

MARCH 2025

Home

MATTERS



THE VOICE OF
AHEA
Alberta Home Education
Association



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

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

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

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by Alannah Lammiman

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

Let Us Know . . .

To update your information or to unsubscribe, please email the office at: officeadmin@aheaonline.com.

From The Chair



Peter Verhoog

Hi Everyone,

It is so good to finally, after years of absence, see a *Home Matters* publication coming out in print once again. Why so long you might be thinking? Well, it's a bit of a story for sure, but most of it boils down to affordability. One of the mandates of the AHEA board is to connect regularly with its membership about all things home education in Alberta, and sometimes beyond. Beginning in 2020, that correspondence moved from an in print *Home Matters* to a digital *Arrow*, strictly for cost purposes. It allowed AHEA to keep up its mandate, but live within the economic restrictions of the times. Since then, it has been a road of recovery that has brought us to this latest step of reintroducing the *Home Matters* publication loved by so many in this province.

A big part of what *Home Matters* was, and will strive to be again, is that connecting point that draws home educators together. That includes encouraging our membership by letting them know they're on this home education journey along with many others. Among those "others," many have gone before them, some helped blaze the trail, some were there when it all began in Alberta almost 40 years ago, and some are only thinking about joining up because something is irresistibly pushing in that direction, and some have little ones and are thinking down the road. Regardless of which category you fit in, know that there is help and encouragement, ideas and support all around you.

Our hope is that you'll be encouraged by the articles, perhaps sharing in some concern expressed, learning from those that have been there and done that, and just sharing in the camaraderie that blazing a new trail for your kids is one of the best things to happen in a good while. Knowing what your kids are learning, watching them take it in bit by bit, learning what their particular interests are, seeing them respond to particular styles of learning and seeing their characters grow and mature from year to year, there is little in life that is so satisfying as a parent.

For those of you new to this publication, AHEA is a volunteer organization that exists because people like yourself become involved and are interested in helping

others along the home education journey. AHEA exists to support you in any way that we can with information about getting started, things you need to know or be aware of, or personal answers to questions as required. We also advocate for your freedom to home educate as we meet regularly with education officials, discussing and pushing for resolution those aspects that are concerns of our community, and we're here to help you connect to others on the education journey through our website, the annual convention, and other opportunities throughout the year as they arise. We're supported by your donations, your attendance at events, and your participation as you stay connected, making us aware of things going on in your community, and keeping us apprised of your thoughts and opinions.

It has taken a lot to get things going once again with *Home Matters*. Our special thanks go out to Greg Lammiman for his efforts on the editing and advertising side of things, and to Melodie Vervloet for her efforts on collecting articles. Thanks also to many of you that have taken the time to write articles, and share a bit of yourself with the broader community. If you'd like to participate in *Home Matters*, or have thoughts on improvements, please don't hesitate to reach out to us.

Please enjoy this complimentary copy of *Home Matters*. As you might imagine, there is significant cost to producing and printing *Home Matters*, and we would be interested in knowing your thoughts of having a print copy vs a digital copy made available to you. This feedback will help us as we move forward on this project. Also, if you know of others that would like to have a copy, please pass it along, or have them forward a request and we'll add them to our distribution.

Let me close by thanking you for your ongoing support of AHEA. God bless you on your home education journey.

"And in thy seed shall all the nations of the earth be blessed; because thou hast obeyed my voice."

~Genesis 22:18

Speaker Feature

Science Shouldn't Be Boring

By Kevin Swanson



Confession time. I hated biology in high school. I was forced into taking physiology in college for a life science credit. Thousands of facts were thrown at me, and I had to memorize all of it for the exams. It was miserable.

Even though I have an engineering degree, I found most of my science courses intensely boring, taught by geeky intellectuals who truly did not seem interested in what they were teaching. I remember one instructor falling asleep during his lecture.

I wrote a curriculum on zoology for 5th–7th grade kids this year. It was my way of repenting for all the bad science classroom experiences, the bad textbooks, and the bad teaching and learning I went through in my life. Setting out to write *God Made Animals*, I wanted to see the glory, the beauty, the complexity, the order, the joy, the wisdom, the goodness, the power, the judgment, and the mercy of God in all of His world. And, by God's grace, I saw it.

Science should never be boring. If science is boring, God is boring, uninteresting, and unworthy of praise, and nothing could be further from the truth. Every paragraph of our science textbooks should contain wonder and awesomeness. Every fact should be coated in praise. Every page should convey the relevance, the purpose, and the excitement of discovery and learning.

