseph just like he talks to the rest of our family. As a result, over the many chiropractor visits and occasional social times that Joseph has interacted with Rob, he feels less nervous and much more comfortable interacting with Rob than he does with most people. Though to someone listening in, it would appear that Joseph and Rob's conversations are small talk, Joseph is actually very open with him compared to most other people in his life. Rob usually gets several sentence answers rather than the one- or two-word answers that most people receive. And, even more telling, Joseph is so comfortable with Rob that he can usually respond immediately instead of having to think about how to respond. Joseph has noticed that Rob treats him as a "normal" person. One time, after we left Rob's office, Joseph had a rare moment of expressing his feelings, showing that he does, indeed, know he is "different" when he said, "He talks to me just like if I am anyone else." It was obvious that this meant the world to Joseph.

These are not the only four people who have reached out to Joseph. Most of my mom's friends greet him and chat with him on a regular basis, and other people do as well. Some, however, feel awkward around him and say nothing, not realizing that even a simple, "Hi, Joe" would make him feel welcome and included.

It can be hard to reach out to those who do not respond as we would like them to react. Personally, I would much rather spend my time and effort on friendships that feel more two-sided. A good heart-to-heart talk with a good friend is one of my favorite things in the world. It is hard to reach out to those who are different. This is true, not only with those who experience special needs, but also true of those who have personality quirks, are extremely reserved, have a prickly personality, talk too much or talk too little. Yet, Jesus reached out to the socially awkward. And, in our desire to be Christ-like, we should do the same. I am so thankful for those who take the time to invest in "difficult" people. At one level or another, we are all "different" and "difficult," and we all have moments of being socially awkward. Yet, God still accepts and loves us.

My husband is such a godly example to me of reaching out to the hard-to-love. You will often see him chatting with people who others tend to avoid. Yet, having a son like Joseph has taught me so much. One of the important lessons I have learned from having him as my son is to not give up on a relationship just because the person is hard to reach. I love Joseph as only a mother can, but God loves him even more than I do. Joseph, and others like him, are valuable people created in the image of Christ, and we, ourselves, are blessed when we treat them as such.



Kim and Jeff Stilwell have lived in Des Moines, Iowa, since 1987. They are high school sweethearts who met at a missionary kid school in Lima, Peru. Jeff and Kim have five precious children and a daughter-in-love: Joshua & Alissa, Joseph, Josiah, Jessica, and Jennifer. They are also the happy grandparents of the sweetest granddaughter in the world, Kate.

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Summer in the National Parks

BY LAURA CARLSON



You know that all the hours planning, researching, saving money was worth it when your teenager steps out, hikes up, and has a quiet moment with his Creator.

Picture it:

Your family gazes on crisp blue skies, sitting quietly below the tall, snowcapped peaks of the majestic Grand Teton Mountain Range. The beautiful Jackson Lake lies below. Wisps of transparent clouds drift across the vista. Evergreen-scented air (is that the same smell as your essential oils?) fills your lungs. The children sit eagerly at the feet of a uniformed park ranger. All those gentle reminders to the kids to 'be respectful' have paid off! The ranger gratefully nods to you, and then begins the educational lesson on wildlife and hiking.

This is the trip of a lifetime, two weeks traveling the Yellowstone and Teton National Parks with your children. A trip like this is the result of a hundred hours dreaming, planning, and packing. Binders and books fill a huge plastic container just waiting for the long drive to begin. Oh, yes, this mom has planned everything down to the last detail for over 18 months. It is a celebration filled with smiles and balloons. As homeschoolers, we enjoy freedom to take our school on the road and experience different learning opportunities.

The first balloon pops while packing the vehicle the morning of departure. It isn't all quite fitting into the vehicle. "Maybe we don't really need so many blankets," I proclaim, as we sweat in the lowa heat. "That crisp mountain air will feel great after this heat in Iowa," I decide, as I remove the extra blankets. (We'll return to that decision later while in the Tetons).

1) Plan

Planning this learning adventure can be a wonderful part of the experience. Discuss the trip with your family, set a budget together, then assign your students different parks to research. This can provide you more insight into what interests your children. Our family has "school-traveled" through Williamsburg and Jamestown, VA.; Washington D.C.; and St. Augustine, FL, over ten years of homeschooling. Our son, who enjoys maps and geography, has mapped all the trips. Find what sparks interest for each child and involve them in the planning.

National parks have simple websites to navigate. You can also order brochures, but allow extra time for those to arrive (up to three weeks). Put a map on the wall and highlight your plans. Connect the big screen to a computer and invite the entire family to participate in the research.

