

TEXAS HOME SCHOOL COALITION

REVIEW

KEEPING TEXAS FAMILIES FREE



PLUS:

Faith Between
the Lines

Bachelor's Degree in
2 Years or Less?

Sneak Peek at
New Fall '17 Curricula



TEXAS
HOME SCHOOL
COALITION

SPRING 2017
VOLUME 21, ISSUE 2
www.THSC.org

COUNTER THE



Homeschool.



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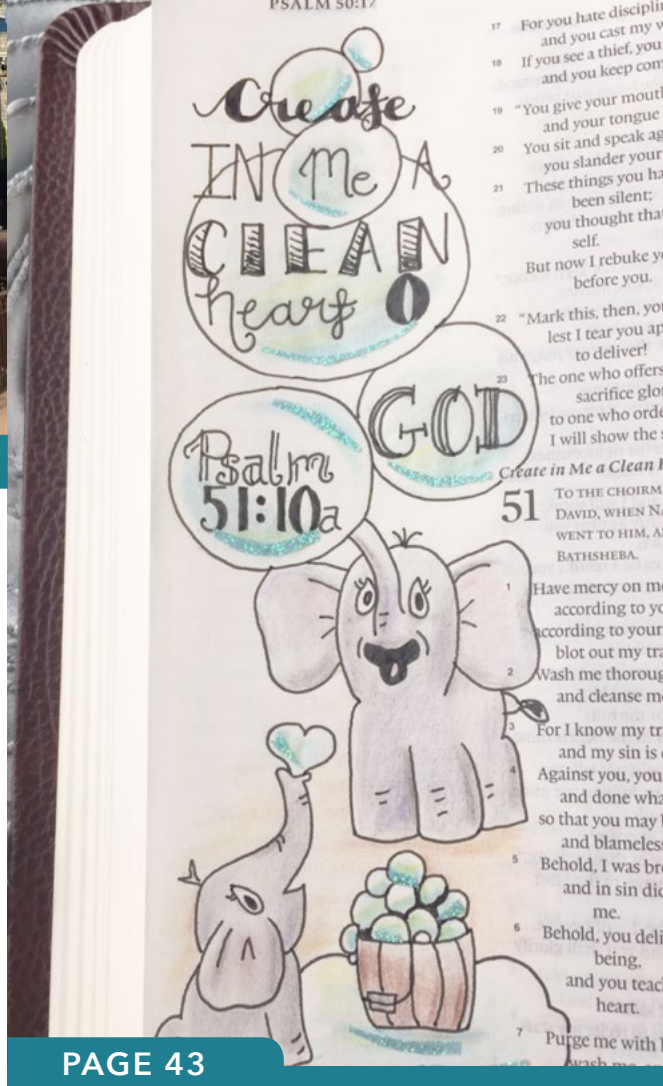
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The articles in this magazine reflect the freedom of home educators in Texas to choose from a wide variety of home school philosophies and teaching methods. Opinions and attitudes expressed in articles do not necessarily reflect the beliefs of the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

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THSC.org



As we near the end of the 2017 Texas legislature, I think back over past legislatures and the battles that THSC and Texas home schoolers fought and endured.

During the 1995 and 1997 legislative sessions, the focus was on parent-taught driver education courses. To this day, all parents, including those that do not home school, have the freedom to teach their children to drive.

The 2000s then presented new challenges. In 2001, THSC forced Texas public community colleges to allow home school students to take dual credit classes. Then, THSC advocated for higher education legislation in the 2003 Texas legislature.

The outcome of that law was to stop discrimination against home school graduates applying for admission to a public Texas college, university or trade school.

In 2009, we defended our freedoms after the Texas legislature passed Senate Bill 1440 that drastically increased the authority of Child Protective Services (CPS). THSC and Texas home school families were instrumental in generating over 17,000 letters, calls and emails to the Texas governor, who then vetoed the bill.

Then, during the 2013 Texas legislature, THSC was instrumental in killing two pieces of legislation that would have been detrimental to Texas families. One would have allowed doctors to sentence sick children to death despite objections from their parents. The other legislation would have allowed vindictive in-laws to take children away from their parents without having to produce evidence that the parents were unfit to care for their children.

During the previous session in 2015, THSC passed a bill that closed loopholes on class ranking that public colleges and universities had begun using to discriminate against home school graduates.

Some of the challenges during the 2017 Texas legislature have been new. THSC has primarily focused on CPS and parental rights reform to ensure that parents involved in CPS investigations or court proceedings are considered innocent until proven guilty.

THSC has also fought for home school access to UIL-sponsored activities at public schools in the school district where their parents pay taxes. "One Father's Appeal to Pass the Tim Tebow Bill" on page 28 underscores the importance of this legislation to many home schooling families.

Just like every session, we have realized some of our goals, while others we have not yet achieved in the 2017 legislature. Even while eagerly anticipating what the end of this session might hold, we are already asking, "What next?"

What will THSC do in the 2019 Texas Legislature? What we do every session: Continue *Keeping Texas Families Free*.

INSIDE THIS ISSUE...

"Do your research on scholarships and grants, including how a gap year or unconventional college plan could affect your eligibility."

Taryn Austgen, p. 24

"We cannot be double-minded. Either we can manage joyfully what we have or something needs to change."

Brittany Ellermann, p. 32

"A rich level of discussion occurs when more students are involved, particularly with high school students. Students talk about what they believe and how to defend those beliefs, which develops maturity and thinking skills."

Susan K. Macias, p. 40

"I've learned that you don't have to be a scholar to use the Bible as a tool for teaching young believers. You simply must be willing to submit to God's will and be transparent with your own understanding of His plan and purposes."

Latonya Moore, p.44



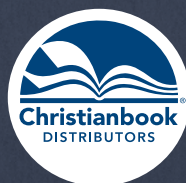
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THSC Takes on Social Security Administration for this Home Schooling Family—A Testimonial

I am a mom. I am also a journalist, a photographer, a sister and an aunt. But first and foremost, I am a mom. So, when my high school senior son, Yuri, asked me to home school him—something I knew nothing about—I said yes.

When Yuri turned 18, he was not in regular school, so I had to reapply for Social Security benefits for my son. It was an ordeal, and I didn't know what to do.

I was referred to THSC Customer Service where I met my angel, Deb Brockett. I was very upset, crying, almost hysterical. As a single mom, 65, on Social Security, I needed my son's Social Security benefits. Deb was not only professional and helpful, she calmed me down and was so kind—she made me feel safe. Deb went beyond what was expected and became an immediate friend. She requested the THSC intervention I needed, and they intervened in record time.

I took a letter from THSC to the Social Security Administration and they “accepted it,” then changed their minds, saying, “We need more info.” Deb again worked her magic, working overtime to get this done. She called to see if I was okay, if the letter worked, etc. In other words, she CARED. I have never met anyone with so much compassion for my son and me. She is unbelievable. Deb deserves a promotion, a raise and a halo for being my angel.

The second letter from THSC worked—the Social Security office approved us and said we should have back payment by January 1. Due to Deb's efforts, I know it is coming. I should also mention that Stephen Howsley from THSC's Policy Team went above what he had to do to ensure my success. He was great.

Consider this a love letter about Deb and THSC. There are people in this world who really make a difference in people's lives, like Deb. There is a word that means when the place that I honor and cherish in my soul touches the place that you honor and cherish in your soul. That word is namaste. So, I say to Deb: “Namaste, you will always be part of my soul.” ■

Congratulations to Deb Brockett, THSC's 2017 Employee of the Year!

A RAVING REVIEW FOR THSC CAPITOL DAYS!

"We just want to thank y'all again for the hard work you do defending our freedoms at the Capitol and for putting together the Capitol Days program! It was such an amazing experience for us. I have never been very interested in government myself, yet I left the event having thoroughly enjoyed the opportunity to make a difference with our legislators. I will never see government the same again!"

Kristi D., home schooling mom



Megan, Nathan, Owen & Peyton D. sign a prayer proclamation on the south steps of the Capitol in Austin during Capitol Days. Photo by Kristi D.

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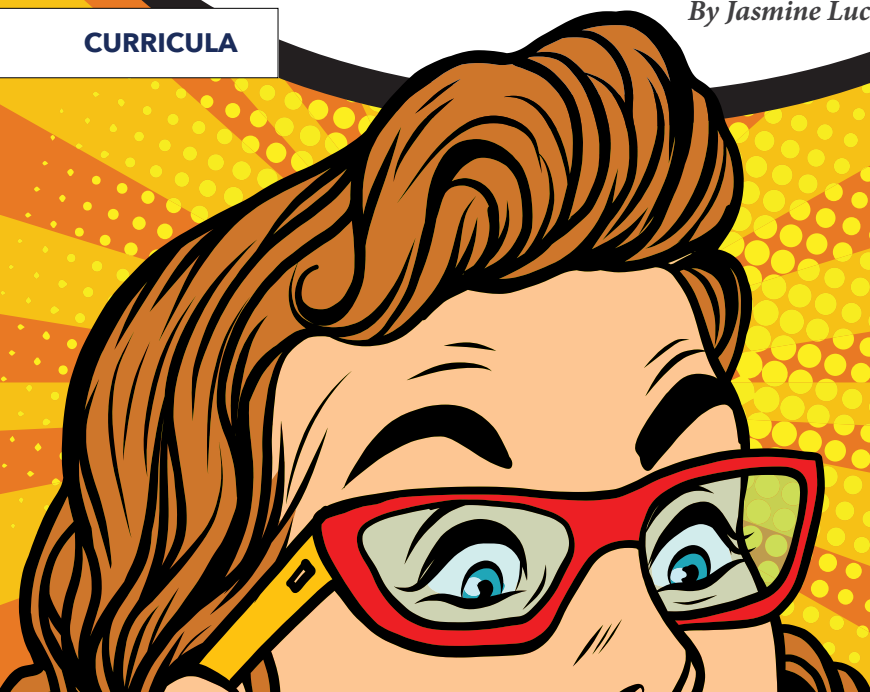
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Mansfield, TX Location Opening Soon!