Take God's amazing creativity seen with the Bombardier Beetle for example. This insect's defense system could be the most amazing and the most complicated in all of creation. Using a mixture of chemicals, this beetle lights up an explosion in a chamber contained in his body. This blows out his rear and fries any small animal that might be trying to attack him. Like a slow-motion machine gun, this little guy can repeat the explosions 15–20 times in just a few minutes. He keeps two chemicals in different sacs in his body — a watered-down (28%) hydrogen peroxide and hydroquinone. If these chemicals leaked out and mixed in his body, they might react and blow him up. So God provided the beetle with another chemical inside of him that acts as an inhibitor (which would prevent that chemical reaction). But that's not all there is to it. When the beetle squirts the two chemicals into the chamber towards his rear end, the

chemicals mix with two enzymes (catalase and peroxidase). This reaction increases the pressure and temperature, resulting in a small explosion and the emission of toxic gases into the face of the beetle's nemesis. Obviously, the combustion chamber within the beetle has to be able to sustain very high temperatures over 212 F (or 100 C).

All of this is very complicated and a twelve-year-old might have a hard time understanding how these chemical reactions work. Scientists have had to study this process for a long time to figure out how the catalyst (the enzymes) create the toxic gases out of the two chemicals mixing. It should be obvious that a brilliant Designer, our awesomely wise God came up with this idea. The important thing to remember about Mr. Bombardier's defense system is that nothing works until everything works. The beetle needs both active chemicals, the catalyst, and the inhibitor which would prevent him from mixing the chemicals in his own body and blowing himself up.

Unbelieving scientists try to tell us that all of this came by evolution, by trial and error conducted by unintelligent forces over a million years. Of course, that is ridiculous. Reasonable people could never believe such a theory. Human scientists have to work for many weeks and years in laboratories to design chemical systems that produce controlled reactions and explosions without producing destructive side effects. They have to be very careful not to blow themselves up while they are doing their experiments! The fact that God can design a system in the body of a little beetle that works thousands of times over and continues to work well for six thousand years is beyond incredible. It is amazing!

Or, let's not forget the hard-working Dung Beetle. He is part of God's cleanup crew. He cleans up after animals which leave their dung in piles around God's green earth. Of course, humans are careful to take care of their waste products, but animals are not so clean. Therefore, in His great wisdom, our God provides 5,000 species of dung beetles to bury the animal wastes produced by carnivores and omnivores. This beetle is a busy little guy, as he buries 250 times his weight in dung in one night.

That would be like you burying 25,000 pounds of rocks in an eight-hour period. A grown man can only shovel about 8,000 pounds a day. Imagine how his back would hurt after all of that work! Some of these beetles can push or pull 1,100 times their own body weight. That would be like an average man pulling six buses full of people down the street. It turns out that the Dung Beetle is also quite the astronomer. He is able to roll his ball of dung in a straight line at night using the stars as his guide. A researcher from Lund University in Sweden placed the beetle in a planetarium and discovered that this little bug was using the stars to make his way. Without the stars, he was not able to keep his trek on track. The Dung Beetle will roll the dung into a ball, sometimes quite a bit larger than himself. Then he will use it for food and for a place for the female to lay her eggs. The male usually does the hard work, rolling the ball as the female follows behind. When they find a good place for a home, they bury the dung ball and settle into their underground home to raise a family. As the saying goes, "it's a dirty job, but somebody has to do it!"

If you stood every kind of animal in the world side by side, you would be amazed at the variety of colors, shapes, sizes, abilities, personalities, instincts, and social habits God put into these animals. The varieties would go on for mile after mile. You would see the funny-looking animals (the platypus and the blobfish), the powerful animals (lions and elephants), the intelligent animals (dolphins and chimpanzees), the beautiful animals (the swan, the white tiger, the husky dog, the peacock, and the panda bear) the ugliest animals (the proboscis monkey, the warthog, the star-nosed mole, the goblin shark, and the batfish), the most dangerous animals (the great white shark, the lion, the cobra snake, and the Sydney funnel spider), and the cutest animals (the wombat, the slow loris, the bottlenose dolphin, the penguin, kittens, puppies, and the arctic fox). Who made all of these spectacular creatures? It had to have been somebody who knew what was funny and delightful, dangerous representing judgment, wise and sagacious, powerful and majestic, beautiful, ugly, and cute. God made all of this. Oh, that we would more and more give Him all the praise, honour, glory, and recognition for these amazing works all around us! This would return life to the life science class. This would offer the ultimately meaningful purpose to learning, and all of life!

