



homeschool iowa

A PUBLICATION OF THE NETWORK OF IOWA CHRISTIAN HOME EDUCATORS | FALL 2019

Features:

**This Year's Homeschool
Bucket List**

**Central Iowa
Regional Focus**

**Creating a Comprehensive
High School Plan**

Building a Successful Co-op

**Homeschool Iowa
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contents

FALL 2019 | VOLUME 10 ISSUE 2

in every issue

- 4 Advertiser Index
- 6 Finding Your NICHE: Central Iowa
- 18 Homeschool Options

features

- 5 This Year's Homeschool Bucket List
By Jenn Warren
- 9 Can I Successfully Teach Middle School?
By Laura Carlson
- 10 Creating a Comprehensive High School Plan
By Cheri Frame
- 12 High School to College
By Mike Rasch
- 13 Upcoming Homeschool Iowa Events
- 15 High School to Trade School
- 16 The End of an Era
By Kim Stillwell
- 19 How Do I Find and Contact My State Senator or Representative?
By Laura Carlson, Homeschool Iowa Advocacy Team
- 20 Building a Successful Co-Op
By Cathy Sorenson and Crystal Wieland
- 22 The Greenhouse

advertiser index

DMACC (dmacc.edu) 14
 Driver’s Education 101 (www.iowa.driverseducation101.com) 8
 Faith Baptist Bible College (www.faith.edu) 2
 Reid Law Firm (www.treidlawfirm.com) 24
 Small Business Directory 23
 The Truth Network (www.truthnetwork.com) 19
 Thrivent Financial (www.thrivent.com) 23

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what’s the point?

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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.
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our mission

Homeschool Iowa exists to:

- equip homeschooling families
- encourage home educators
- promote home education, and
- protect homeschooling freedom



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This Year's Homeschool Bucket List

JENN WARREN, EDITOR

New books, new planners, new Ticonderoga pencils, new notebooks, new homeschool year, and the same old bucket list.

Our annual homeschool bucket list is always the same:

- Stick to a schedule
- Allow room in that schedule for flexibility
- Memorize new Scriptures and review old ones
- Take time every day to pray
- Pursue academics, but prioritize relationships
- Look for opportunities to be kind
- Read lots of books
- Take field trips
- Plan for sunshine days
- Bake something as often as possible
- Ask questions when you get stuck
- Share the things you learn that make you excited
- Do your best
- Clean your room
- Family game night!

The things on this tired old bucket list are the things that keep our family going in the right direction. They are the daily things that remind us of what is most important, of what we must do to fulfill our responsibilities.

We have another bucket list. That one is full of places we want to visit, things we want to try, goals we have set, and dreams we share. But we've learned that without the practical bucket list in place, helping us to keep our priorities straight, the fun bucket list never happens.

It's easy to get caught up in the excitement of making plans, creating bucket lists, and dreaming of all the big and exciting things we would like to do with our families! It's also easy to fall from those heights of excitement to depths of discouragement when we get a few weeks into our school year and sickness comes or vehicles break down or a wind storm causes havoc at our homes or our plans with friends fall through and the bucket list of exciting things sits on the shelf collecting dust.

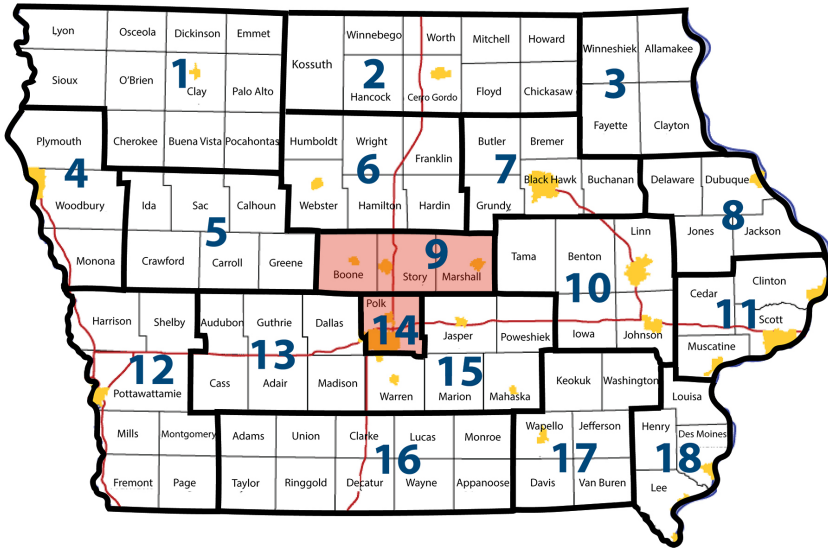
When we were new to this homeschool life, I regularly found myself in those depths of disappointment. Then I lowered my expectations and I found peace. I learned that keeping a simple bucket list of attainable goals helped to keep me from feeling like I was failing my kids. And because we are intentional about keeping some fun things on that tried-and-true bucket list, we still have plenty to look forward to each year as we enter our next school year.

Will you join me in keeping a simple bucket list? Here's our family's first memory verse for the year to help you:

"Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me; for I am meek and lowly in heart: and ye shall find rest for your souls." Matthew 11:28-29 (KJV)

Finding Your NICHE

Regional Focus: Central Iowa



*Have Questions? Need Resources?
Reach out to your Regional Rep!*

Find out more on our website:
www.homeschooliowa.org

**Homeschool Iowa
Regional
Representatives:**



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Region 9

Christine
Region 14

Central Iowa is home to the Des Moines metro area and a plethora of things to do! With the State Capitol Building, museums, natural areas, and fun places like Adventureland, there are plenty of things to do. Because these two regions run together a bit with the sprawl of Des Moines, we will just be sharing what there is to do by category rather than breaking it out by region for this issue of the magazine!

ARTS:

Explore the arts and history at the Des Moines Art Center. The permanent collection includes works from Georgia O'Keeffe, Jean Dubuffet, and Francis Bacon. Also, in the heart of Des Moines, you can visit the 4.4-acre John and Mary Pappajohn Sculpture Park.

