

September 2025

Home MATTERS



THE VOICE OF
AHEA
Alberta Home Education
Association



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HOME Matters

Serving the Home Education Community of Alberta

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Cover Photo

by Rob Campbell

Do you have a photo that would be perfect for a Home Matters front cover? Send it to Editor@AheaOnline.com.

AHEA’s focus continues to be in support of parents who have chosen to direct and deliver the education of their children and not in offering information on teacher-directed forms of education (including online, private, or charter schools). The mandate and philosophy of AHEA centres around the advocacy and promotion of parent-directed home education.

HOME Matters is published three times each year and is distributed by means of a mailing house that does not keep the distribution list on file. While *HOME Matters* accepts unsolicited articles on occasion, we would appreciate a query letter first. The actual article must ultimately be approved by both the editor and the AHEA board before publication.

Articles submitted and published in *HOME Matters* are not necessarily endorsed by the AHEA board of directors and only reflect the views held by the author.

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From the AHEA Board

Peter Verhoog, Board Chair

Good day everyone,

Thanks for taking a few moments out of your day to catch up on some good articles, interesting advertising, and some general information that may be meaningful to your educational journey.

I’m going to spend a few minutes on politics. Some of you may not be responding well to that statement, but let me explain why this is important. At it’s very basis, politics is rooted in numbers, or support. What tends to drive political decision making is the popularity of those decisions, in addition to the merits of right and wrong involved in that decision making. I think we all recognized that the recent move by the provincial government to remove certain base materials from public school libraries received a certain amount of backlash. It was a political price to pay for making that right decision. Hence my foray into politics today. I trust that we want our politicians to make good decisions. It is an infinitely easier decision to make when it is also a popular decision. For those of us that have been lax in our support of politicians, I’m going to challenge you today to be more active in sharing your opinion with your local MLA, your government ministers, and even your premier, which is so easy to do all at the same time these days.

When you consider that I’m speaking to tens of thousands of home education parents of the twenty thousand plus home education children in Alberta, along with grandparents, relatives and associates of home education beyond that, we have the potential of having a strong voice in the political realm. When all of these voices come together on a single topic the effect is huge. I know that the tendency is to discount the effect of a letter, an email, or a vote, simply because it is just one in thousands, it will hardly make a difference, but believe me, they all leave an impression. You’re right when you think just one is really not going to make a difference, not in itself, but political pressure is a bit like breathing, once doesn’t cut it, it needs to be consistent. But once is a start, just to convince yourself you can manage this, and from there it, like most good things in life, becomes a discipline. Just like a few minutes a day on a trusted news source can bring you up to speed, so can a few minutes of encouragement to a politician to stay the course and make the right decision. How does this relate to home education? The minister of education needs to know that

you care, and that you exist, and that you’re interested in what he is doing. He needs your encouragement to make some changes to the Home Education Regulation, and there is nothing more persuasive than to get a flood of emails all talking about that one thing. Please help AHEA by being a voice of encouragement. Here is his address and contact details.

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Minister of Education and Childcare
Members of Executive Council

Executive Branch
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Edmonton, AB T5K 2B6

Phone: 780 427-5010
Fax: 780 427-5018
E-mail: education.minister@gov.ab.ca

On to other matters, things you need to be aware of—AHEA is looking for some help. We’d like to branch out more consistently in a couple of different directions to begin with, realizing that the current board doesn’t have what these areas are going to need. One is special needs, we’re looking for an advocate in this area. The second is social media, so we need someone with a passion for words and connecting to the broader home education community on a regular basis, and keeping up with the conversations happening out there. There are other considerations on the table, but our approach at this time is to begin with the two mentioned and see how things develop before expanding into other areas of need. That doesn’t preclude anyone from coming forward with a proposal to AHEA for a specific need and a solution. Here’s your invitation to do so.

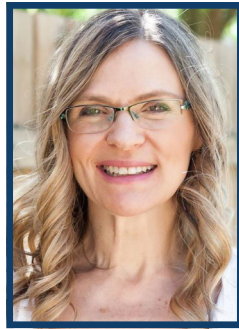
Some events coming up that you might want to be aware of—The AHEA AGM is coming up in October in Edmonton, details to follow. The King and His Kingdom conference is returning to Calgary this year on October 29, 30, 31. The Creation Science Association of Alberta is hosting its annual conference in Edmonton upcoming on October 24, 25.

(Continued on p. 7)

A Look Back at Convention 2025

Unless the Lord Builds the Convention

By Shannon Tederoff



"Great job! Well done and such a good weekend filled with encouragement. You can't leave and not feel equipped to homeschool another year."

"This was our first year homeschooling and attending the conference. We loved all of the sessions and vendors! We feel so encouraged and excited to homeschool our kiddos and hope to return next year."