I wanted this new, innovative approach to science for Christian families to bring together every cool fact, every outstanding feature of the multifaceted animal kingdom, and every possible demonstration of the Creator's wisdom, power, and goodness. And, the goal? Worship! Praise! Wonder! And that, never again would a student say that this world God has made...is boring.

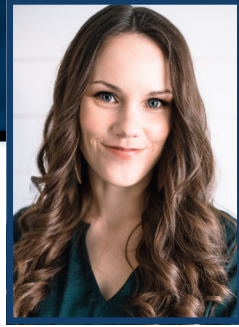
Kevin Swanson is a keynote speaker at the AHEA Convention May 29–31 in Red Deer, Alberta. He is Director of Generations (generations.org), and has worked with Christian Home Educators of Colorado for 24 years. Together with his wife Brenda, they have homeschooled 5 children all the way through. Kevin has hosted the Generations Radio program for 21 years, and he has authored over 30 books on home schooling, biblical worldview, and Christian curriculum for homeschools.

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Speaker Feature

Teen A Day in the Life of a Homeschool Mom By Rebecca Spooner



I wake up to the sing-songy sound of my alarm at precisely 5 a.m. Why did I choose a worship song? I didn't want the rude awakening of a blaring horn, but in this moment it would have felt more authentic and true. It's rude — the blatant audacity of this alarm. Late night me was clearly naive, assuming she could burn both ends of the candle and survive. Morning me is much more reasonable: I'll die, I think with all seriousness — turning off the alarm and rolling back over to sleep for just one more hour. But alas, one hour turns into two, which turns into three. By the time I finally do open my eyes of my own volition, I am greeted by a sun that shouldn't be there yet and the first waves of a headache due to the fact that I should have probably eaten breakfast by now. All at once, the gravity of my situation comes crashing down. Feeling particularly favorable toward late night me, I condemn my morning self for its weakness. I am three steps behind, and I haven't even started yet! Jumping out of bed, I don the unofficial homeschool mom uniform of sweatpants and a sweatshirt. And so it begins—maybe tomorrow I'll wake up early. The house is quiet . . . too quiet. Gone are the days when that meant unspeakable chaos. Now it can only mean one thing: my lanky teenagers are still fast asleep. Like a movie, my adorable children seem to be stuck in layers of sleep: a dream inside a dream. It requires shaking their shoulders, speaking loudly, and clapping my hands in order to garner any response. At the first signs of life, I depart with a closing remark that they need to clean their rooms. My duty done, I make my way to my shiny latte machine. The steps are almost therapeutic in their predictability and it isn't long until I'm drawing on my frothy canvas with the silky-smooth steamed milk. Carrying my prize to the couch, I sit down with my Bible, my happiness dampened by the assurance that I will soon be interrupted. 5 a.m. may be met with a deep sense of victimhood from me, but it never lasts. Once I power through my self-pity, it is without a doubt my favourite time of the day. Having my house all to myself is a luxury I rarely get. It is my time of peak creativity, and it sets the tone for my whole day: success or flop. As expected, within minutes my kids stagger out of their rooms (a sure sign that they did not, in fact, clean them) whereby I am besieged by conversation. I placate them for a few minutes before assigning them chores and sending them on their way.

After a particularly pitiful attempt at their chores, my kids gather in the living room to start school. In case you're wondering, we do have a dedicated school room: Where else would I put all the books and school supplies that I hoard? However, we've grown accustomed to the plush comfort of the couch. It's probably a mistake. The more we give in to our inner "loungyness," the less productive we are. But the family pets have already staked their claim around us, and I'm quite unwilling to choose professionalism—especially on a day like today. We're missing half our books. Only two of the kids have pencils. No one knows where the teacher's guide is. None of this surprises me. It is as familiar as skipping my alarm: same song, different day. Our school day is slow, coming in fits and bursts. It is full of interruptions, conversations, and distractions. Coffee and tea have become a family affair, as it seems impossible to do our work without something warm in our hands. Someone is in the bathroom . . . again. This is my homeschool day.