If you are interested in performance arts, you can see a variety of shows at the Des Moines Civic Center, listen to an opera at the Metro Opera, or enjoy some classical music with the Des Moines Symphony. The Des Moines Community Playhouse presents a wide variety of performances, including their "Friday Funday" series of interactive shows for younger children.

GOVERNMENT:

Iowa State Capitol: Either during the legislative session or the quiet summer hours, the Iowa State Capitol Building is a must-see for Iowa students. Get in on a guided tour for a trip to the top dome and all the unique aspects of the building. Plan to come to the Capitol on March 16th for Homeschool Iowa Capitol Day.

While learning about Iowa's government, visit Terrace Hill, which has been called "home" by five Iowa governors and their families. The Terrace Hill governor's residence is recognized as one of the most accessible governor's homes in the country.

HISTORY:

Salisbury House & Gardens in Des Moines is inspired from English castles with architectural features that reflect elements from the fifteenth through seventeenth centuries. You will see an impressive collection of artifacts, art work, and furniture displayed throughout the tour.

The State Historical Museum of Iowa highlights early geological

state history through current affairs. A younger children's play area makes this stop perfect for all ages.

One of the most unique historical hands-on experiences in the metro is Living History Farms, where volunteers and staff reenact everyday life from the 1700's Ioway Indian farm to the 1875 town of Walnut Hill.

The Jordan House highlights the story of James Jordan and his family who moved to West Des Moines in 1848. He became a prominent Iowa leader and the "chief conductor" of the Underground Railroad in Polk County.

The Wells Fargo History Museum offers over a dozen interactive hands-on displays that will keep visitors busy for more than an hour. Their most famous display is the interactive stage coach. Children can dress up in period costumes, ride inside the coach while watching a video about 1800's travel, or try their hand at holding leather reins and driving.

The Iowa Gold Star Military Museum houses an impressive collection of retired military vehicles, a large gun display room, and several hands-on activities dating back from our country's earliest wars. Staffed by some of our finest veterans, students can gain inside information during a guided tour.

Another great museum to visit is the Kate Shelley Museum in Moingona where you can learn about the teenage Iowa farmgirl who bravely crawled across a train trestle during a raging storm to ensure that a passenger train would stop before trying to cross a bridge that had already collapsed in the storm.

In Boone, you can visit the Mamie Doud Eisenhower birthplace. The museum has heirlooms from both the Eisenhower and Carlson family, including the classic Chrysler Windsor sedan that belonged to the Carlson family and Mamie Eisenhower's 1962 Plymouth Valiant.

SCIENCE:

A unique opportunity in Des Moines is the Apple Store, which offers unique field trips for students and teachers. There are several different trip themes and topics based on the needs of each student group, including: movie making, coding, robotics, and more.



Apple also offers teacher workshops and resources.

Iowa Public Television offers guided tours and hands-on stem projects. Students can go behind the scenes to learn about the latest broadcast technology or do group activities in the studio classroom. IPTV also provides educational resources for Iowa teachers.

The Science Center of Iowa can host large groups of students for hands-on science activities and classroom engagement. Displays include air & space, motion, nature, and more. It's a perfect place to visit, both for your family or your homeschool co-op or group.

The National Balloon Museum in Indianola is staffed by knowledgeable volunteers who are experienced in ballooning and have flown hot-air balloons. The museum offers the history of ballooning and has over two dozen baskets on display. Younger students will have fun watching a film about a clown who flies in a hot air balloon.

The Picket Fence Creamery in Woodward is a family-owned dairy farm supplying local grocery stores with high-quality products. Kids will love to hold the kittens and pet the calf while learning about the milking process, pasteurization, and preparing of products during the hour-long tour.

All Iowa students should have an opportunity to visit an Iowa farm. For ways to connect with local farmers visit the Field Trip Iowa blog where Jen gives you several suggestions on how to reach out to farmers in your area: <http://fieldtripiowa.com/visit-an-iowa-farm/>.

OUTDOORS:

The Blank Park Zoo is an excellent smaller zoo, and is perfect for younger children, but diverse enough for older students as well. There are several hands-on programs and times when you can feed animals.

ISU Insect Zoo brings creepy crawlers and an exciting hands-on educational experience to classrooms and community centers anywhere in Iowa. Students can also visit the one-room museum on the 4th floor of Science II building on the ISU campus in Ames. Also in Ames is the beautiful Rieman Gardens with a butterfly space and lovely gardens to explore. Rieman Gardens offers Homeschool Days throughout the year.

Sitting below Saylorville Dam is Cottonwood Recreational Area, home to the best frog pond in central Iowa. Pack a picnic, bring along some nets and your nature journal to enjoy a sunny afternoon observing wildlife.

Polk County Master Gardeners created the Enabling Garden for people of all abilities to enjoy and learn about gardening. There are smooth paths, easy access to the flowers, and a musical children's garden. Their website has a calendar of events with learning programs and children's art workshops.

The Polk County Conservation officers host a series of educational hikes, programs, and field trips in parks and community centers around the metro. Be sure to visit the new nature center at Jester Park near Granger and the elk and bison viewing area.

Just east of the metro, the Neal Smith National Wildlife Refuge is huge with over 11,000 acres. Giving an expansive sense of prairie, a long twisting paved road leads you through a few miles of tall grass prairie to the visitor center. It's easy to imagine Laura Ingalls riding in a covered wagon across such a land. The Prairie Learning and Visitor Center is well-designed for large groups of students, but still small enough for families to enjoy.

In Boone county, there are opportunities for picnicking, hiking, camping, swimming, boating, fishing, and more at the Ledges State Park. In 1924, the Ledges officially became one of Iowa's first state parks. The Civilian Conservation Corps constructed facilities at the park using native timbers and field stone. Many of those are still standing today, including an arch stone bridge, trail steps, and shelters.

Activities

The Renaissance Faire at Sleepy Hollow runs for three weekends each September and features a different theme each week. Knight fights, a Viking Camp, Royal Court, the fine arts, and more! A cluster of tents give a peek into daily life in the 1500s. Try on a knight's helmet, watch blacksmiths work, or learn about ropemaking.

