

March 2026

# 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 Shauna Lammiman

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

Greetings to you all.

Since we last talked, much has happened on a number of fronts. "It was the best of times, and it was the worst of times," as borrowed from Mr. Dickens in *A Tale of Two Cities*, it sure seems to fit in our time and place in 2026 as well. While Prime Minister Carney spoke in imaginative drivel to the masses at Davos, the evil perpetrated on the people of Canada seems unending from within Parliament and without. Never have Canadians been in such social chaos and financial debt, while justice and accountability are nowhere to be found.

Closer to home, our provincial picture looks somewhat brighter. The outcome of the teachers' strike last year brought to plain sight the political nature of the ATA, resulting in mass petitions for MLA recalls and defunding of non-public education, both of which so far have failed after timing out without gaining the signatures required. The petition drive for Alberta independence continues at this point.

Regardless of where you stand politically, one has to wonder what comes next and whether it will be better or worse than what is. As home educators, the challenges have never been more evident, and the journey more necessary and fulfilling. We currently have uncontested freedom to home educate, pretty much as one wishes, but the events of the last six months paint a clear picture as to how quickly things can change. The 80% of home educators currently tied to independent school boards quickly learned how tenuous the status quo is. The 20% outside of that shouldn't consider themselves untouchable in that regard. You have to know that the drive to defund is simply the first step in the drive to collect the whole within one system, with one curriculum for the masses. It's about control.

So how do we respond as home educators? As we celebrate AHEA's 40th anniversary this year, I would suggest we respond the same way as those of faith before us did, when put to the test. They did what they deemed necessary to stand for the cause of righteousness. Some went to prison for their convictions. I doubt many of us have that on our bucket list of things to accomplish in our lifetime, but if it came down to it, would we do it?

Perhaps it may not come to that, but it is something to think about.

If anything became apparent in the drive to defund, it was in the size of the knowledge gap between truth and fable. What people are willing to believe depends in large part on what they hear, and from whom they hear it. Talking to people and setting the record straight is the least we can do, and in this day and age, it's more likely our duty. If we'd like things to change for the better, you have to know that it takes hard work against the tide to get there. Let's all look for ways to speak of the benefits of choice, the upsides to home education that we all know best, and the love of learning we instill in our children when we allow them to learn at their particular pace and give them time to focus on the things they love. Changing the narrative is up to us all.

Speaking of changes, a big thank you to those of you who answered AHEA's call for help. We now have more resources *helping us to help* the parents we seek to serve. We still have more opportunities for you to join us. If you have the skills that you think will help us, a passion to write articles, or a bent to help us stay better connected to the broader spectrum of organizations that we find ourselves in step with, we'd like to hear from you. Let's see if there's a fit for you at AHEA. AHEA would also like to extend an invitation to anyone who would like to serve at the board level. A healthy organization sees small amounts of change over time. We have not seen that change in the last five years. We recognize that it has allowed us time to gel as a board, but we also recognize that new people bring new perspectives and ideas to make us better at what we do. We look forward to hearing from you.

Lastly, let me extend a personal invitation to all of you to join us at the AHEA Convention coming up on May 28-30. Celebrating our 40th anniversary comes with special event pricing this year, especially for those who have never attended. We look forward to seeing you there.

Till then, God bless you on your journey.  
*Galatians 6:9-10* 🙏

# The Power of Gathering Together

## The Heart and Soul of the 2026 AHEA Home Education Convention

by Zan Tyler



Zan Tyler  
Convention Keynote  
Speaker 2026

Our annual Convention unites us, strengthens us, and reminds us we're not alone.

I have a son who never wanted to go to bed when he was little. As I was contemplating this quandary one evening, I heard James Dobson on the radio relaying the story of a little boy who kept calling for his daddy at bedtime because he was afraid. The exasperated father finally and emphatically told the son, "You need to trust God when you are lonely or scared."

"But, Daddy," the little boy whimpered, "sometimes I just need someone with skin on."

After the pandemic shutdowns of the early 2020s and the transition to a lot of online learning opportunities, we are all like that little boy. We need someone with skin on. We need fellowship. We need to laugh together (which is hard to do alone). We need to cry together. We simply need to be together.

We find strength in gathering. We receive comfort from each other. We experience encouragement. We encounter new ideas and challenges. And as Christian parents, we are called to serve our families and each other. We need to seriously "consider how to stir one another to love and good works" (Hebrews 11:24, ESV).

There is no better way to do this than to attend the 2026 AHEA Home Education Convention — and to encourage others to come as well. It is time to gather together to give and to receive encouragement intentionally and in person, face-to-face.

Gathering takes effort. You have to get dressed, leave home, and travel, whether you live nearby or on the other

side of the province. Ginny Yurich, author and podcaster, said it this way, "It is easier to stay put than to go out." But I know from Ginny's life and my own experiences that getting out and getting together with others is well worth the effort.