SNEAK PEEK AT NEW 2017–2018 CURRICULA

By Jasmine Lucero

CURRICULA



For home school moms, spring means renewed hope, optimistic planning and curriculum re-evaluation. That usually means Mom has homework mining websites and catalogs to find new curriculum ideas.

Not this year! Texas Home School Coalition has done the homework for you by assembling a showcase of new curriculum products for the 2017-2018 school year. The list will also come in handy at this year's THSC Convention.

Companies marked with an “E” will exhibit at either the THSC Convention in Arlington on May 11-13 or The Woodlands on July 20-22. Be sure to stop by their booths to get a close-up of these new materials.

WRITING AND LANGUAGE ARTS

WriteShop **E**

WriteShop.com/WriteShop-Junior-Overview

WriteShop Junior, Grades 3-6 (Book F)

“WriteShop Junior” teaches students how to write and publish fiction, nonfiction, poetry and short reports. The activities consist of prewriting games, graphic organizers and kid-approved self-editing tools. Whether your writers are reluctant or gifted, they will find the right level for them.

Institute for Excellence in Writing **E**

IEW.com

Portable Walls for the Essayist, Grades 9-12

This tri-fold resource, a recap of Unit 8: Essay Models, contains models and tips for writing many types of essays, as well as word lists, style techniques and pointers on the ever-important introductory and concluding paragraphs.

High School Essay Intensive, Grades 9-12 (February 2017)

Institute for Excellence in Writing is releasing a revised edition of the “High School Essay Intensive.” The DVD course with accompanying handouts provides tips on high school essay writing, including text analysis, response-to-literature prompts and the college application personal essay. With content updated in 2016 for SAT®, ACT® and techniques for writing a college application, this seminar also offers tools and tips for general composition skills.



The Student Resource Packet, Grades 3-12 (February 2017)

This packet and binder is designed to present information at the point of need. It includes charts, reminders, style samples, tips, exercises, word lists and more. This is a reusable source for new and experienced IEW students.

People and Places in Our Community, Grades K-2 (Summer 2017)

Students will become familiar with the workers who keep a community running—firefighters, police officers, road crews and rescue workers—by writing compositions with stylistic techniques and six of IEW’s nine structural units.

World History-based Writing Lessons, Grades 6-8 (Summer 2017)

Using the Structure and Style Writing Method™, students improve their compositional skills while learning about notable events and people from around the globe. This yearlong course explores world history from Gutenberg to 21st century technology.

Byline (Clearwater Press) *BylineWriting.com* Byline, Grades 8-12 (July 2017)

From the creators of “One Year Adventure Novel” and “Cover Story” comes a new writing curriculum that turns students into time-traveling reporters who practice journalism in the forgotten corners of history. By studying the work of great journalists, students uncover techniques of persuasion and propaganda that are widely used in media today. The curriculum includes 74 video lessons on DVD or streaming media.

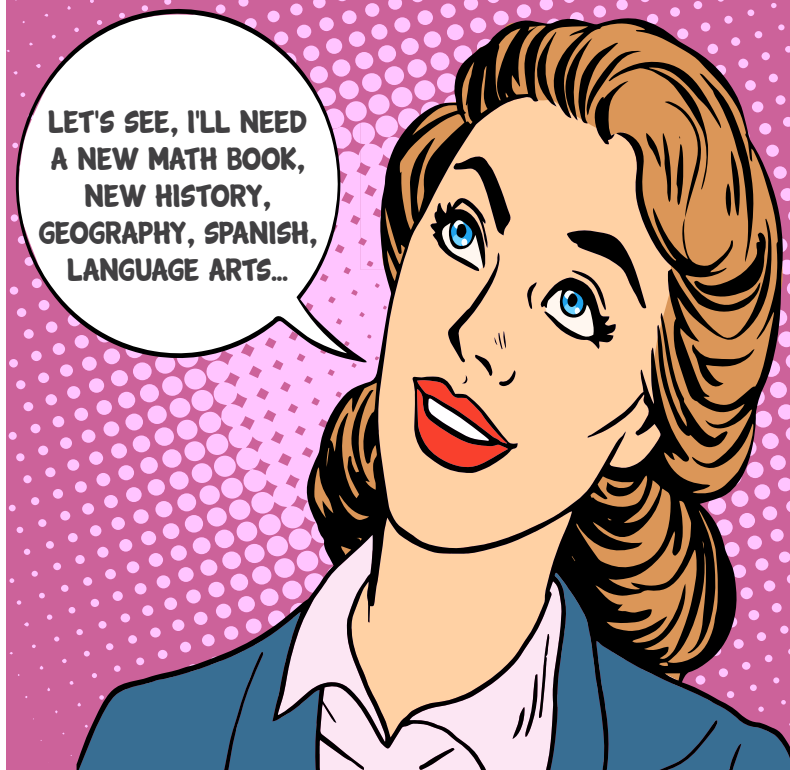
Master Books *MasterBooks.com*

Jensen's Vocabulary, New Revised Edition (February 2017)

The course provides a systematic approach to learning vocabulary with over 1,000 valuable words from basic Greek and Latin roots.

Jensen's Format Writing Bundle, New Revised Edition

Prepare for college writing or the real world with this well-respected, popular expository writing course. This curriculum systematically and effectively teaches students the structure and organization used for writing paragraphs, business letters, research papers and more documents.



Jensen's Punctuation, New Revised Edition

This punctuation rulebook includes pages of examples for students to work through, employing constant repetition for long-term retention. The exercises are taken from classical literature.

Vocabulary Virtuoso

Second and third graders will learn 160 words they should know for reading, writing and standardized tests. Each lesson includes a story involving elementary school students. Plus, students are introduced to geography skills such as maps and landforms and creative writing skills such as symbols and poetry.

The Critical Thinking Co. *CriticalThinking.com*

Building Writing Skills: Level 2

This 96-page book teaches argumentative, narrative and informative/explanatory writing as a five-step process: prewriting, drafting, revising, editing and publishing. The step-by-step lessons use examples and concept maps that teach brainstorming, planning, editing and revising. Each lesson is followed by practice that includes a simple, time-saving scoring rubric.

Sentence Diagramming: Level 2

This 80-page book teaches students how to diagram sentences to better understand English grammar structure. This alternative method to learn grammar is geared toward visual and logical learners. For kids who are more “math minded,” this curriculum helps improve English skills.

HISTORY

A Journey Through Learning!

AJourneyThroughLearning.net

The United States of America

This new lapbooking series follows Mrs. J. and her five home schooled children as they explore U.S. history. Each lesson includes reading the study guide, assembling a lapbook, creating a timeline, completing writing assignments and answering interesting trivia.



Heart of Dakota

HeartOfDakota.com

U.S. History II

Covering American history from 1877 to modern times, students use a narrative style with Jesus Christ at the center of the study. Students will experience history through primary and secondary source documents, prompting them to think deeper about varying viewpoints, important historical moments and the day-to-day lives of people from that period.

MATH

Master Books

MasterBooks.com

Math Lesson for a Living Education: Level 6
(April 2017)

The sixth book in the popular series will help students review and master important skills as they prepare for advanced coursework. Because the book is designed to present math concepts in the context of real life, students learn to apply the rules and techniques to solve everyday problems.



Geometry, Curriculum Pack w/DVD (April 2017)

Harold Jacobs' "Geometry" helps students develop geometric awareness through the use of innovative discussions, cartoons, anecdotes and vivid exercises. The message is that geometry is all around us.

RightStart™ Mathematics

RightStartMath.com

RightStart Mathematics Second Edition:
Level F (Fall 2017)

Dr. Cotter began working on the second edition in the mid-2000s as she continued her research on how to teach children math. After collecting numerous ideas, she wrote the second course that teaches these new approaches and techniques in an easier-to-teach format. The curriculum includes updated research and more games.

THE ARTS

Creating a Masterpiece

CreatingAMasterpiece.com

Art in History

The Art in History program is a unique approach to learning about art throughout history. Most art history programs focus on learning about the life of specific artists during a period, but this course teaches students how to create projects similar to those created in that era.

Sculpt by Numbers

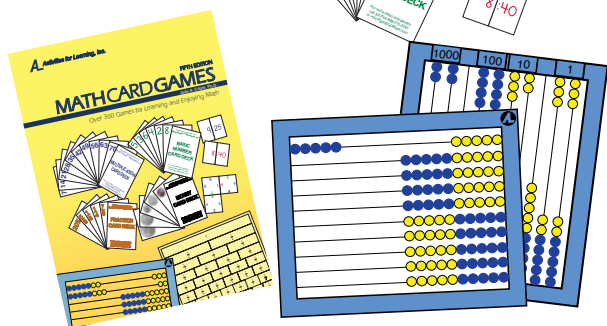
SculptByNumbers.com

Junior Series Models

These innovative sculpting kits contain all the tools and materials needed to complete a project. The Junior series introduces younger children to the art of sculpting with new models: Baby Stegosaurus, Baby Unicorn and Baby Tiger.