"It's always refreshing to connect with other like-minded people striving for the same goal."

"I loved some changes you made this year. Thank you for no sessions when vendor hall opened Fri and thanks for last hour to shop after last session."

"I love how on fire for God & passionate for what they do both speakers are! It's so refreshing & encouraging!"

"First time attending; had a great opportunity to feel part of the homeschool community."

It's been a couple months since the AHEA Convention 2025, entitled Unless the Lord Builds the House, has passed. We were very grateful to the Lord for His blessing on this Convention again. We were encouraged in a time when digital resources can sometimes take the place of in-person events to have over 1700 in attendance, including 234 youth and 432 children!

We began the events a day earlier this year, hosting a **Used Book and Curriculum Sale** all-day Thursday. Judging by the interest, this event will only grow next year as we intend to run it once again. Over 2100 items were sold!

Immensely popular were our two **Keynote speakers**. Kevin Swanson, his second time at AHEA, was once again inspirational in leading families to disciple their children through home education. Rebecca Spooner, her husband Jonathon and their family, who are still in the middle of their homeschool journey, provided relevant and practical messages to encourage living life as a homeschool adventure by listening to the Lord's leading. Our **Breakout Workshops** included topics on marriage, special needs, biblical worldview, anger issues and more! We ran two panels: one on Special Needs and the other on Post-Secondary Institutions. If you missed the Convention, some of the workshops or would just like to be edified again, the **recordings** are available as a package or individually on our website for a very reasonable cost. Go to: aheaonline.com/product/2025-convention-talks/

Our ever popular **Exhibit Hall** featured 121 vendors, with several new vendors joining us this year. A growing group of Youth Entrepreneur vendors were also a welcomed addition to our exhibit hall!

Giant Cow Ministries returned again to provide a two-day **Children's Conference** with several options for parents. There is a growing group of young volunteers who are enjoying serving in this area. It was fantastic to see the kids so engaged with the activities and encouragement from this program.



Friday night's **Barn Dance** provided by the Corry Boys was also well-attended and provided a great way to celebrate and fellowship with other homeschool families.

The Youth Track had a fully packed schedule including topics on AI, Finding Life Direction, Geology and Creation. A popular event was the Mock Parliament held on

Saturday afternoon which included some lively debates!

We made a few innovations to our schedule this year to allow for more keynote addresses to the entire group and as well facilitate more shopping time. We will re-evaluate for next year, always looking to improve the experience for our Convention attendees, speakers and vendors! Thank you for the input from the ever-valuable convention surveys. Congratulations goes out to our survey winner this year—*Deanna Fillion!*



I would be remiss to not once again thank the AHEA Board: Peter and Andrée Verhoog, Kevin and Christina Vanderzyl, Martin Vervloet and Ted Tederoff who have put in countless hours of their own time and resources to pull this convention off and support me as the Convention Director. Our fantastic Convention team (who've continued on for the past 3 years!) deserve so much credit too: Heather Cartwright (Registrar), Barb Unger (Assistant Registrar), Greg Lammiman (Convention Guide Editor and Advertising Coordinator), Kerri Riechel (Speaker Coordinator), Bronek Walter (Exhibit Hall Coordinator), Brenda Potorieko (Volunteer and Used Curriculum Coordinator), Joel Aguilar (Facilities Coordinator), Dana Aguilar (Room Monitor Coordinator), Natalie Johnson (Youth Coordinator), Corrie Vandeburgt (Food Coordinator), Margaret VanAssen (Bookkeeper) and Kathy Johnson (Assistant Volunteer Coordinator).

If you'd be interested in joining our "team" in a small or larger way, we'd love to hear from you. Right now we are specifically looking for a **Special Needs Coordinator** who could help us grow this area of service to our community both at the Convention and by possibly coordinating Special Needs focused events. Another area of need is our **Social Media Coordinator**. We are specifically looking for help in managing and expanding social media platforms during the year and leading up to the Convention. If either of these areas tweak your interest, please contact us at aheaboard@aheaonline.com. We'd love to discuss these opportunities with you!

Our theme was *Unless the Lord Builds the House....* we labour in vain. We could paraphrase that for AHEA and say that unless the Lord builds the Convention.... we labour in vain. We put forth our efforts for twelve months and the Lord brings the increase. We are so grateful to Him for blessing this event and trust that the wisdom and knowledge and even fellowship you experienced this May will carry you through another year of Home Education. We are so blessed to live in a province and country where we can teach our own children! AHEA's mandate is to work to ensure we always have these freedoms. We encourage you stay connected with us this coming year.



We are already busy preparing for **next year's Convention which will be AHEA's 40th Convention Anniversary! May 28-30, 2026**. We are excited about how God has blessed our community and ask you to continue to pray for us as we make decisions for next year.