The Boone & Scenic Valley Railroad and Museum allows you to both explore the history of the railroad in the area and take a ride on a train to experience rail travel! Dinner trains offer a unique elegant dining experience. Trolley rides from the depot to downtown Boone are available from May through October on the weekends too.

In Urbandale, you can experience the Living History Farms. Starting with the Ioway Indian farm, moving on to the 1850's farm and ending with the 1900's farm, there are multiple hands-on activities to help you experience history in a real way.

If roller coasters, waterslides, and fun rides are things you enjoy, then you must visit Adventureland in Altoona! You will find fun for every member of the family.

Conclusion:

Thanks to Jen Ciha, who manages the Field Trip Iowa blog, for her permission to use her "Science Field Trips in Des Moines" and "Historical Field Trips in Des Moines" blog posts to build this article. Photos in this article are from her blog. You can check out more of her field trip and family fun ideas for the Des Moines area and beyond at www.fieldtripiowa.com. Also, thanks to our Regional Reps for their contributions of things to do in the area!



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Can I Successfully Teach Middle School?

BY LAURA CARLSON

I enjoy meeting homeschooling parents. As I am apt to do, I share our homeschool graduation story to encourage elementary student families. I ask, "Do you plan to homeschool through high school?" They often frown, shrug their shoulders, and reply, "Oh, I don't know if I can do it. And they have to learn how to handle the real world at some point."

Instantly, a picture of screaming adults at the Roman Colosseum flashes across my mind as I imagine these servant-hearted young students entering an arena of "the real world."

Are we making children's educational decisions based upon feelings? "I feel confident I can teach elementary levels. I don't feel confident to teach pre-algebra and middle school subjects, so I'll send the kids to public school after fifth or sixth grade." If you were a good enough teacher to guide your children through fourth grade word problems and spelling books, prepare them to share with siblings, manage their activities, drag them along to your meetings, train them to help out at the grocery store, and plant a garden, what suddenly makes you less able to lead students through middle school?

Using a feelings-based theory, I predict there would be many more only children following that sleepless first year with a baby. Unfinished projects would pile up on desks as feelings of overwhelming indecision fill our minds. Adults don't make serious decisions using feelings. "I want that red convertible more than I want to heat the house next winter," isn't a common statement in Iowa homeschool families. We use budgets, facts, prayer, and logical thought process to make decisions.

Serious facts: homeschooled students score higher on standardized testing, graduate in higher rates, succeed in work and college, and suffer much lower suicide rates than public schooled youth. Homeschooling is safer, and there is significantly less abuse in home-educated families.

"You're just as qualified as anybody else to teach middle school," answers a homeschool graduate. "If you do proper research, you can take hands-on control of your child's education."

Isn't that why you started homeschooling? To have input, control, and guide these little people on the path that you prayed about when they were born? Before you turn your children over to national regulations and corporate goals, make a list of God's educational goals. How are these best met?

Remember where your strength comes from. It isn't public opinion. God gave you the skills and desire to teach your children. Ignore others who question or belittle your ability or motives.

Reevaluate the previous homeschool years and take a closer look at your child. Is he ready for a middle school with 600 other students? Would he enjoy that school? Will she be challenged to do her best in a classroom with 32 others clamoring for a teacher's attention? Does the school have the same Christian goals you do? Is there flexibility in the classroom for unique and personal learning styles?

A family friend was homeschooled until high school. He shares this observation: "A lot of time was wasted at my public school. Everyone spends the same amount of time on a subject whether you are bored or don't get it. It is like an assembly line. I liked homeschooling. It's about the individual, even if there's ten kids in a family."

While homeschooling, I learned my limits and strengths. I outsourced math and science for middle school and high school. Our



son attended weekly "Creation Apologetics" classes taught by a Christian scientist via live internet instead of attending the typical science class in public school. Is he worse off in the "real world" because he didn't learn a million-year date of a rock? (Not so far.) His experiences while being homeschooled were eclectic. He learned how to live in the real world, which includes interacting with adults. He watched friends act out in middle school, and he didn't have to live it eight hours a day. Homeschooling provides an opportunity for parents to guide children as they enter the real world at a pace that works for each individual.

Homeschool Iowa offers resources online and in person for parents to plan middle and high school years. Regional Representatives located throughout Iowa are experienced homeschool parents who share their knowledge and expertise to guide and support your personal journey. The Home School Legal Defense Association (HSLDA) website also provides detailed plans for families and personal help to members.

Why did you homeschool in the first place? Academic achievement? Christian choice? Special learning? What would make you change your initial choice? Does it fit with God's plan for your students and family?

Psalm 119:1-4 is helpful. "You're blessed when you stay on course, walking steadily on the road revealed by God. You're blessed when you follow his directions, doing your best to find him. That's right - you don't go off on your own; you walk straight along the road he set. You, God, prescribed the right way to live; now you expect us to live it." (The Message)

My homeschool motto is "never alone." Reach out and ask for help. Working together, we can do it!



Creating a Comprehensive High School Plan

BY CHERI FRAME, 2019 CONFERENCE SPEAKER

Whether you are an experienced homeschool parent or just getting started, you may have questions about planning the high school years. There are a few distinctive differences between the elementary and secondary years that can be helpful to consider as you create a plan.

PreK – Grade 6 are the foundational years where you enjoy learning right alongside your student, as you are teaching them the basics of reading, writing, and arithmetic. Your student's days are filled with play, visits to the library, and short math lessons. Together, you explore people, places, and ideas through your choice of resources. Parents often have a general plan for the year, but each day is fluid and the pace is set by your student's interests, development, and understanding of the material.

Grades 7 – 12 require more direction and planning. The pace and content of the secondary years, while still taking cues from your student's development, transition to completing parent-directed courses that satisfy your graduation goals. Transcripts need to be prepared, college admission requirements met, and personal skills acquired to enter today's job market. Remember, you, as the homeschooling parent of your student, will set your own graduation requirements, create your own transcript, and certify your own homeschool high school diploma.

STEP 1. Multi-Year Planning

Creating a comprehensive multi-year plan can help you feel confident that you're meeting your goals. Without a plan, par-

ents often wonder, "Am I doing enough?"