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<p>AGES 2-5</p> <p><i>Little Hands To Heaven</i> A Picture Story of Heaven, Ages 2-5</p> <p>LITTLE HANDS TO HEAVEN Ages 2-5</p>	<p>AGES 5-7</p> <p><i>Little Hearts For His Glory</i> A Picture Story of Heaven, Ages 5-7</p> <p>LITTLE HEARTS FOR HIS GLORY Ages 5-7</p>	<p>AGES 6-8</p> <p><i>Beyond Little Hearts For His Glory</i> A Picture Story of Heaven, Ages 6-8</p> <p>BEYOND LITTLE HEARTS FOR HIS GLORY Ages 6-8</p>	<p>AGES 7-9</p> <p><i>Bigger Hearts For His Glory</i> A Picture Story of Heaven, Ages 7-9</p> <p>BIGGER HEARTS FOR HIS GLORY Ages 7-9 extending to 10-11</p>	<p>AGES 8-10</p> <p><i>Preparing Hearts For His Glory</i> A Picture Story of Heaven, Ages 8-10</p> <p>PREPARING HEARTS FOR HIS GLORY Ages 8-10 extending to 11-12</p>	<p>AGES 9-11</p> <p><i>Creation to Christ</i> A Picture Story of Heaven, Ages 9-11</p> <p>CREATION TO CHRIST Ages 9-11 extending to 12-13</p>	<p>AGES 10-12</p> <p><i>Resurrection to Reformation</i> A Picture Story of Heaven, Ages 10-12</p> <p>RESURRECTION TO REFORMATION Ages 10-12 extending to 13-14</p>
<p>AGES 11-13</p> <p><i>Revival to Revolution</i> A Picture Story of Heaven, Ages 11-13</p> <p>REVIVAL TO REVOLUTION Ages 11-13 extending to 14-15</p>	<p>AGES 12-14</p> <p><i>Missions to Modern Marvels</i> A Picture Story of Heaven, Ages 12-14</p> <p>MISSIONS TO MODERN MARVELS Ages 12-14 extending to 15-16</p>	<p>AGES 13-15</p> <p><i>World Geography</i> A Picture Story of Heaven, Ages 13-15</p> <p>WORLD GEOGRAPHY Ages 13-15 extending to 16-17</p>	<p>AGES 14-16</p> <p><i>World History</i> A Picture Story of Heaven, Ages 14-16</p> <p>WORLD HISTORY Ages 14-16 extending to 17-18</p>	<p>AGES 15-17</p> <p><i>U.S. History I</i> A Picture Story of Heaven, Ages 15-17</p> <p>U.S. HISTORY I Ages 15-17 extending to 18</p>	<p>AGES 16-18</p> <p><i>U.S. History II</i> A Picture Story of Heaven, Ages 16-18</p> <p>U.S. HISTORY II Ages 16-18</p>	<p>AGES 7-15</p> <p><i>Drawn Into the Heart of Reading</i> A Picture Story of Heaven, Ages 7-15</p> <p>DRAWN INTO THE HEART OF READING Ages 7-15</p>

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FOREIGN LANGUAGE Spanish Geniuses

SpanishGeniuses.com

Spanish Genius

Planned to be a collection of 24 videos supplementing Spanish instruction of "Spanish Now," Spanish Genius High School Video Lessons is a pay-as-you-go series by the author of "Flip Flop Spanish" and Texas home schooling mom, Señora Gose.

Flip Flop Spanish *FlipFlopLearning.com*

Flip Flop Spanish Flashcards: Ministry Pack (March 2017)

Also new is Level 2 of “See it and Say it Flip Flop Spanish: Whole Family Spanish.”

Latin Trivium

LatinTrivium.com

New to this Classical education course is that all textbooks are now available as ebooks. Students learn Latin by exploring Italy’s history, geography, the Vulgate and other historical aspects of the birth of Christ and Christianity. More than just grammar and rhetoric, students learn to use the language in a context-appropriate, classical manner.

TalkBox.Mom

TalkBox.mom

Designed to take advantage of Mom’s natural role in teaching language, TalkBox.Mom currently offers Spanish, French and German language instruction materials and is taking pre-orders for: Korean, Japanese, Italian, English, Mandarin Chinese, Bengali, Arabic, Portuguese and Russian. TalkBox is for beginners to advanced learners, including parents who are business fluent in a foreign language but lack home-life vocabulary.



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BIBLE

Picture Smart Bible PictureSmartBible.com

This comprehensive overview of Biblical history includes geography, important verses and major themes of each Bible book. The curriculum is now available in Spanish—"The Old and New Testament in Spanish." And, for early elementary—"The Old and New Testaments K-3 level." The Picture Smart Bible also helps parents and children draw their way through the Bible together.

BiblioPlan BiblioPlan.net

Remember the Days: Early Modern Days (March 2017)

A new series for Grades K-6, these books teach history in a kid-friendly way with an easy-to-read layout and plenty of colorful pictures. Students will learn U.S. history, world history, Church history and geography in written form, in order, and in context from a Christian worldview.

SPECIALTY CURRICULA

Landmark's Freedom Baptist Curriculum LandmarkLFBC.com

Personal Development for Young Ladies (updated)

This Bible-based guide helps develop girls into ladies by addressing courting, dressing, family relationships and more.

Personal Development for Young Men

This course helps make men out of boys by covering subjects such as dating, dressing and family relationships. Each lesson begins with vocabulary and ends with an essay.

Shop (updated)

The Shop course provides introductory-level instruction on electricity, plumbing, machine shop and carpentry. This is useful for simple home repairs and as a good base for a future career in one of these areas.

The Critical Thinking Co. CriticalThinking.com

Critical Thinking Detective Book 1

Designed to help students develop critical thinking skills, students must carefully read the mysteries, then analyze and synthesize information to guide their decision-making. This book helps develop observational skills, reading comprehension, and deductive and inductive thinking skills. ■



Jasmine Lucero is a veteran home school mother of seven. Her eclectic life involves working part time as a website administrator for Texas Home School Coalition, chasing chickens, wrangling bees and gardening on the homestead.

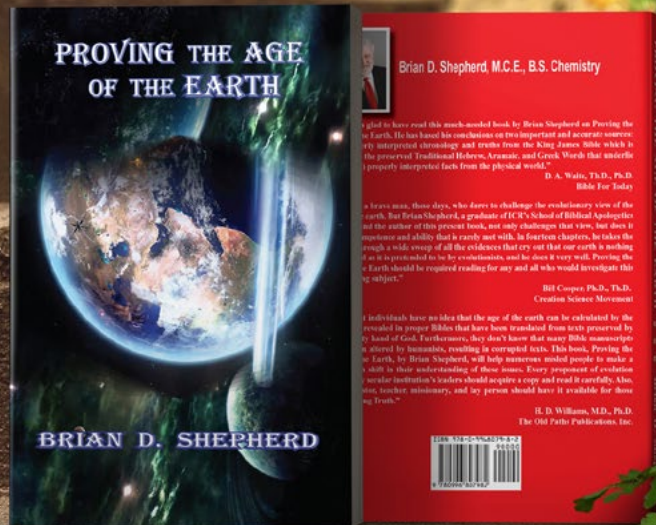
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- Heather Laurie, Owner, SpecialNeedsHomeschooling.com

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*Audio version not yet available for Astronomy or Botany. Audio version is the textbook read aloud. Audio versions do not include the notebooking journals. Audio CDs are MP3 format.

Also New for 2017-2018 from THSC Convention Exhibitors

Bible Studies

New from Scripture Memory Fellowship—
ScriptureMemory.com

- Sermon on the Mount Memory Journal
- Ten Commandments Memory Journal
- Jonah Memory Journal

The Arts

New from See the Light—SeeTheLightShine.com

- The Arts
- Pastel Landscape”
- Drawing and Painting Online Art Workshops

Math/Finance

AE Money Quests—AEMoneyQuests.com

- Money Mountain Board Game (K-3)

Middle School Core Courses, Honors and AP Courses

American School—AmericanSchool.org

- Many new paper-based courses coming late summer. Check AmericanSchool.org/courses to view the new offerings.



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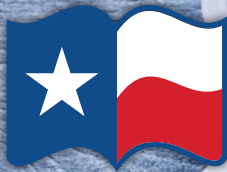
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SO YOU'VE GRADUATED: NOW WHAT?

Maybe your nose has been so far into the books, you haven't had a chance to think about what happens on June 1. Maybe you're so overwhelmed by the world of possibilities that you're like a deer in the headlights facing that quickly-approaching graduation.

Or, maybe you've got it all figured out. Graduation is exciting and stressful. So many options, so many expectations—not the least of which are your own. Take a deep breath and stay hopeful, regardless of which path you choose.





The Road Less Traveled: An Unconventional Approach to a College Degree

By Taryn Austgen

I always planned to attend college after high school. In 8th grade, I made my first SAT vocabulary flashcards and my high school courses had everything a college-bound student needed.

Then, when my high school graduation arrived, I had a full-time summer job lined up and two part-time jobs for the fall. But, I had no clue what I ultimately wanted to do with my life. I didn't want to go to college without a plan. I thought that if I didn't know why I was getting a degree, I wouldn't actually finish. So that fall, when most of my peers started their college journeys, I stayed home to figure out what the next step should be. It was one of the most pivotal seasons of my life.



People often talk about how much they changed in college—how they found themselves and how much they grew. That happened during my gap year. I'm so grateful for the time I had to focus on who I wanted to be, instead of going the traditional route.