Shannon Tederoff is a member of the AHEA board and serves as the AHEA Convention Director.

"I am so thankful to everyone who worked so hard to put the convention together. We have been coming for 10 years and always enjoy this weekend."

"I was impressed by the atmosphere--so many interactions with other attendees showed kindness & integrity."

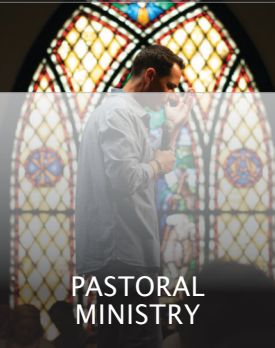
"As a first-time attendee, I was impressed that there was a broad range of topics. It was easy to find many sessions that were relevant and sometimes hard to choose. I was impressed that speakers seemed down-to-earth, engaging w/ attendees one-on-one between sessions."

"There was so many great speaker (sic). I learned so much and have come away inspired. The curriculum hall was also great!"

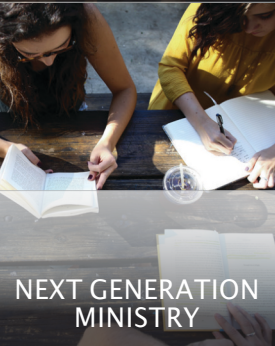




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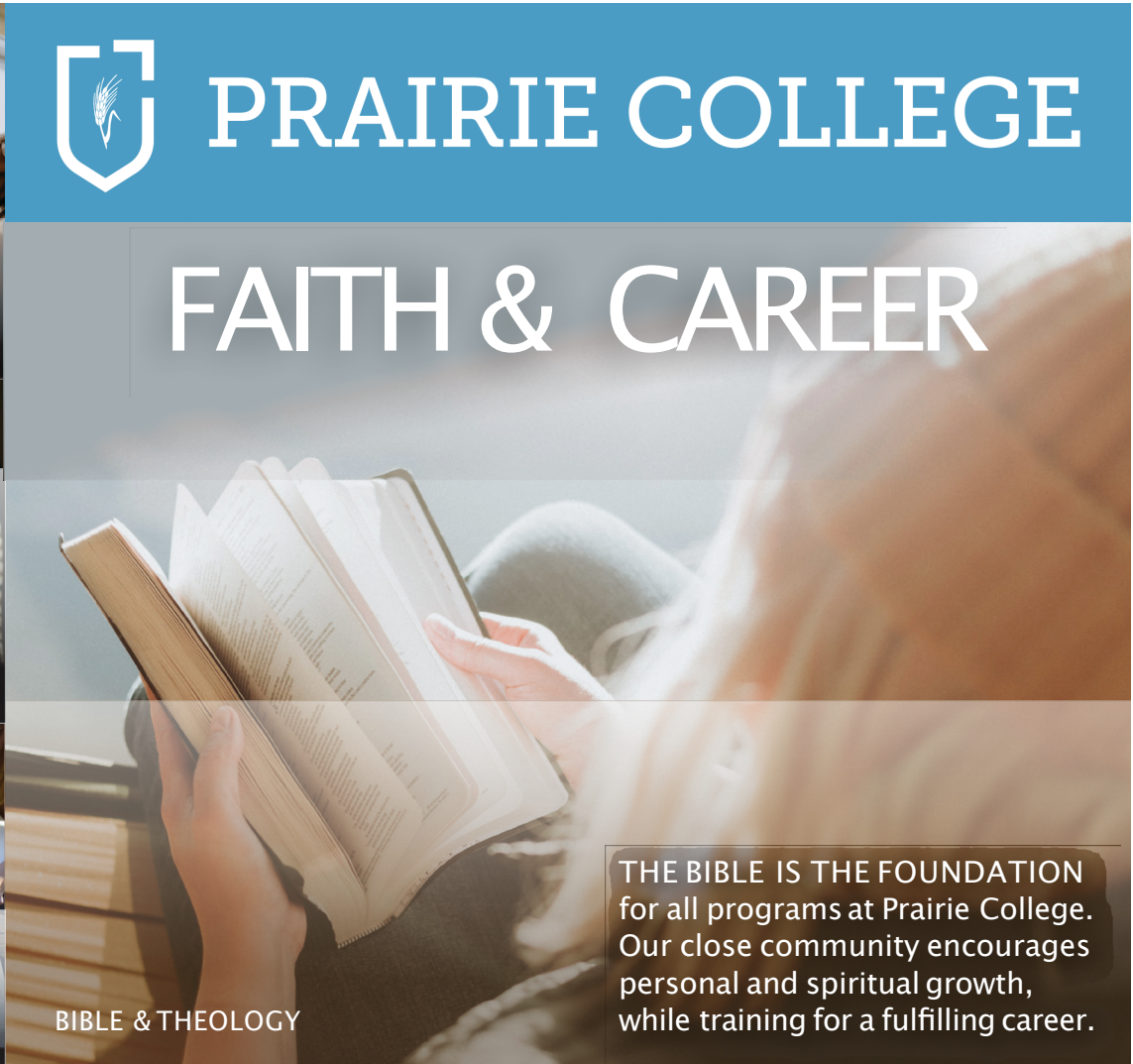
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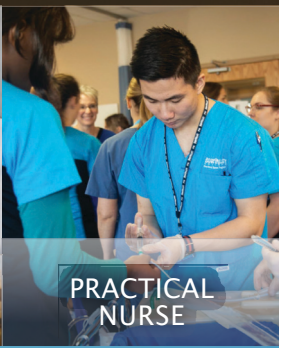
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From the AHEA Board