Days like this can feel like a wash: go to bed, wake up, try again tomorrow. Every once in a while, we have a perfect day where everything seems to go as planned, and these treasured triumphs become the measure I hold everything up to. It's a repeating cycle: condemning expectations crashing against the hard shores of lacklustre reality day after day, wave after wave. But what if this is it? What if instead of focusing on perfect, I appreciated the minimalistic? Life is made of these days more than any other. They are the steady beat of the song that drums behind us, the substance that ground us. There are memories in the mundane—hidden in every conversation (even the ones we are at the mercy of). Nostalgia seeps into the coziness of the couch, the purr of the cat in your lap, the warm tea in your hands, and the feeling of completeness that family creates. These are the impressions that will stick with us. So today, I will not hope for a better tomorrow . . . it's already here.

"This is the day that the Lord has made; let us rejoice and be glad in it." —Psalm 118:24

Rebecca Spooner is a keynote speaker at the AHEA Convention May 29–31 in Red Deer, Alberta. She is a homeschool mom of five kids, creator of Gather 'Round Homeschool, owner of Homeschoolon.com, and author of More Than Words Bible curriculum and Journal Me Organized. She is a second-generation homeschooler who is passionate about sharing her successes and failures. . . to be authentic and honest that this is not always easy, but it is possible. Join her for stories from the trenches of homeschool life that are relatable, funny, and all too true. And may you walk away with practical tools and strategies and a fresh new perspective to keep you going. Bring a cup of coffee; it's about to get real.

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

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

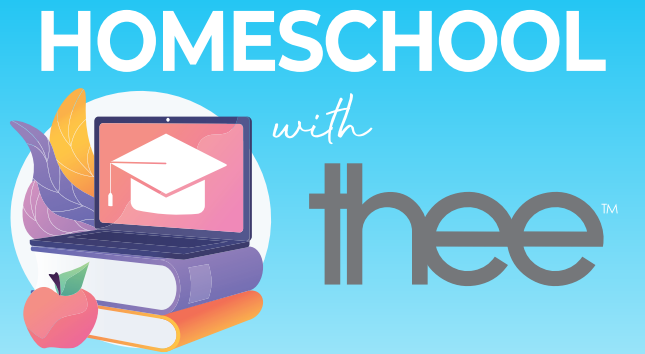
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THEE provides individual academic counselling, support, and learning resources to home educating parents. THEE will never prescribe a particular instructional method or set of school resources. Parents are always in control of their program. We encourage families to pursue their personal, academic, and family goals by actively supporting traditional home education.

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Coming to the Convention?

Consider Volunteering

Why volunteer?

- To meet and get to know new friends and like-minded people.
- To contribute to and support a cause you believe in.
- To try something new.
- To save money! (see Special Volunteer Benefits below)

“Special Volunteer” Benefits: Individuals who volunteer for 8 or more hours or couples who volunteer for 10 or more hours between them receive a full refund on their registration fee. Individuals who serve for 4 or more hours receive a 50% refund.

And.... Youth Volunteers earn a Free Friday Pizza Party!

What positions need to be filled?

We need assistance in the following areas:

- set-up and take down
- security personnel
- speaker host and driver to and from the airport
- room monitors
- registration
- greeters
- Used Curriculum Sale (UCS) - various roles
- photographer
- lots and lots of help for the Children’s Program (one or two days)!

Sign up early for best selection of roles!

To Volunteer, be sure to complete the Google form on the AHEA Website.

Questions? Contact: volunteers@ahaeonline.com

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CELEBRATING 25 YEARS IN KID’S MINISTRY

FOR AGES 3-11

TENTATIVE SCHEDULE

FRIDAY, MAY 30	SATURDAY, MAY 31
7:15a - Volunteers Training	8:00a - Volunteers Arrive
8:40a - Cow Doors Opens	8:30a - Cow Doors Opens
11:30a - Close for Lunch	11:15a - Close for Lunch
12:50p - Doors Re-Open	12:15p - Doors Re-Open
5:30p - EVENT CLOSES	4:15p - EVENT CLOSES