A planning template can help you create this plan. I offer a free Planning Template on my website, you can download that at CreditsBeforeCollege.com/Homeschool-Through-High-School

Next, pencil in the courses and activities that you envision your student completing in each of the grades. Begin by writing in courses that progress in a sequence, such as math. Adjustments will be made based on your student's ability and interests in the last step. Refer to your state statute to ensure you are fulfilling all requirements. I also encourage parents to review college admission requirements and recommendations from their local state university to ensure they are preparing their college-bound students for a seamless transition.

STEP 2. Work Smarter, Not Harder

Once you have crafted an initial plan, consider eliminating, rearranging, and adding courses based on these suggestions.

Eliminate repeating subjects. Instead of having your student study a course with similar content in Grades 7-8 and again in high school, consider eliminating the repeat. Pencil in the course just once, when your student is ready for the high school level. For younger students with strong reading, comprehension, and vocabulary skills, this might be before ninth grade. For other students who aren't ready to advance early, this may leave a hole in their schedule. Instead of repeating a subject with similar content, replace it with something different. For example, eliminate

middle school U.S. History and replace it with a research project or study of cultural geography or time for a fine arts elective.

When eliminating repeating subjects, you might notice more white (free) space in your plan. Your student will thank you for that! Consider alternatives, such as economics, psychology, and worldview or elective studies that coincide with your student's interest, such as music, art, computer technology, and robotics. Then include skill building courses, such as career exploration, personal finance, and entrepreneurship. These courses are a welcome addition as you build a schedule that bridges education to vocation.

Bundle like subjects. As you review the arrangement of your student's courses, consider bundling like subjects together. For example, have your student study American Government the same year he takes U.S. History. The two are so intertwined, it just makes sense to group them together. Include literature (speech and debate), field trips, family travels, volunteer activities, family movie selections, current events reading, and research assignments all around the topics of U.S. History and Government. Study it once, study it well, and move on! Your student's knowledge will expand, and you may find planning to be more enjoyable. Do the same by planning World History and World Religions in the same year. Include ethnic cooking, geography studies, and missionary biographies as part of this year's studies.

Introduce CLEP and DSST exams. With encouragement and guidance, students can use the same high school resources to prepare for CLEP or DSST exams. These are nationally-recognized exam programs that enable students to earn college credit by demonstrating competency in subjects often studied in introductory-level college courses. They are popular with homeschool families since students of any age can take these exams. Homeschool parents can add them as a final exam to their students' high school level studies. Exams cost less than \$100 and can be taken at several local testing locations.

The time to introduce CLEP and DSST exams is when your student is ready to study at a high school level. For some students, their comprehension and vocabulary will enable them to study at a high school level in some subjects before Grade 9. Start by reviewing your student's plan and note which high school level courses have a corresponding CLEP or DSST exam. Popular CLEP exam titles include U.S. History, Western Civilization (World History), Analyzing Literature, College Algebra (similar to Algebra 2), Composition, Biology, and Psychology. Two popular DSST exams that work well for younger students are World Religions and Environmental Science. I have developed course guides specifically for these subjects that are available on my website.

Finding out about credit-by-exam changed the way we approached Grades 7-12. Adding CLEP and DSST as final exams to courses my students were already studying provided additional incentive to study the subject well. Because they accumulated a significant amount of credit, my children were able to gradu-

ate early and earn their bachelor's degree for under \$15,000. Not every college awards credit for these exams, so if you know the school your student will be attending, it is always recommended to review their policy. If you are not sure which school your student will attend, I recommend students take these exams alongside their high school courses. For more information, CreditsBeforeCollege.com/Getting-Started.

STEP 3. Customize Toward Your Graduation Goals **Options for College Credit.**

Many states, including Iowa, have programs that allow qualifying students to enroll in post-secondary options that, in many cases, allow students to receive both high school and college credit concurrently. For more information, refer to homeschooliowa.org/college-credits.

For parents considering this option, review your high school plan to account for classes you may want your student to take at an upper level for college credit.

Teach Life Skills. Prepare your teen to step confidently into their adult role by customizing your student's plan with an eye toward their post-high school goals. For some, this next step is college. For others, it may be work, Bible school, travel, ministry, or military service.

Help to make this step an easy transition for your student by teaching essential life skills, such as home maintenance, personal well-being, and money management. Be intentional by including these life skills into your written plan. You can find a starting list at CreditsBeforeCollege.com/life-skills.

Foster Employment Skills. Think of Grades 9-12 not just as the last four years of high school, but the first four years of their college/career plan. Give your student plenty of opportunities to develop employment skills by including volunteering, part-time jobs, and career-related internships in his schedule. Graduating with employment experience will enable your student to develop his resume and help him make informed career decisions. Look for employers that will mentor your student. My most common recommendation is for students to work at a front-desk position where they learn to greet customers, practice first impressions, and develop valued communication skills. It's also exciting to see teens start their own side business.

Review and Revise

As each year comes to an end, review and revise your plan. Make adjustments based on your student's progress and targeted pursuits. You are your student's best advisor. Start where you are today and follow these steps to help you create a successful high school plan.

Cheri Frame is a veteran homeschool parent and the founder of Credits Before College. She and her husband Tim live in Minnesota and homeschooled their three children K-12. Through her extensive research and guidance, her children graduated college early and debt-free. As a speaker, author, and consultant, Cheri specializes in equipping parents to be their own students' guidance counselor. Her book, A Parent's Guide to Credits Before College, is written to help students maximize their credit-by-exam options and graduate debt-free. For more information, visit CreditsBeforeCollege.com. ©2019 Cheri Frame

You, as the homeschooling parent of your student will:

- *set your own graduation requirements*
- *create your own transcript*
- *certify your student's homeschool high school diploma*

High School to College

BY MIKE RASCH, VICE PRESIDENT FOR ENROLLMENT AT OAK HILLS CHRISTIAN COLLEGE, BEMIDJI, MN

As a student, selecting a college is one of the most important decisions that you will make, and as a parent one of the most important in the guidance of your child.