(Continued from p. 3)

And finally, and most importantly, a quick word of encouragement to those beginning on their home education journey. This is one of the largest and most precious decisions you're going to make as parents. The shift for your family will be priceless. The road ahead will be fraught with doubts and wonder, and yet amidst it all you will have a deep-seated peace that you're doing the right thing. For those further down the road, please let me encourage you once again to reach out to those just starting out, or hitting a rough patch. A word of encouragement from someone that has seen it and done it goes a long way to bolster the confidence of those in the midst of it.

Deuteronomy 31:6

*Be strong and of a good **courage**, fear not, nor be afraid of them: for the Lord thy God, He it is that doth go with thee; He will not fail thee, nor forsake thee.*

The National Alliance of Christian Home Education Leadership

The National Alliance of Christian Home Education Leadership (the Alliance) is a network of Christian statewide homeschool organizations from across North America. The mission is to connect, encourage, and equip leaders of statewide Christian homeschool organizations in promoting and safeguarding home education to the glory of God. AHEA was recently approved for affiliation with the Alliance. Last fall some AHEA board and convention team members attended the 2024 Alliance Conference in Nashville as guests.

Benefits from this affiliation include networking with homeschool leaders from across the U.S. and Canada, gaining insights into issues affecting homeschool freedom, learning from fellow state and provincial homeschool leaders, and growing in leadership skills and knowledge. As an Alliance-affiliated organization, AHEA board members are invited to attend the annual Alliance National Leaders Conference where leaders are built up, equipped, and encouraged for the mission to which God has called our organization. Our participation in the Alliance will strengthen our board and organization as we strive to serve Alberta homes education families with excellence."



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In Perpetual Motion:

How Our Family Works Together in Homeschooling and in Music Ministry

By Heather Fehr



I suspect that our family is like a lot of homeschooling families: continually busy, working at things that are necessary, learning and practicing skills that we think are important, and building things that we love. My husband James and I both had the privilege to receive a home education when we were of school age—James from grades five through twelve, and me from grades ten through twelve. We have been home educating our own eleven children for the last 21 years—seven of whom have completed their formal schooling at home and four that are still working on it. All of our children live at home except for one son who is married to a lovely gal with a precious new son of their own. For now, our older kids are happy to live at home until God leads them elsewhere. They have jobs and contribute financially to help cover costs. Besides homeschooling and outside work, God has also allowed our family to work together as a musical ensemble we call “The Fehr Family Band.”

“We’ve realized that there are so many opportunities for education outside of actual schoolwork.”

in. When our oldest daughter was seven and our second child was six, we had the opportunity to enroll them both in a three-year piano music program called Music for Young Children. I went with them each week to the lessons and helped them practice at home. I’d been a piano/voice teacher before getting married and I realized that I could learn how to teach this program and then use it to teach my other children, as well as having outside students come to our home for lessons. Our youngest child, now ten years old, recently finished his three-year program of group music lessons and is now continuing to take private piano lessons. School wasn’t finished for the day until music practice was done. Practicing is still a big part of all of our children’s lives. If you come to our home

during the week, there is a good possibility that you will hear various instruments being played throughout the house, from the laundry room to washrooms to the furnace room and the bedrooms. It’s a pleasant cacophony of musical noise. I love hearing each one honing their skills, developing personal practice disciplines, and seeing how they grow in character as they are diligent.

As time went on, the children began to be interested in instruments other than the piano. Since they had already begun to learn the language of music, learning another instrument was quite a bit easier. The three older boys chose to learn guitar, mandolin and banjo. After some time learning and practicing on their own, they started to play together. At a time in their life when they were also part of a community handbell choir, they were asked to play a song on their acoustic instruments at one of their handbell concerts. From there, a kind pastor who attended asked if they played for other events. He invited our family to play and sing some songs at a seniors’ get-together. Not long after, two of our girls started to learn violin from a local teacher. Other instruments that various children have learned to play are the cello, tin whistle, flute, Irish drum, harmonica, and ukulele.