During the gap year, I realized how much I loved communicating truth through my words—both written and spoken. I wasn't sure exactly what job I wanted, but I knew I wanted to pursue communication. For me, that was enough conviction to confidently be college-bound.

When I earnestly researched college options, I realized the conventional method of enrolling in one school and earning all my college credits there was one of the most costly ways to earn a degree. Sometimes it even takes longer than alternative routes. Because my family could not afford to send me to a four-year university, and loans were not an option, my initial plan was to take two years of community college before transferring to a state school.

Saving time and money were of the utmost importance to me, so I continued to look for different options for higher education. Finally, I found a source of affordable, self-paced online courses that provided me with the flexibility to continue working and volunteering. I saved thousands of dollars by taking my college courses à la carte from a variety of sources, but I still needed help figuring out which courses I needed for my degree and how they would transfer.

Eventually, I transferred all earned credits to an affordable, accredited university and graduated with a bachelor's degree. In just a total of 13 months, I completed college debt-free. Seven years later, I'm the communications director at an education company. Now, I'm living out my passion of communicating truth through my words.

The way I earned my degree isn't for everyone. So, my rec-

ommendation is to do homework on your future. As a homeschooler, you know better than most—the conventional way isn't the only way! ■



Taryn Austgen is the communications director at Lumerit Education, an innovative education company that helps students earn their bachelor's degrees debt-free. In her free time, Taryn loves reading, traveling, seeing musicals and playing strategy board games with her husband.

Worth Your While

- A new report, "2017 Student Guide to Online Education," explains what to expect as an online student. View at BestColleges.com/resources/higher-education-trends.
- The book "Accelerated Distance Learning: The New Way to Earn Your College Degree in the Twenty-First Century," by Brad Voeller is packed with college resources, websites, accelerated-study techniques, and tips for high-quality distance learning. Available on Amazon.com.
- Find the "CLEP Official Study Guide 2017" at your local library or from major booksellers. The guide covers the 48 subject exams CLEP offers and what to study. Also visit the CLEP website at CollegeBoard.com.
- Download the free ebook, "The Dual Credit Secret: How Dual Credit at Home can Help Your Teen Earn an Accredited Bachelor's Degree during High School," from DualCreditatHome.com. THSC members receive a \$200 discount on a 49-week Study Plan for earning dual credit for core high school or college subjects.

Learn all the ways a THSC membership can save you money at THSC.org/memberbenefits.

A person with blonde hair, wearing a light-colored tank top and dark shorts, is walking away from the camera down a long, dimly lit prison corridor. The corridor has high ceilings with arched windows and metal railings on both sides. The walls are made of rough, aged stone.

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Do You Actually Need a Four-Year Degree?

If you don't know why you're going to college, which degree you want to earn, and the field you'd like to pursue afterwards, then starting college may not be the best option. You might save time, money and angst by getting some life and work experience through jobs and internships first. Then, once you have an idea of what you'd ultimately like to do, go to college if you need a degree.

There are plenty of jobs that do not require a bachelor's degree. Some require certifications or an associate's degree, but some do not require any post-high school education. A report from Georgetown University, "Recovery: Job Growth and Education Requirements through 2020," projects that one-third of next-gen jobs will require a bachelor's degree or higher, one-third will require some sort of technical degree or training, and another third will not require education beyond high school.

In this list, we've brainstormed 30 careers that do not require a four-year degree. If you are planning to support a family without a college degree, search for "26 High-Paying Jobs That Don't Require a Degree" on CareerTrends.com.



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Medical Assistant

Insurance Sales Agent

MRI Technologist

Computer Support Specialist

Radiation Therapist

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Optician

Physical Therapist Assistant

Dental Hygienist

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Check out more than 90 degree options at www.letu.edu/thsc for more information about LETU and homeschoolers.



10 Hacks to a Debt-free Degree

So you weren't born with a silver spoon in your mouth—that actually gives you a slight edge in college. According to the *American Sociological Review* article, “More Is More or More Is Less? Parental Financial Investments During College,” although parental financial support results in higher graduation rates, it tends to bring down grade point averages.

In fact, students actually benefit from working while in college, according to a study by Boston University (BU.edu). The study, “Working May Help Your GPA,” concluded that 20 hours per week is the optimal work schedule to positively impact GPA.

Besides earning money, the benefit to working in college is building your resume to stand out from your peers post graduation. But, if you are not able to work while in college, here are 10 more ways to afford college without accumulating debt.

Get dual credit. The more college credit you earn in high school, the less you'll have to pay for later.

Take CLEP tests. Bilingual students can earn 12 Spanish credits for the cost of an \$80 test. Visit Clep.CollegeBoard.org for more information on 48 subject exams.

Find tuition assistance programs. You can work for a company with tuition assistance benefits to get additional help paying for college. To get started, search GetUnbound.org for the article, “33 Companies That Can Save You From College Debt.”

Take a gap year. You can work and save money—earn \$20,000 or more in a year between high school and college.

Find grants. Do your research on scholarships and grants, including how a gap year or unconventional college plan could affect your eligibility. Keep in mind that even a \$10,000 per year scholarship won't help much if tuition is \$40,000 per year.

Enroll in military service. The Post-9/11 GI Bill provides education benefits. There are some caveats, though, like the program only pays for 36 months. So, do research *THSC and the THSC Watchmen* you enlist. Also check out ROTC programs at TodaysMilitary.com.

Knock out core classes. Identify which core classes you can take at an affordable local community college or online college to transfer to your degree.

Utilize summer season. You can complete core classes online in the summer or at cheaper schools in order to “skip” a year. With careful planning, it's possible to get 12 credits during a summer session.

Go nontraditional. Who says you have to go to college when you're young? Waiting a while to go to college may relieve some of the financial pressure.

Try a program like Lumerit Education's Unbound. Eighty-seven percent of Lumerit students graduate debt-free. With more than 40,000 courses, it's possible to put together an affordable degree plan that will fit any schedule.




JOHN BROWN
UNIVERSITY

Our advice?

Check out all the usual universities your friends choose, but before you decide to spend 4 years and a lot of money, give yourself a few minutes at www.jbu.edu and see what you might be missing. *We think you'll be interested.*



The Case for a Traditional Degree

By Jessi Troester

The traditional path to earning a higher education degree is becoming less traveled due to the proliferation of online, for-profit and community schools. However, the centuries-old hallowed halls of academia still have a lot to offer.

- Living on campus offers camaraderie that cannot be matched. The relationships you build may last a lifetime and can serve as invaluable connections at every stage of life.
- Attending a traditional college allows you to interact with people from a variety of backgrounds. The discourse on college campuses can broaden your perspective.
- Living away from home teaches necessary life and social skills in a still somewhat structured environment.
- Attending full-time college on campus allows you to focus more. While some students are successful at juggling work and college while living off campus, others may find this difficult. A traditional path may help reduce distractions, increasing your chances of success.
- There are many student groups that allow you to explore your interests and develop life-long passions.
- Plenty of resources are available, including the campus library, study labs and specialty computer, software and audio-visual equipment. Many campuses provide tutoring free of charge, which is easily accessible to on-site students and something non-traditional schools often lack.
- Campuses offer sports and recreation for all levels. You can find competitive sports, intramurals and pick-up



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- Traditional colleges encourage and facilitate internships and practicums for credit. These internships combine education and real-world experience to make it easier to break into your chosen field.
- Involvement in campus government and clubs builds leadership skills. This experience looks great on your resume.
- Students at traditional colleges have opportunities to study abroad. You can explore the world, learn a new culture and make friends from other countries, generally for the same price as regular tuition.
- Employers respect the prestige associated with a good school. Many still place a higher value on traditional institutions over online-only institutions.
- There is an opportunity to study with iconic professors. Academic experts in your given field often teach at traditional colleges and universities. ■

Jessi Troester is a rehabilitation manager at Alphapointe, a comprehensive rehabilitation and education center for the blind and visually impaired. Married to Aaron for seven years, Jessi and her husband also raise service puppies. Jessi the 2nd Vice District Governor Elect in her district Lion's Club.



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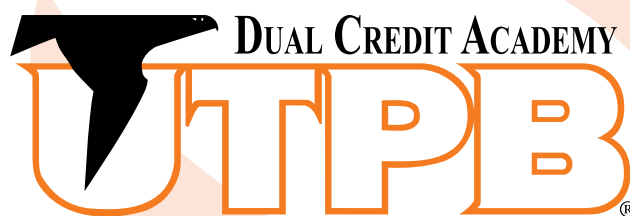
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One Father's Appeal to Pass the Tim Tebow Bill

By Jason Mallory

THSC and the THSC Watchmen are a full-time lobbying force in Austin during the 2017 Texas legislative session. Our four main priorities are:

- *Killing bad legislation that would compromise the rights of Texas families*
- *The Parent-Child Protection Act to protect innocent families from CPS intrusion*
- *The Family Unity Act to restore parental rights and close loopholes that hurt families*
- *The Tim Tebow Bill to allow home school students to participate in UIL activities.*

Recently, a Houston-area father wrote in support of the Tim Tebow Bill so that his sons can play sports. Texas Home School Coalition is fighting hard to pass this legislation for families like this one, whose choices often boil down to either abandoning home schooling or denying their children opportunities to excel in areas of strength and passion. Won't you join us in giving Texas home schoolers more freedom? Visit THSC.org/Tebow to learn more about this bill and how you can help make it law.

Thank you for the opportunity to respond to Senator Van Taylor's Tim Tebow Bill from the perspective of a home schooled athlete's father.