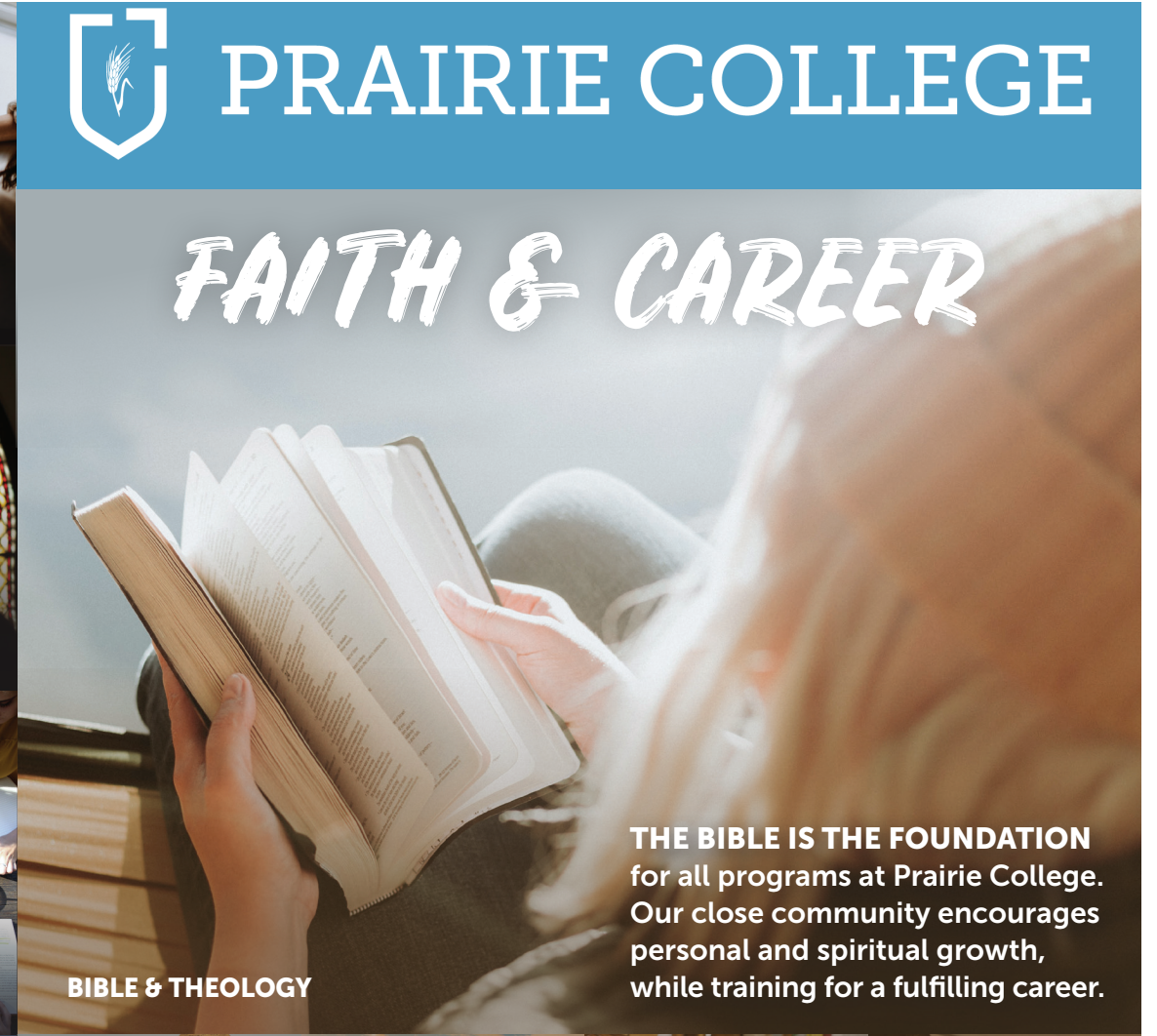
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Advocacy Report



Andréé Verhoog

As we look to the USA in the past weeks, there is mention of funding for homeschooling. Some applaud it while many others have strong reservations. Why all the hoopla?

Closer to home, home educators in Alberta receive some government funding. In 2020, Notification Only, No Funding was introduced as an alternative. Why would anyone want to consider that route you might ask? “For more freedom,” they might suggest. Others might respond that we have all the freedom we want under the current funding and regulations. These are questions and discussions taking place on many Facebook home schooling group pages today. In fact, the discussions are often broader than that, and include educational students outside of home education, often in the context of funding following the student. More often than not, the discussion is centered around increased funding.

A good question to ask as home educators at this point is, “Do we really have full freedom under our regulations?”

Acts and regulations are written by government for government. Rarely are they written by government for the benefit of the people they are supposed to serve. Under our present Alberta Home Education Regulation you have 2 options; Supervised or Unsupervised (also known as “Notification Only, No Funding”). Until 2020 there was only the supervised option.