Jesus was a people magnet. People were drawn to Him. They gathered around Him everywhere He went: the disciples, whole cities, the multitudes, his enemies, immense crowds, hungry people, thirsty people, sick people, needy people, skeptical people, poor people, rich people, old people, children. The oppressed, the self-righteous, the broken-hearted, the disenfranchised. These people, these crowds, gathered around Jesus quickly, constantly, and relentlessly.

Jesus knew the value of being with people. He left His exalted place in heaven to be with us. What a sacrifice He made to come to earth, live among us, and lay down His life for us. Even His name Immanuel means "God with us." The AHEA Convention provides a unique opportunity for us to be with others as well. There is nothing quite as powerful as being together in person with others on the same journey.

Here are some things you can do to prepare for this year's convention:

1. Rejoice in the opportunity to gather together and invite others to come. Share this amazing opportunity with homeschooling friends and those interested in learning more about homeschooling. Homeschooling is growing by leaps and bounds, and new families need to know the resources and the help that awaits them at this AHEA gathering.

2. During the conference, look for opportunities to talk with other parents — while waiting for a workshop to begin, standing in line at a sponsor table, walking in the hallways, or enjoying the lunch break. You may be delightfully surprised when a fellow attendee encourages you by sharing a little about their experience. And through casual conversation, you may find you can bolster another parent in their dedication to homeschooling with a simple word that brings hope and inspiration.

Recently while traveling home from a homeschool convention, Joe and I made an unplanned stop to grab a bite to eat. We were talking about the event while waiting for our food, when quite unexpectedly a woman sitting at a table nearby looked at us and said, "I want my son to homeschool his children." We spent the next 30 minutes sharing information with this woman. It was a powerful, God-ordained moment. Parents today are looking for good news in education. I believe they find it in homeschooling.

3. Look around and appreciate the dynamic community of families teaching their children at home. What a powerful reminder that you are not alone!

Joe and I can't wait to see you in Alberta in May. We'll be sharing encouraging words and helpful hints to aid you in making your homeschooling journey as productive as possible without burning out at the same time.

Zan Tyler and her husband, Joe, homeschooled for 21 years, teaching all of their children from kindergarten through high school. When she began homeschooling, the state superintendent of education threatened her with jail. Zan is a popular podcaster, prolific author, inspirational speaker, tireless advocate for homeschool freedom, and works with BJU Press Homeschool and HomeWorks by Precept. She worked in Christian publishing and curriculum development for 16 years. In 2015 she was presented with the Chris Klicka Award by HSLDA for her dedication and commitment to home education worldwide. You can find Zan at ZanTyler.com.

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# Homeschool Vacation with a Purpose

by Melodie Vervloet

If you're looking for an idea for a family vacation this summer, why not try a ministry trip?



Not only is a ministry trip educational, its benefits reach into the eternal, and will continue to have a ripple effect that keeps on giving.

In January of 2025, my husband and I were watching a message by Kevin Swanson. In it, he encouraged families to do more of life together- school together, work together, mission together, etc. Suddenly, the idea hit us that we should do a mission trip as a family. This was something I had always wanted to do, but up until then, the timing seemed wrong, our children were too young, or we didn't have the finances. However, we had recently been gifted a sum of money that we thought would cover a mission trip for the whole family, (at least for the ones who still lived at home). After that night, we began to research. Praying God would guide us to where we should go, we googled numerous short-term mission opportunities available for families.

The door opened for us to volunteer at a YWAM base in Costa Rica, to be gone for ten days in total. A coworker also expressed interest in going, so he joined our family. The flights and airport experiences were new to five of our children, and we saw God work in ways that were supernatural and amazing.

We landed in San Jose, Costa Rica, and the manager at the base picked us up. We stayed on base and did whatever needed to be done. We ended up building a deck for their office, fixed a picnic table, went street witnessing, visited a community center in the impoverished area to share the gospel, hosted a huge birthday party for their children, visited a church, and the beach, fed the homeless, and organized the YWAM base's craft supplies.

**"...one of the best forms of education there is."**

Since then, our daughter Jerusha (19) felt God leading her to take their discipleship course and flew back to the same base on August 28 to spend 12 weeks taking the course and then flew to Africa for the outreach phase. Currently, she is in Kenya doing door-to-door evangelism. The experiences she has had are incredible and life-changing. Our older son is headed to Belize on a mission trip, and he leaves in a few weeks.