Passage of this bill will directly benefit my family, allowing access to University Interscholastic League (UIL) sports programs for my four children—15-year-old Braden and my triplets aged 11.

My children have been active in many sports since an early age. And, continuing their development through competitive sports is important to our family because of its long-lasting impact. Sports has especially benefited our eldest son Braden, but it has become costly without access to UIL sports programs.

Braden is a gifted, dyslexic student who has found success during middle school. The home school learning environment has enabled him to thrive academically in honors courses at the high school level, despite his dyslexia. He is also involved with Texas Youth and Government

Athletically, Braden has trained and competed in various sports since he was four years old. Braden's participation and development in sports has included T-ball, flag football, Little League, competitive league baseball,



Krista and Braden Mallory at the Texas Capitol with THSC's Public Policy Analyst, Stephen Howsley. Photo courtesy of Jason Mallory



league swim team, football, triathlon and sporting clays.

We firmly believe Braden's involvement in team sports is essential to his development as a young man. Unfortunately, a vast majority of his friends and competitors participate in extracurricular UIL sports programs that Braden does not have access to as a home schooled student.

This fall, our decision to home school through high school was challenged due to the financial burden on our family as we continue paying for Braden's sports development. Meanwhile, lifelong family friends are now on UIL swim and baseball teams that are offered by public schools.

Braden is currently enrolled in a baseball association and swim team that serve as alternatives to the UIL programs offered through district schools. Participation in these two alternatives cost more than \$3,000 annually for Braden alone.

Braden also participates in strength and agility training that costs \$285/bimonthly and takes batting lessons at \$70 per hour. These costs add up very quickly.

At these prices, our triplets will not be able to participate in sports when they reach high school. Or, we will be forced to enroll them in public school for access to the UIL programs that we have paid for over the past 15 years with our tax dollars. Without opportunities to continue to establish relationships, develop skills and compete at the highest level, Braden and my younger children could ultimately have limited scholarship opportunities.

Please push for the Tim Tebow Bill to be passed by the Texas House of Representatives in the 2017 Legislative session, allowing access to UIL sports programs for home schoolers. Thank you for your service in protecting the rights of Texas home schooled children! ■

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Meet Brittany Ellermann: *Mom in the Spotlight*

By Candi Summers

*W*hen you meet Brittany Ellermann she strikes you as a gentle, soft-spoken lady. When you look deeper at the path she has chosen since graduating from home school in 2002, you understand she is also mighty in spirit.

The wife of “Top Shot” season three winner Dustin Ellermann, Brittany has lived her life in the spotlight over the past six years.

Dustin’s win on the competitive marksmanship show opened opportunities for speaking ministry in both the gun show circuit and churches. But, sudden fame forced the family to find a balance between outside ministry and the needs of their children.

The Decision to Home School

Graduating from home school was an asset to Brittany in her life as a public figure.

“Growing up home schooled helped me know that our school didn’t have to look like public school at home. It’s okay to think outside of the box,” Brittany says.

“After graduation, I completed my certificate of nutritional counseling from Trinity School through the online program. I was a nanny for a family with four kids. I honestly considered that hands-on training with life skills better than any formal education I received.”

Dustin and Brittany started their life together when they met at Camp His Way, a Christian camp in East Texas. They have been the camp’s directors since 2005.

Brittany and Dustin decided early in their marriage to become licensed foster parents. Along the way, they have added biological and adopted children to their family. They now have five children, including two adopted from foster care: Katie (17), Kody (11), Gideon (8), Arrow (5) and Haven (2).

But, throughout the process of building a family, Brittany has experienced immense pressure. The conflict has come from outside scrutiny, perceived expectations and her own upbringing as a home school student in a strict home. Like many moms, she questioned her decision to home school once reality set in.

“I came to a low place personally when I needed to verbalize that I am not ‘married’ to home schooling. I am ‘married’ to the very best for each one of my kids,” Brittany said.

“At one point, I considered putting the kids in public school because I just felt I couldn’t do it all. Then, I had a release know-

ing I don't *have* to home school. I've never *had* to. It was a choice I made for many reasons, and looking at it from that perspective freed me from some big burdens."

Brittany is thoughtful about her decision to home school all five of the children and she does not take that choice for granted.

Her encouragement to parents is: "Look at why you are home schooling. It shouldn't be just because you have always done it. What does your child need in this specific season of life?"

Brittany is deeply devoted to giving her children the tools they need for a productive life. "It takes a certain amount of searching to find what they each need," she says. "And then finding a way to fit that in. And then when life changes, you have to find a new way to switch things around. Year after year it's a new swap."

With five children it would be tempting to take shortcuts in home schooling, but Brittany cautions: "It's important that we don't cram all our kids into one schooling box. Even biological siblings can have different learning styles, and it's not doing them justice to make them all try to learn in the way we want."

"Allowing them the freedom to work in their favorite way, while still encouraging them to stretch and grow and get out of comfort zones every now and then is a good balance."

Making the Transition from Public School to Home School

Dustin and Brittany adopted their oldest child, 17-year-old Katie, from foster care. During the process, Katie was required by child protective services to stay in public school, which proved to be problematic. When the adoption was final, Dustin and Brittany thoughtfully transitioned Katie to home school.

THSC and the THSC Watchmen were closely involved in passing the legislative reform to address the challenge Dustin and Brittany faced while fostering Katie. As of September 2015, CPS must now allow foster parents in Texas to home school.

"Bringing Katie home was touchy. We really did check in with her every month or so to ask what she felt. We warned her that it wasn't going to be an immediate switch back to public school at the first assignment or home school situation she didn't like," Brittany recalls.

"But we promised to hear her voice and perspective throughout the whole thing. Going through that process really made me aware of my reasons for wanting to school her at home. We also helped her realize she had missed a lot of education in her multiple foster home moves. We counted nearly 10 moves. She was doing well to understand anything beyond second or third grade!"

Brittany's determination to fill in the gaps in Katie's education paid off. "I remember Sept. 5, 2014, when she grasped



Photos courtesy of Brittany Ellerman

multiplication. At 14-years-old she finally got it! That helped me know we were doing the right thing for her," she says.

"In public school, she was picked on and touched inappropriately on the bus, on top of other things. It is amazing to hear Katie say that she has deeper friendships with the people at our bi-monthly co-op than with the people she attended school with every day before."

How Does Brittany Balance Home School and Family Time?

Managing a household while home schooling many children at once is difficult. Brittany has found one solution that works for her on a daily basis—quiet time.

"My kids know that it will be quiet time in our home from 2-4 p.m. daily. That way, even if the morning is loud or chaotic,

they can look forward to knowing the solace of quiet is soon approaching,” she says.

She also knows these hectic days will not last forever. “We get the privilege to speak the most influence to our precious kids right now,” she advises.

“Raise the child you want to be dear friends with in the future. We only get to parent for 18 years, but we get to be companions to the children we raised for many years after that.” ■



Candi Summers lives in Arlington, Texas, with her five children and husband Nathan. Candi has served on the advisory board of THSC since 2015. Home schooled in Texas from 1980 to 1990, Candi now home schools her children. She loves reading, genealogy and trivia.

More From Brittany

Brittany’s women’s ministry is called “Intimate Taberah.” She encourages women to slow down and listen quietly to God.

Her advice to over-worked mothers is: “We cannot do it all. And we are fooling ourselves if we think we can. We have to pick and choose what is right for this season of life. If that means buying instead of baking bread, then so be it! If it means skipping some recreational activities or field trips, that is what needs to be done. But we have to choose. We cannot be double-minded. Either we can manage joyfully what we have or something needs to change. It might just be a mental change like seeing things from a different perspective—an opportunity instead of a mandate. It might need to be a logistical change, cutting out good things like field trips or co-op. We have to lead by example knowing when our plate is full. We can teach our children when to say no to good things to be free and able to say yes to the best things.”

Read Brittany’s blog at IntimateTaberah.weebly.com.

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Being a Friend to a Family with Special Needs

By *Melissa Smith*

When my family moved to Texas over nine years ago, God planted us in a neighborhood two houses down from a family with special needs. As we raised our children together and grew in friendship, I learned a lot about building relationships and came to understand the unique challenges that special needs families face. My family has been abundantly blessed through this relationship.

The road to friendship, though, wasn't always smooth. In hindsight, I can see how God's grace held us together and taught us how to love each other well. There were many points where our friendship could have broken down. Unfortunately, beautiful friendships are often times lost because of fear of the unknown, preconceived notions and lack of communication.

Finding an entry point to a relationship can be one of the challenges. At our first play date, the mom let me know her boys had autism and let me ask questions. This open door to communication has served our friendship well over the past decade and set the stage for us to talk through issues. And challenges did arise.

Most of us lack knowledge about developmental disabilities and how they affect the daily lives of families. Therefore, what may seem like insensitivity or callousness may just be lack of information.

My children and I did not know what it meant that first time one of her sons jumped around and waved his hands in the air. I also did not understand the exhaustion she felt at always having to advocate for her children.

There were so many words that were new to me yet part of her daily vocabulary. How do you bridge such a gap?

It took time and a lot of communication. At times, I feared that my children would ask questions or make observations that would cause awkwardness or wound our new friends. Sometimes they did, and our friends forgave us.

In my ignorance about the struggles the mom faced every day, I feared offending her with my questions. But, she graciously dropped any defensiveness and fear of rejection, and I ditched my fear of the unknown and assumptions. She helped me look past the surface to find common ground.