As everyone’s abilities improved, we were asked more often to play and sing at various events. This pushed us to start incorporating a larger spectrum of arrangements and songs into our repertoire. We would continually try to bring fresh new songs into our setlists for the new events we attended. This allowed us to keep growing in our abilities at a steady pace. We love the growing and stretching this causes! It has been interesting to see how the more music we do, the more we realize that we still have so much to learn.

Soon after we started singing, James’ parents, who used to travel in their own family music group, passed on to us their sound system and trailer for hauling it around. It really helped to learn to run sound for ourselves, although it involved a steep learning curve. We have been able to gradually add to our equipment, as well as use some of it to record a couple of albums. We are just starting to

work on a third recording which we hope to be finished this spring.

Meanwhile, we have kept diligently working at our schoolwork. We do a more traditional type of schooling in our home. We’ve used a few different programs that are set up with lessons so that I don’t have to do much preparation. School is Monday through Friday most weeks during the traditional school year. We start out each September working toward a set amount of work to be completed by Christmas. Then after a nice holiday break, we get going again in January with plans to finish our season’s worth of schoolwork by the end of May. We don’t always get it completely finished, but it’s usually close. Then if we still have some left, we can do a little here and there when we have time in the summer. I had almost all of the teaching responsibilities for the first 12 years or so. Since then, as the girls have gotten older, they have helped each other and the younger ones quite a bit. I’m still very involved, but I do appreciate my wonderful helpers. Teaching responsibilities have evolved smoothly as situations have fluctuated, including dealing with health issues for certain ones, and adjusting to new and different busy seasons in our lives.

Summers have been very interesting and event-filled for the last few years. We have had the opportunity to present music at various jamborees and festivals throughout Alberta, Saskatchewan and Manitoba. Our whole family jumps in the van or in our 1975 MCI bus as we travel together to events. We also have bookings on weekends throughout the school year. We love to sing about Jesus and what He can do. We love to make music together. We love to meet new people. And we love to learn and grow, because there are always so many opportunities for that!

A more recent opportunity that has allowed us to grow and learn has been taking on the responsibility for running the annual Deer Valley Meadows Gospel Music Jamboree held at a camp east of Red Deer. It’s been a fun challenge to learn how to run this successfully. This includes booking and working with many different music groups and volunteers, setting up and running sound, booking camp lodging and meals for attendees, buying and serving food for some of the guests, hosting and accommodating the music groups, arranging the event’s three-day schedule, and making promotional materials. This event is a very exciting time for all of us and we look forward to it every year! You can get more info at dvmgospelmusic.com in case you’d like to come and join us!

Many things that we hadn’t planned on have been added to our original home education plan since we first began our journey, but God has paved the way and opened doors. Besides reading, writing, arithmetic and other

standard subjects, we’ve been able to learn a lot about music, instruments, songwriting and arranging, and time management on many levels. With the help of friends and mentors, we’ve learned about sound equipment and its upkeep, as well as bus, trailer and vehicle maintenance and bus/RV renovation. We have made family harmony a high priority - the relational kind more than the musical kind. We’ve realized that there are so many opportunities for education outside of actual schoolwork. We’ve also found that it is possible to do a thorough job of traditional homeschooling while pursuing other interests and hobbies that have turned into a music ministry. It’s an exciting life! We look forward to the new adventures God has in store, and we will keep striving to be faithful in what He has called us to.

James and Heather have been married for over 25 years and are the parents of 11 children. James has been in the computer industry for over 25 years. He enjoys playing music and reading good books. He also loves playing the occasional strategy board game with his family. Heather is a homemaker and primary school teacher. She also teaches piano lessons in association with Music for Young Children. They live in Alberta.

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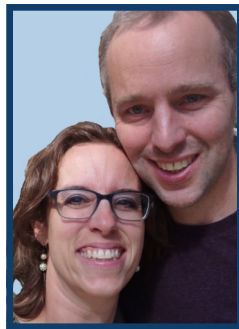


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The Work of Discipleship:

Of Being Before Doing

By Rachelle Shonwise



Have you ever looked at a day spreading in front of you with a hundred things already clamouring for your attention and wondered what was most important? Or looked back at a day of responding (*reacting more often than not in my case*) and wondered if the things that demanded your attention were really the most important? As homeschooling moms (*and dads, but that's a perspective I have yet to experience*), there are a myriad of urgent things pulling our attention this way and that. There's the house to clean, run, organize, and maybe even decorate. There are meals to be planned, shopped for, prepped, cooked, served, and cleaned up. There are people to be cleaned, listened to, read to, taught, encouraged, held, and driven to places. There's schooling planning to be done (*or at least thought about*), curriculum to be evaluated, bought, and (*hopefully*) implemented. There are ideas to consider and then communicate. And that's all without really taking into consideration life outside of our kids and households!

