

Fall 2012

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Home Educators Association of Virginia News Magazine

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From the Editor

Mary Kay Smith

One of the wonderful things about homeschooling our children is the chance to mentor them ourselves or provide a mentoring experience for them. Children learn by doing—first by being an observer, then a helper, then a doer. As they work with us, they are automatically and naturally being trained.

A number of years ago, my daughters, Lindsey and Ashley, went with me to Japan and Hong Kong for a month, helping me with some children’s programs. They worked alongside me, preparing dramas, crafts, and object lessons. They had to cope with the inconvenience of foreign travel—inoculations, long flights, airsickness, bug bites, weird food (pigeon, sea soup, stinky tofu), strange customs (sniff, never blow), and squat toilets.

But you know what? The next time it was easier.

We went to Zambia. We tolerated new shots, the same menu (chicken, nshima, and fried cabbage) twice every day for two weeks, traveler’s diarrhea, African time, cold baths, silty water, and “bush” toilets. The girls worked alongside me once again, but this time presented more of the material. They were a little more confident and became a little more resourceful (can *you* open a Fanta® orange soda on a door jamb?)

We went to Portugal and provided a week of intensive, hands-on U.S. history classes for children of two international schools. This time, the girls received assignments and were on their own. I needed every body in a different room. They were certainly nervous—some of those students were their peers—but they did it.

And then five months later, just before a second Zambia trip, I had unexpected back surgery, and suddenly my kids were not observing, helping, or just taking part. They had to take all my classes for two weeks and teach adults how to do children’s ministry.

Now, they don’t think anything of going to an unknown place to help out. They can give presentations, teach, and mingle with the people even if they’re just communicating with gestures. They can deal with hardships, too. On Ashley’s trip to Ecuador, she had to discreetly shampoo her head to prevent lice. She got food poisoning, and on her flight home she threw up twice—so inconspicuously that the kids sleeping next to her didn’t notice. During Lindsey’s senior year, she went to Peru and had to guide the adult supervisor who had never travelled internationally before and didn’t know what to do. On a trip to Australia, she had to handle a visa problem for four people, and on a second Japan trip, we all had to cope with little air-conditioning in 105-degree heat.

I call all those things success. The girls have been mentored.

Mentoring and apprenticeship comes in all shapes and sizes and lengths of time. Mine happened to be in children’s ministry and mostly in third-world countries, but we hope these articles give you some other options to consider.

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How do you handle sibling rivalry as a homeschool family?

Ann H: We've always taught that our family is a team...that no matter who we know in our lives, in the end, we will always really only have each other and the Lord...that what we do reflects on each other, our family, and our Lord. In one of his books, Tedd Tripp talks about the root of many problems being selfishness; we have always dealt with any challenge in this area as being a heart issue, not a "you're bad" issue. Our kids remain close, and although we do have those selfish moments from time to time, they are rare. We also

never let a situation escalate to "fighting." As parents, we intervene and use those situations as teaching moments.

Lindsey L: We have a "no-share/no-play" rule. It is strictly enforced, even with visiting friends, who often gape in wide-eyed amazement as I simply remove the offending item and continue with my day. My children now quickly pass things over and share if they hear me remind them of the rule.

Outside the Box

Check out this photo! What a great idea for teaching children to think outside the box! The possibilities are limitless... taco salad, a rice dish, ice cream. You just need 6" tortillas in a 375-degree oven for 10 minutes. Voila!



What do you find time to do in the summer that you can't do all year long?

Mae W: We actually do "less" outside-the-house stuff during the summer. Most of my children and I don't care for the heat (or the bugs) of summer, so we school pretty hard during the summer. It frees us up to do lots more during the "school year!"

Jennifer C: Relax! Craft...read...sleep in. Or nap. Or just play with the kids. I need to do that more all year!