One of the first things I learned is that a special needs parent's love for their children is beautiful and strong. These parents know how to work hard, sacrifice themselves and give generously. I admired those things in my friend.

However, as I tried to interact with them and enter their sphere, I found they often had a hard time asking for and receiving help. So, trust came slowly. It took me a lot of time to realize why. They must constantly advocate or intercede for their children in a world that does not understand them and often does not accept them. That's difficult for any parent.

There was give and take in our relationship. And, over time, my children and I learned to speak her children's language. When her son jumped around and waved his hands in the air, he was happy—im-

mensely happy. My children could laugh with him and join in his joy. The mom even learned to trust me with her children and let me help her so she could rest.

The special needs families we have been blessed to

“One of the first things I learned is that a special needs parent's love for their children is beautiful and strong. These parents know how to work hard, sacrifice themselves and give generously. I admired those things in my friend.”

—
Melissa Smith

know over the years possess wisdom, strength and grace forged in the fires of difficulty and advocacy. Their children have gifts and abilities that have inspired and taught my children to see the world through someone else's eyes.

Altogether, these amazing families and their children have deeply impacted our lives. Their selfless love is beautiful and sacrificial. Being near these families inspires me to love deeply, to persist vigorously and to give grace readily. They model this daily, and the fruit shows in their children.



joy in the simple moments of life and the majestic beauty of God's creation. After a few years

Whether in the hills of North Georgia, the bayous of Louisiana, the mountains of Colorado or the wide plains of Texas, Melissa finds

teaching high school English, God redirected her to stay at home to raise her children. She now lives in Texas where she home schools her three children, enjoys photography and reading whenever there is a free moment—leaning on Christ as she learns to laugh at the days to come.

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Announcing a New Training Program to Help Home School Groups Become More Accessible to Students with Special Needs

Home school groups often contact THSC's Leadership Support Manager asking how to minister to special needs home schooling families. Conversely, THSC member home schooling families with special needs students often contact THSC's Special Needs consultants asking about groups that are friendly to special needs.

Therefore, THSC is developing a Special Needs Group Training Program to bridge this gap. The program will launch in three phases. Phase One starts on May 1 with free online materials for parents and children who are part of typical and special needs families. The second phase scheduled for June 15 will include material for group management. The third phase scheduled for July 15 will include material for teachers. Subscribe to THSC's Special Needs Nook blog to be informed about upcoming training opportunities. Visit THSC.org/subscribe.

Tailor-Made *Co-ops* By Susan K. Macias





Because I am vertically challenged, clothes off the rack almost never fit me. If I want clothes to fit just right, I have them tailor-made. I found the same principle to be true in my family's home schooling adventure. Our family required a custom fit.

When we first began home schooling 22 years ago, options were few. Now, home school co-ops offer a variety of classes. There are DVD and online classes as well. Still, the available options do not always meet a home school family's needs.

Ten years ago I faced that dilemma. Two co-ops existed in our community and a DVD course was available, but none of those options were the right fit for my high schooler. Knowing my teenage son needed more than I could give him, I tried to craft a solution.

Teaming up with other moms of sons near the same age, we formed our own co-op. Our biggest academic challenge at the time was chemistry. We hired a retired teacher to teach the class, while we helped with the experiments and administered the tests. It worked so well the first year, we continued for two more years, adding several more classes such as writing, history and literature.

We discovered the natural competitiveness in boys fueled more scholastic effort compared to when only mom saw the test grade. They started to compare scores and suddenly began trying harder. After three successful years, the co-op ended when the boys graduated.

A tailor-made co-op came to the rescue again when I needed help with my youngest two students. Being at the tail-end of a large family, they were sometimes short-changed when I focused on the needs of their siblings. So, we needed help to enrich their educational experiences.

We decided to gather weekly for a science class with another family. The other mom and I selected a textbook to use and established our syllabus together. We traded off teaching and gathering supplies.

In our weekly class times, we completed art projects, experiments or activities that enhanced the science we studied at home. Knowing that we would be at our friend's house to study together on Wednesday mornings kept us on track the whole year. The result was our best year of elementary science. Our tailor-made co-op was a perfect fit!

There are numerous co-ops in Texas, many of which you can find listed at THSC.org/homeschoolgroup, but if you can't find one that fits your family's needs, don't be afraid to create your own. Then, keep it going as long as it meets your home school goals, whether for creative outlets, the tough subjects, or all-girl or all-boy "distraction-free" learning.



Keys to a Successful Co-op

A Good Core Group

To have a successful co-op, partner with families that share similar goals for home schooling. If you have wildly different approaches or expect different outcomes, it will not be a good fit. When two or three like-minded, core families establish the rules and manage the expectations, other families can join if your approach meets their needs.

Excellent Communication Among Parents

From the start, it is vital to discuss everyone's goals for the co-op. Establishing student expectations and parental responsibilities will help prevent problems. Some questions to address include:

- Whether grades will be given
- Whether parents can drop off their students or they must stay
- Which curriculum will be used

Reasonable Division of Labor

Not every parent likes to teach, nor should every parent have to! There are other responsibilities such as coordinating the calendar, group purchases, planning field trips or activities, and finding ministry opportunities. If all parents contribute, this lightens the burden for everyone.

Advantages of the Co-op

Co-ops offer several advantages for the busy home school mom.

Accountability

The set calendar and planned syllabus help students stay on schedule academically. Before we established the co-op, a family crisis could derail our year. But, the co-op helped us push through, stay on track, and finish classes well.

Continued on pg. 40

HOME SCHOOLERS PULLING TOGETHER

Co-ops are just one of the ways home schoolers can work together for better social and academic outcomes for their students. Here are some others types of home school groups:

- Local Support Group
- Home School Extracurricular Association
- Home School Virtual Group
- Home School Play Group
- Home School Field Trip Group
- Special Needs Support Group
- Home School Resource Center
- Group Class Communities
- Affiliated Regional Groups

Visit THSC's Home School Group Page and enter your ZIP code. You can search almost 300 Texas Home School Coalition partner groups to find one near you!

THSC has a lot to offer home school groups of all kinds. We serve groups with as few as three families and as many as 450 families!

Visit [THSC.org/groups](https://thsc.org/groups) to learn about benefits THSC Partner Groups receive, such as:

- \$20 discount on THSC membership
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Brett & Christina

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Group Participation

A rich level of discussion occurs when more students are involved, particularly with high school students. Students talk about what they believe and how to defend those beliefs, which develops maturity and thinking skills. At the same time, they are exposed to other people's thoughts. Because the co-op is in our home, I am present to hear what my students are exposed to, and we are able to discuss these ideas later.

For instance, we discussed the Civil War this year. During the discussion, we discovered a wide variety of opinions from the girls in our class about the causes of the war, the quality of the Lincoln presidency, and the results of the war. This forced all the students to think more deeply about their positions and to decide if they could defend their viewpoint. My girls and I had great conversations after class talking through their different ideas.

Variety of Classes

With several moms teaching subjects, we can offer more variety than I could individually. For example, this year we took a dual approach to Biblical studies. In the first semester, we examined inductive Bible Study methods. In the second semester, we did an in-depth study on a Biblical book, which is something I had desired to do for several years.

Higher Standards

For many students, knowing that someone outside their family will see their work heightens their efforts. This year, we added group critique to our writing co-op. Consequently, my students learned editing skills and are now more careful with their own work.

Home Environment

Because our "class" takes place around the dining room table, we maintain the unique flavor of home schooling. Chatter breaks out after class and my daughters enjoy the sweet friendships they have developed through the co-op.

It might seem daunting to begin a co-op, but it is worth it. I am grateful every time the Lord has helped us find a solution. If your home school needs to be "taken in" a little here, and "let out" a little there, try tailoring a co-op of your own to find a perfect fit!



Susan Macias is a writer and speaker. Susan ministers to women to help them build strength and courage in following Jesus and serving their families. Susan's first book, "PRAY Like Their Lives Depend On It," will be published in Spring 2017. Susan has been married to her college sweetheart, Nathan, for 34 years. They have seven children and Susan has been a home schooling mom since 1993. You can find Susan's blog at SusanKMacias.com.

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FEAST invites you to come celebrate the multi-faceted face of parent directed education at our 2017 Convention. Conventions can be life changing events for the whole family. Free Thursday Sessions will be offered as well as the Friday and Saturday paid Convention Options. Grandparents, Church Pastors, and Widows are free. Conventions can be overwhelming, we understand and will have veteran home school parents manning the FEAST Booth to help you get started or get back on the right path!



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Come learn the value of one-on-one, interaction with speakers and curriculum exhibitors found only at a home school convention! Workshops bring shared interaction, imparting wisdom, and insight on different challenges in parent-directed education including: child training, family life, and physical and spiritual growth. Attending a convention will propel you forward, and revitalize your enthusiasm to succeed in home schooling another year! Catch the contagious spirit of fellow home schoolers that are "On The Right Path" at the 2017 FEAST Convention!

Children's Fair

We are Traveling Texas! Children ages 6 – 12 are invited to "travel with us" as we visit the Seven Regions of Texas! Each day our interactive lessons, games and crafts will take us on a mini vacation to see parks, big cities, little towns, plant and animal life and major attractions located in each of the seven regions of our great state of Texas! Each student will have their own Passport to stamp and document their convention journey! Students will be accepted on a first come basis, so register early as we expect our tour to fill up fast!