Some days I miss the simplicity of the diaper days – the days when life was crazy, but I knew I'd changed the diapers, read to the kids, and kept them all fed, and that was the most important. Of course, I then remember the struggle of having multiple urgent needs pulling me more ways than I was capable of going, and then remind myself that every stage has its joys and challenges. If the truth be told, it doesn't matter which stage of life I'm in, I resonate with Anne Morrow Lindburgh when she longs for, "*a singleness of eye, a purity of intention, a central core to my life that will enable me to carry out these obligations and activities as well as I can. I want, in fact—to borrow from the language of the saints—to live 'in grace' as much of the time as possible.*" Isn't that what each of us desire on some level? To know what a rich and sustainable life looks like, a life that ends with "Well done, good and faithful servant"?

I think to find that clarity and singleness of purpose we have to start first with the why, and then with the how of our calling. Matthew 28:19-20 says, "Go and make

disciples of all nations, teaching them to observe all I've commanded you." Jesus' final command to His disciples before He left was simply to continue what He had started—making disciples. Every one of us has a mission, and the foundation of every mission is that call to discipleship. When we become parents, our mission field sharpens into focus with our kids as our first priority. While I've found that God uses this hidden, intensive discipleship program of parenting to prepare us for a mission field outside the home, as long as we have kids, discipling them is our first responsibility. Our "why" is to fulfill that calling to discipleship.

"So often I think I don't have time to be quiet...And yet, when I do take that time, it repays itself tenfold in clarity of purpose, in peace, and in the ability to remember who I am in Christ."

Discipleship is the act of doing life shoulder-to-shoulder and face-to-face with another, and using that life to point them toward what is good, true, and beautiful, and ultimately, to God. But here's the kicker. You can only give what you have. You can only teach what you know. And you can only model what you see – what is filling your mental vision. This means our "how" has to start a little closer to home.

To disciple well starts with a commitment to personal growth and an understanding of what it means to allow the life of Christ to live through us. To worry less about curriculum and parenting styles and more about keeping our eyes on Christ.

In essence, a life of clarity and purpose begins with being before doing; with making space to fill our hearts and minds with what is good, true, and beautiful, so we have something to share. I am reminded of Jesus' interaction with Mary and Martha during His time on earth. Jesus commended Mary's choice to sit at His feet and learn, to even step out of the bounds of what society found acceptable in order to hear His words and be in His presence. This doesn't negate doing—on the contrary, our sense of peace and confidence in the doing comes from first being transformed by His presence.

It's a funny thing really, the fluid nature of time. So often I think I don't have time to be quiet, to sit and read, to

journal and pray, to listen to the still small voice of the Holy Spirit. And yet, when I do take that time, it repays itself tenfold in clarity of purpose, in peace, and in the ability to remember who I am in Christ. So much of my stress is uncertainty and worry about what might happen or what the most important thing is for me to do. Often the thing that is most needful is not the loudest or most demanding action, nor is it often the thing I feel like doing. More often than not I want to DO something concrete and measurable, rather than building rhythms of slow, hidden heart work that don't seem to bear fruit for years. I was recently challenged and encouraged by this reminder from *Reclaiming Quiet*:

"We have to live in such a way that knowledge ripens in body as well as mind, in affection as well as word, as we mold our lives by eternal rhythms and shapes rather than those of a fallen world."

"We are asked to shape our lives, our time, our attention by habits and rhythms radically different from the windblown fury of the broken world. This means an entirely alternate shape of life, not just the subtraction of screens and distractions but the embrace of prayer, of daily wonder, of listening, of trust, of celebration that roots us moment by moment in that deep, watchful quiet that ushers us into the presence of God."

Building habits of quiet, of sitting in the presence of God and doing the work of excavating the lies and fears that are bombarding my mind, and then bringing them before Him to be remade is the work. Investing time to find Scripture that speaks truth to the lie I'm believing and worshipping Him for what He says is true (*as opposed to what I feel*) transforms me and enables me to have something to share with my kids. Sara Hagerty sums this up so perfectly in *Adore*:

"Adoration is where we bring our raw vulnerability – our 'what I actually believe about You, God' – to the place of His truth, expecting Him to change us...Adoration is not an exclusion of our emotions. Adoration never requires us to shut down our emotions. On the contrary, it invites us to bring them – all of them – to God. God does not want our polished pretenses. He wants our whole selves, and He wants us to come honestly. So He invites us to wrestle."