Michelle C: Summer is full of camp, lesson planning—yes, I know I should do it during the year, but when!—and gardening. We live in Pennsylvania. We can't garden during any other season because the weather fluctuates too much.

Jennifer K: We look forward to time at the beach...more time to be outside...more time to meet up with friends. We play in the splash fountains at a local mall. We also go to the library more frequently.

Nancy J: Reading, studying poetry, and doing music and art appreciation are all things we just don't seem to have very much time for during the rush-rush-rush year.

Gwendolyn H: We swim in our backyard "blow up" pool. We also do much more science during the summer—like making soap.

Any ideas for your first "not-back-to-school" day?

Dorothy K: Our support group always got together for a picnic. What a fun, great way to build friendships for kids and moms! One thing I wish I had done that I didn't: take a picture of my children each year!

A Reader's Comment

Mary Kay Smith, that was a beautiful letter "From the Editor" (*Summer 2012*). Thank you for that!
Sarah Simpson Snow

How do you maintain your own identity amid the awesome role of homeschooling?

Jennifer M: "Homeschool mom" is a huge part of who I am. Whenever I get lost in that, I put on a pair of high heels, lots of eye make-up, and do my hair. Then I knit a scarf. Before children, I was looking for "who I was"—at least now I know!

Tony C: I don't feel the need to "find my own identity." I am a wife and homeschooling mother doing what I am called to do. I have other talents, but it has nothing to do with "finding my identity." I don't see anything wrong or unsatisfying in always being known as my husband's wife or my children's mom.

Gwendolyn H: My children are too young and deliberately nerdy to care about my identity, or to fully differentiate between school and fun. They are still amused when they hear others call me by name. We show them video or audio tapes of Mommy speaking at conferences sometimes. They see or hear about Mommy doing other things like playing the piano or viola. It helps them to see that Mommy does things other than make up "stuff for them to have to read and write."

Dawn P: In Sally Clarkson's book *Mission of Motherhood*, she talks about having hobbies or interests outside of your children. I maintain friendships and interests that are related to homeschooling, but are for me.

Snapshot

What's your favorite summer Olympic sport to watch? Our Facebook followers responded.*

Swimming 60%	Archery 10%
Gymnastics 50%	Judo 10%
Equestrian 20%	Fencing 10%
Track 30%	

*Some readers chose more than one sport, so results add up to more than 100%.





From the Director of Homeschool Support

Yvonne Bunn

Homeschoolers have access to learning experiences that other students don't have. Although we tend to focus on academics, we should never underestimate the importance of outside activities that are based on a student's interests. In fact, I would rank real-life experience through outside activities as one of the top benefits of homeschooling.

Life-experience activities such as volunteer service, internships, apprenticeships, or mentoring opportunities provide out-of-the-box learning opportunities. Teens often want to be involved in activities such as working on a political campaign, participating in a ministry, getting a part-time job, or learning a vocational skill. These outside activities are valuable learning experiences, and they should count as credit on a homeschooler's high school transcript.

During the teen years, find out what motivates and interests your student, and then help him use his interest to his advantage. Incorporating his interest into his homeschool studies is often a great motivator. Teens are getting ready to make huge life decisions. They will soon be entering the workforce, choosing a college major, or joining the military. With the flexibility of homeschooling, and through guided hands-on activities, teens can gain real-life knowledge that will help them make better-informed decisions about their future.

Our daughter grew up loving to read books. We would often have to say, "You have to put down your book now and go outside to play!" She thought she wanted to be a librarian until around age fourteen when she spent a summer volunteering at our local library. It wasn't long before she discovered that finding books for patrons and shelving books wasn't what she liked to do—she liked to READ books, not catalog them! It was a good thing we discovered this before she majored in library science in college.