What does the regulation state? Whether supervised or unsupervised the regulation requires the parent to follow either the Standard of Learning Outcomes or the Alberta Program of Studies. Parents must meet some standards as determined by the government for our children’s education, hence not complete freedom. The Standard of Learning Outcomes are quite general and allow the most freedom as the parent is allowed to select a wide range of curriculum to reach these outcomes, although there is no resulting certificate provided after successful completion. The Alberta Program of Studies is more rigid and demanding, and can result in a diploma by the overseeing board after successful completion.

The unsupervised option requires that the parent notify the government by submitting a form. The parents do not need to submit an educational program plan to the government (although good record keeping is suggested) and no government funding or certificate of completion is available; freedom is maximized.

The supervised option requires the parent to notify the government via a willing school board. It may be any school board across the province that is willing to supervise the home education plan provided by the parent; not necessarily the school board where the child resides. The school board will assign the parent an Alberta Certified Teacher (facilitator). The facilitator must conduct at least two evaluations of the progress of the student in each school year. They may request more. The regulations stipulate that the parent must make the student available so that the board may conduct an evaluation of the progress of the student. What exactly does that mean? It may include testing the child through verbal questions, seeing work they’ve completed, or making the child read something aloud, etc. Government funding up to 900 dollars per child is available, but certain freedoms are taken away and replaced by requirements of the school board.

Both programs may be terminated by the government or the school board if they can show progress is not being achieved. How one measures progress is unclear, and not stipulated – simply worded as “in the opinion of the director.” It is also not clear where the student would be expected to attend if removed from the home education program.

As you can see, with funding comes certain responsibilities, and less freedom. Logically, we can know that with more funding comes greater responsibility and expectations, and less freedom.

Studies have shown that the amount of regulation does not improve the outcome for a student in home education, nor does the amount of supervision. Dr. Brian D. Ray’s article “A Systematic Review of the Empirical Research on Selected Aspects of Homeschooling as a Choice” reflects these findings. We would be remiss to think that Alberta home educated children surpass their

Continued on p. 15.



Forcing My Way into Homeschooling's Secrets

Melodie Vervloet

“Don’t only practice your art, but force your way into its secrets; for it, and knowledge, can raise men to the divine.”

-Ludwig Van Beethoven

“We tried homeschooling for a while, but it didn’t work for us.” “I can’t handle my kids, it’s easier to just send them to school.” “I like going to work where people respect me and it’s quiet.” “My child and I have totally opposite personalities. It’s better for someone else to teach them. Besides, I don’t understand the way he thinks at all.” “I hate having a crowded, disorganized, messy-most-of-the-time house.” These are all legitimate reasons not to homeschool – on first thought, the surface. For me, I like the easy way. I’ll take a flat, straight, highway to ride my bike on over a dirt, treed, mosquito infested backwoods trail any day – on first thought, the surface. I’m exhibit A in avoiding any and all forms of suffering. Until I forced my way into suffering’s secrets. And it does have secrets.

We started officially homeschooling in 1996, when our oldest was six. My husband had lost his job, and with it, a house, so we were living in my parents’ basement. I had sewn a new dress for my daughter for her first day of school. I was very excited to see her open her new books and teach her the great educational truths from past generations. I looked on with pride and excitement towards what she would become. By the end of the week, our younger daughter had spilt paint on my parent’s white carpet, all four children were restless, and if I remember correctly, some got sick. I felt tired and discouraged. I was eight months pregnant, homeless, and for a short time my husband, jobless.

Secret #1– Expect hardship – persevere.

Shortly after this we found a small bungalow to rent in my hometown. It barely fit us all, with the new baby sleeping in a cradle in the laundry room. And, my husband got a job with a local farmer.

That was 28 years ago this past September. What has become of our firstborn? She and her husband have five beautiful children, and she sits at their table, homeschooling them. We enjoy fellowship with them.

Secret #2– You will rejoice in time to come– persevere.

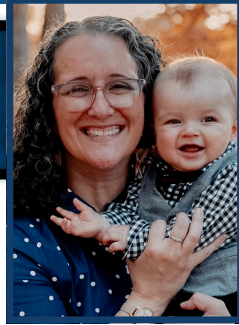
My homeschooling journey started out intense; five little ones in six years. Then, six more children were added. My heart loved it, but my mind could not wrap around the workload, even though I trained the children to help. However, I loved that I had the privilege of teaching so many little ones how to read, tie their shoes, how and what to eat, obedience, respect for others, etc. With all the mothering, laundry, cooking, and teaching, I felt overwhelmed, yet content and fulfilled in my role as a wife and mother.