This is the most important work. Choosing to courageously face our doubts, fears, and questions and doing the hard work of wrestling with God that will allow His life to be lived through our unique personality, circumstances, and family. This doesn't mean perfection—far from it. Our kids don't need perfection, they need to see us running with our frailty to Christ.

*"(Your kids) don't need you to be a perfect example of Christlikeness. Your goal is not for them to be your disciple, after all. They need you to point them to the One who is worthy of following. The daily battles of discipling may make you wonder whether you're toiling in vain. But keep pressing in. You can't expect a harvest during planting season. **Concentrate on reaching the heart of those you've built relationships with, and time will take care of the rest.**"*

Our job is simply to allow the Holy Spirit to work in us, to faithfully do the work He brings to our attention each day, leaving the outcomes in His hands, and trusting Him when He says, "He who began a good work in you will complete it until the day of Jesus Christ." May we keep our eyes fixed on Christ, sitting at His feet as a disciple first and then allowing His life to make disciples through us.

Rachelle Shonwise is a third generation homeschooler, mom of five boys and one daughter, ages 7-16, and has been married for seventeen years to her favourite person, Josh. They have run a plumbing business for the past fourteen years and are currently transitioning into pastoring the Wimborne Alliance church. Rachelle loves reading, gardening, and people. Nothing fuels her tank so much as engaging in a good discussion about ideas with others.



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Where dreams take flight and hearts find purpose

Safeguarding Unschooling: The Importance of Communicating How Learning Happens

By HSLDA Staff

Unschooling is a beautiful practice of living and learning in a way that purposefully honours the unique human being—their interests, their pace, their delights, their ability, their rhythm.

We all begin life with each child in the unschooling way.

A child is welcomed into a family. We sing, talk, and introduce the baby to the world, noticing what piques the baby's interest, or what engages her or makes her smile.

As the child grows, we read to him, and allow him to gum the books or pour over favourite pages. We purchase carefully-chosen games, puzzles, blocks, and dolls, delighting as the child explores, imagines, discovers, and invents new ways to play with the toys. Any particular interest is reinforced as we find ways to enable the child to explore more deeply, feeding the interest until it changes and she becomes fixated on something else.

John Holt says, "We can best help children learn, not by deciding what we think they should learn and thinking of ingenious ways to teach it to them, but by making the world, as far as we can, accessible to them, paying serious attention to what they do, answering their questions — if they have any — and helping them explore the things they are most interested in."

This is the necessary work of unschoolers in the absence of prepared curriculum.

The Rewarding Responsibility of Child-Led Learning

For the unschooling child's environment to be one that is enriched and ripe for engaging with the world around them, the parent must be actively paying attention and consistently creating an environment that will facilitate growth in the child. The child's learning, then, continues to be natural and fluid, never forced, but is always an invitation to go deeper.

"Children naturally possess an active interest in knowing more about the world around them," says Susan Engel, developmental psychology expert. She suggests that providing satisfying answers to a child's constant

questions encourages them to ask deeper and more refined questions, thereby feeding their curiosity.

Demonstrating our own curiosity in front of our children profoundly affects them as well. It is incumbent on the parent to proactively find ways to continue to feed and deepen the child's interests and abilities through discussion, books, apprenticeships, classes, clubs, and mentorships—places the child can ask more intricate questions, deepening their wonder and curiosity.

When unschooling parents are paying close attention as their children learn, it is a small step to begin to document their learning. Children can still learn in freedom while parents keep careful records of the child's learning. Tracking their learning serves the dual purpose of being able to celebrate specific milestones, and also to have a record of your child's progression of learning that can be easily understood by family members and educators. This provides protection for the unschooling family while continuing to learn in freedom.

Following Structure to Track Learning

1. Yearly Meeting – Envision the year with your child; brainstorm ways to learn what they're interested in.
2. Goal Planning – Keep a log of the child's yearly goals, weekly goals, daily goals. These can even be entered retroactively.
3. Regular weekly meetings – Have a weekly check-in, to see how goals are being met; if you are keeping goals retroactively for your child, log the completed goals and continue to actively research how to help your child move to the next step in their learning in each subject/interest area.
4. Daily discussion – Engage with your child; ask probing questions; gently challenge them to consider a new perspective; record the child's reflections.
5. Maintain a portfolio of your child's learning – include pictures, videos, writing, field trips.

Goal setting, and documenting are easy tools parents can use to translate unschooling into language others can understand.

The unschooling lifestyle seeks to respect and honour the individuality and autonomy of the child—beautiful and yet startlingly countercultural. This is a world in which it is becoming increasingly important to teach our children the importance of being respected and thinking for themselves. Where the government might seek to intervene, let's safeguard the right to unschool by using tools to intelligently and competently articulate to educators what our children are learning.

