

# HOMESCHOOL SOCIAL

SUMMER 2020  
ISSUE 1

A MAGAZINE FOR "WEIRD, UNSOCIALIZED HOMESCHOOLERS"

## HOMESCHOOL SUCCESS STORIES

WORLD-RENOWNED  
UNSCHOOLED ARTIST. TUILE

## NATURE STUDY

WHY LEARNING ABOUT THE  
NATURAL WORLD IS AN  
IMPORTANT PART OF  
EDUCATION



BOATSCHOOLING  
*The Homeschooling Adventure  
of a Lifetime*



## LETTER FROM THE EDITOR

I have to say, it's hard to believe that it's finally here! This magazine has been a long time in the making; a true passion project that I hope will reach homeschoolers around the globe in a positive and uplifting way.

I have been homeschooling our four girls (ages 11, 10, 9, and 7) from preschool age and, I have to say, we have some wild adventures that we can't wait to share with you! Now we have a four month old little boy to join in on our adventures! I also organize countless activities in our local homeschool group. From glass blowing, to live theater, to science workshops - if you can name it, there is a homeschool activity for that!

Here at Homeschool Social, we're excited about a well-rounded, multimedia education. We encourage exploring the world and following your interests. We understand that one person's interests and strengths might lie in the arts, while the next is a science wiz, and the next is a problem solving genius. We hope to have articles and activities to appeal to every type of learner.

You want to do bookwork at home all day? We support that! Feel like having a child-led radical unschooling approach? That's cool too! Want to take your family and travel the world to learn? Fantastic! Honestly, we understand that there is no right way to homeschool. You do you. Homeschool Social will be a magazine for all homeschoolers and will have a vast assortment of hands-on activities, lesson plans, articles, tutorials, stories from other homeschoolers, curriculum reviews, multi-media links, and much, much more!

I'm so delighted that you are here to join us for our inaugural issue and I hope you'll love what we have in store for you this issue and in issues to come!

*Sarah Stewart*

# HOW WE HOMESCHOOL

*Learn About Our Family's Homeschooling Style*



**“Life is either a daring adventure or nothing at all!”**

**–Helen Keller**

## **BOATSCHOOLING: AN INTRODUCTION**

by  
Kimberly J. Ward

For the record, I am a gardener, not a sailor; yet somehow I not only agreed to, but actually championed our plan to spend two years living aboard a sailboat. Yep, let's pack up everything, rent our house, and move onto a 300 square foot sailboat for two years. In August of 2014, our Crew of Three (my husband Michael, our ten-year-old daughter Ally, and I) did just that!

In addition to a gardener, I am a writer and a traveler, and above all, I am a Planner: The Queen of Lists. Generally, my weapon of choice is the almighty Excel spreadsheet. In my quest to organize the gargantuan task ahead of me, I created a workbook called simply *The Plan*. In it were dozens of spreadsheets filled with all manner of lists, yet the tab for "Homeschool" remained empty for an unnervingly long time.

Pushed beyond my comfort zone in just about every direction, the idea of taking on the responsibility of educating our daughter was the most daunting. I had never homeschooled before. In fact I had never even considered it; and if you think the instruction manual for raising children is lacking, try the one on homeschooling!

As we created our lists of projects to complete, items to buy, and things to do before departure and steadily checked them off one by one, the innocuous looking item Homeschool continued to linger, untouched.



Every time I told someone about our trip, invariably questions about school came up, and every time “What curriculum are you planning to use?” was asked. Egad, at that point I was not even sure what the word curriculum actually meant.

Homeschooling can be loosely defined as the education of children in the home, generally by the parent(s). I would define boatschooling similarly, as the education of children, done anywhere except the home; and though generally facilitated by the parent(s), the education is provided by the world.

Can I really do this? Was I really qualified to teach Ally for two years? I took some comfort knowing that I couldn't completely ruin her in two short years. Right?! Michael and I talked about this nagging fear at length. We firmly believed the life experiences we would all gain during our two-year adventure far outweighed the risk that Ally might lose some ground academically. We reasoned that if she was behind when we got home, we would simply work with her teachers and hire tutors if necessary.



After working around it for months, quite honestly because the idea of homeschooling terrified me, I was determined to check Homeschool off my list. I would learn the pertinent terms, sort out what materials we needed, and check “it” off my list. I called our Superintendent's office, which provided the administrative requirements. I set up a meeting with Ally's principal, who gave me a copy of the Massachusetts Frameworks for Math and English. He also gave some sage advice: keep her writing; study revolutions and civil wars, not just ours but throughout the world; and make sure she is comfortable with technology. Math and English only. What about Science, History and Geography, not to mention Art, Computers and Technology, Music, Physical Education, and Foreign Languages?

OK, what should my child be learning? That's a pretty straightforward question, yes? Boy was I wrong! It is not that there are no books or websites but that there are way too many, often with conflicting and/or confusing information. Apparently my notion of a checklist of skills and information to be learned in a given year is not a notion shared by our Department of Education. As I researched what should be taught, I began to understand that curriculum is the how: the tools used to teach. Though how could I determine the tools I needed, if I didn't know what my child needed to learn?

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**...boatschooling  
aboard Ally Cat  
did not always  
go according to  
plan.**

I believe this was the exact state of mind I was in when I arrived at my friend Andrea's house. After listening to me vent, she shared what she called her "dirty little secret." Not only did her boys attend public school, but she homeschooled them on the side. Do tell! Andrea brought out a stack of books and dropped them on her kitchen table. Pen and notebook in hand, I sat down next to her.

She started with The Core Knowledge Sequence for Preschool - Grade 8: Content and Skill Guidelines for Grades K-8. Would you look at that?! By grade, a list of what my child should be learning. There is a concise overview of topics (basically an outline) detailed by subject, not only for Math and Language Arts, but for Science, History and Geography, Visual Arts, and Music as well. I felt as if I had struck gold! Andrea then went on to tell me about the companion series What Your (First to Sixth) Grader Needs to Know, edited by E.D Hirsch, Jr., the Founder of the Core Knowledge Foundation. I loved that this gave me both a broad sense of what Ally should be learning, as well as details. You may not agree 100% with the content, however this resource was by far the starting point for which I was searching.

She shared textbooks, websites, and year-end assessment tools. In addition to this treasure trove, Andrea also shared what worked well for her boys, as well as what didn't. She told me she'd often had to be flexible, and shift her strategy when a specific tool didn't work. Every child has a different learning style, including Ally.

I, however, now had my checklist! Score! All I had to do was determine my curriculum, and I was no longer intimidated by that word. I would simply decide what materials and resources we wanted to use. About this time, I ran into my neighbor Geoff, who's retired after teaching fifth through eighth grades in public schools for more than twenty years. He offered that he had a shelf of materials I could have. I eagerly agreed and said I would come by that day to pick them up. No problem, he would bring them over, and he showed up at our front door with a wheelbarrow and four boxes full of materials! We're going to need a bigger boat.

I unloaded it all into my living room, which forced me to go through it immediately. I sorted it by subject, and I'm pretty sure I had enough material in that room to teach Ally for the next ten years! I clearly did not have the skills to determine what of this overabundance was worthy, so I set it aside, and there it sat for a month or more.

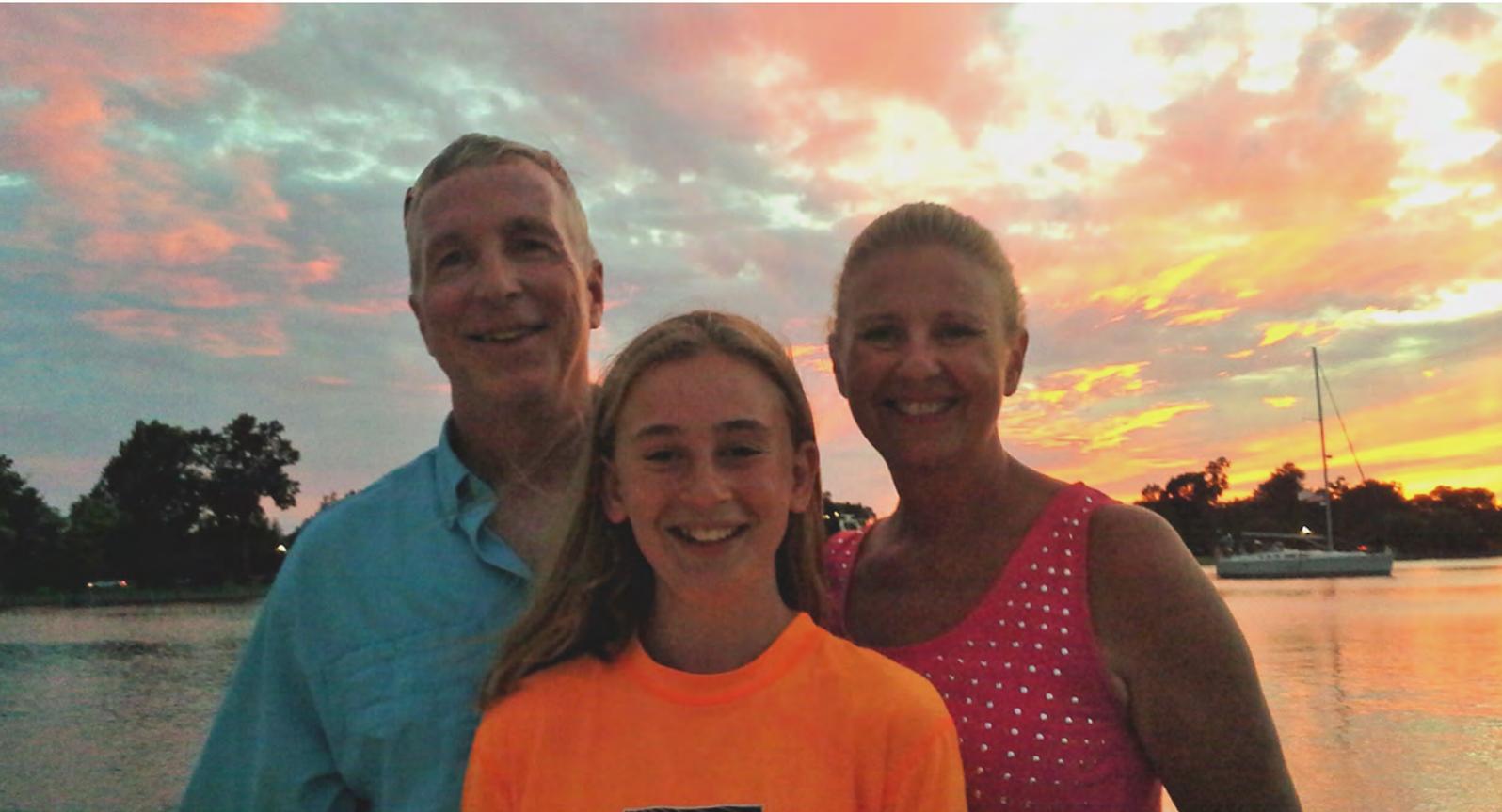
Once again, it was time to go out of my comfort zone. An acquaintance I barely knew, Monica, shared my passion for gardening. She is also a sixth grade science teacher and has been for years. I picked up the phone and invited her over to see my gardens (and would she possibly be willing to help me sort through all of the books given to me to figure out what to use to homeschool Ally for the next two years?). One of the parallel tasks was to figure out what type of storage bins would fit in each of the funky-sized storage areas on our boat. Lack of dry storage on a boat, coupled with humidity and salt air, make it necessary to store items in watertight bins. The space I designated would fit eight of those scrapbook bins, which I found on clearance at the craft store. I labeled them: English, Math, Science, Social Studies, Spanish, Geography, and Art. The last one would be for our school supplies.

Monica was a godsend, exactly what I needed when I needed her! She was able to go through each piece of material and quickly assess if it was great, good, meh, dated, better for fifth or sixth grade, or not appropriate at all. Would you believe that every item she selected for fifth grade, for each subject, fit exactly into the bin for that subject? Astounding!

Just so you don't think all of this was too easy, please know that boatschooling aboard Ally Cat did not always go according to plan. First, I am a mom and she is a kid. We had to figure out our new roles as teacher and student, and while I was all fired-up ready to teach her, at the beginning she stubbornly decided not to learn from me. Where does she get that stubborn streak from anyway?! I had to get rid of my idealized notion of what I thought boatschool should be and accept where we were; which was on a dock in Washington, DC, a twenty minute walk from the White House, the US Capitol, the Supreme Court, the Mall, and all of its monuments and museums. It was time for me to embrace this tremendous nontraditional classroom and make learning fun! After all, adventure is the best way to learn!

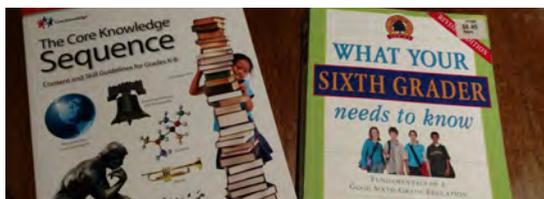


# ABOUT KIMBERLY



At various times, Kimberly has managed a bank, directed human resources departments, implemented computer systems, taught preschool and recruited physicians. By far, her current roles are also her favorites: mom, wife, gardener, traveler. And writer. Kimberly lives in the coastal town of Mattapoisett, MA, with her husband, one teenager, fourteen vegetable and fruit gardens, eight boats, four kayaks, and one crazy coonhound. She homeschooled her daughter Ally for two years while living on a boat.