Secret #3– Hard work –persevere.

Teenage years came and went. Driver’s licenses, hunting, hockey, piano lessons, choir practice, camp, church, cousins, friends, vacations, jobs, girl/guy relationships, some romance break ups, others ending in marriage. I loved this new stage. This was the stage of, at times, differences in opinions, yet sorting it out, walking through break-ups, staying up all hours of the night to cry with them. These were the years I discovered how much of a sinner I was (am). These were also the years of developing a relationship with our young people on a deeper level. I found myself having to release my teens from my grasp and give them reasonable amounts of freedom. These were the years of fighting against fear of all the enemies out there that would love a chance to jump on all my years of hard work and destroy my children. These were the years of seeing them suffer and seeing them succeed. With each hurt, I hurt with them, with each victory, I rejoiced with them. These were also the years of the unexpected. A few things I discovered from this season is that God uses our weakness, more than our strength, and it is impossible to become strong without suffering. I also found myself praying more urgently, and discovered it is possible to have good relationships with our young people. Even if you have a rebellious young person, do not fear.

Continued on p. 14.

A Warning About Having Children



Jessica Burke

The U.S. Surgeon General recently issued a new public health advisory. Forget pandemics or toxic substances; this time the very source of this warning is likely sleeping under the same roof as you. The culprit: your own kids. According to the surgeon general's report, the mental toll children are taking on their parents is "an urgent public health issue."

As the mother of a larger-than-average family—we have five children ages 18 months to 18 years—I'd like to think I have a little credibility on this topic. My children certainly give me plenty of reasons to worry. Last week, I stood in my driveway crying as I waved goodbye to my second oldest when she left on her first solo drive. If you haven't sent off your child behind the wheel alone, there's nothing quite like it. A day later, my baby had an ultrasound due to a lump growing on his brow. With every problem the children have, I restlessly try to find the right and best solution. Every ache and pain they suffer causes me emotional hurt. The more you love, the more chances for heartache.

But I'd never say they've been hazardous to my mental health. Instead, they've made my world bigger and my life richer. The way they've changed my thinking and what I value has made me a calmer, gentler, happier person. My children have brought so much laughter and delight. This has been highlighted in our home since the birth of our youngest baby, seventeen years younger than our oldest. Thanks to our toddler, our home has more laughter than ever, and my big kids have learned about the joy a new child brings to a family. Sometimes the toddler even laughs at us laughing at him. One of my favorite times of the day is when I take him outside to swing. He giggles in anticipation as he waits for me to pull him up as high as I can and then release him. "Wheeee!" he exclaims every single time. He claps and asks for me to do it again and again. We've probably done it thousands of times over the last six months, and he hasn't tired of it yet. Neither have I. How can I not smile and laugh and delight in a baby enjoying life so much?

Having children who love to laugh makes me laugh and smile more often. They remind me not to take everything so seriously, like the time I banned lemonade from road trips because of the excessive bathroom stops. Their collective jokes about the evils of lemonade

for the last five hours of the trip eventually broke my grumpiness and ended with laughter at myself, at them, and at all the nasty bathrooms we had set foot in. If I am blessed to be an old woman with deep smile wrinkles, it will be a gift from my children and proof of how much better I lived because of them.

My children have made me more aware and interested. They have expanded my world by introducing me to new wonders. Every time we're outside, and they pause to marvel at a mushroom or a frog the size of their fingernail, I am reminded to stop and look. When they bring me a perfect acorn or clover, I'm amazed at what I often miss under my feet. When they tell me the story behind a song or painting, my appreciation of artists grows. When they hand me a book and tell me I have to read it, they're bringing me into a story bigger than my own. They make me want to know more and learn more and appreciate more. As a tropical depression brought rain today, the kids eagerly finished their schoolwork so they could play outside. To me, the rain is often an inconvenience. Wet jackets and shoes, postponed plans, and sloppy driving. But to my children, it's the perfect opportunity to work on their front yard surfing. Just to the right of our biggest oak, water collects, and after a good rain, you can skim a sled along a glorious two-inch deep puddle. If you approach it fast enough, you might successfully make it across the whole puddle. And that, my friend, is surfing in our front yard. What fun have I missed out on because I wasn't interested enough?