I am a firm believer that it is never too early to start the process of college selection. In fact, I know at Oak Hills - and I am sure at other schools as well - the process is much easier when the students have prepared early! Let's take a closer look at what this actually entails:

High School Freshman:

- Start collecting information from colleges
- Work hard, get good grades throughout high school. Scholarships are often based on your grade point average.
- Parents: determine a transcript format for grading and stick to it.

High School Sophomore:

- Start looking into dual enrollment college level classes. There are certain requirements, so check early.
- Take college tours of campuses that are of interest to you. This is one of the best ways to determine which place fits you.

High School Junior:

- Take your ACT/SAT and send scores to those colleges you are interested in. (This will give you time to re-take the test if you want to try for a higher score).
- Take college classes, this is a great way to gain college credits early and sometimes, at no cost to you or at a reduced fee. (Most colleges have certain criteria you must meet).
- Start applying for scholarships! Take the time to apply. There is a lot of money available to those willing to take the time to apply.

High School Senior:

- The financial aid process is complicated, so start it early. Colleges like students who show initiative. Apply to the schools you like. It's okay to have multiple applications out at the same time.

SEPTEMBER-DECEMBER: Narrow your college choices down to two or three, if possible. Go online and look for more sources of funding. www.finaid.org. Attend financial aid workshops. Start to apply for scholarships and investigate student loans.

JANUARY-FEBRUARY: File your FAFSA at www.fafsa.ed.gov. You will receive your Student Aid Report (SAR). Review it carefully! Start to complete any applications for financial aid

through the colleges you have applied to. Submit any corrections to the FAFSA, if needed. (*Called verification*).

MARCH-APRIL: Contact the financial aid offices of the schools you applied to and make sure they have received your materials you have sent them. Send any outstanding material promptly. (The most frustrating piece for the admissions and financial aid department at the schools is not receiving your information in a timely manner!) Scholarship aid is usually limited, so if you wait the aid may no longer be available. Additionally, getting your information in sooner makes it more likely that you will get the classes you want, your first choice in housing selection, and etc. When you receive your financial aid package, review it promptly and carefully and follow up with the colleges if you have questions.

MAY AND JUNE: Accept and return financial aid package from your school of choice. File any paperwork to take out student loans and contact the financial aid office on details of work study if applicable.

There. That is all there is too it! Okay, not funny. But if you stay on course with your financial process, it is really not that hard! The process is pretty much the same whether you attend a secular college or a private Christian college. I am partial to the Christian college myself. I know. You are thinking, "Sure, he is. He works for one." That would only be partially true. Not only can attending a Christian school be a life-changing decision, it can also impact your spiritual life and spiritual future! Christian colleges employ Christian faculty and administration that will help you grow not only in learning but also in your faith and walk with God!

Acronyms are in abundance in the financial aid process. I have listed a few with the explanations that may help:

COA: Cost of Attendance. The total cost of one year's education, including tuition, room, board, books, and fees. Remember to plan for unbudgeted expenses as well.

EFC: Expected Family Contribution. This is the dollar amount determined by the information you provide on the FAFSA. This is the amount your family or you are expected to be able to pay out of pocket for college expense.

SAR: Student Aid Report. You will receive this after filing the FAFSA.

FFEL: Federal Family Education Loans. These are administered through the U.S. Department of Education. These funds come from banks, credit union, or other lenders.

FSEOG: Federal Supplemental Educational Opportunity Grant. This grant program is for undergraduate students with exceptional financial need.



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High School to Trade School

Grade school, middle school, high school, college is the natural childhood-to-adulthood progression we most often here. But, for a lot of people, the “college” piece of that progression doesn’t fit. For these students, a better option might be to learn a trade, either through an internship, on-the-job experience, classes at a trade school or community college, or a combination of all four!

If your student is planning to attend a trade school, there are some things you and your teen should consider:

- Is it possible to earn the trade school degree or obtain the certifications necessary for the chosen career path while still in high-school? Or would it be better to complete high-school then obtain the degree or certificate?
- What local schools are available to get the degree from? Or will a school in another place serve the student’s need better? Also, is there a distance learning program available that would be a good fit for the student’s needs?
- Is it possible to take CLEP tests to test out of some of the required classes? If so, does the student already have the knowledge and skills necessary to test out of classes? When are the tests and how much will they cost?
- Is the program an accredited Associates Degree program or simply a certificate program? If it’s a certificate program, is the certificate recognized by industry leaders?
- Will the school accept a homeschool high school transcript and homeschool diploma or do they require testing?
- What is the cost? Are there scholarships available?
- Does the school offer any career placement assistance?

What about the future for your trade-school-bound teen?

Studies by The National Center for Educational Statistics show that individuals who complete at least a Bachelor’s degree earn over 30% more than their peers who only complete high school and over 20% more than their peers with an Associate’s degree. Do those statistics mean that your trade-school-bound teen will be locked into a lifetime of low-pay-

ing jobs? No, some trades pay very well! Also, the possibility of pursuing a Bachelor’s degree in the future is an option for your teen. Bonus, many employers offer to pay for continuing education classes, including the completion of higher-level degrees as a part of the benefits package offered to their employees.

Trade-School-bound young adults start working in their careers earlier than college graduates and with much less educational debt. CNBC reports that nearly 70% of college students take out loans to pay for school and the average student loan debt is over \$35,000/college graduate. Various studies show that it takes most students nearly 20 years to pay off their student loans. It is important to remember that completing a four-year college degree does not guarantee financial stability.

What types of careers are open to students who attend a trade school?

The job opportunities cross all industries! In the medical field, radiation therapists, diagnostic sonographers, dental hygienists, and vet techs are all popular jobs that require a two-year degree. There are good careers in the industrial field too, including electricians, industrial mechanics, and petroleum technicians. Residential services are a strong field for entrepreneurial young people to pursue; plumbers, HVAC technicians, and construction professionals can either develop their own businesses or work for established companies. For detail-oriented teens careers as a paralegal, court reporter or real estate transaction manager can be lucrative. You can get entry-level positions as a web developer, graphic artist, or IT specialist without a four-year degree and can progress professionally as you build experience and continue to learn in these ever-changing fields.