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The Philosophy and Statement of Faith of the Alberta Home Education Association

Article 1 – Definition

The Alberta Home Education Association (AHEA) is a Christian organization. It shall base all of its policies and actions on Christian principles and takes the Bible as its moral and spiritual guide. Elected Directors, Staff, Convention Team Members, and Nomination Committee Members must be believers in Jesus Christ as Lord and Saviour.

Article 2 – Philosophy

1. AHEA affirms that God has given parents the primary responsibility for the welfare, socialization and education of their children.
2. AHEA is dedicated to the education and socialization of children in the natural setting of the family.
3. AHEA further holds that the right to home education includes not merely a right over the place in which education occurs, but a right to determine the content, process and timing of this education.
4. AHEA holds to the belief that no academic discipline is neutral and that all education is religious in nature since one's view of the world and life is inevitably involved in teaching.
5. AHEA holds that student assessment is an integral aspect of the education process, and therefore parents have the sole right and responsibility to determine the methods and instruments to be used to ensure the educational welfare of the child.
6. AHEA pursues and recommends — within the framework of its philosophy — a policy of constructive interaction in dealing with those legally charged with the monitoring of home education programs.

Article 3 – Statement of Faith

Scripture: We believe all Scripture is given by inspiration of

The Alberta Home Education Association (AHEA) began as the response to problems that had begun to plague home educators in the province of Alberta. Home educators had, for many years, been the domain of families who had poor access to regular educational facilities due to distance and other factors. In the seventies, a movement began that was to change the face of education in Alberta. More parents were becoming concerned about the secularization of education in the province, and as a result, alternative education methods began to spring up.

Included in the movement was a growing body of parents who decided that educating their children at home was the preferred method. For some, the school authorities were supportive, but for many more, the authorities were hostile. Because of the small numbers in this environment, school authorities found it easy to intimidate parents, and methods of appeal were limited. As a result, a small but knowledgeable group of parents decided to develop a provincial organization, and in 1986, registered the AHEA under the Societies Act of Alberta.

God, is without error, is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, and for instruction in righteousness. (2 Timothy 3:16).

God: We believe that there is one God, eternally existent in three persons: Father, Son, and Holy Spirit (Matthew 28:19).

Jesus: We believe in the deity of Jesus Christ (John 1:1), His virgin birth (Matthew 1:18- 25), sinless life (Hebrews 4:15), and miracles. We believe in His vicarious and atoning death (Hebrews 9:27, 28), resurrection from the dead (1 Corinthians 15:1- 8), ascension to the right hand of the Father (Acts 1:9-11), and in His personal return in power and glory (Hebrews 9:27, 28).

Man: We believe that man was created in the image of God. He created them biologically male and female (Genesis 1:26, 27). Man sinned by disobeying God; thus, he was alienated from his Creator (Genesis 3:17-24). That historic fall brought all mankind under divine condemnation. Man's nature is corrupted, and he is thus totally unable to please God (Romans 3:23). Every man is in need of regeneration and renewal by the Holy Spirit.

Salvation: We believe that salvation is a free gift of God and comes through faith in Jesus Christ, whose death on the cross paid the penalty for man's sin (Romans 3:25).

Marriage and Family: We believe that the God of the Bible designed marriage as an exclusive lifetime covenant of union between one man and one woman, and that sexual intimacy is reserved for that union (Genesis 2:24). Marriage is His unique gift that echoes the union of Christ and His church (Ephesians 5:23) and is the ideal environment that He has ordained for procreation and for the raising of children in the nurture and admonition of the Lord to the glory of God (Ephesians 6:1-4). We believe that children belong to God who has given the responsibility and authority for their discipleship and education to their parents (Deuteronomy 6:5-7).

Government: We believe that civil government has been instituted by God (Romans 13:1). As such, the government exists to serve the people through the preservation of justice and order. (Romans 13:3-4)

Save the Date!

AHEA Convention
May 28-30, 2026
Westerner Park
Red Deer, Alberta

AHEA AGM is in October in Edmonton. Watch for details at aheaonline.com.

Make sure you have your membership well ahead.

Go to aheaonline.com/ahea-membership-information.

AHEA is a parent-driven provincial organization that proudly represents the interests of home education families, serving this community since 1986. We have a wealth of experience and relationships that we utilize in our efforts. We advocate, educate, connect and communicate to the public, government, interested parties and home educators old and new.

- A Voice for Alberta Home Educators
- A Home Education Support Resource
- An Amazing Annual Convention

AHEA is a not-for-profit organization that relies on your ongoing support through membership, through volunteering and through your financial support. Additional information can be found on our website about our history, Board and opportunities to volunteer, as well as membership, our governing documents and lots of information on home education. Go to www.aheaonline.com.



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