My children have taught me to love. They are more forgiving and understanding than I am. They have instructed my heart on how to move forward in relationships. Their loyalty and dependence models to me how to be a friend and a family member. I've lost my temper and been impatient and have wronged them again and again, and yet, they love me fiercely. Sometimes I struggle at bedtime, and in their delay tactics, I am tempted to be rude and short as I try to just get them in bed. My children seem to refuse to let the sun set on my anger. How much better am I when they want that hug, that kiss, that song, that snuggle regardless of how tired I am and how selfish I want to be? I will never regret loving stronger and better, and the children remind me of that.

Continued on p. 14.



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HOME Matters March 2025

*Forcing My Way into Homeschooling's Secrets
Continued from p. 11*

Secret # 4 – God will use you to display the same gospel you taught them all those years previous – persevere.

Then came marriages and grandbabies. Thanks be to God, we have 15 grandchildren, with two more expected this year.

I discovered that homeschooling is a type of discipling. It's doing life together. It's allowing ourselves to look unto Christ, and learn of him, absorbing the truth from the scriptures, then turning around and passing on that information to our children and grandchildren, even without words. Every day is an adventure. So much has happened in my life over the last 28 years of homeschooling, yet God gives the grace, wisdom, and patience to make it through it all. Homeschooling/discipling varies from family to family. But ultimately, it is pointing us and our children to the way, the truth, and the life – Jesus Christ.

Now, as a grandmother, I hope to have opportunities in the future to invest in the lives of my grandchildren.

Secret #5- When I'm really "yoked to Christ" he takes the brunt of my pain, my frustration, my overwhelmed-ness. As Henry Wright once said, "When you start truly believing God, you cease to perform as if you were God." As I let Him take over, I find His yoke easy. It's not all up to me anymore – it's His work – His job to change hearts, and so I persevere, looking unto Christ, the author and finisher of my faith.

Secret #6—The rewards of persevering through everything you walk through on planet earth are not only mere temporal— but eternal, and eternal rewards are exceedingly beyond any rewards or comfort we could have enjoyed by taking the easy road. –Persevere.

Martin and Melodie Vervloet have been married for 37 years and live in central Alberta. They homeschool the youngest three of their 11 children. Currently, Martin works in construction.



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*A Warning About Having Children
Continued from p. 12*

Probably everyone knows that children will enlarge your heart. But if you stop and think about the brilliance of your children, you'll realize they have also enlarged your world with delight, interest, and love. If your only focus is the worries you have for your children, then sure, maybe your children will be hazardous to your mental health. But when you allow them to instruct you on how to live a rich life, you may start living for something greater than those worries that want to consume you.

If you have kids, your life will change. But maybe you'll find yourself laughing more, learning new things, and loving better. And your world will be larger and your life richer because of it.

Jessica Burke has been married to her high school sweetheart for twenty years and they are raising their five children in North Carolina. A former public school teacher, Jessica has spent the last eighteen years with a vocation of homemaker and classical home educator. The Burkes lived in eastern Europe for three years and have traveled together to over twenty countries, surviving some adventures which the grandparents shall never hear about.

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*Advocacy Report
Continued from p. 12*

counterparts in other provinces in terms of education outcomes because of the supervision that they receive.

Regulations can be workable as long as you have a government and bureaucracy that is friendly to home education which we have been blessed to have here in Alberta for the last few years. The years prior to that showed us otherwise, where the regulations can be made hoops to jump through, and swords to wield. Once again we need to ask, are the regulations written to protect the student or to allow the government to do what it wills?

The current regulation will expire in August, 2025. AHEA has responded to the government's invitation and met with other stakeholders to discuss potential changes to

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

Article 1 – Definition

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

Article 2 – Philosophy

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

Article 3 – Statement of Faith

Scripture: We believe all Scripture is given by inspiration of God, is without error, is profitable for doctrine, for reproof,

the regulations related to the day to day functioning of the regulation. We have also submitted a request for further discussions related to the overall tenor of the document and the position parents are given within the wording. The government is currently reviewing all written submissions by the stakeholders.

If you have an opinion you would care to share on freedom, funding, or anything else related to government policy regarding home education, we would like to hear from you. We hope that this has been helpful to you, and ask that you continue to pray for these developments, that the government would be favourable to at least some of our requests for change.

Andrée Verhoog is a wife to Pete, and the homeschooling mom of four daughters who have all graduated. She is also known as Mémère to her three grandkids. She loved homeschooling her children and now sits on the AHEA board.

for correction, and for instruction in righteousness. (2 Timothy 3:16).

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

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

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

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

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

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



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

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

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



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