Kimberly is currently working on her first book, *Crew of Three: Ready to Set Sail*, a memoir detailing the planning required to move onto a boat for two years, sailing from Massachusetts to Grenada and back. You can visit her website where you can follow her journey from first draft to published book.



## HEAR MORE!



# LEARNING APPROACHES

How to Help Children Learn



**LORRAINE  
DRISCOLL  
MST, RHN**

## **REAL ANSWERS, REAL SOLUTIONS**

A Brain-Body Approach to Learning & Behaviour  
Difficulties

Your child does not have a bad brain, it is not broken and his or her situation is not hopeless. They simply may not be able to learn, focus or manage their behaviour because their brain may have weak connections or they require targeted brain nutrients that are unique to their needs. No two children are the same; each brain and body is unique in terms of how it processes everything from food to information.

### **Success - It's Not the Brain You Have - It's the Brain You Create**

If your child struggles in school, his or her brain may not have developed the necessary skills that are required for effective learning. If your child has a difficult time with behavior or focus, it means your child's brain is untrained in the skills that are necessary to be successful in and outside of the classroom.

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Building Better Brains  
[info@lorrainedriscoll.com](mailto:info@lorrainedriscoll.com)





Something as simple as missing a crucial developmental milestone like crawling, lacking key nutrients or undiagnosed food sensitivities can make all the difference in the ability to process, memorize and learn. Memory, listening skills, visual and auditory processing, attention, logic and reasoning are all skills that can be acquired with the correct learning therapy and nutrition. When these skills are properly developed your child can thrive both in school and in life.

### **The Rise in Learning & Behaviour Disorders**

Children today are struggling like never before with learning and behaviour. A general increase in our toxic load as well as major changes to the way children develop, are educated, their diet and their lifestyle has been attributed to being one of the major causative factors in the increase in childhood disorders. These major changes in the last thirty years have seriously impacted the brain development of children as well as their bio-chemistry.

It doesn't seem to matter which mother you talk to today—they are at their wits end with the never-ending homework battles, calls from the school and lack of real answers or solutions to their child's cognitive struggles. Autism has jumped from 1 in 10,000 to 1 in 67 in only thirty years. Better diagnosis and genetics can't account for such a steep increase in just thirty years.

There is not usually a single causative factor—rather many, but research has shown that cognitive disorders like ADHD and learning disabilities can be impacted by factors as simple as skipping a milestone like creeping, crawling or not enough tummy time as well as nutrition, environmental toxins, overuse of antibiotics and other medications.

*Brain health doesn't end with nutrition, but it is certainly where it begins.*

### **Real Solutions for Real Change**

The good news is that improving brain health doesn't have to be rocket science. The latest findings in science offer an incredible sense of empowerment and hope for the brains of our children. For decades—even centuries—it was believed that the brain was hard wired and intelligence and abilities were fixed. We now know we can grow new brain cells—even as adults! Brain imaging scans have shown that even adult brains can reorganize themselves and overcome incredible limitations when stimulated correctly.

Research and experience with my own clients has proven countless times that a brain-body approach is a game-changer in building a better brain. A brain-body approach involves addressing the root causes of why the brain is not functioning optimally—and that involves addressing brain function through two angles—targeted nutrition therapy and learning therapies that change the way the body and brain functions, processes and stores information.

### **The Brain is Plastic and Can Change with the Correct Stimulation**

Learning therapies help to organize a disorganized brain; this can happen because a child may have skipped a milestone in the first year of life. When the lower brain levels are not fully developed, the cortex cannot do its job—that is of higher order thinking and cognitive tasks.



**More  
Tips  
Here!**

*A brain-body approach involves addressing the root causes of why the brain is not functioning optimally.*

Screening for which lower brain levels are not fully developed and then addressing them through learning therapies that develop the lower brain levels can make the difference between a kid who once couldn't sit still in class and a kid who now can or a child who read laboriously and had no idea what she was reading and can now read fluently. By going back and developing the lower brain levels through movement therapy that simulates the earliest movements of an infant, the lower brain levels can be developed.

I compare these learning therapies to physiotherapy for the brain. It doesn't require brain surgery—all that is required is to ensure the brain is optimally nourished and that weak connections and areas of underdevelopment are made strong through the correct brain exercises.

### **Nutrition - Where Better Brain Function Begins**

The other most frequently overlooked factor is nutrition. Brain health doesn't end with nutrition, but it is certainly where it begins. I have found targeted nutrition therapy to be pivotal for many of my clients who are struggling with learning, reading, behaviour and autism spectrum. Once we address food sensitivities, toxicity and gut bacteria, parents and kids are amazed at the changes in behaviour. After six weeks, one seven-year-old boy told me, "I can think clearly, in a straight line now." His parents said his anger went from 8 to 2 and his tutor was amazed at his new-found ability to focus.

### **Remediation Reinforces Bad Brain Connections**

The problem with many reading and learning programs is that they either act as Band-Aid solutions or do not address or resolve the underlying reasons for poor processing in the brain. Traditional remedial reading programs or tutoring simply teach around issues and create strategies to manage a disorder rather than correcting the source of the problem. Extra practice and teaching in the same way that never worked before will not produce changes. In fact, remedial programs may at times cause more damage by reinforcing 'faulty' connections.

The answer to improving your child's abilities is not always 'more practice'. Certainly, practice makes perfect when the right connections are in place. Rigorous, rote learning may not only strengthen the wrong connections but it often leads to mental exhaustion, lack of motivation and even potential failure. Stimulating the brain to develop areas that are the source of poor learning, laborious reading and difficulty focusing and regulating emotions is at the heart of real change. When the right connections are in place learning takes place more naturally and confidence and motivation soars.

### **A Brain-Body Approach Addresses Where the Trouble Started**

A brain-body approach essentially combines therapies that research has found to be most effective in addressing the root cause of learning and behaviour difficulties. They are the starting points that offer real solutions in transforming many of the common childhood disorders and conditions that are rising in epidemic proportions among children today. Parents and clinicians around the world are witnessing and documenting how their children are improving by addressing the underlying reasons for their child's learning and behaviour challenges.

In my own experience working with these challenges, I have found that a combined approach of targeted nutrition with learning therapies yields the best results to help your child achieve their full potential in their ability to learn, cope and thrive in everyday life.



# CURRICULUM REVIEW



## Review of Time4Learning

By Warren Myers  
<https://antipaucity.com>

Time4Learning.com is a Common Core consistent (though not fully CC-compliant), online homeschooling resource that runs the gamut from Preschool to 12th grade. I'm only addressing the Preschool and Pre-K material in this review, however. We use it with our 4-year-old Pre-K boy, and he loves it (most of the time). He did have a modest learning curve getting the hang of using a trackpad on our laptops, but eventually he got there (without too much coaching). At the Preschool and Pre-K level, Time4Learning structures itself through educational games like coloring, sentence creation, memory games, and more.

There are a host of demos available on their site. My little fella likes "Sentence Slopes" the most (this week). Sentence Slopes is a word-ordering game where you need to put the 4-6 words listed on the screen into the same order as a spoken sentence. The sentence might be, "The wall is red." The player's job is to rearrange "red", "wall", "The", "is" properly to make the same sentence that was spoken. Individual words can be played, the whole sentence can be played, and the player has unlimited chances to rearrange the words until it matches correctly. Pricing is very simple and straightforward. Currently it's \$19.95/mo (\$14.95/mo per additional student) for Pre-K-8th grade, and \$30/mo for 9th-12th grades per student (including 4 courses). Extra high school classes are \$5/mo per student each.

Time4Learning is a "full" curriculum ([https://www.time4learning.com/curriculum/faq.html#homeschool\\_program](https://www.time4learning.com/curriculum/faq.html#homeschool_program)) - and can be used in either a primary or supplementary form. We're using it as a supplement right now alongside My Father's World to introduce basic computer skills, augment reading/writing skills, and give a fun way to practice math skills.

# Breakdown

## The Good

- It's easy to register
- Super easy and transparent pricing
- Kids (well, my kids) love playing the games
- Kids don't know they're learning, because the games are pretty engaging and fun
- Every registered child has their own profile and login, so progress can be tracked in the Parent Portal easily
- Everything on T4L's website is safe and family friendly

## The Less Good

- You need - really need - solid, high-speed internet access and a recent computer
- T4L's gamification system unlocks more games as you complete earlier ones- While this is probably OK for later grades, for Preschool/Pre-K, I think they should all be available on Day 1
- Some common browsers don't work, or will one day and not the next
- Be sure to have multiple browsers installed and ready to login (Chrome, Firefox, Edge, Safari, Opera, etc.)

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*Time4Learning structures itself through educational games like coloring, sentence creation, memory games, and more.*

## My Recommendation

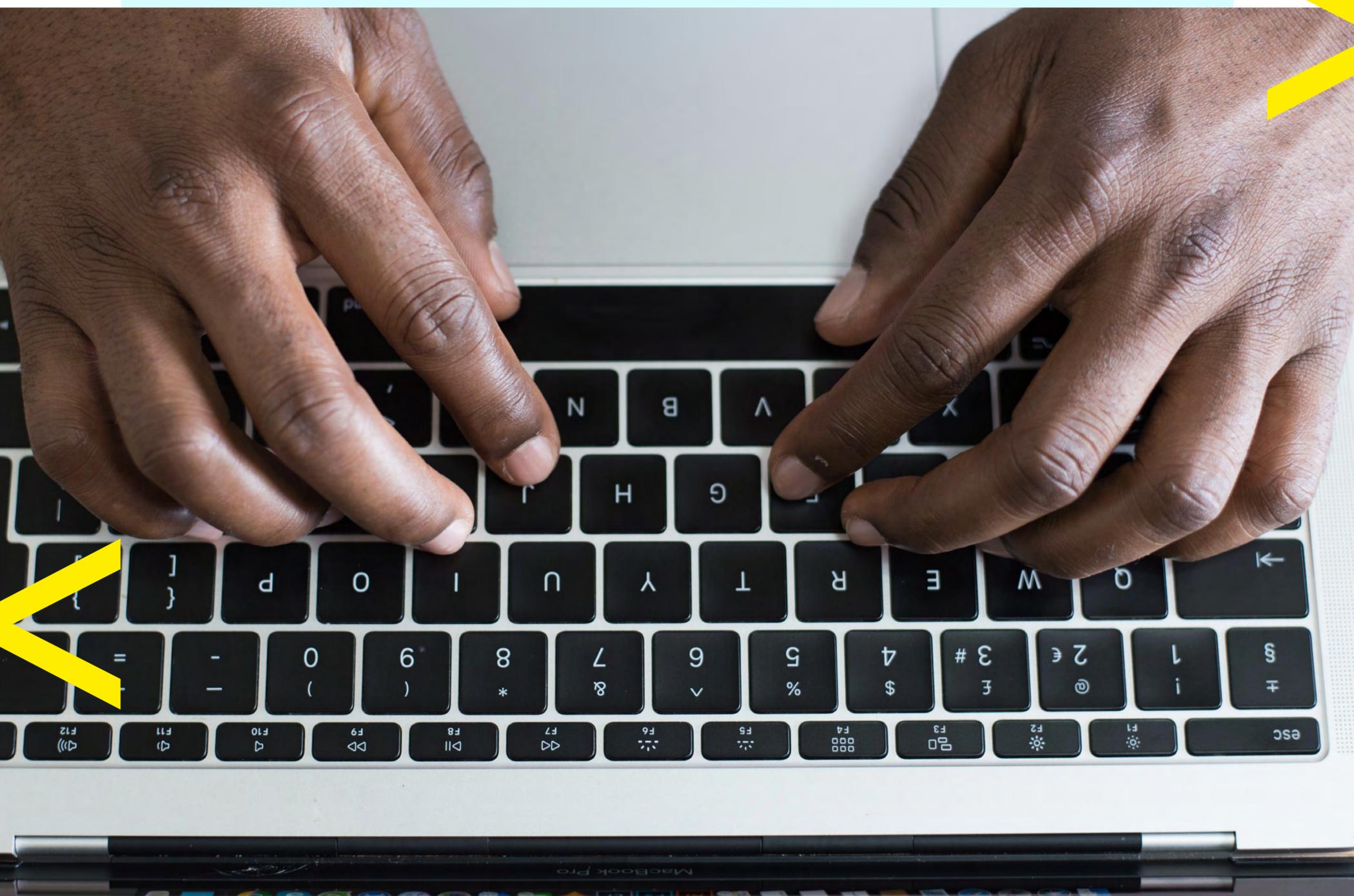
Definitely a great addition at the Preschool/Pre-K level, and with T4L's 14-day money-back guarantee, easy pause-cancel-restart process, I think it's a good thing to try with your littles for a few weeks, at least. If they like it, it's fairly inexpensive. If they (or you) don't, it is a far less expensive way to find out than having purchased a whole curriculum that ends up going unused or hated for hundreds of dollars.