I cannot overemphasize the importance of planning the trip. Our plans began with a phone conversation in January of 2017 for a scheduled June 2018 trip. Booking ahead for your camping spot or cabin is vital. There will be absolutely nothing available if you try to book same night accommodations in Yellowstone. I watched a grown man panic in Yellowstone's Mammoth Hot Springs lobby as the reservations attendant repeated, "Sorry. We have no openings tonight."

Neighbors shared stories of an impromptu trip through Yellowstone. The family slept in their vehicle because there was literally no room at the inn. The children learned a valuable lesson: bears will do anything to eat a snack. Evidentially, a sow (female bear) broke open the truck passenger window to grab the crack-

ers, and then left by breaking out the driver's side window while the parents and kids were huddled in the pickup topper.

Again, planning is imperative to a successful adventure.

I like to plan stops on long drives. Sometimes we don't visit each one, but it pays to do the research in case you want to stretch your legs. After you plot the drive and where you want to visit based upon your research and notes, you'll have options for each day. For example, if it is raining, you skip the hike, but can tour the cowboy museum. The National Park Service organizes a program called Junior Rangers. You'll find this information available at every national park. Trained to teach all ages of youngsters, these rangers offer coloring books and stickers to fulfill the Junior Ranger badge requirements. Following the instructions is easy, and you don't have to make up a lesson plan. Again, this information is right on the National Park websites.

2) Permit flexibility

Permitting time flexibility is important to enjoy these parks. Stopping to use the binoculars as a grizzly bear waddles his way up a grassy mountainside is exactly why you are on this trip with the family. Permitting time for extra moments to watch a moose herd wading in the sloughs, lifting their majestic heads, grasses dripping from munching mouths, that is not going to be a scene in Iowa.

Permitting time for a bison herd to sit on a Yellowstone roadway that you want to travel is necessary, even when it takes an extra 480 minutes. Remember, you planned for this with color-



One of our hikes included fording a creek that had swelled to a stream with late snows melting in the high altitudes. It was Ben's job to decide if we could safely cross. And, no, we didn't attempt a crossing. This task was one way to encourage a teenager to make a decision based upon few facts and the unknown current.



See that red shirt up the path? That is me letting go of my 18-year old son as he explores paths that I won't follow. Trusting the lessons repeated for a decade of home education are firm: look where you step.

ing books, games, and binoculars.

Permitting others to share their experiences gave me patience to deal with my own family traveling. I researched the parks for months, watched videos, read travel books, and asked neighbors for tips. But the most valuable information I learned was from other moms in the hotel breakfast rooms as we drove west. Asking one woman if she was on her way west or east, she shared, over coffee, how she and her teenage daughter spent a week at a dude ranch and were now headed home. The trip was a renewal for them after the murder of the older son in a large city. "It has been an expensive trip, but exactly what we needed," she affirmed. "We don't know how many days we have here, so I've learned to treasure each one."

Permits! Buy a park permit to travel through the parks prior to leaving. We ordered ours online and drove the "fast" lane to enter parks.

Permit time to be grateful. Permit time for experiencing God's creations with your family.

What children learn from travel experiences will vary. My son's report, finishing his homeschool years on this trip, when compared to an eight-year-old's national park report, will read differently. They climbed the same mountains, breathed the same crisp air, shivered in the Tetons (although, maybe you kept the extra blankets that we left at home), and both shared irreplaceable family time. The quiet moments spent looking at God's creation standing on the shores of Jackson Lake was invaluable. No words were needed as we listened to snow runoff crashing down ravines. God made this America for us to enjoy. He means for us to share these moments as families. Plan, Permit, and then take pleasure in these moments.

Our journey included a brief stop at the Corn Palace in Mitchell, S.D. I was the only one to get out in the rain to see the unique building up close. Again, permitting flexibility kept the atmosphere inside the vehicle peaceful.

The Minuteman Missile National Historic Site on Interstate 90 east of Wall Drug was a long-held goal of our son's. Watching the educational film, learning the site's history, and buying a deck of



Ben, in red shirt, packs the vehicle with his father the morning we left for "the west." Our son was an active part of the 18-month planning for this educational trip to the national parks.

playing cards took all of three hours. Seeing the real missile silo after studying it for a full year was incredible. Gift shop, movie, museum, and down the road, the missile site. Plan for this stop well ahead of trip as the silo tour sells out months ahead.

Yes, we stopped at Wall Drug. The history of the place is unique to America. The teenager loved it; the parents barely survived. Again, flexibility saved our sanity.

Mt. Rushmore proved to be a challenge. This park was on Ben's bucket list for 10 years. The moment arrives, and fog. Could not see a thing. Prayed about it, returned the next morning, and the fog literally pulled back as we drove up the mountainside. Ben's face, when he saw Lincoln's granite face, was priceless. We stayed for hours in silence, walking around and thinking about the men who shaped our nation carved into that stone. Tours, movie, restaurant, and junior ranger available.