The ripple effect of these trips is far-reaching, and in my mind, one of the best forms of education there is. 🙏

*Martin and Melodie have been married 37 years and live in Northern Alberta. They homeschool their youngest two children out of eleven. Currently, Martin pastors the Alliance Church in Valleyview.*



Celebrating 40 Years

Do you have a student who will be graduating from Grade 12 this year? Please consider commemorating this special occasion by participating in the **2026 AHEA Graduation Ceremony!**

The ceremony will take place at the end of the **AHEA Convention weekend on Saturday, May 30, 5:15 pm held in the Prairie Pavilion.**

For more information, go to [www.aheaonline.com](http://www.aheaonline.com) (deadline is March 30th to participate)



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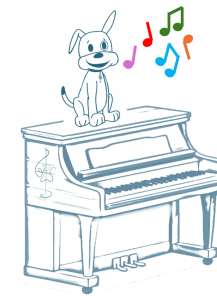
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# Convention 2026



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# The Early Years of AHEA

By Michael Wagner

On our 40th anniversary, Dr. Wagner outlines the history of our Alberta Home Education Association.



Dr. Michael Wagner

Currently, the situation for home educators in Alberta is generally quite good. There are many options available to them, and no legal obstacles to deal with.

It was not always this way. During the 1980s, Alberta's pioneering home educators faced legal and political impediments to educate their own children. But they persevered, and through hard work established the political and cultural environment that is taken for granted today.

One particular couple deserves considerable credit for creating the Alberta Home Education Association (AHEA): Dave and Aline Stasiewich. They began home schooling in Edmonton in 1983. That same year they began hosting informal meetings at their house with a small number of other home educating families. The numbers of people attending continued to grow, so the meetings were moved to a larger venue. This group would eventually adopt the name Home School Christian Fellowship, and it continues to exist today.

Back in the mid-1980s, many home educators lived in fear due to the hostile climate for people who didn't send their children to public school. Some home schooling parents were visited by truancy officers, while others had to deal with social disapproval. These were not good times for home education.

## Formation of AHEA

Dave and Aline would meet with the Minister of Education to advocate for home education, but it became apparent to them that a provincial association for home educators would be helpful in negotiating with him and

his department. Therefore, together with some other parents, Dave and Aline formed AHEA. It was officially incorporated on November 26, 1986.

Among the five signers of the request to register the organization under the Societies Act was Stockwell Day of Red Deer. At the time, Stockwell Day was a rookie MLA in the Progressive Conservative government of Premier Don Getty. He would later become an Alberta cabinet minister and then a federal cabinet minister in Stephen Harper's government.

At this time, the legal status of home schooling in Alberta was not entirely clear. The School Act allowed superintendents to legally excuse students from attendance at school if they were receiving "efficient instruction" at home, but "home schooling" itself was not defined in the School Act. Basically, parents wishing to home educate their children had to ask for permission to do so from their local school superintendent. They were at his mercy. Superintendents who disliked home schooling could simply deny permission to parents. Sometimes they did deny permission.

After its formation in 1986, AHEA was immediately busy with pressing the government to include provisions for home education in the new School Act that was then being written.

## New School Act

In May 1988, Education Minister Nancy Betkowski introduced Bill 27 as the proposed new School Act. This bill was generally favourable to parental rights in education.

The bill was supported by Ted Byfield of Alberta Report magazine who noted that it was "plainly oriented toward parental control, as against state control, of what a child learns. . . The bill sets out unequivocally the parental right to decide: 'Parents have a right and responsibility to make decisions respecting the education of their children.' This is something public educators have long been at pains to prevent. What your child does or does not learn, as far as the 'professionals' are concerned, is a matter for professionals, not parents to determine. The Alberta act specifically repudiates this view."

The bill passed easily despite Liberal and New Democratic Party (NDP) politicians vigorously opposing its emphasis on parental rights.

## Regulations

With the new School Act being adopted, the next item on the agenda for AHEA was the home education regulations. The directors of the association urged all members to write and call their MLAs, the Minister of Education, and the director of the Legislature's education caucus.

Many members did call and write, clearly indicating to the government that home educators were concerned. As a result, AHEA representatives were invited to speak to the education caucus. After the AHEA presentation, the minister assured the AHEA directors that they would get some input into the forthcoming regulations.

AHEA received a draft of the proposed home education regulations on November 4, 1988. The Deputy Minister of Education then called a meeting for November 15, 1988 for all home educators and their organizations to attend. AHEA urged every member to attend and indicated that the outcome of this meeting was crucial because the proposed regulations were much too strict.

Many home educators did show up for the meeting and department officials saw that home educators were a determined and serious group.

The Home Education Regulation was released on February 28, 1989. These new regulations gave home schooling families the option to be supervised by a "willing non-resident board." That is, if the school board of the district in which they lived was not favourable to home schooling, the parents could register under a different board, anywhere in the province, that was favourable.