**WE WANT TO HEAR FROM YOU!**

**WE'RE CREATING COURSES,  
UNIT STUDIES, ESCAPE ROOMS,  
BADGES, AND OTHER RESOURCES  
FOR OUR MEMBERS AND WOULD  
LOVE TO HAVE YOUR INPUT!**

**Email us at  
[info@homeschoolsocialmagazine.com](mailto:info@homeschoolsocialmagazine.com)  
with your ideas!**



# HERE'S SOME OF WHAT WE ALREADY HAVE IN THE WORKS!



HOMESCHOOL  
101



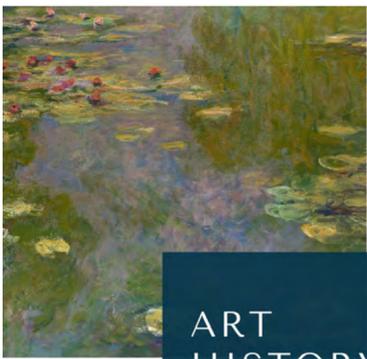
WILDCRAFTING  
BASICS



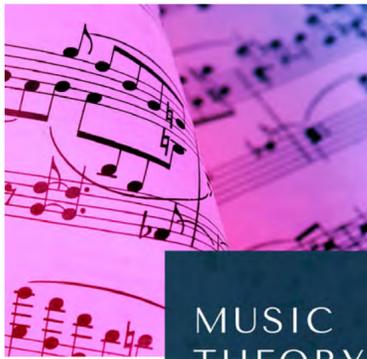
STOP-MOTION  
ANIMATION



CANDY  
MAKING



ART  
HISTORY



MUSIC  
THEORY



DIGITAL  
PHOTOGRAPHY



UKULELE



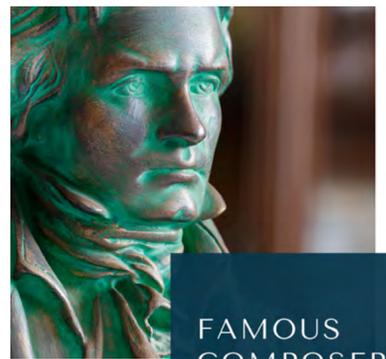
CREATIVE  
WRITING



SPFX  
MAKE-UP



HANDS-ON  
MATH



FAMOUS  
COMPOSERS



WORLD  
RELIGIONS



CANADIAN  
GEOGRAPHY



LEARNING  
WITH GAMES



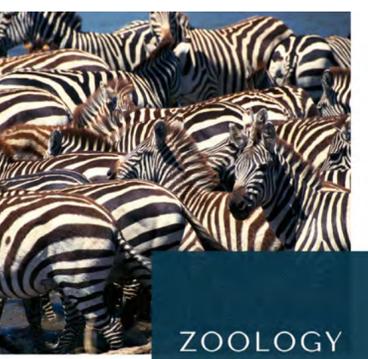
EASY  
COOKING



ROCKS &  
MINERALS



WILDLIFE  
GARDENING



ZOOLOGY



SCIENCE  
ON A  
BUDGET

# COMMUNITY OUTREACH



## CLEAN UP YOUR PARK

By Lindsey Barr, *World Changing Kids*

Community is so important. If I ask you to think of some of the best memories of your childhood, I bet that they include time spent outside in the woods or playing at ponds and rivers. They might include playing with the other kids in the neighbourhood until the streetlights came on, riding bikes around the neighbourhood, heading up to the corner store to get some candy, and picking up stacks of books from the library. You probably would remember playing hide and seek, kick the can, or capture the flag for hours with your friends.

That is what I remember.

### TIP:

RATHER THAN USING PLASTIC SINGLE-USE GLOVES THAT WILL SIT IN OUR LANDFILLS FOREVER, USE BIODEGRADABLE DOG POO BAGS - YOU CAN GET SOME THAT ARE SHAPED AS MITTS AND WORK WELL FOR THE KIDS. ONE OTHER SUGGESTION THOUGH IS TO PURCHASE A BUNCH OF GARDENING GLOVES - HAND THOSE OUT AND COLLECT THEM AT THE END FOR REUSE NEXT TIME.

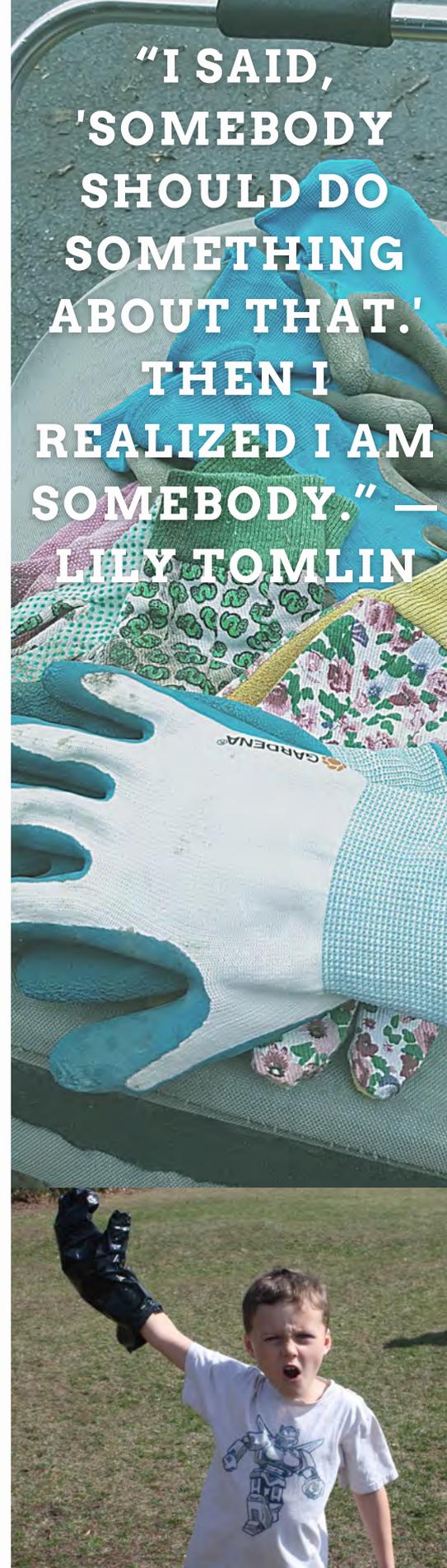
These fun times were possible because we knew our neighbours. Our parents knew that there were other adults around the neighbourhood who were keeping an eye out for all the kids. If we fell off our bikes two blocks from home, we could knock on a neighbour's door to ask for help. We were allowed to knock on friend's doors to see if they wanted to come out and play - we didn't have to schedule a play date two weeks in advance. We could all park our bikes in a friend's driveway and hang out.

I have spoken to so many parents about these fond memories. At the end of listing all these great things, the parents will sigh and resign themselves to the fact that our children can't have these great parts of our childhood. These parents will say that the world has changed and life can't be that simple and easy anymore.

Well, I refuse to believe that. I think we have the power to create the type of community we want our children to grow up in. We can build that village that we all need to raise our children in. So, I wrote a book - *Plant a Garden of Kindness, A Child's Guide to Filling a Year with Weekly Acts of Kindness*. This book is a step by step guide for helping you create the friendly community we all need.

*Plant a Garden of Kindness* consists of 75 Acts of Kindness kids can do. The goal is to pick 52 of them and do one a week for a year. By the end of the year, your children will have strengthened their kindness, empathy and compassion muscles. By the end of the year, you will know more of your neighbours, you will have friends you can call on when you need some help, and you will be available to help them when needed. You will trade children back and forth between houses. You will walk into the park and see so many friendly, familiar faces. You will have people to collect your mail, shovel your driveway, and put out your garbage when you go away. None of us can do this parenting thing alone; we need to be connected to other parents in our community.

In an effort to help you get started building this friendly community, I am going to share one of the Acts of Kindness from my book with you right now!



**"I SAID,  
'SOMEBODY  
SHOULD DO  
SOMETHING  
ABOUT THAT.'  
THEN I  
REALIZED I AM  
SOMEBODY." —  
LILY TOMLIN**

### **ACT OF KINDNESS #32 - CLEAN YOUR PARK**

**PICK A DAY TO GO OUT AND CLEAN UP YOUR NEIGHBOURHOOD PARK OR SCHOOL PLAYGROUND. LET OTHER NEIGHBOURS KNOW YOUR PLAN BY POSTING ON FACEBOOK, OR EMAILING, OR TEXTING, OR GO OLD SCHOOL AND PRINT OUT INVITES.**

**IF THERE ARE CHILDREN WHO ARE TOO YOUNG TO PICK UP THE GARBAGE, THEY COULD BE PUT IN CHARGE OF FINDING THE GARBAGE AND POINTING OUT WHERE IT IS.**

WE HAVE CREATED A CERTIFICATE FOR THIS ACT OF KINDNESS. PRINTING AND HANDING OUT A CERTIFICATE TO PARTICIPATING CHILDREN WILL REALLY REINFORCE TO THE CHILDREN THAT THE ADULTS IN THEIR LIVES VALUE KINDNESS AND COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT.



### Why Should You Do This?

Our children listen to our actions way more than they listen to our words. By completing this action together, as a family, we will teach our children that it is their responsibility as a community member to help clean up. This will teach them not to leave garbage in a park or public place because someone else will have to pick it up. This will ensure that they make a habit of always cleaning up a piece of garbage while they are out and about. If we all took responsibility for that, our neighbourhoods would be a lot cleaner, friendlier and more welcoming.

But most importantly, this will make our kids feel powerful - it will make them believe that they actually do have the power to make the world a better place. By teaching children that they have this power, we will raise a generation of kind, compassionate, engaged children, rather than children who are anxious and apathetic and feel overwhelmed by all the bad things going on in the world.

KINDNESS  
CHALLENGE



LITTER CLEAN-UP

WATCH OUR VIDEO!



# FAMILY TRAVEL

VIRTUAL FIELDTRIPS TO GET YOU THROUGH COVID

Homeschooling often involves a lot of awesome field trips but, with so many closures, we have to adjust! So, fasten your (virtual) seatbelts and join us on a trip!



## NATURAL WONDERS

Via Google Earth and others, you can explore many natural spaces. Here, you can explore the Great Barrier Reef!



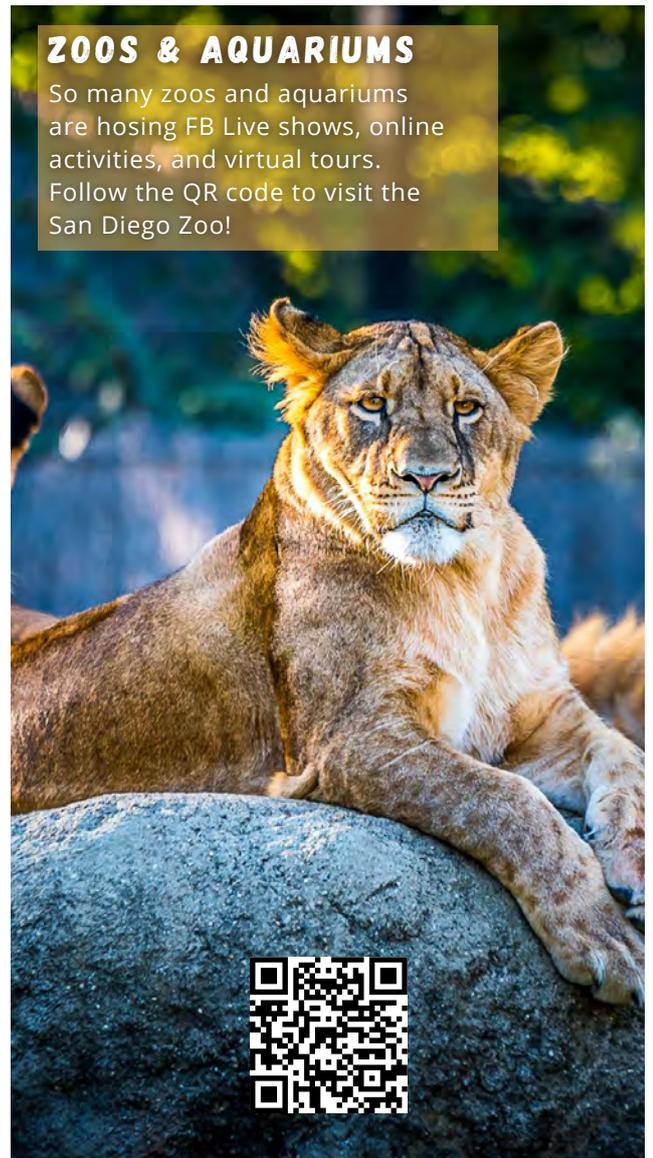
## NATIONAL PARKS

Many of the national parks have Google tours or online Jr. Ranger programs. Try out a virtual Yellowstone visit!