Book your lodging in Mt. Rushmore early. You can camp, rent an RV, cabin, or stay in any number of hotels. Permit extra time for the long lines as summer progresses. With a late winter this year, we moved our trip in February by a week. Hotels in this area are not as booked as lodging in the national parks.



A teenage's early mornings spent smiling with parent may not be unusual on an educational family trip. This father and son enjoyed rare hours together while I witnessed some good stuff. Ben's dad works long hours. They don't get a lot of time together. This was a good trip.

Be sure to stop at Crazy Horse Memorial. This is not a government-owned park. It is a privately-owned museum, college, restaurant, and exhibit. We all enjoyed our visit despite the rains. The movie is a good historical drama, and the museum an accurate history of the Native Americans.

I found a unique route to Yellowstone entrance through Beartooth Pass. Directly from the website: *"The Beartooth All-American Road passes through what is known today as the Beartooth Corridor. Surrounded by the Custer, Gallatin, and Shoshone National Forests, traveling parallel to the Absaroka-Beartooth Wilderness, and abutting Yellowstone National Park, the Highway sits in a million-plus acre wilderness. Visitors have the rare opportunity to experience and explore pristine, untouched alpine and montane landscapes, lush forests, and alpine tundra in the space of a few miles."* It sounded good to me.

3) Treasure moments

My husband and son enjoyed the views and quickly learned to ignore my irrational fear of imminent death. Turns out, I suffer from acrophobia (fear of heights). I still encourage others to plan the drive. Traveling from Red Lodge resulted in a rather wonderful experience in Cooke City, Montana, which is near the entrance to Yellowstone Park. We found a tiny bakery tucked on the mountainside with incredible homemade huckleberry Pop-Tarts and a community of independent people living in some isolation. Internet access launched in 2017. Cell phones do not work in much of these areas. There are 20 students in the kindergarten to eighth grade public school, while high schoolers attend boarding schools. Truly a unique town to visit. There is a hotel on Main Street and bed and breakfasts right down the road. Book early.

When we drove through the old gates into Yellowstone, we were reflective and quiet. There are a lot of trees in the park, as well as road construction, so prepare for delays with books and activities. Again, no cell service in much of the Yellowstone system.

Many of the mapped attractions will be crowded. We heard half a dozen languages at Old Faithful. Visitors from around the world visit America's parks. The park ranger there presented a very good program on the geyser system and how they work. Be



If it looks like our son is racing up the path to get away from us. He likely is. I learned a lot about his maturity and ability to apply what I taught him as my student. He can do it. I did a pretty good job of preparing this young man.

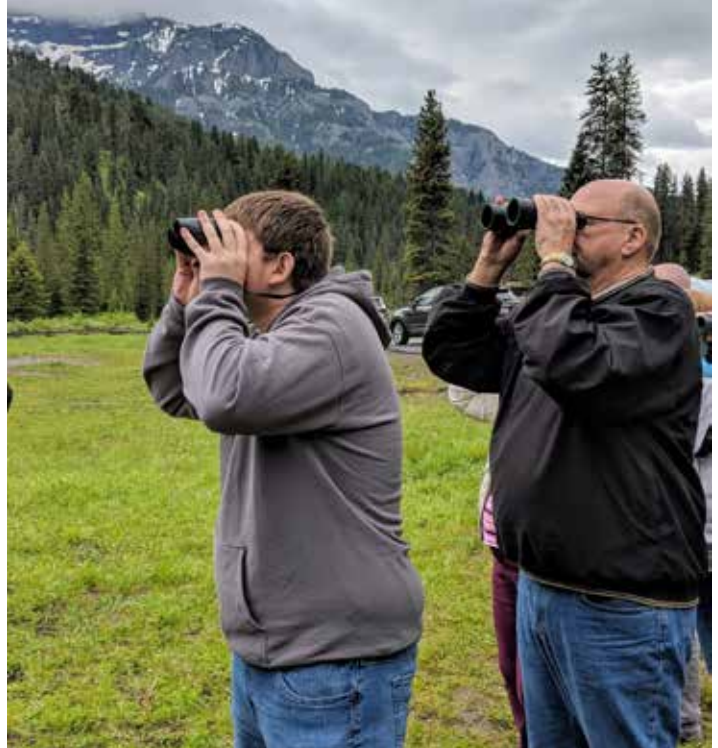
aware, all the educational presentations use evolution descriptions and not creation-based references in educational talks.