## Willing Non-resident Boards

AHEA immediately began trying to identify willing non-resident boards. The search for such boards turned out to be a very difficult task. Apparently, there was a kind of peer pressure among the boards not to accept students from other jurisdictions. A board that did accept students from other jurisdictions would be considered a "skunk in the chicken coop," as Ray Strom put it. Thus home educators were stuck with their resident boards, many of which were unfavourable.

It wasn't until 1991 that a breakthrough occurred. In September of that year AHEA discovered that the Assumption Roman Catholic School District #50 in Oyen was open to being a willing non-resident board. Harold Elias and Ray Strom from AHEA spent a considerable amount of time negotiating an agreement with that board. AHEA then prepared a notification form to be filled out and faxed to Assumption. With only three days remaining before the deadline for notifications to be received, over 100 students notified with that board.

This was the turning point. Notifying with a willing non-resident board was no longer just a legal possibility but a genuine reality.

In 1992 the situation began to look even more encouraging when the Alberta government proposed changes to the School Act that would include allowing accredited private schools to act in the same capacity as willing non-resident boards for home educators. AHEA was very supportive of this change because, once enacted, home educators could be supervised directly by a Christian private school rather than a public or separate school board. This was clearly a victory for home education in Alberta.

## Conclusion

Over the next several years, AHEA would continue to play a central role in advocating for home educators' rights, especially when the regulations were being revised or changes made to relevant legislation. It's safe to say that home educators in Alberta are better off today as a result of AHEA's work. This is a significant and worthy legacy. 🏠

*Michael Wagner is an independent researcher and writer, and a columnist for the Western Standard. He has a PhD in political science from the University of Alberta. He has written books on Christianity and politics in Canada, and the Alberta independence movement. He and his wife have eleven children and they have been home educating for about 30 years.*

# Trending in Home Education: Homeschooling Through High School

By HSLDA Staff



Families are discovering they can confidently guide their teens through high school at home.

The latest trend in our movement is the phenomenal amount of interest in homeschooling through the high school years. Demand for the topic was at record highs at provincial and local conferences right across Canada during the spring of 2023, and HSLDA was invited to present at several additional events specifically set up to address the topic.

This development reverses a long-running trend which has typically seen most families homeschool through the elementary years and then send their children off to a bricks-and-mortar school for their secondary-level education. Parents have typically done this for three primary reasons:

- a concern they may not be able to teach subjects well at the high school level;
- a desire on the teen's part for social interaction, sporting, and other opportunities; and
- a belief that a high school diploma is necessary for postsecondary admissions and general success in life.

However, it is not just long-time homeschooling families who are deciding to homeschool through high school now. A growing number of parents who have never homeschooled before are also taking the plunge and directly providing their teen's formal education for the very first time!

Many of the parents who have homeschooled for years, and those who are just starting out, express alarm at what they see happening in publicly funded schools. They

refer to the growing amount of "indoctrination, not education," safety concerns, the inconsistent quality of teaching, and the rise in anxiety and depression among teens in school. Despite the challenges of providing a secondary-level education, these parents have come to believe they can do a better job than the schools.

And, indeed they can.

## Many Benefits of Homeschooling through High School

There is now an incredible variety of excellent learning opportunities for high school-aged students, including top-notch curricula and many great online courses. When potentially challenging subjects like chemistry or foreign languages are tackled, families are forming high-school level co-ops to share parents' expertise, or hiring tutors.

Not only are homeschoolers getting a great high school education, but universities and colleges are often eager to admit these students because the experience of the last three decades has shown that home-educated students typically develop the self-study and learning habits that lead to success.

In fact, universities have always offered numerous pathways to admission. Homeschoolers are discovering that their parent-generated transcripts, portfolios, and standardized test results are often sufficient to achieve entry to many institutions. Others have used the 'transfer credit' pathway to gain a place in the program of their choice. Transfer credits are credits earned at another institution, such as an open online university, like Athabasca University, or as a result of passing a subject-specific test, such as the Advanced Placement (AP) test. Alternatively, students can often access their local adult learning centre's correspondence courses to complete six grade 12 credits, which can be used to apply to university.

Applying to community college can be a bit more challenging, but many are opening up pathways for homeschooled students to gain admission through equivalency testing or mature student admission tests.

## Benefits Outweigh the Challenges

While home educating families often excel at academics and postsecondary admissions, the biggest challenge can often be finding sufficient and appropriate social, sporting, and artistic opportunities for their aspiring scholars. It's challenging to build friendships if homeschooled students meet only once a week at an activity or group. As well, the onus is on homeschool families to do their own research to find suitable and affordable opportunities and then spend copious time driving their children around. Even so, the benefits of home education usually significantly outweigh the challenges.

*Originally published on the HSDLA Canada website. Reprinted with permission.*

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*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. 🏠*

### 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

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) 🏠

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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 ([AHEAonline.com/donate](http://AHEAonline.com/donate)). 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](http://www.aheaonline.com).



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