## FAMOUS LANDMARKS

Virtually every famous landmark has a way to visit virtually. Explore the Gardens of Versailles from your couch!



## ZOOS & AQUARIUMS

So many zoos and aquariums are hosting FB Live shows, online activities, and virtual tours. Follow the QR code to visit the San Diego Zoo!



## NATURE CENTRES

Many Nature Centers are hosting virtual workshops, tours, and FB Live sessions. Follow the link to Nature.org's four week virtual summer camp!



**MORE IDEAS  
HERE!**



*Pinterest*



## MUSEUMS

View collections, play games, and explore plenty of learning opportunities. Go take a virtual tour of the National Museum of Natural History!



DO YOU HAVE A GREAT VIRTUAL  
FIELD TRIP IDEA?

CONTACT US AND SHARE!



# ARTS & CRAFTS



## Materials:

- Basket
- Newspaper
- Soil
- Wooden Birdhouse
- Natural Materials (bark, twigs, dried moss, stones, shells)
- Live Plants and Moss

More ideas here!



## Fairy Gardens

A whimsical addition to your summer

There are a few art projects that we return to year after year. Our favorite springtime project, by far, has to be fairy gardens! Each year, we host a workshop and invite our friends over to make these tiny, whimsical little fairy habitats. What happens next is up to the imagination of each creator!

### Step-by-Step Guide:

1. Line your basket with newspaper so your soil doesn't escape.
2. Fill your basket 2/3 of the way with potting soil.
3. Add plants. Mosses and low-growing plants are best.
4. Add a house for your fairy.
5. Use your natural materials to make paths and decorate your fairy habitat.

### Cross-Curricular Extensions:

Introduce some social studies by sharing fairy folktales from other cultures.

Bring in some science by learning about the plants you are planting and tracking their growth.

There is a wealth of beautiful fairy-centered poetry available. Read some together as a family and then write your own fairy poems!

# GAMESCHOOLING

*Reviews of Our Favourite Games!*



## Sneaky Cards

**An Interactive Game - Play it Forward!**

*Sneaky Cards*, by Gamewright, is an amazing game that allows you to bring gameplay out into the world! With Mission Objectives like "Engage", "Connect", and "Care", this game will have you out having fun and spreading joy to all!

This is a dynamic game that has you register your deck online and track it's progress as you complete your tasks and hand off your cards to unsuspecting strangers! While it may not be ideal for COVID times, this game (with it's low price tag of less than \$20) is a fantastic way to begin incorporating both community outreach/service learning and gameschooling into your homeschool!



**Check out  
our video!**



**Do you have a homeschooler  
who loves boardgames?**

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# **JOIN US FOR THE GAMESCHOOLING LEAGUE!**

**Season One of *Can't Stop* begins  
in September!**

**LEAGUE IS HOSTED ON  
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E-MAIL  
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TO REGISTER!**

# ***EVENTS***

SPECIAL EVENTS FOR HOMESCHOOLERS

**\$40**

24 hour access with none  
of the extra frills!

**\$100**

Conference plus a full year of  
access to all of our  
extra resources!

*All prices in  
Canadian Dollars*



**New to homeschooling and needing guidance?  
Looking for new ways to revitalize your homeschool?  
Join us online August 3-7th for  
The Socially Distanced Homeschool Conference!!**

**The conference will include Q&A sessions, special guest speakers, loads of resources, and live webinars with Sarah Stewart – veteran homeschool mom and mentor, National Geographic Certified Educator, Nearpod Certified Educator, Apple Certified Educator, and more!**

# WEBINARS INCLUDE:

- Gameschooling: Using Gaming to Boost Learning
- Travel School: Leveraging Travel as an Unparalleled Learning Opportunity
- "BUT WHAT ABOUT SOCIALIZATION?!" Homeschool Socialization Explained
- How to Turn Anything into a Learning Opportunity
- Why Choose Experiential Learning?
- Computer Science Resources
- How Continuing YOUR Learning Will Help You on Your Homeschooling Journey
- The Importance of Nature Study
- Herbal Studies in the Curriculum
- Systems to Support Your Schooling
- Records, Reports, and Assessment
- Homeschooling with Streaming Services: The Best Shows and Movies to Bolster Learning
- Creative Language Arts Projects
- Tot Schooling: Homeschool for the Littlest Learners
- Homeschooling on a Budget
- How to Organize Group Activities Like a Pro
- Exciting Electives and Where to Find Them
- Teaching Tricky Topics: Broaching Sex Education, Ethics, Social Justice

## WITH SPECIAL GUEST SPEAKERS:



MUSIC TEACHER & FORMER  
HOMESCHOOL STUDENT  
FROM *ALCORN MUSIC STUDIOS*

**EMILY BAILLIE**

Fun Ideas for Integrating Music into Your  
Everyday Learning



WORLDWIDE PUBLIC SPEAKER  
EDUCATING STUDENTS &  
TEACHERS ON APERT SYNDROME  
AND BULLYING

**JONATHAN SIEBERT**

My Real-Life Wonder Story: Teaching Your Children to  
Choose Kindness



SCREENWRITER,  
PLAYWRITE, & TALENT  
AGENT  
FROM *THE MEUS*

**LISA MEUSER**

How Acting for Film & TV Meshes Perfectly  
with Homeschooling



AUTHOR, BRINGER OF CHANGE,  
& HOMESCHOOL MOM  
FROM *WORLD CHANGING KIDS*

**LINDSEY BARR**

How & Why to Make Service Learning a Part  
of Your Homeschool Experience



CBC RADIO PRESENTER,  
PUBLIC SPEAKER,  
COMEDIAN, CEO, &  
HOMESCHOOL MOM

**JENN HAYWARD**

The Importance of Including  
Indigenous Affairs in Your Curriculum



NATURE EDUCATOR,  
ENVIRONMENTAL  
STUDIES MAJOR & BOARDGAME  
DESIGNER  
FROM *NATURE CONNECTIONS*

**BRITTANY BOYCHUK**

Connecting Children with Nature: Take Your Learning to  
the Trees!

IN ADDITION TO LIVE AND RECORDED ACCESS TO ALL OF THESE INFORMATIONAL WEBINARS TO HELP YOU MAKE THIS THE BEST HOMESCHOOLING YEAR EVER, REGISTRATION FOR **THE BIG PACKAGE** GIVES YOU ONE YEAR OF ACCESS TO:

- **Membership in a private Facebook group where I am regularly available for Q&A**
- **All of my log sheets, templates, and lesson plans**
- **Extensive lists of my favourite resources**
- **A new self directed course released each month!**
- **Any curricula or resources I design , including interactive digital lessons**
- **Monthly webinars on homeschool related topics**
- **Our experiential learning badge program**
- **Entry into a draw for session of homeschool coaching personalized to your family**



HOMESCHOOL  
101



# CHALLENGES & GIFTS

SUMMER 2020  
ISSUE 1



LIANNA KOERNER

## HOMESCHOOLING MY CHILD WITH DOWN SYNDROME

### Why We Chose to Homeschool

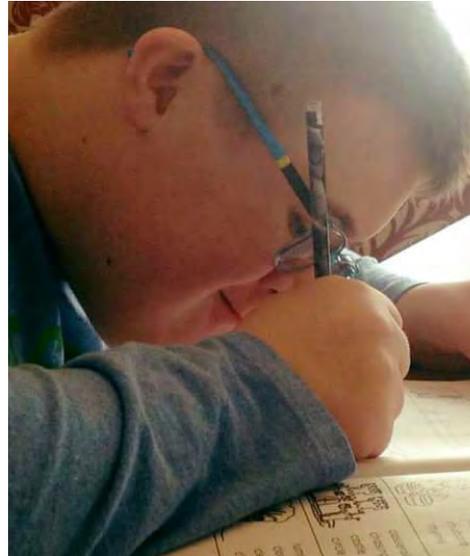
Our homeschooling story starts more than four years ago. The challenge of keeping our son in a mainstream classroom was overwhelming. Our family plan of creating a lifelong friendship circle for Gabriel was disintegrated by funding politics, the administration's misguided ideas of a disabled child in mainstream classrooms, and an unwillingness to see the child first; not the label.

Our desire for natural inclusion would never be realized. Instead of being described as a classmate, Gabriel would be described as a "behavioural problem". Beginning in Junior Kindergarten, his communication book that travelled back and forth from school was a diary of wrongs committed by our son.

By Grade three, Gabriel's mental health was declining steadily. Unable to navigate why the boys in his classroom were ignoring and physically bullying him, and without any authentic male friendships due to being overshadowed by educational assistants, Gabe faced each school day emotionally alone.

In the mornings of early November 2013, Gabriel's sobbing in the bathroom upon waking was heartbreaking. "I will tell you everything when I retire.", answered his educational assistant as I confided my worry for him to her. That confession changed our lives and it was the catalyst that woke us up to our son's despair.

By November 8, 2013, our son would be a homeschooler. We would never hear her confession.



**THE TRANSITION INTO HOMESCHOOLING GABRIEL WAS DIFFICULT FOR BOTH OF US. THERE WERE MANY STARTS AND STOPS IN THE PROCESS; FROM LETTING GO OF MY OWN PERCEPTIONS OF WHAT “SCHOOLING” IS TO IGNITING THE PASSIONATE LEARNER IN GABRIEL. WE BOTH EMBARKED ON A JOURNEY TO FIND OUR WAY TOGETHER. I LEARNED LONG AGO THAT HAVING DOWN SYNDROME IS NOT THE LARGEST PROBLEM FOR A LEARNER, BUT INSTEAD, IT IS THAT SOCIETY NEVER DEVELOPED TO NATURALLY INCLUDE CHILDREN AND ADULTS WITH DISABILITIES. UNFORTUNATELY, BLANKET STATEMENTS AND MISGUIDED IDEAS ABOUT PEOPLE WHO HAVE DOWN SYNDROME CAN DETER WHAT EACH INDIVIDUAL MAY REQUIRE TO BE SUCCESSFUL. THE EXTRA CHROMOSOME IN TRISOMY 21 IS USUALLY THE ONLY FACT THAT PEOPLE WITH DOWN SYNDROME SHARE (OUTSIDE OF THE PHYSICAL CHARACTERISTICS, WHICH IS ANOTHER ESSAY FOR ANOTHER TIME). EACH IS INDIVIDUALLY CHALLENGED AND GIFTED JUST LIKE ANY OTHER PERSON WITHOUT A DISABILITY.**

## Challenges

However, the influence of the third gene on the 21st chromosome does cause common emotional and cognitive hurdles when it comes to learning. The learner may lack impulse control, stimming behaviours, an inability to reiterate or output what he has read and written, poor working memory, as well as lack the essential skills to gather and organize information. When faced with an inability to articulate fear and anxiety towards something new, any child suffers a barrier and will resort to a behaviour that garners a safe reaction – either positive or negative. The child only wants the outcome that he is comfortable with knowing. You may have seen this in your younger children in new situations. Gabriel exhibits this more often and for a longer period of time than a child without Down syndrome.

For the first three years, I struggled with how to teach Gabriel. I searched out like-minded parents, I researched blogs, educational websites, and homeschooling forums, and browsed through countless catalogues of curriculum. Enamoured with other homeschooling parents' ideas, I bought piles of reading material, curriculum, manipulatives, and hands-on kits and toys.

I envisioned a son who loved to read about his country and to imagine the world at large, who mastered the basic math skills that eluded him in school, who would love all things science, who would write brilliant stories from his unique mind and, of course, love to take a brush to canvas. He wanted none of it. In hindsight, I lost my son again in my desire to “normalize” him. I tried to push him into what I experienced as a learner.

**ONCE I REALIZED MY MISTAKE, I BEGAN TO REALLY LISTEN TO GABRIEL AND TO HONOR MY OWN LIMITATIONS. RECENTLY, I PURGED THE DOZENS AND DOZENS OF BOOKS I ACCUMULATED FOR GABRIEL AND IT FELT INCREDIBLY GOOD TO LET IT ALL GO. I HAVE HELD ONTO A FEW CURRICULUMS BUT I DON'T KNOW IF WE WILL EVER GET TO OUR "CANADIAN FLYER ADVENTURES" AND "GREETINGS FROM SOMEWHERE" BOOK SERIES. I STILL HANG ONTO THE HOPE TO ENJOY THE "MEDICINE WHEEL EDUCATION" CURRICULUM. OUR FOCUS NOW IS ENGLISH AND MATH AND LIFE EXPERIENCES WITH OTHERS.**

## Gifts

A common myth about people with Down syndrome is that "they are always happy". The happy myth gets in the way of the real fact: people with Down syndrome don't have that social filter we put on. If they are happy, you see their exuberance without a care about what others think. If they are feeling angry, there is no need to make the reaction socially "pretty". It is what it is and what it means in the absolute present.