Traveling through the park, we rerouted for long road construction delays due to weeks of late snow and rains. Planning for unexpected weather, roads, and animals is helpful, and you'll enjoy the trip more. We had some lovely talks with other travelers stuck at construction sites.

Print maps and download apps offered by Yellowstone. With no GPS available, you'll want a printed or saved map available.

The value of field trip homeschooling cannot simply be measured by a test score. Watching our son experience wildlife through the binoculars and read books for hours as we traveled gives me confidence to say it was well worth the planning and research to provide this foundation for him at home. Get out there and plan a field trip with your students!

Laura Carlson is an Iowa born, raised, and educated writer living in central Iowa. She is a graduate of Iowa State University and has worked as a dishwasher, website developer, and addictions therapist. Her motto is "Life: Live It."



I enjoyed watching my son and his father experience wilderness as much as they enjoyed seeing their first bear in Yellowstone National Park. We planned for extra stops. And this 'bear' sighting was worth every moment.



Balancing a teenager's day includes permitting time to include shopping for books and games he is interested in. The missile site was a highlight for Ben's trip.



This missile site is not well-known, but is directly on the way along Interstate 90 into Wall Drug. If you are traveling this way, we recommend stopping for the movie and museum. Ben spent a year studying the Cold War years. And as a future historian, this was a stop he was excited to visit.



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REQUIREMENTS:

>> CPI Form A must be filed by Sept 1 or within 2 weeks after removing child from school
>> Annual assessment results report must be filed by June 30

ACCESS AVAILABILITY:

>> Access available for Dual Enrollment for public school services, activities, and Senior Year Plus options
>> Access available for Parent-Taught Driver Education

COMPETENT PRIVATE INSTRUCTION (CPI) Option 1 w/ Your Chosen Teacher

REQUIREMENTS:

>> CPI Form A must be filed by Sept 1 or within 2 weeks after removing child from school
>> Meet with your chosen teacher 8 times (2 per quarter)

ACCESS AVAILABILITY:

>> Access available for Dual Enrollment for public school services, activities, and Senior Year Plus options
>> Access available for Parent-Taught Driver Education

COMPETENT PRIVATE INSTRUCTION (CPI) Option 1 w/ HSAP* Teacher

REQUIREMENTS:

>> CPI Form A must be filed by Sept 1 or within 2 weeks after removing child from school
>> Meet with HSAP* teacher 16 times (4 per quarter)

ACCESS AVAILABILITY:

>> Access available for Dual Enrollment for public school services, activities, and Senior Year Plus options
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Driving Circles in the Cul-De-Sac

BY JENN WARREN

There are so many deep, heavy, important things I want my children to learn, to become, so many good things I want to ingrain in their personalities. But one of the lighter things, one of the things that I have found to be so important in my life is to learn how to find joy in simple pleasures.

hot chocolate with "fresh mallows"
finding animals in the clouds
watching the train (even the really, really, long ones)
throwing stale bread to the ducks
playing dress-up, even though I've got a deadline looming
having biscuits and gravy for dinner
driving through neighborhoods to look at Christmas lights
Easter egg hunts
water hose fights in the backyard
driving on the "wake-up" bumps on the road because they make a funny noise
giving underdogs on the swing set
jumping on the trampoline
making cookies
singing silly songs and making funny faces
taking flowers to Nana
sharing a snack while we run errands
doing loops in the cul-de-sac a little faster than a crawl

simply put:

being delighted by the mundane

Simply taking time to be delighted in the discoveries of my children. To say yes to those things that make them smile, even if I am too old to jump on the trampoline and know better than to do a couple "fast" loops in the cul-de-sac before pulling into our driveway, and driving on the "wake-up" bumps" makes the driver behind me think I don't know how to stay in my lane. It's choosing Joy, and it's one of the practices of motherhood I do that keeps me sane.

I love being a Momma. Some days it's hard - I work from home with deadlines to meet, a house to clean, dinner to cook, and two little ones who didn't sleep well and don't want to take a nap, so they are grouchy and grumpy and climbing all over me. But I wouldn't trade it for anything. And when I remember to find Joy, to choose Joy, to refuse Frustration in favor of Joy, every day is golden, and we laugh a lot. I wouldn't change that for anything.

This journal entry dates from February of 2012. My kids are 6 years older now, nine and eleven instead of three and five - but this lesson, this need to be delighted by the mundane, is still true. Choosing Joy is still something I must do on an everyday basis. I plan to choose Joy in the new year. And here's hoping you find Joy in the new year too.



Jenn Warren is a homeschooling, work-at-home freelance graphic designer, and mom of two, who loves fonts, graphic elements, and white space almost as much as she loves her husband. Jenn serves as the editor for Homeschool Iowa magazine and as the Homeschool Iowa Marketing Director.



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