If you are home educating a student who is interested in starting a trade rather than going straight on to college after high school, your educational plan may look a little different than the college-prep track of other students who have chosen a career path that starts with a college degree. Homeschooling gives you the freedom to customize each child’s education plan to meet their specific needs and future plans. You can be confident that your high school student will graduate with a solid educational foundation for whatever career path they choose.



The End of an Era

BY KIM STILLWELL

By the time this column goes to print, my youngest child will have graduated from high school. My oldest is 27, and we have homeschooled all the way through. For most of my adult life, I have been a homeschool mom. As my youngest child comes to the end of her homeschooling years, I have such mixed emotions. I know it sounds dramatic to say that it is the end of an era but, for me, it truly is. We are blessed to have some of our young adults still living at home, but they are living their own lives and becoming the adults that God intended them to be. Though I pray for them and may be a counselor and sounding board, I no longer play the major part in their lives that I once did.

The end of an era is a time to reflect. For you moms who are in the thick of raising little ones, please be encouraged that my main memories are good ones. I remember the moments cuddled up together reading books. I remember the times of playing in the park together as a family. I remember hiking through woods as a family. I remember the seven of us laughing and talking around the table. I remember the nightly Bible reading and prayer times. I remember late night discussions about theology and politics. I remember the hours of playing table games. I remember family vacations. I remember listening as they talked about the things that were important to them. Of course, not all of that is in the past, but these events do not occur on the regular basis that they did at one time.

I have made many mistakes in my motherhood. With God's help, there have also been some successes. I'd like to share with you some of the things I would do differently and some of the things I would not change.

From the time we had two children, Jeff and I tried to instill in our children that they were each other's best friends. There were days when they were little that I wondered if they would even like each other when they grew up, much less be best friends. It warms my heart to say that now all of my children truly are close. They enjoy being together and seek each other out for both fun and counsel. Yes, they have moments of disagreement,

even now, and times when they get on each other's nerves, but they are good companions.

Scripture memory was a priority in our home. I remember verses I learned when I was young and can still quote them verbatim. But I will stumble through passages I learned last week. For this reason, it was important to me that my kids memorize Scripture. When they were little, we would go over a verse each day before meal time. We would go over the same verse until the children knew it well. We also learned the books of the Bible this way. As they grew older, they learned longer passages on their own. I incorporated this into our school day and, on the days when we had to cut our school day short, memorizing and reading/listening to the Bible took priority even over math and English. As useful as math and English are, I knew that hiding God's Word in their hearts was even more important.

I'm thankful that Jeff was very consistent about having family devotions with our children: Over the years, we went through many books of the Bible and prayed for many people and missionaries. If you are a mom reading this and your husband does not lead in family devotions, please do not be discouraged. While that may be the ideal, life is not always ideal. In fact, usually it is not. I know several families where the mom begins each school day with Bible and prayer time, and the children benefit greatly from this.

I love to read, and this has carried over to my children. I spent many hours reading to them from babyhood until they preferred to read on their own in late childhood or early teen years. Often I read to them as much as two hours a day (not all at the same time). We were able to go through so many books together, and the kids still occasionally bring up a book we read together and talk about it.

I am sure I didn't always do this, but I tried hard to listen to my children when they came to talk to me. Our children do not have to open up to us. If they choose to share their hearts with us, it is an honor and a privilege. Our children should be able to tell us anything. Sometimes we may be surprised or even shocked at what



they share, but we should still be calm, loving, and encouraging. We should gently point them to God's Truth, not in a scolding, lecturing way, but in a loving, caring way. On a side note, if a teenage boy chooses to come and share his heart with you, drop everything and listen. Most young men do not share their hearts very readily, so we should count it as the privilege that it is.

I would like to add a disclaimer to the previous paragraph. When I say we should be available to listen to our children, I do not mean we should allow them to be rude or selfish. If we are talking to someone else or in the middle of doing something else, it is fine to tell them to wait a few minutes (or hours) to talk. It is fine to say, "I would love to hear what you have to say in a little while, but right now I am talking to Daddy," or "I'd be happy to listen to you as soon as I finish helping your sister with her math."

We had many family adventures together. During warm weather, we would often go to a park on Jeff's day off. We were able to explore many parks together in our area. We traveled together and went on family vacations. When our kids were older and began doing activities, like TeenPact alumni events, Jeff or I (or both of us) often went with them.

Relationships are built on shared experiences. As you can see, everything mentioned above involved time together. We built memories together, which helps to strengthen relationships.

I'd like to insert something that is off topic, but I feel it is important to say. If I were to give one piece of advice to young moms, it would be, "Get off your phone and spend time with your children." Smart phones are great tools, but they should not be your master. You will never regret time spent with your children. You won't remember not keeping up with the latest news on Facebook or not responding to a text right away. But you will always remember that you spent time with your children and, more importantly, so will they.

Do I have regrets? Oh, so many! Some regrets are minor and some are huge. I regret having some of my babies on such a rigid schedule. I would have spent more time with my children and less time researching or on the desktop. I regret times I spoke

in harsh frustration instead of admonishing in love. I regret the times I jumped to conclusions without knowing all the facts. Though my kids were outside more than the average American child, I would have had them be outdoors even more.

My kids didn't have a lot of screen time, but if I were to do it over again, they would have even less screen time. I would have had more strict deadlines in high school to help prepare them for college and the rest of the real world.

I would have worried less about what others thought about my parenting and more about what God thought. I would have been more consistent in having my children do regular chores. They did help out quite a bit, but I would have had more of a routine and schedule for chores.

I would have handled the deep struggles of one of my daughters differently in some ways. I often apologized to my children when I blew it, but I wish I had done so even more instead of letting pride get in the way, wanting to be right just because I was the mom. I wish with all my heart that I had protected them more from the influence and input of some of the kids in the neighborhood.

There are some things that I wouldn't change but I would increase in frequency. As I said, I wish we had spent even more time outside. I wish we had spent even more time learning God's Word. I prayed for my children daily, but I would have prayed for them even more. Just recently it has been driven home to me how important it is to pray for our children, and I have made it even more of a priority than ever before.