Teen Staff



Nathan Macias, home school father, former TX State Legislator, and Executive Director of The Patriot Academy will head up our "Champions of Change" program for students 13-19. Our FEAST Teen Staff Leadership Training will be two-fold with on-site service projects as "Teen Staff" and leadership training that will encourage them to become "Champions to Change the World!" Your teens will love being part of the fun and fellowship while being trained as tomorrow's leaders!

**"Trust in the Lord with all thine heart; and lean not unto thine own understanding.
In all thy ways acknowledge Him, and He shall direct thy paths."**

Proverbs 3:5-6

June 8-10, 2017

Register today at www.homeschoolfeast.com

Faith *Between the Lines*

By Latonya Moore

When my husband and I decided to take on the awesome responsibility of home schooling our children, we agreed that religion should not be limited to academic lessons. Instead, our faith should be evident to our children in all aspects of daily living.

After many years of home educating, we continue to incorporate lessons about God and faith in everyday life.

This was not easy for me, though. I did not grow up with a strong foundation in faith. Sure, I knew God existed and I went to church several times a year. This was my exposure to being a follower of Christ. But, I did not truly grasp the principles of being a Christian.

My husband attended church more frequently in his youth. His mother was a devout believer and followed many church traditions, but he also lacked true understanding of walking with God.

Since a real relationship with the Father was lacking in our childhoods, we knew that we wanted more than superficial Christianity for our children, Dania and Ramya.

The desire for our daughters to have the foundation that we lacked was the catalyst for us to find a church home that taught from the Bible. We wanted Scripture to be the primary basis of the teaching, rather than opinion or commentary.

“The desire for our daughters to have the foundation that we lacked was the catalyst for us to find a church home that taught from the Bible. We wanted Scripture to be the primary basis of the teaching, rather than opinion or commentary.”

—
Latonya Moore

Living Our Faith

Our church leadership teaches about God in simple, gentle ways. And, that’s the approach we’ve taken with our daughters. You won’t find us drilling the Ten Commandments into their heads each morning. Instead, you will find us teaching our daughters by modeling Christian principles.

Continued on pg. 44

Faith in the Margins

by Anna McFarland

From my very first Bible journaling event, I was hooked. Not only did journaling get me into God's word, it allowed me use art to bring verses to life.

After that experience, I knew that I wanted to be a part of Bible journaling in the future. That led to the opportunity to lead a workshop, which one participant described as "revolutionizing her world."

Believe it or not, Bible journaling is not a fad. According to *Illustrated Journaling*: "Marginalia, the proper term for that which is written or drawn into the margins, has intrigued anthropologists and sociologists for years." Before the printing press was invented, hand-lettering each Bible verse was an act of worship and the wealthy often hired artists to illustrate their family Bibles.

So, how do you start? While it is possible to journal in a regular Bible, it can be tricky finding space. Publishers now offer Bibles with wide margins that are either blank or lined so that you can write prayers, praises and promises.

After you find the right Bible fit, find a pen set that will not smudge or bleed through thin pages. Since your Bible may end up being a valuable inheritance to pass down to your children, choose an archival ink that will not fade with time. When you are on the go, colored pencils are a great option because they do not require page prep. Finally, for any type of painting, it is a good idea to brush over the page with a white paint mixture called gesso [pronounced jě-sō] to prevent wrinkling; then let it dry.

For the artistically-challenged, as well as young children, print an image on graphite paper, place it underneath the Bible page on which you wish to draw, and trace the lines. Or, you could stamp an image, then color inside the contours. My personal favorite is lining the margin in washi tape—decorative masking tape from Japan. For advanced instruction in Bible journaling, look for classes at your local craft store.

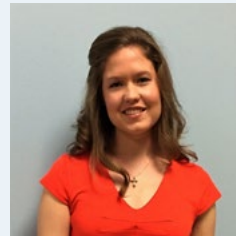
Once you have the supplies, it's time to prayerfully pick a verse in your daily Bible reading. Start by writing your verse on scrap paper and underline the words that stand out to you. When you transfer the verse back to the margin of the Bible, you can change either the size or font to emphasize the importance of those words. To center the words, begin with the middle letters and move outward.

Next, add some illustration; it could be flourishes, elaborate doodling or images. When I read about having

a clean heart in Psalm 51:10, I linked the passage to soap suds, which eventually led to elephants blowing bubbles. With that in mind, I returned to the scrap paper to sketch the design in pencil before going over it in pen.

No matter how your journey starts, the goal of journaling is not perfection or to make something visually interesting, but to make God's Word memorable and active in your life.

In the Bible, the Lord repeatedly asked His people to build altars so they would remember how He gave them victory. Although I do not have stone piles in my backyard, I have valuable notes and drawings in my Bible to remind me of God's faithfulness when I am struggling to trust Him. And, because the concepts are embedded in my mind from journaling, I believe I'm more likely to live out God's Word. May these methods breathe new life into your quiet time with the Lord!



When Anna McFarland is not encouraging budding Bible journalers at Facebook.com/fantasticjournaling, she is blogging on DrawnToHisLight.wordpress.com. She would love to hear from you.



This photo and photo on p. 3 are courtesy of Anna McFarland.

Each day, we are provided with opportunities to teach our children the things of God. Some lessons will be direct quotes from the Bible, while other lessons come from opportunities He provides us to make those lessons tangible.

We teach our daughters not to steal by example and by taking the time to clarify what stealing looks like in its various forms. One time I was back-to-school shopping with my youngest daughter, Ramya, when we saw a woman take a sheet of printing paper out of its package. The woman left the package of paper and took the one piece for her own use. This prompted a discussion about the woman's behavior and when we should say something to others about their choices.

Our daughters also had a front-row view of our faith a few years ago when we followed God's leading to move. When my husband and I uprooted our family following God's nudge, we did not have a plan. Each step was an act of faith.

Our daughters knew that there was not employment waiting for us on the other side of this move. They watched us as we kept our eyes on God and trusted Him to provide for us. During this time our daughters saw our faith in action and they witnessed answered prayer!

Teaching About God

Home schooling and faith tend to go together. Many parents choose to home school their children because they desire to give them a solid foundation in their faith. It's important to remember that being a living testimony goes hand-in-hand with studying the Word.

I've learned that you don't have to be a scholar to use the Bible as a tool for teaching young believers. You simply must be willing to submit to God's will and be transparent with your own understanding of His plan and purposes. That life lesson will make a huge impact on your children.

But, focusing on God's word is equally important. Reading the Word with my daughters is one of the best things I've done as a parent! Discussing Scripture without pressure to have all the answers has inspired my girls to read their Bibles on their own.

Many mornings I pass their room to find the girls reading the Bible. Recently, Dania was reading Proverbs and Ramya was reading Esther. As a parent, I was proud to see them use their tools to study for themselves!

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take care of humans!**

**Good Boy,
Achilles!**

Written by
Eddie Ellis



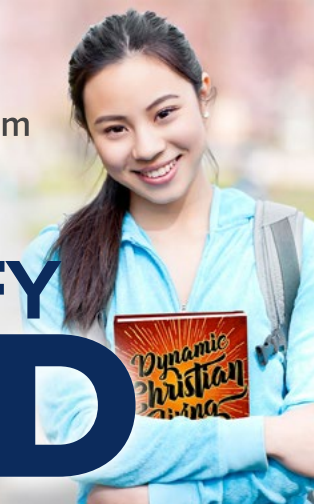
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We have used a variety of resources to stay in the Word as a family. For a few years, we attended Community Bible Study and studied the books of John, Job and Philippians. There have also been times we did devotions at home using online resources such as Love God Greatly, Hello Mornings or Good Morning Girls.

We also used the S.O.A.P. method, which focuses on Scripture, Observations, Application and Prayer. This method provided us with a guide for discussing the Scripture we studied. (See the “Bible in Stick Figures” resource for more study methods.)

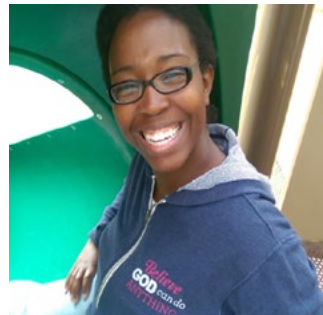
God in the Ordinary

Faith is an integral part of our lives; it is evident in all that we do. We especially try to honor God in our media choices. And, we often find God in secular materials, even when that was not the director’s or author’s intent. There are lessons everywhere if you know how to find them.

Let me provide an example by way of a book we read recently, “A Dog’s Life: Autobiography of a Stray” by Ann M.

Martin. The story is about an abandoned dog named Squirrel. When it looked like there was no more hope, help came for Squirrel. Though it was a secular book, we read between the lines that God provides for us and that, although people will fail us and act unjustly, there is still redemption, just like Squirrel experienced when she found a forever home.

There are many ways to teach the things of God; just keep a receptive mind and heart to follow His leading. When He is in the forefront of our lives, we can plainly teach our children spiritual truths by using His Words and our actions in any context.



Latonya Moore is a wife and home educating mother to two daughters. She is a creator at heart and she spends her downtime writing at JoyintheOrdinary.com or designing faith-based jewelry for Alexandria's Authentically Made Jewelry (AuthenticallyMade.bigcartel.com).

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Curriculum in Review

Grapevine Studies, a Bible study curriculum, allows learners to draw their way through God's word. The studies are simple for teacher and student. After reading the scriptures aloud, students draw stick figures of important and specific Biblical events. The colors they use correlate to the figures' purpose.

Twenty studies from the Old and New Testament begin with a chronological timeline. The students then draw key events and illustrate at least eight main points. Each lesson ends with a lesson review, memory scripture and a drawing page for the students' favorite part of the lesson.

