

# HighSchoolTranscripts for TraditionalHomeschoolers

by Barbara Streibl

Let me introduce myself. I have homeschooled my daughter Barbori for seven years. After having tried various schools during early elementary school years, I homeschooled through various options: traditional, blended for junior high, and back to traditional for high school. Due to family circumstances Barbori decided to do Grade 11 and 12 in one year. As she skipped grade 3, in 2008 she was entering university at age 16.

Barbori decided to apply for a fine arts program at UBCO which required a transcript and a portfolio. The portfolio called for the best twenty pieces of the applicant's artwork with very few rules as to the kind, size or media. The transcript consisted of an assessment form prepared by our facilitator and a summary of marks prepared by me. We had an excellent high school guidance counselor at our school board and a very helpful, competent and friendly recruitment officer at UBCO. I was able to have both forms, complete with our school board's seal, sent directly to UBCO. Our first experience with sending of high school documents was excellent – within a couple of days they were sent to UBCO and the application process was smoothly completed.

Just a couple of years later, in March 2010, Barbori requested another high school transcript from our school board. This time a new person was handling the sending out and gave us a hard time. During our conversation she maintained that no seal could be attached to my summary of marks because she could not be sure if she could trust the marks since they were prepared by a – wait – homeschooling mom. Yet all work and every grade reported by the facilitator was based on my selection of curriculum, textbooks and supporting materials, my exam selection and marking, and on my advice, support and explanations to Barbori. The fact that our facilitator just reported on the work done but did not do any homeschooling as such with Barbori completely escaped her.

A second problem emerged later when she advised me that the summary of marks which she was so wary of - the document which supports the assessment form - was not in Barbori's file. I was not happy with that turn of events but considered sending just the assessment form. So I looked over the assessment form in more detail and was shocked to find that there was no information to show that I was the homeschooling parent, just a mention in the comments section that I gave marks. In all the years of home schooling I was the only parent who signed the application form for yearly plans as well as the original application form. And yet my husband was listed in the same capacity (as parent) as I even though he did not participate in any homeschooling.

To provide background to my taking issue with such a seemingly

minor matter I will explain the above mentioned family circumstances, the reason for Barbori taking on the last two high school grades in one year. The reality was a very stressful, busy year. Barbori made this decision due to my husband's remark in July 2007 that she would not get into a university nor get a scholarship from his professional association because she was a homeschooler. He made this remark in spite of attending a homeschooling conference and being in possession of two or three books specifically written for homeschooling fathers. Barbori was concerned that should something happen to me, her father would insist that she attend regular high school for her graduating year. Barbori did not want to take the chance and so she decided to complete her high school as soon as possible. Summertime has always been the season for Barbori to incorporate knowledge gained during the school year leading to her greater maturity and understanding. Therefore, another drawback of rushing high school was the loss of a year during which she would have had more time to contemplate her future plans, as well as another summer of reflection.

As I continued the discussion with this new employee, I pointed out that there was no line on the assessment form specifying that I was the homeschooling parent and that the summary was really the only place which confirms who did the actual teaching. She was not convinced. When I expressed dismay at her dismissive attitude, she chided me that I wanted to be recognized for my ego. I commented that the summary is more a recognition that I did the work and took responsibility for the results than a pat on the back to feed my ego. In the end our regular high school counselor came back to work for a few days and forwarded the documents without any fuss. The university accepted them and again, the application process was successfully completed.

It is very important that the efforts of traditional homeschooling parents are recognized at the very least in two ways:

- 1) The mother's, father's, or both their names (if both parents are involved in school instruction) must be included on the assessment form on a line heading as a homeschooling parent separate from the heading as parent.
- 2) The summary of marks must be a part of the assessment form, with a signature line for the parent who actually did the homeschooling e.g. selecting a curriculum, preparing the program for the school year, ordering textbooks, preparing and marking exams and assignments, answering questions, providing explanations, field trips, attending homeschooling conferences. In all of these a father can, and should be, actively involved (even when he works fulltime outside the home) and if so, his name should be listed on the summary.

Why are these two additional pieces of information necessary? The summary of marks makes it easier for admissions staff to quickly scan the information rather than having to read five to six paragraphs mingled with marks for individual exams. Also, the name of the parent denotes the parent's responsibility for the results as well as clear confirmation of their effort. By including the traditional homeschooling parent's name as a homeschooling parent on the assessment form the school board also validates and confirms the work of the parent. This could be a reason to encourage more fathers to be involved more actively in homeschooling. The way the form stands right now, an admissions person from post secondary school could assume that it was the facilitator (listed on the form as supervisor) who did all the planning, teaching, correcting and participating while the parent just provided a place to study. Nothing could be further from the truth and believe me, there are many people who are in decision making positions but are not well informed about traditional homeschooling.

This acknowledgement of the parent doing the work on the form issued by the school board signals to the post secondary institutions that her (or his as the case may be) work is recognized as being an integral and important part of the student's preparation for further education. If the school board is not willing to provide this formal recognition, then Canadian traditional homeschoolers may have to prepare their own transcripts and portfolios as their American counterparts.