As I ponder the last 27 years, my main emotion is gratitude. I am grateful that God gave me these five precious children. (This has now extended to a daughter-in-law and granddaughter.) I am blessed to have been able to homeschool them. I am thankful for the relationship I have with each of them. And most of all, I am so thankful that, as of now, they all love and serve the Lord. I know this is only by the grace of God, and I do not take it for granted.

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-law: Joshua & Alissa, Joseph, Josiah, Jessica, and Jennifer. They are also the happy grandparents of the sweetest granddaughter in the world, Kate.

*...Relationships are built on shared experiences...
We built memories together, which helps to
strengthen relationships.*



Homeschool Options in Iowa

An Overview Chart

Options with no initial reporting and no public school services

Independent Private Instruction or Competent Private Instruction Option 2 with Opt-Out Reporting

Similarities

Differences

IPI

- No initial filing requirements.
- Can receive free testing at their resident public school.
- Eligible for Parent Taught Driver Education.

- Home educators operating under the IPI guidelines may instruct up to four unrelated students, although no payment may be received for the instruction. The instruction of unrelated students is not addressed under CPI.
- IPI: Parents must provide instruction in these 5 subjects: reading, language arts, mathematics, science and social studies, but there is no legally defined minimal number of instructional days.

CPI

Option 2 with Opt-Out Reporting

- Access to public school driver education without dual-enrollment.
- Access to one specific component of Senior Year Plus: concurrent enrollment classes at Iowa Community colleges.
- No AEA or public school services available for special needs students.

- CPI Option 2 with Opt-Out: Has no required subjects but does require parents to provide at least 148 days of instruction per school year, with 37 days per school quarter.
- Follow-up Reporting: IPI parents are required to respond to a written request for information about IPI programs from the Iowa Department of Education or local school district superintendent. (*Visit our website for a form to help you respond to a request for this information.*) CPI Option 2 with Opt-Out has no initial or follow-up reporting requirements.

Options with reporting and access to public school services

Competent Private Instruction Option 1 (with your chosen teacher or a HSAP* teacher) or Option 2 with Opt-In Reporting

Similarities

Differences

CPI

Option 1 w/ Teacher of your choice

- CPI Report Form A must be filed with your resident school district by Sept 1st or within 2 weeks of removing your child from school.
- Dual enrollment is permitted allowing students access to public school services, activities, classes, and materials as available from the school district and as the student meets the eligibility requirements. Dual enrolled CPI students must receive at least 1/4 of their instruction via Competent Private Instruction.
- AEA and public school services are available to special needs students educated under CPI guidelines through dual enrollment.

- CPI Option 1 with Teacher of Your Choice: You must retain a teacher with a valid Iowa teaching certificate or practitioner license appropriate to the grade level of your student and include that teacher's name and folder number on the CPI Report Form A. Teachers must meet with the student and parents at least twice every 45 days of instruction and one out of every two visits must be face-to-face.

CPI

Option 1 w/ HSAP* Teacher

- AEA and public school services are available to special needs students educated under CPI guidelines through dual enrollment.

- CPI Option 1 with HSAP* Teacher: Students must be enrolled in the HSAP then the public school will assign a HSAP supervising teacher. The HSAP teacher must meet with the student and parent at least four times every 45 days of instruction and one out of every two visits must be face-to-face.

CPI

Option 2 with Opt-In Reporting

- Eligible for Parent Taught Driver Education.
- Parents must provide at least 148 days of instruction per school year, with 37 days per school quarter.

- CPI Option 2, with Opt-In Reporting: Annual assessment must be completed by May 1 and the results filed by June 30th. Acceptable assessments are listed on our website.

*Public School Home School Assistance Program



How Do I Find and Contact My State Senator or Representative

BY LAURA CARLSON, HI ADVOCACY TEAM MEMBER

This issue of *Homeschool Iowa* asks you to contact your state legislators. Send a thank-you card or an introduction of your family. Summer and fall is the best time to contact them, prior to the legislative session. Who are these elected officials?

Here's how to find them:

- 1) Go to this page on our Homeschool Iowa website: homeschooliowa.org/iowa-law/legislative-updates/.
- 2) Scroll down to the bottom of the page, and click the blue button labeled "Find My Legislator."
- 3) The new page that will open is the Iowa Legislature's "Find Your Legislator" tool.
- 4) Type in your address to locate your district's senator and representative. Type in your house number, street address, and city. (No need to enter the state)
- 5) The new page that opens will have a picture and the name of your state senator and state representative. Additionally, the Iowa district number for your address is included. If you click on your senator or representative's name, a page will open with all the information you will want to call, write, or email this person. Included are the committees that they serve with such as education, ethics, agriculture, or ways and means. If you click on the district number next to the picture, a map will open which outlines the district you live in. It is nice to memorize your district for conversations at voter forums in your community.
- 6) Bookmark this page for your senator and your representative. You will want to contact them during the year as legislation is considered or to send a thank-you note.

I hope you contact your senator and legislator before the next session, which begins in January 2020. This is part two of the 2019-2020 legislative session. Some bills will be continued from the 2019 session and others will be new.

Our Homeschool Iowa Advocacy Team's goal is to stay on top of bills that may affect homeschool families as the session proceeds. We contact legislators, if appropriate. We may ask you to contact them, if appropriate. The HI Advocacy Team makes relationships with Iowa senators and representatives with the purpose to educate them about how laws affect homeschool families, and to encourage homeschool supporters as partners in making laws we all operate under. You may keep up with legislative updates at <http://homeschooliowa.org/iowa-law/legislative-updates/>. If you have questions, please contact the team at advocacy@homeschooliowa.org.



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Building a Strong Co-Op

BY CATHY SORENSON AND CRYSTAL WIELAND



Home Educators for Excellence in Des Moines, HEED, is celebrating our 25-year anniversary in 2019, and we are thankful to both look back and look forward for all those who have served, prayed and supported HEED. The founders of our organization laid a strong foundation, which has allowed us to not only survive, but thrive, in the age of technology and a plethora of options people can choose for their families.