Some of my most dear friends are "What you see is what you get." people. If you have met my son, you may have seen a sullen-faced kid who is quite introverted with other children. I am working hard at not saying, "Gabe, did you say hello?" because that is my problem, not his. Gabe is who he is, and he had to come up against some tough circumstances to claim his own right. By letting go of material and emotional barriers this past year, our homeschool life is peaceful, joyful, and contemplative. Gabriel has discovered new passions like cooking, scrapping electronics, reading books about singer-songwriters, baseball, and horse care.

He is nurturing old and new friendships for his own needs - not mine - and discovering that he is able to participate successfully in homeschooling programs and course sessions with little to no support. Long gone is his aversion to any classroom-like setting with an adult hovering nearby; he is his own "inclusion" advocate.

There are moments that seem to remain completely still between us these days. He is deeply inserted into living his own life; his intuition is growing and his confidence is blooming. We look at each other, and we both know it could be a different life.

The gift of homeschooling a son with Down syndrome is this: I am reminded of the tenacity a child will possess when he wants to do something so badly that he forsakes all consequences. There is no measure, no test and no barrier of the brain and heart working together to imprint new experiences and passions. My son can rise above what impeded him in a classroom because it was never going to offer what the world can to all people, with and without a disability: life.





SUMMER 2020 | ISSUE 1

# KIDS IN THE KITCHEN

Infusing Your Curriculum with Flavour!

## INGREDIENTS:

- 1.5 lb ground meat (*we like a mix of pork and chicken*)
- 1/2 cup vegetables (shredded carrots, minced mushrooms, and/or chopped green onions)
- 1 teaspoon aromatics (grated ginger, garlic, cilantro)
- 1 tbsp sesame oil
- 1 tbsp oyster sauce
- 2 tbsp soy sauce
- Wonton Wrappers

## DUMPLINGS

**We love incorporating life skills into our curriculum and one skill that all of our girls love to work on is cooking. Sometimes it's super simple, and sometimes we delve into some slightly more complicated recipes like this one. Although there are lots of ingredients and it can be a bit time consuming, it's a fun activity for the whole family!**



**TOOLS:**

- BOWL OF WATER
- TABLESPOON
- PARCHMENT LINED OR NON-STICK BAKING SHEET

**Instructions:**

1. Mix all ingredients but wonton wrappers in a bowl.
2. Place approximately one tablespoon of filling in the middle of each wrapper.
3. Dip your fingers in the small bowl of water and run them along the edge of the wrapper (this will help your wrapper stick together).
4. Press the edges together. You can simply fold over and seal the edges, pleat the edge, or gather into a pouch. Set aside on baking sheet.
5. Repeat steps 2-4...over and over. Make sure to involve the whole family!
6. Set aside any dumplings you plan to eat immediately and freeze the remainder on the baking sheet. Once frozen solid, they can be stored in bags for up to three months.
7. Cook.

*Boiled:* Bring a large pot of water to a boil, add dumplings, return to a boil, cook for 3-5 minutes.

*Steamed:* Add to steamer pot and cook for 6 minutes if fresh or 8 minutes from frozen.

*Pan Fried:* Spread 1 tbsp of oil on the bottom of a skillet and heat on high. When oil is warm, add dumplings to pan and cook until bottoms have browned slightly. Add 3 tbsp of water, cover, and cook on low heat for 3-5 min (fresh) or 6-8 min (frozen)

**LEARNING EXTENSIONS**

- **Be sure to talk about your measurements as you go. Try doubling the recipe and doing the math to scale it up.**
- **Learn about the cultures that dumplings come from. Search for videos and resources and make a unit study.**

# LANGUAGE ARTS



## BOOKS ARE BIGGER THAN LITERACY ALONE – WHY HOMESCHOOLERS NEED TO READ

Written by Nanci Nott

Erasmus once said, “When I have a little money, I buy books, and if I have any left, I buy food and clothes.” My ten-year-old daughter, on more than one occasion, has told me I’m a lot like Erasmus, minus the fancy hat. It’s true. I don’t wear fancy hats, and I do adore books. If music be the food of love (as Shakespeare so eloquently put it), then surely books must be the food of wisdom? When homeschooling parents think of literacy, reading springs to mind fairly quickly. But what springs to mind when I mention history, science, maths, or art? Are these concepts not also to be found between the pages of books?

When I was a child (in the pre-internet dark ages), my best education existed in the typed-and-bound form of book-wormish moments. I remember barely any of what I learned at school. But I retain (to this day) vast knowledge pertaining to my reading material of the time. For example, I can still quote entire passages from K.A Applegate’s Animorphs series, and I know some great trouser-puns about Euripides, courtesy of Terry Deary.





Whilst the curriculum requirements for fictional alien invasion studies and lowbrow humour lessons are noticeably non-existent, my childhood reading material lit fires of curiosity that far surpassed the texts in question and seared a love of learning permanently into my brain. I developed fascinations for history, science, philosophy, art, language, anthropology, and a hundred other areas as a result of spending a book-filled childhood reading interesting stories. The books I read as a child were almost entirely responsible for many of the passions I've continued to explore as an adult. When I first read Ethel Turner's *Seven Little Australians*, I found myself fascinated by Australian life in the eighteenth hundreds and, upon finishing the book, was hypnotised by an uncontrollable urge to spend as much time as possible in the wonderful world of horse-drawn buggies, too-tight corsets, and tragic tree-falls. Unfortunately, I was only eight and didn't have unlimited access to the classic literature and dense non-fiction I craved. Had the internet been available, my hours might have been spent undertaking eager research and downloading Dickensian ebooks. Alas, it was the early nineties, so instead I satisfied myself with writing terribly anachronistic tales about pinafore-wearing children in fancy parlours, stealing food from locked larders, and saying things like, "Oh, Father!"

Fast forward twenty-something years, and here I am, still writing terribly anachronistic tales, except now my characters wear leotards instead of pinafores, and say things like, "We can't turn Pythagoras into a dog every time someone walks in here... or can we?"

When I was a child, I wrote stories about concepts that intrigued me. Now, I write stories about concepts that intrigue my children because they, like me, have learned to love learning through reading. Anything - and I mean anything - can be explored in the form of a fictional narrative. So what does any of this have to do with homeschooling? I have been homeschooling my kids for well over a decade, and books comprise a huge part of our learning. Not because the written word is magical (although I suspect it might be), but because stories are keys which unlock doors in the minds of children. Socrates said, "I cannot teach anybody anything. I can only make them think," and he was right.



Books make us think and, better still, they allow us to explore worlds that would otherwise have been impossible for us to visit.

In addition to incidental learning that takes place (by default) during the consumption of quality stories, books excite our brains into wanting to discover more. This is why fiction can teach children just as effectively as non-fiction can.

It has never, in all of history, been easier than it is right now to find quality children's books about basically any subject. Not just for the purpose of learning about that specific subject, but for lighting a spark with the potential to burn brightly within your child's mind for many years to come.

If you want your child to show interest in learning more about World War II, read *Once*, by Morris Gleitzman. George's Secret Key to the Universe, by Stephen Hawking, is a great read for middle graders interested (or soon-to-be-interested) in astrophysics. I could provide a million book recommendations, but the truth is it doesn't matter so much what children are reading, it only matters that they are reading. Maths is probably the most difficult subject to tackle through literature, but it is certainly not impossible. My oldest daughter became obsessed with teaching herself binary after reading *Christopher*, by Richard M. Koff. The chapter numbers of the book were written in binary, which inspired her to write out every number between one and one thousand in binary. Then, just for fun, she used YouTube videos to teach herself how to add and subtract large numbers (in binary), which led to her

For more information on educational fiction, home-schooling resources, lesson plans, puppet templates, random goats, and more, please feel free to visit *Turner Books*.



Nanci Nott is the author of 'Zany Circus: Paradox', Book Two of the Zany Circus middle grade series (Pythagoras Rules), and 'Why does my child hate school?'

Nanci believes in the abolishment of boredom, and the presence of play in education. She likes writing for children almost as much as she loves reading with them. Book Three of the Zany Circus middle grade series will be available soon!



researching the meaning and purpose of using a base two number system as opposed to a base ten or base sixty number system. She was nine years old at the time.

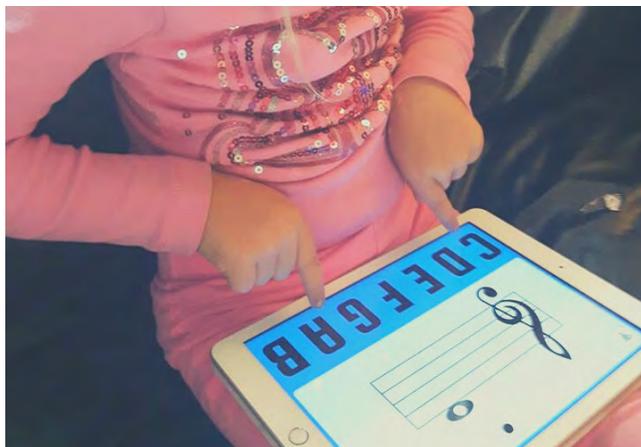
My son did a similar thing last year, except his main mathematical interest was Roman numerals. After reading a picture book about Roman numerals, my then-six-year-old memorised all Roman numerals up to one million and entertained himself for hours on end by calculating answers to maths questions and writing them out as Roman numerals. No one asked him to do this; he did it purely for his own amusement, and to satisfy his own curiosity. That is the impact books have on brains. Perhaps my son will never encounter an occasion in which to utilise his extensive knowledge of Roman numerals, but the positive associations he has formed in relation to mathematics will last a lifetime. And the happiness he finds in the pleasure of reading for its own sake is worth more than a thousand worksheets.

One of my favourite Plato quotes is, "Do not train a child to learn by force or harshness; but direct them to it by what amuses their minds, so that you may be better able to discover with accuracy the peculiar bent of the genius of each."

No matter what homeschooling looks like in your home, books are (and always will be) our greatest allies and our children's deepest sources of inspiration.

# MUSIC

## Our Favourite Music Theory Apps



*There are so many fun and engaging music theory apps out there and we would like to share a few of our favorites!*

### LEARN NOTES!

**Available On:** Apple

**Cost:** \$3.99

**Topics Covered:** Music notes on treble and bass clef

*This app has been fantastic in our family for note fluency! With options for treble and bass clef, as well as options for matching to keyboard, keyboard with letter names, or just letter names you will learn your notes in no time!*



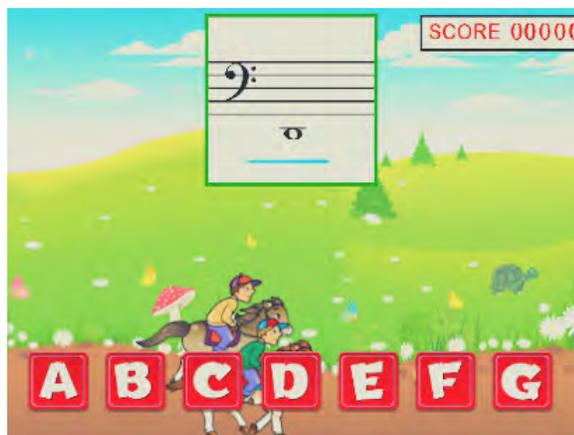
### FLASHNOTE DERBY

**Name:** Flashnote Derby

**Available On:** Apple, Android and Kindle Fire

**Cost:** \$2.99 - \$4.99

**Topics Covered:** Music notes on both clefs



*This fun racing game has you choose which note is displayed on the screen to move your horse forward. The more you get right, the more your horse moves! This is a great way to get reluctant note readers engaged and it even lets you review your mistakes at the end of each race! As a teacher, you can sign up for an account that allows you to assign homework and track progress. Just for kicks, there is even an option of racing reindeer if you browse through the menus!*



## RHYTHM SWING

**Available On:** Apple

**Cost:** \$3.99

**Topics Covered:** Note and rest values, rhythm

Tap the notes on the screen in time with the beat to help the monkey swing across the vines and avoid getting caught by the crocodile!

This adorable game starts very simply, with quarter notes, and works its way up to more complicated rhythms and is a hit with all of our children!



# NATURE STUDY



## WHY IS NATURE STUDY IMPORTANT?

*Brittany Boychuck*

As someone who spends their life with children in the great outdoors teaching wilderness skills, it turns out this question is surprisingly hard to answer. I want to say it's because of all of the healing benefits associated with time spent outside, but that's not it. I want to say it's because learning to manage risks will help keep children safer in the long run than sheltering them from things labeled as "too dangerous" for tiny bodies, but that's not it either, though of course these are both part of it. There are so many very good, scientifically backed reasons for giving children more time in nature, but none of these really hit the core of why I think learning in this way is important.

**"PERHAPS OUR CHILDREN WILL BE ABLE TO IMAGINE AND CREATE A BRIGHTER FUTURE, WHERE LIVING THE LIFE THEY WANT DOESN'T NEED TO COME AT THE EXPENSE OF OTHERS AND THE PLANET"**



If my child-self were to answer the question, I would answer with the classic 90's child attitude, "Because it's just important... Duh!" To me it's always seemed that the most important things to learn in life were to learn how to take care of yourself and the people you love, and that naturally extended to the natural world. I've always had a fascination with how people lived before TV, before electricity, before cities and before the idea that nature was somehow separate from us. The forest and natural places I visited always felt welcoming and safe in a way that the human environment of concrete and sterilization and busy schedules did not. I used to go out into the forest in the dark and feel safer hearing the sounds of animals in the night than I ever have in the city. Plants and animals feel more predictable than humans. Since the age of five, knowing how to take care of yourself in a way that doesn't hurt the natural environment just always felt like the most important thing in the world to me.