The program is flexible for the youngest learners up to 8th grade. Traceable packages enable younger learners to participate, while older learners dive deeper into the Word by defining vocabulary unique to the lesson and answering discussion questions.

This simplistic, visual study of the Bible meets four of the five Texas home school subject requirements (reading, spelling, grammar and good citizenship). Visit GrapevineStudies.com to download a free sample lesson.



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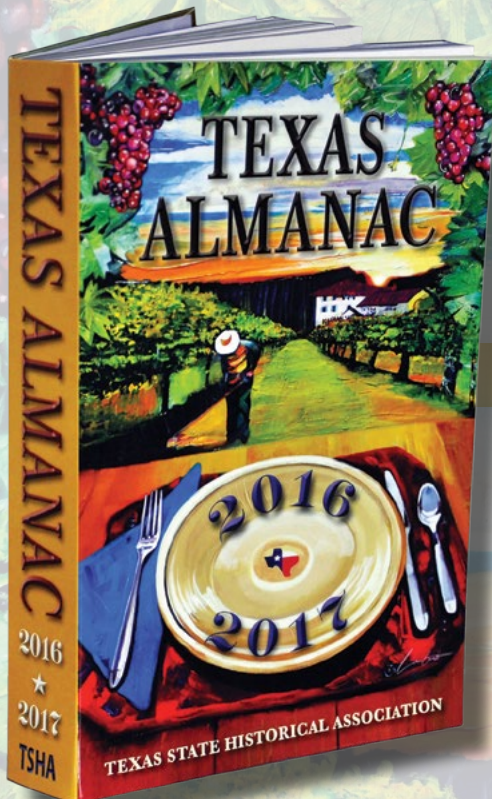
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Look what we have done together since our founding:

- Texas Supreme Court ruled home schooling legal
- Parents can teach driver's ed
- Home schoolers can take dual credit classes
- Home schoolers are eligible for higher ed grants
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- Public schools must allow home schoolers to take PSAT

Visit THSC.org or call 806.744.4441 for more information.

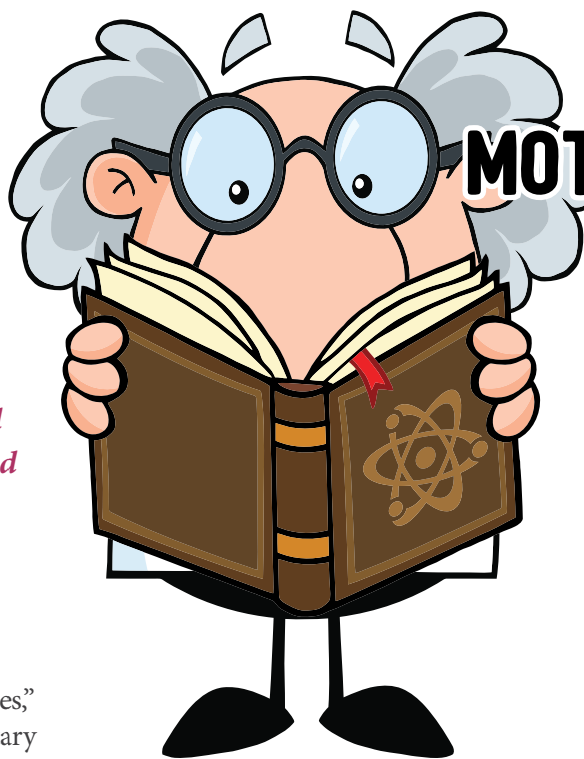
Welcome back, lab techs! Today, the main ingredient of our concoction will be the novel “Around the World in 80 Days” by Jules Verne. Our experiment does not take 80 days, so we will call it *Around the World in a Couple of Days*. Here are our chosen destinations:

- Identify the terms “culture,” “technical advances,” “mapping,” and “monetary conversion”
- Read and research
- Explore world cultures
- Practice critical thinking about world cultures
- Develop a digital slide presentation featuring geographical and sociological knowledge
- Demonstrate advanced presentation skills

There is a method to this motley mix, but first read the book, which is available for free online at PlanetEBook.com. Then, learn the terms listed above. (Not a fan of Jules Verne? Most of the above steps can be applied to the Apostle Paul’s journeys found in the Bible.)

You’re back so soon? Well, then, let’s begin.

- Discuss with your teacher the changes since 1872.
- Map the journey Phileas Fogg and his friends took, creating an elaborate art piece that shows each stop and something about the culture of each country. Take a picture of your map for the digital presentation.



PROFESSOR AMALGAM'S MOTLEY CURRICULUM CONCOCTIONS

Adaptations for Younger Learners

Early Elementary

- Watch a narrated and illustrated 12-minute version on YouTube by searching Kids Gid channel for “Around the World at the 80 Day StoryBook.”
- Set up a relay race, collecting one item from each country visited as a souvenir, and time the race.
- Race several times, compare the finishing times, and discuss what affected finishing times.
- Discuss the differences in transportation from the 1870s to present day.
- Draw a scene from another culture.

Middle School

- Watch or listen to the book in a series of 29, six-minute animated episodes from LittleFox on YouTube.
- Create word problems from Phileas Fogg’s travels.
- Introduce the word “culture” and compare your culture with one of the cultures in the video.
- Using a globe or world map, plan your trip around the world. How many days would you spend in each country and what would you like to see there?

Junior High

- Instead of reading the book, listen to “Around the World” via a free audio book at LoyalBooks.com.
- Discuss what makes up culture and choose one culture to create a PowerPoint presentation.
- Using Google Translate, translate a paragraph of the book into French and practice reading it. (Google can also read aloud.)
- Use a timeline to show the development of transportation from 1869 to present day.

- Choose one or more cultures to describe in-depth for the digital presentation. Compare it to your family’s culture.
- Write a short biography of Jules Verne, identifying the technological advances of his times that might have influenced his novel. Add this to your presentation.
- Over the years, people have imitated this trip. Research the attempts, then plan your own journey. Map out key stops, describe the modes of transportation, decide how long you would spend in each country, and calculate the cost of the trip in U.S. dollars.
- Research conversion of dollars to other currencies. Then, include a chart in your presentation of what the trip would cost in each of your key stops’ local currencies.
- Write an annotated bibliography page to document research sources.
- Finally, present your research to your family.

We’ve done it—an Artechnical Historically Scientific Communicallanguage Adventure! Bon voyage, until our next concoction!

UPCOMING EVENTS

THSC Texas Leadership Conference

May 11, 2017, Arlington, Texas

THSC.org/tlc

THSC Convention—Arlington

May 11-13, 2017

Arlington, Texas

THSC.org/conventions

THSC Convention—The Woodlands

July 20-22, 2017

The Woodlands, Texas

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The Texas Home School Coalition (THSC) is a 501(c)(3) educational organization that is supported by tax-deductible donations. THSC is dedicated to serving the home school community; it promotes home education in Texas by educating the public, the home school community, and officials about home schooling.

THSC Association, a 501(c)(4) advocacy organization, is dedicated to *Keeping Texas Families Free*. It is supported by membership fees and donations. THSC Association membership benefits include legal assistance, as well as a long list of other offerings and discounts.

The work of the THSC PAC (Political Action Committee)—endorsing and supporting pro-home schooling candidates—is supported by donations that are not tax-deductible.

See **THSC.org** for more information.

MAKING THE MOST OF EVERY OPPORTUNITY

By Donna Schillinger

I began a precious endeavor 21 years ago that will never quite be finished. My endeavor, nonetheless, has its milestones, the next of which is scheduled for May 6, 2017.

From day one, I understood I had a solid block of 18 years to reach one of the major milestones. For this project, I was gifted with a unique sense of urgency. I tell you quite honestly that God taught me to number my days aright and make the most of every opportunity, because the days are evil. He gave me a heart of wisdom to realize that I had only the brief span of a childhood to daily drink in the rays illumining from that little platinum blonde.

That is not to say I have no regrets, nor to assert that I always gave it my best effort. I simply mean I never lost the urgency of the deadline. “Only 18 years! ... Only 12 years! ... Only six years! ...” and, hyperventilating, “Only this year left!”

I could not have suffered any greater heartache upon my daughter leaving home at 18 than if she had taken an internship in Antarctica. It was irrelevant that her college was so close that I could do her laundry on the weekends.

On the day she moved into the dorm, an irrevocable shift occurred in our relationship. We had been wrenched apart (that’s what it felt like to me anyway) by social norms and expectations. Whereas she had the ability to quickly regenerate, my wound was left bare to throb in anguish and slowly scab.

Now her university graduation comes cruelly quick and opens the wound again. Before you dismiss me as melodramatic, you need to understand that at this next milestone the chickens will come home to roost. All the grief I gave my own mother as I trotted the globe, I am about to reap.

Home schooling takes so many different forms, and for our family, our classroom was often in some other country. I raised a faithful, fearless global citizen who speaks Spanish and Portuguese and has traveled to 17 countries. She’s just getting started, soon to be armed with a degree in intercultural studies and community development. But now, it will be ... without me.

Unequivocally satisfied with my approach to home education, I nonetheless wonder if I fully thought it through. Maybe we should have baked more bread and done less backpacking. Maybe I should have kept her closer to home.

Who knows if our paths will converge again in front of a shared bathroom mirror. For now, the intervals between visits will grow longer. I miss her already. In the interim, I thank the Father for having impressed upon me the urgency of childhood.

Donna Schillinger serves as publications manager for Texas Home School Coalition.



“



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