HEED has a rich history of servant leaders with both a wide and a forward vision for our Co-op. That vision, along with a strong framework of rules and guidelines has helped HEED ride the waves of trends, needs, and changes in the homeschooling community. We want to share the key elements we feel are conducive to the long life of HEED.

Monthly Meetings

The crux of HEED is the monthly meetings. These meetings are in the evening and for the member home educator, which is primarily the mama, but fathers are welcome to attend.

Variety

The monthly meetings have always been a feast of variety and a source of encouragement, fellowship, and learning, whether from a guest speaker from within our group or outside, panels on a specific topic, or a time for the ladies to brainstorm and share ideas for school, for personal time, or their family.

Food

Would you like to know another ingredient which works for our gatherings? Food. It works! Jesus did a lot of teaching over food, and it usually helps draw people together. We have a Hospitality Coordinator who organizes volunteers to bring snacks: one sweet, one healthy. After our monthly meetings, everyone is invited to Applebee's for more conversation and to share appetizers. This is a spontaneous thing which started a few years

ago and just stuck.

Connection

Besides the monthly meetings, we have a website and email forum provided by Homeschool Life. The forum is a great online space to ask questions and get support in between meetings. People can pose questions about curriculum, sell school items, ask for advice about teenagers or technology, find a good electrician, or plan a playdate. The forum is a great way to connect even when the monthly meetings are not possible due to schedules.

Mentoring

About 20 years ago, a Mentoring Moms group was initiated and has continued to today. Sometimes mentoring took a one-on-one approach, but mostly met in small groups with an older veteran mom. This not only benefited the young moms in learning and adjusting to the first two years or so of homeschooling, but it developed many relationships that still bind a large percentage of our members today. A side benefit has been that many of our past and current leaders came out of these groups and are serving HEED today.

Activities and Events

We have always enjoyed a wide variety of field trips, classes, and big group events, such as holiday-themed parties, Family Game Nights (with food, of course!) and our Track and Field Day. Many play groups, playdates, service projects, and club-type groups have sprung up during the years to meet the needs and desires of our families.

Unit of Service

Every member is required to "give back" and complete a Unit of Service during the school year. This can be in a variety of areas, such as plan a field trip, help set up before a meeting, bring

“...These are the rails which were envisioned many years ago but are still alive today because every board has treasured them and respected what they were meant to accomplish.”

snacks, and more. This act of service helps to spread the workload, and it is important in giving us a strong sense of purpose and unity.

Leadership

HEED is governed by a board of directors of at least four couples and supported by sixteen coordinators. Serving on the board with our spouse is a great way to keep the group balanced and to seek advice and insight from someone who is not so personally tied to the organization. The board plans the monthly meeting topics and works to support the by-laws. HEED's mission statement, statement of faith, and by-laws have been a great guide as we decide what elements are worth adding to HEED and how to protect the organization. These are the rails which were envisioned many years ago but are still alive today because every board has treasured them and respected what they were meant to accomplish.

The support from the coordinators is a KEY component of the health and vibrancy of HEED. And to be honest, we often struggle with filling leadership roles. However, we have seen the Lord provide for our needs over and over again. There are always a variety of opportunities; and many hands make light work! Some coordinator roles include: Website Admin, Field Trips, Des Moines Playhouse tickets, Membership, Resource Library, Mentoring Moms, Prayer, and Special Needs.

Our common purpose, strong support, forward vision, and friendships have all contributed to sustaining our group over the last 25 years. We are grateful to the Lord Jesus Christ for His faithfulness to HEED!



25
Years!

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Check HEED's Facebook page for more details
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**People often say to me: “You can’t keep your children in a bubble”.
And I reply: “It’s not a bubble; it’s a greenhouse.”**

**A bubble stifles growth and blocks out nutrients.
A greenhouse provides an environment for cultivation.**

**Children’s hearts need to be “greenhoused” before they’re ready to be transplanted
out into the world. We release when their roots are deep and they are
mature enough to withstand the storms, not beforehand.**

**While they’re still under our protection, we take the responsibility
for engaging them in learning about different cultures, ideologies, and values.
They should only know worldly teachings enough that they will be inoculated against them.**

**It’s neither parenting out of fear or legalism,
nor going to the opposite extreme of being too permissive.**

**No, our kids shouldn’t grow up in a bubble.
But they shouldn’t be left exposed to the harsh outside elements, either.**

**The greenhouse of our home has all the right conditions
for those young seeds to grow and flourish.**

Marisa ~ Called to Mothering

Marisa is a homeschooling mom of two and author of *Bucking The System: Reclaiming Our Children’s Minds For Christ*. She writes to encourage women to find purpose and joy in their God-given calling as mothers, helping them raise children with a Biblical worldview. She relies on Jesus and coffee to get her through the day, and loves marveling at the cultural differences between New Jersey, where she grew up, and Oklahoma, where her family has been transplanted! She blogs over at calledtomothering.com.



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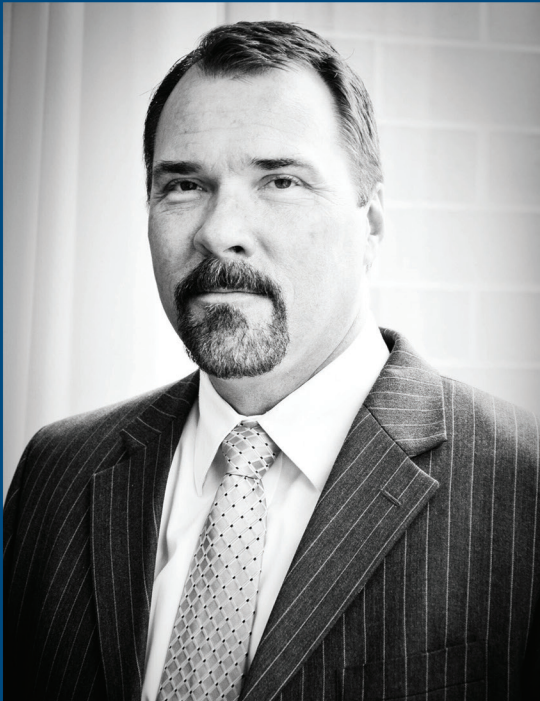
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