Children innately know these things. After all, these ancestral skills have been vital to the survival of our species. At a very early age, we gravitate towards developmentally important skills like hiding, seeking, sneaking, and imagining what it's like to be others – animals and plants included. A little later, we add things like needing to ask questions about everything around us, developing hands-on crafts and skills, and understanding both human and natural rules and boundaries while learning to take calculated risks. When we begin entering our teens, we start seeking a sense of self within the community, looking to understand ourselves in relation to the complexities of others and the world we live in while rapidly honing the skills we began learning as children and pushing the limits. We are biologically primed to learn in these ways.

But most children are deprived of these basic experiences. How many times have we told a four-year-old to stop asking so many questions? How many times have we told a 13-year-old to focus on their studies instead of their friends? How many times have we told a seven-year-old to stop adding more rocks to their collection under their bed? Just this weekend an eight-year-old who spends all of his time in the city asked me if he could buy all of our feathers, bones, snake's skin, wasp's nest, antlers, and other treasures we had on a display table.





He had never experienced life outside of the city, but every part of his being yearned for it. Even children who live in the country aren't usually taught the basic skills they need in order to know and understand the world around them or how to live lightly, because few of us were taught ourselves. Many things were just never passed on. I grew up as a kid in the countryside, and I'm still learning things today that when I mention to my grandfather, his response is usually something like, "Oh yeah... Old Man Stupperski down the road used to do that, but he did it this way". When I ask why he never shared these things before, he responds, "because I didn't think it was important, and I only ever saw him do it". I'm constantly plagued by the question, "what happens when these skills are lost?"

For me, it all comes back to the skills. It's not enough to just "be" in nature, just as it's not enough to just "take". Skills of the Wild is where opposites meet. It is the sweet spot where knowing and doing merge. This is why I don't work at a forest school, and I don't work at a survival school, either. Forest schools are an answer to an overly structured system, freeing the children to follow their interests and passions in the natural world. Survival schools teach that it's every man for himself, taking whatever you need to get the job done - regardless of its impact on the environment.

At Nature Connections, we strive for more than both of these approaches. We don't believe that children will innately discover everything they need in life just by following their hearts. They also need attentive leadership, guidance, direction and instruction with the aim to eventually help them become even more capable than their teachers. We don't believe that children should learn to just take what they need and defend themselves without giving back and taking care of others. We will never claim to be perfect or "experts" in our approach or our learning, because that's where the learning stops. But we do believe with the right skills, concepts, and mindset, we can learn to meet all of our most basic human needs while cultivating community and healing the land we call home. Perhaps if children grow up knowing they can take care of themselves in a way that gives back, they won't suffer the many emotional ills most of us face as a society. Perhaps in times of challenge or hardship, they will still feel and inspire confidence where others cannot. Perhaps our children will be fortunate enough to live a life where they feel they have enough, rather than always needing more. Perhaps our children will be able to imagine and create a brighter future, where living the life they want doesn't need to come at the expense of others and the planet, and where basic things like love, respect, gratitude, and giving back are just part of being human.

# FAMILY LIFE



“**THEY COUNT ON US TO ENCOURAGE AND CHALLENGE THEM, TO VALIDATE THEIR FEARS AND WIPE THEIR TEARS, TO HEAR THEIR CONCERNS, AND TO RESPECT THEIR FEELINGS.**

## PEACEFUL PARENTING

By Pamela Walker

What type of parent are you? Authoritarian, permissive, uninvolved (unlikely if you're here), authoritative, or maybe none of the above? Parenting buzz words and parenting philosophies are hot topics in the parenting arena, and can get you a sideways glance at the park, or a pat on the back, depending on your parenting style. The way we discuss and identify with other families is often based on how other parenting styles either jive with our own approach, or evokes an uneasy feeling. The parenting discussion has evolved and grown with the platform on which we share our individual experiences, and form our tribes through social media and parenting forums.

However, while we plug away at our tiny screens we have unknowingly shut ourselves in and cast away the "village," making parenting even harder. But why is parenting hard? Other than sleep deprivation, growing and shrinking our bodies, managing hormonal peaks and valleys, and balancing work and social schedules (all while meeting the constant needs of tiny humans), it can feel like things spin out of control. Factor in managing various personalities, who are at different stages of cognitive development, and parenting can feel like a constant struggle. But what if we made life easier and found joy in the day-to-day challenges? What if we take a step back and recognize the stages of cognitive development, and identify age appropriate behavior? What if we relinquish the need to control, let go of the power struggles, and banish unrealistic expectations? Life just might get easier for the entire family.

Parenting expectations will vary based on parenting philosophies and their own childhood experiences. How we engage our children will depend on how we regard them in the context of societal norms and their role in the functional family. We can meet children where they are developmentally, or attempt to mold them into unrealistic and idealistic versions of small adults.

Meeting children where they are on their adventure of cognitive development requires a basic knowledge of cognitive stages. Understanding what each stage entails, and what they are physically, mentally, and emotionally capable of can make all the difference in managing our own expectations, our interactions with them, and how we discipline our children. The nuances of cognitive development through the ages and stages can be astounding, and very reassuring for parents. Recognizing the difference between healthy boundary testing and blatant disregard can be a very important distinction; whatever the case however, before any discipline can occur an emotional connection needs to occur for any learning or repair can be established.

Discipline: another hot button in the politics of parenting, means a lot of different things in the teaching of right from wrong. Discipline is all too often used as a guise for punishment. Discipline and punishment are not one and the same.

Sarah Ockwell-Smith explains that gentle discipline, through emotional connection, is an effective tool in teaching children. Connection, reflection, and direction in an age appropriate way will validate their feelings while setting healthy boundaries. We can connect in a way that will assure children that we see and hear them, and that we respect them while guiding them to make better decisions.

Sarah Ockwell-Smiths is the author of several parenting books and specializes in the psychology and science of parenting, particularly "gentle parenting" and attachment theory.

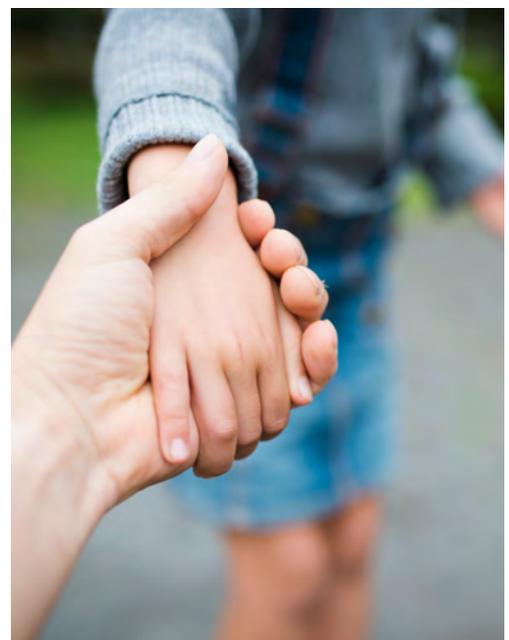
According to Ockwell-Smith, "Gentle Parenting is a scientific, evidence based, approach to raising confident and happy children." It is a parenting ethos characterized by four tenets: empathy, respect, understanding, and boundaries. To read more about these tenets and Ockwell-Smith's gentle parenting approach visit <https://sarahockwell-smith.com>.

As children grow and we learn their personalities, cognitive abilities, interests, strengths, and weaknesses, our responsibility to nurture and guide them stays the same. As we switch gears through the ages and the stages, they rely on us to be there for them, and to guide them in the direction of growth and kindness. They count on us to encourage and challenge them, to validate their fears and wipe their tears, to hear their concerns, and to respect their feelings.

Gentle parenting is not the easy path. Encouraging children to stay true to themselves and to live authentically often means that they will challenge our beliefs and open old wounds, and therein lies the beauty of gentle parenting. The open and honest learning and growth that comes from understanding, empathy, respect, and setting healthy boundaries are the tenets which allow us to challenge our children, as well as be challenged by them; all while nurturing the functional family bond and raising our children to be kind and peaceful people of the world. Love and kindness is the way forward, even through the moments of frustration and tantrums. Tapping into our own emotional intelligence, and having our own needs met is the key to imparting the gift of gentle parenting.

66

***In between every action and reaction, there is a space. Usually the space is extremely small because we react so quickly, but take notice of that space and expand it. Be aware in that space that you have a choice to make. You can choose how to respond, and choose wisely, because the next step you take will teach your child how to handle anger and could either strengthen or damage your relationship." – Rebecca Eanes***



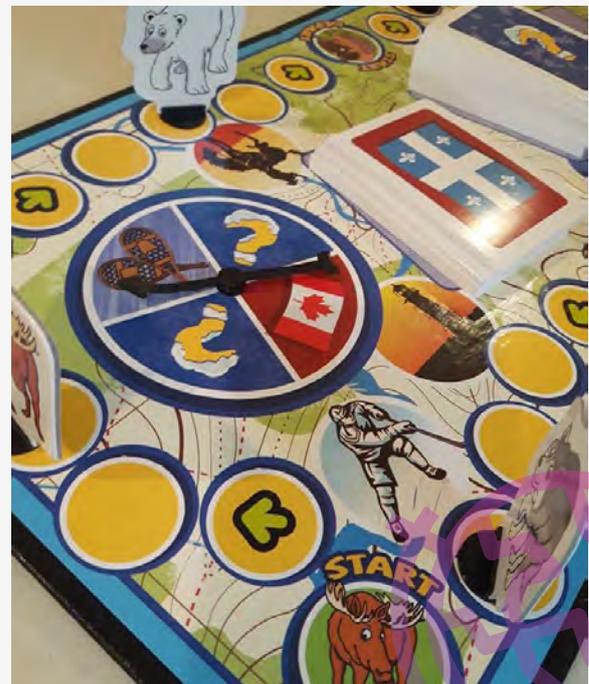
# SOCIAL STUDIES

## Fun Alternatives to Bookwork

In my experience, worksheets are simply not the way to go when it comes to Social Studies. I, personally, barely remember a thing from worksheets I filled out in history and geography classes. And what do you think I do remember? I remember the field trips, the speakers, and the hands-on learning. Unfortunately, due to the nature of the school system, those opportunities were few and far between. In our homeschool, we have taken an approach to homeschooling that veers away from worksheets and toward immersive, fun learning opportunities that children are sure to remember!

### BOARDGAMES

Gaming together is a favourite family pastime of ours and we love to use that time to explore educational topics. From role-and-play style games that explore history and geography topics to Geography Twister (yes, that is seriously a thing), there is a game available to explore almost any social studies topic.



### COMMUNITY EXPLORATION

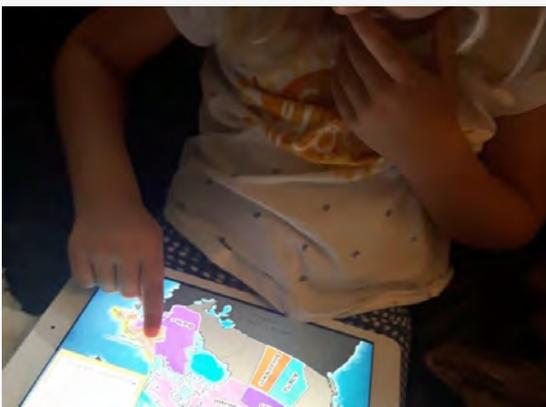
There are so many things to explore just in our own communities and nearby places! Many historic areas and trails have informative plaques on a variety of topics. We like to visit as a family and take turns reading out the information and posing discussion questions. Occasionally, I will head out ahead of time and create a fun family challenge for everyone to complete!





## WORKSHOPS

We definitely make use of our community resources and watch for workshops available and museums and cultural organizations. However, we also host lots of our own workshops that include other homeschooling families. Anytime we find a topic that interests us but doesn't have a local workshop, I whip up a quick lesson plan and invite some friends over! Some of the topics we covered this year in our pop-up social studies workshops were Day of the Dead, Remembrance Day, Halifax Explosion, and Christmas Around the World. We always make sure to include a variety of activities to access all types of learners and lots of hands-on activities for learning opportunities children are not likely to forget!



## MUSEUMS

Of course, nobody would be surprised to hear that we explore lots of educational topics, but the large museums that everyone knows about are not the only source you should be tapping. There are so many small museums to be seen, each with their own unique exhibits and exciting things to discover. Make sure to ask about school programs (many museums have a minimum registration of only ten students) or available lesson plans and educational resources, most of which can be accessed for free. If you are feeling very ambitious, spend a date night out before you take the kids and craft an educational quest through the museum!



## APPS

Although this may be akin to worksheets, we have some awesome social studies apps that deserve an honourable mention. The benefit of apps is that students can work independently to learn a lot in a very short time.

# SCIENCE

*What The Kids Need To Excell In Science*



By  
**Teresa Bondora**

 @TeresaBondora

When she's not in the mountains Teresa can be spotted in Atlanta, GA where she homeschools, feeds her husband sometimes, cleans house under duress, makes heartfelt videos, works on her next book but mostly does stupid things which she also shares on YouTube.

When most people ask me to write or speak, the number one thing on most minds is, "Am I covering all the right stuff?" The number one fear I hear is, "I'm afraid I'm just not really doing science well."

So when I sat down to write this article I thought about those fears and what I know the real answers to be. And lucky for you, they are simple, cheap or free and easy to start today!

As a former high school science teacher for eight years I was in a unique position to see the results of different types of learning up to that point and I was in the position to prepare kids for either the tests they would need to get into college or to prepare them to succeed in whatever field they chose that had science components in them. Across the board there was plenty of knowledge but rarely did I see much in the way of the basic understandings of what the world is made of and I rarely saw skills like critical thinking and lab skills and logical reasoning.

## "SCIENCE IS A MULTI-FACETED SUBJECT AND IT CERTAINLY CAN GET OVERWHELMING QUICKLY."

When I became a homeschooler 17 years ago I was able to start working with homeschoolers who wanted to really help their kids succeed. So, this is good news. Let's get started.

Science is kind of unique as a subject because not only do you have the book and the knowledge base of "stuff" to learn but there's also the basic chemical understanding of why things are happening, there's a skill set you need, specific tools for different types of labs and lots of facts and memorization. Then there's the fact that most things in science have lots of terms to learn and most of them stem from Latin or Greek origins. So science is a multi-faceted subject and it certainly can get overwhelming quickly. It just so happens that it doesn't overwhelm me AND I get great joy from helping others get all this together, lose the fear, make sense of it all and get those basics underway. I get paid to help kids prepare to excel in college science and I get to meet lots of excited kids and parents who really want their kids to have what they need. What a great thing.



So let's start with chemistry. NO! Wait. Don't run away. I'm not going to scare you. I promise. Baby steps. Just follow me for a second. I'm not going to tell you to grab a chemistry textbook. But think about this. People say that physics is the mother science. I go against that philosophy and yeah, I take some flak for it, but I know differently about chemistry. Wanna learn biology? When we get to photosynthesis, we have to fake it or skip it if we don't understand basic chemistry. What about gas exchange in the gills or lungs? Chemistry again. What about nerve conduction, electrolytes, respiration in the cell? All chemistry. And not difficult stuff either.

What about minerals in earth science? They are grouped based on their largest elemental component from the periodic table of elements. And I have a free minerals lesson by the way! What about physics? Electricity and optics all require a basic understanding of chemistry and the periodic table. And our entire world is made up of the elements on the periodic table. It's really simple to look at it and see things we already know. So why are we not introducing it early, to young children, so they can become familiar with it? I thought this and wanted to get one for my kids. But...they were all cartoony or pictures of elements. So....I made one. I wanted worksheets or fun things for them and still nothing available. So I wrote the Periodic Table of Elements Coloring Book.



**Science is an active subject. It IS, it DOES, science is the world in motion!**

When I do seminars and conventions I usually host a children's table. The first thing the parents say to me is "Oh, he's never seen this and he won't really understand it or like it." The first thing all the kids in the room go straight to? The Periodic Table. Every. Single. Time. Why? Because there's something cool about it. When I tell them their whole world is made of just these few items, they are all excited about it. They start yelling out elements they have heard of like copper and sodium and gold. Kids like it, moms fear it. Time to end the fear and get it out there in the open. Put one on your wall. And guess what? You don't even need to buy one! I have instructions on how to get the kids involved and make your own!

Once you have the basic periodic table underway, it's time to tackle the skills. There are many science skills to work on developing over time. The ability to think like a scientist is crucial to helping our children feel comfortable in science but also in helping them become better consumers. The marketers understand science, the corporations understand humans and thought and critical thinking and depend on your ignorance of logic and reasoning, to sell their product. Let's help the kids become better at the skills to succeed in science and in life. Chances are you already have materials that cover some of these skills but latin roots in biology can be googled and found all over the internet. Logic games and critical thinking skills are in books and web sites available for use for free. Once you are working on the basics of the elements and bonding, working on those skills and also having fun with the knowledge of the science world you are covering bases that make the rest easy.



It doesn't matter what curriculum you use or if you have none. What matters is that you are using what your child responds to and clicks with! Youtube has been our main source of learning about science concepts. I'm sure many of you are familiar with this. Let me reassure you, as a former science teacher, that this type of learning about rules, laws and constants, science concepts and knowledge is not only free and high quality but when our children are engaged and learning.....what better way to help them than when they are having fun?

Science is an active subject. It IS, it DOES, science is the world in motion! I don't believe it should be taught sitting down at a table. It should be lived, watched and experienced. I hope you agree and I also hope I have helped you feel better about what you are doing in science, helped you find some holes in your curriculum and helped you find ways to fill those gaps. I wish you much success and joy in your science adventures!

FOR INFORMATION ON HOW TO  
MAKE YOUR OWN PERIODIC  
TABLE, WHAT WE MUST TEACH  
OUR CHILDREN IN SCIENCE,  
FREE LESSONS, FREE SAMPLES  
AND MORE FREE STUFF GO  
HERE:



TO SEE GREAT, HELPFUL  
VIDEOS ON FUN IDEAS AND  
HELP IN HOMESCHOOLING,  
ADDRESSING FEARS AND HELP  
IN SCIENCE GO HERE:



# Tot School

*Homeschool for Little Learners*



## Sensory Bins

### FUN FOR THE LITTLER HOMESCHOOLERS

It's always fun (though sometimes a tad messy) to involve the littlest homeschoolers in our school time! We always called this "Tot School" and one of our all-time favorite ways to make this happen was with sensory bins. Sensory bins can be purely squishy fun, or they can incorporate educational elements and, as an added bonus, older kiddos often love them too! Find some of our favorite options for sensory bins on the next page!



# Pond

MESS RATING: ★★★★★

**Materials:**

- Mud
- Plants (real or from the fish section)
- River stones
- Plastic pond animals
- Sticks
- Water

**Learning Extensions:**

Talk about a pond ecosystem, plants and animals that you will find living in or near a pond or build your own mini beaver lodge!

# I Spy

MESS RATING: ★★

**Materials:**

- Rainbow Aquarium Rocks
- A variety of small items

**Learning Extensions:**

Classify objects as you find them by color, length, size, type, and more or work on clock skills by tracking how many objects you can find in a given time period!

# Pirates

MESS RATING: ★★★

**Materials:**

- Black beans or sand
- Coins
- Jewels
- Plastic jewellery

**Learning Extensions:**

Work on coin values by hiding real currency to find, practice color words by finding as many jewels as you can of a particular color, or measure the lengths of necklaces found!

# Cloud Dough

MESS RATING: ★★★★★

**Materials:**

- Flour (8 cups)
- Vegetable oil (1 cup)
- Powdered paint
- Spices, dried flowers, or essential oil (optional)

**Learning Extensions:**

Try out different scents and match them to particular colors of paint, learn which colors to mix to make new colors by mixing powdered paints, or learn math terms by sculpting structures that are tall, short, wide, thin, etc.!



# AMAZING KIDS

*Fun & fantastic kids from homeschooling families!*

## MEET TUILE-FIONNUALA ONORA

**10 year old, world-renowned  
unschooled artist**

***Tell us a bit about your family.***

I have a mom, dad, sister and brother.  
Mom's name is Carrie.

Carrie is a ceramic artist, a fashion designer, an art teacher, a gardener, a friend to the fairies and has a big heart. Carrie helps me focus on my art work and teaches me the techniques of ceramics.

Dad's is Jon; Jon is a dungeon master and a daycare provider on the side. Jon helps pack up all the ceramics when they are purchased and runs the kiln, which is the big oven that cooks the clay. Together my mom and dad run an art based summer camp.

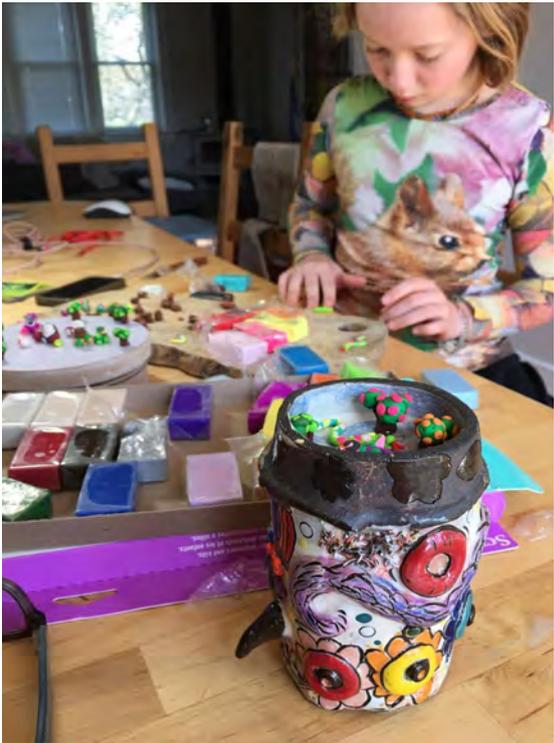
My older sister's name is Aoife - Bean (EE-fa). My sister is my best friend and we do almost everything together. She is very kind and hard working. She also plays violin in an youth orchestra.

My older brother, Darragh who was also homeschooled/unschooled has now moved out on his own and is doing great. He works at the best bakery in town. He has been there for four years now. He started working full time at 15 and is now 19. He is a very hard worker and really connects with everyone. He is passionate about shoes and fashion.

Over the years we have had lots of pets including birds and poultry, hamsters, cat, dogs, rabbits, fish and a lizard.



**"I find it funny that people think you have to go to school to become a good artist. I think you just need time to do your art."**



## Tell us a bit about your art.

Tuile:

I love drawing and making messes. lol It drives my parents crazy but they put up with it. Ive been making art since forever. I've been surrounded by art and kids making art my whole life as my parents teach art.

I do a lot of clay and I'd say clay and drawing are my favourite mediums but lately I've started doing water colour paintings and I'm loving that too.

Ive been making pots (anything made out of clay is referred to as a pot in the ceramic world) and selling them for just over 2 years now but I've been working with clay since I was about 2.

I make functional ceramic for the most part. Mugs, cups, bowls, plates, flower bricks, tea pots, magnets, etc.

My process is complex to say the least but it didn't start that way. Every time I start a new batch I learn more interesting processes that I want to try out.

I'm inspired by things like science fiction, fiction, horror, pop culture, fantasy, pets, nature, family and friends etc. The characters and imagery on my work reflect these interests. Really I just like making pots.

Carrie and Jon:

Tuile's work is developing more and more with every batch of pots she makes. She's learning all types of new processes related to building, decorating, firing etc. Since Covid we have been able to do so many great workshops with amazing ceramic artists that we would never have been able to do before as it would of been very expensive to travel; Tuile would of been considered too young to participate in person for these classes but with Zoom we can easily both participate.



**Instagram is the best! If you have a creative interest you can find your people there. I have met so many awesome artists and have gotten involved in so many cool ceramic adventures and workshops though this platform.**

**Its a great way to get inspired and connected to your chosen art form and stay connected with people.**





## ***You identify as an unschooler. What does that mean to you?***

*Tuile:*

I can do whatever I want as long as its legal.

*Carrie and Jon:*

Its just life. They pursue their interests and we help them as much as we can. At the same time they help out with life and our businesses; they learn tons from that.

Really to us it just means living your best life now.

## ***How do you feel homeschooling/unschooling has contributed to your success?***

*Tuile:*

I've had lots of time to work on my art every day as much as I want. Some times I spend 2 hours doing art and other days I'll spend 6 or 7 hours.

I find it funny that people think you have to go to school to become a good artist. I think you just need time to do your art.

*Carrie and Jon:*

There is no way anyone could get to this point in their art career at the age Tuile is by going to school. To even have the option to focus exclusively on art you would have to be in University and even then you would pretty much be just starting your studies. Tuile does study the medium and the many processes as she works on her pots learning new things all the time.

Being at home in our art studio she has full use of everything she needs to get better at ceramics. Certainly having the time and access to me and my knowledge and experience is a bonus for her.

## ***You've experienced some cyberbullying surrounding your art and lifestyle. Tell us about that.***

*Tuile:* Well haters gonna hate. I just means I'm doing something right.

*Carrie and Jon:*

Yeah that's a big conversation.

Yes, Tuile and our family was bullied by an established Canadian Ceramic artist when she found out about Tuile and her successful carrier. This person hosts several Facebook and Instagram forums on ceramics and used her platforms to attempt to discredit Tuile's artwork, our pedagogical choices and our family life style. It was brutal and bizarre but I did not engage any of it as I know this person was looking for attention and was really just jealous.

Tuile made a great little video of herself affirming her skills that they put into question.

It was fascinating to read the comments on the different posts about how she was unschooled as most people did not know what that meant. Simply googling unschooling would of answered their questions but people are so quick to judge.

The vast majority or the ceramic community came to Tuile's defense and quickly shut down the harassing trolls.

Tuile's advice to other homeschoolers who may get bullied online is to just ignore them and keep doing what you love doing because bullies are just jealous jerks.

Here is a link to the video Tuile made to her bully.



## ***What advice would you give to other homeschoolers?***

Whatever you love doing, do it to the best of your ability and seek out others that can help you succeed. Follow your passion.

**Visit Tuile's  
website!**



# HOMESCHOOL SUCCESS STORIES

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**Cody Crowder**

Age: 23

Location:  
Oklahoma City,  
Oklahoma

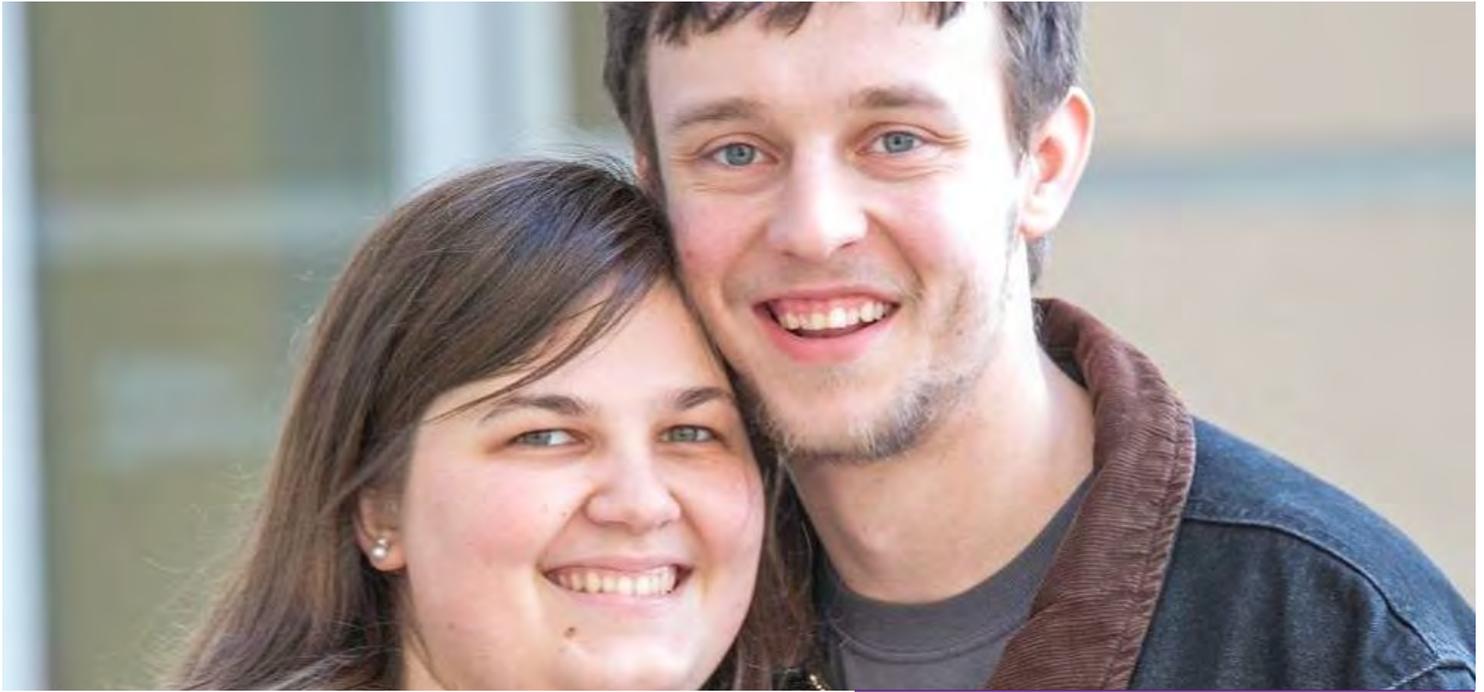
Graduating Year: 2013

## **HOMESCHOOL EXPERIENCE:**

I feel like my homeschool experience was fairly typical of most homeschool families that I know. We have used a variety of curriculums over the years. Anytime we went to a cool place like the zoo or a park, mom would turn it into something educational to ensure we were still learning.

## **POST-SECONDARY EXPERIENCE:**

I went to Autry Technology Center in Enid, OK during my last two years of high school and one year thereafter. There I studied I.T. and earned my certificates in my field of study. I actually ended up being hired by the company I am still with 3 days after I graduated high school due to the certifications I was able to acquire there.



## WHAT ARE YOU DOING NOW?

I work as a computer and network technician for a third party I.T. Business. I do I.T. for John Deere dealers, medical offices, and everything in between.

## WHAT IS YOUR ADVICE TO STUDENTS WHO ARE STILL HOMESCHOOLING?

Hmm... my advice would be to take advantage of the fact that you are homeschooled. You get the opportunity to work ahead in certain subjects and spend more time on the ones you struggle with. Also, it is common for a homeschooler to be done with their day much earlier than a typical public school student. Take advantage of that. Use that time to pursue your interests and your goals; maybe use that to try to finish the school year earlier. There are a lot of possibilities available from just that one advantage.

“

*Anytime we went to a cool place like the zoo or a park, mom would turn it into something educational to ensure we were still learning.*

# ISSUES IN HOMESCHOOLING

**ANYONE WHO HAS ORGANIZED AN EVENT FOR OTHER HOMESCHOOLERS KNOWS THAT IT'S A CRAPSHOOT. SOMETIMES YOU'LL PLAN FOR TWENTY PEOPLE AND HAVE TEN EXTRA SHOW UP AND SOMETIMES YOU HAVE HALF OF YOUR GROUP CANCEL THE DAY OF THE EVENT (OR JUST NOT SHOW UP AT ALL). EVERYONE HAS THEIR REASONS FOR NOT ALWAYS BEING 100% RELIABLE. WE REACHED OUT TO OTHER HOMESCHOOLERS TO GET THEIR TWO CENTS ON WHETHER OR NOT IT'S OKAY TO BE FLAKY.**

I have definitely been guilty of committing to more things than I can actually manage, especially when I first started homeschooling. I have never really tried to organize anything because that is really not my strong suit.

- Anne C.

So true, I remember one event I organized and 5 families, each with multiple kids, did not show up and they were the group. Hummingbird Chocolate had made special arrangements to have an extra person to do the tour and no one cancelled or called, they just did not come. I think that was the last thing I ever organized.

- Wendy D.

It's so hard for homeschooling families sometimes though. If one child is feeling under the weather, we all have to stay home. Introverts feeling overwhelmed, anxious kids having last-minute panic attacks, life getting in the way, burnt-out moms etc. contribute to last minute back-outs. I really try to follow through with commitments, but sometimes when something is cancelled last minute, I breathe a HUGE sigh of relief (introvert here!!). Not contacting the organizer is not respectful though. We need people to organize stuff.

- Sue S,

I wish I was organized and planned more things. I do try not to flake out on commitments because I am trying to teach my kids that if you commit you should follow through.

- Michelle R..

I hear ya. I organized and paid for a thing and ended up losing money in the end. And one day, we were going to have a playdate at our place, I even baked treats. The person didn't even bother to cancel or say sorry. My kids were SO disappointed, which was so hard to see.

- Shannon M.

My heart goes out and my hat goes off to people for planning events that encompass A LOT of planning details, organizing people and offering our children wonderful opportunities. I am an introvert, and my son leads the way with his interests, and without organizers like these homeschoolers, our outings would be few and far between.

- Lianna K.

# ISSUES IN HOMESCHOOLING

I found so much inconsistency around participation in so many of the homeschool events and classes that I tried out with my son, and the lack of consistency and follow through by other families just ended up being too stressful and disappointing for him. My solution was to create a homeschool co-op with a separate paid teacher so that things weren't dependent on individual parents planning or leading the activities. But I still find that I do have to do lots of follow up work with some families to help them to understand the importance of consistent participation and communication. I've been doing it for three years now and it can truly become frustrating. I understand though that it can be hard from the point of view of individual families as illness, etc. can totally throw things off at times, but I agree that it's especially difficult and frustrating when people don't communicate around cancellations. It takes such little effort to send an email or text saying that someone can't make it or will be late or whatnot. I hope people continue planning things, and that families become more mindful about what they sign up for and about communicating when there needs to be a change of plans.

- Mary S,



That's so sad! I feel like we are in a different sort of jam, where most activities are too far for us to travel to with the bus system. I can't seem to find organized things less than 30mins by bus away from us. A lot of it is an hour or more. So I stick to things with membership, tumblers, cosmic, going to try circus school this summer and maybe even karate in the fall. With the warm weather coming we'll be heading to the park hopefully daily too. I'm a very committed person as long as it's not an hour bus ride away, but I've never committed to something I couldn't attend.

- Jothanne M.

It took me years before I started organizing anything - raising and homeschooling four kids and running a home business was overwhelming enough for me, for a long time. I was very happy to sign up for whatever interested us and not have any of the extra work or responsibility. I absolutely don't think there is anything wrong with this. After all, we only have so much energy and so much of ourselves to give. However, when I started organizing a few things I quickly understood how rewarding it can be. Not only do you have the opportunity to add to your own homeschool experience, you also get to know many people in the homeschooling community. Please, continue to organize activities, classes, etc. We all enrich our community through the different gifts we have to offer - just get paid up front!

- Sue S,



**WHAT ARE YOUR THOUGHTS ON THE ISSUE?**

**LET US KNOW AT**

**INFO@HOMESCHOOLSOCIALMAGAZINE.COM**

# WHAT DOES HOMESCHOOLING MEAN TO YOU?



**We asked kids  
and parents what  
they think!**

## Joseph

New York

My name is Joseph K and I am 11 years old and I live in Western NY. What I think of homeschool is that the subjects that I am not perfect at I can work at my own pace. I can work on and learn what I want to learn. I'm taught how to take care of a family. I'm prepared for life. I read at the college level. I do two hours of school a day and then I'm free. I have a great teacher that finds the best for me because she's my mother. Because of my small school period I have twenty five chickens and I'm incubating twenty five snapping turtles.

I like that we get to see our friends every day and sometimes even stop in the middle of the school day to play. I also like that we go on vacation in the middle of the school year because I really like being able to go places and take a break for a bit any time of the year. We go to fun places like amusement parks in the middle of the year all the time and a school kid would probably never get to do that! It's also really great because we go on so many field trips and do so many activities that we basically do something every day. Also, since we homeschool, I have friends that are way younger than me and way older than me. Finally, it's nice that we can go visit our grandmother or do our own thing when we are done our schoolwork instead of sitting at a desk until the end of the day!

## Violet

Ontario

# Andrew

New York

I have been homeschooled my whole life. I am in fourth grade although my family does not do grades we just learn as fast and slow as we want. I love homeschooling because we can spend bare minimum two hours on our schoolwork and then we have the rest of our day to just be kids and play and explore our property. I think homeschooling is wonderful for me and my family. Every day we get up, look at our planners and then just blast through as fast as we want to. To other kids it might mean it's torture because they can't make friends and be with other people but I meet a new friend almost every day. Homeschooling teaches kids responsibility because in school it's just do a test and if you don't pass you just go on without having to understand what you did wrong. I know people who can barely write or cannot use proper grammar and I think that homeschooling is the best opportunity that you can get so that is why homeschooling is the best for most people.

YES TO HOMESCHOOLING! I have a wonderful daughter, Abby. My daughter is funny, smart, kind and creative. Abby laughs a lot and her smile brightens my world. We homeschooled Abby for JK and 1/2 of SK wanting to be with her as much as possible and sending her off only when we felt she was ready. Abby also asked to go to public school so with much trepidation we sent her. This was a huge mistake (for us). Abby's laughter died and her smile diminished. Creativity was boxed, boredom set in and her kindness was confused for being an easy target. Today is day one of returning to homeschooling. We have pulled Abby out of school and we are elated at having our daughter back with us! Homeschooling is possible for us for at least the next two years so we are going to spend as much time as we can learning, being adventurous and being happy! There will be no oppressive rules, no comparisons, no materialistic focus, no hurtful cliques, no violence, no racism and no bullying. Abby will not be exposed to x,y,z but to learning, love, fun and values. My daughter has established friendships and we can continue these in evenings and weekends. She won't be lonely where strangely in a populated school she was. Abby will be taught without other students' strong personalities affecting not only her learning but her self worth. My daughter is so excited for this new journey and that makes it so worthwhile. Let the wonderful adventures begin!

## Canuck Homeschool Mom



# CONTACT US

Let us know what you think!

## DO YOU HAVE SOMETHING TO SAY?

IF YOU HAVE A COMMENT, A QUESTION, A SUGGESTION FOR AN ARTICLE, OR SOMETHING TO SHARE ABOUT YOUR HOMESCHOOL EXPERIENCE, WE WOULD LOVE TO HEAR FROM YOU!



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