During high school, we noticed one of our boys was very mechanically inclined. He could take apart and fix almost anything. He was always buying parts from the small hardware store just a bike ride away from our house. We encouraged him to help out at the hardware store. By age fifteen, he was paid minimum wage for sweeping floors, unloading the supply truck, and stocking the shelves. It wasn't long

before he began waiting on customers and suggesting the parts they needed. He learned valuable people skills and gained good business experience. The learning experience that began during his high school years paved the way for a job after college graduation working with robotics for an international manufacturing company.

Homeschool parents and students often have to make real-life learning experiences happen. Search for opportunities with the people you know in your town or church or support group. Remember, the mentor or employer will become a role model for your youth, so godly character and good business ethics should be a top consideration.

Outside activities can help your student decide if an interest is worth pursuing. Before investing time and money in a particular educational path, try an apprenticeship, volunteer position, or part-time job. That may help your student discover if his interest fits his God-given abilities and talents. Homeschoolers have a distinct advantage—we have the time and flexibility to incorporate this valuable type of learning into our student's education.

*To learn about apprenticeship opportunities at the HEAV office, contact HEAV at 804-278-9200. For information about formal apprenticeship programs through the U.S. Department of Labor or about setting up an informal program, see *The High School Handbook* by Mary Schofield, available at www.heav.org.*

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SPONSOR OF NEW CURRICULUM LAW RECOGNIZED

Homeschool parents welcomed **Senator Dick Black**, Senate sponsor of HEAV's curriculum description legislation, with an enthusiastic round of applause at the convention keynote session. Senator Black encouraged parents to take a stand for moral values and offered his continued support for the right of parents to teach their children.

The new law went into effect July 1, 2012. Any parent who complies with §22.1-254.1 by filing a Notice of Intent or writing a letter to the local superintendent, must file a description of curriculum. In past years, parents have had to supply descriptions that included various elements of the superintendent's choosing—detailed course descriptions, outlines, textbook titles, methods of instruction, tables of contents, or scope and sequences. Now the description of curriculum is limited to a list of subjects to be studied during the coming year.



Senator Dick Black (R-Loudoun/Prince William Co.) addresses homeschool families at the HEAV Convention.

HEAV thanks Senator Dick Black and **Delegate Brenda Pogge** (R-York Co.) for working with HEAV and effectively moving this legislation through the Virginia legislature. We also thank **Governor Bob McDonnell** for signing this important change to the homeschool statute.

HEAV NOTIFIES SUPERINTENDENTS

In the first week of July, HEAV sent a formal letter to each Virginia school superintendent in order to remind the superintendent, his designee, and staff about the change in the homeschool statute regarding a curriculum description. It included the revised statute §22.1-254.1(B) and clearly explained that the curriculum description that accompanies a Notice of Intent or personal letter is “limited to a list of subjects to be studied during the coming year.”

HEAV cordially invited the superintendents to contact the HEAV office if we could assist them or answer any questions. During the past several years, HEAV has developed good communication with numerous superintendents and their assistants.

Please contact HEAV at 804-278-9200 or support@heav.org if we can help clarify any misinformation concerning the new curriculum description requirements.

HEAV ASKS VDOE TO CHANGE HANDBOOK

After passing the new curriculum description law, HEAV expected the Virginia Department of Education to revise their online handbook, *Guidelines for Home Instruction in Virginia*, in a simple and straightforward way. The 2012 law change was initiated by HEAV in order to address the confusion created by incorrect examples in the original VDOE handbook.

After reviewing the July 2012 revised handbook *Guidelines for Home Instruction in Virginia*, HEAV and other homeschool organi-

zations requested the VDOE change the new explanation of the list of subjects. The new VDOE “guidelines” stated that for a curriculum description parents MAY use the SOLs or provide sample tests or other work or a list of resources or textbooks. The new curriculum description concluded by saying, “...but they [parents] are not required to do so.”

HEAV asked the VDOE not to confuse the clear and simple law—“provide a curriculum description, limited to a list of subjects...”—with additional things parents MAY do, but the law does not require. The VDOE quickly responded by removing the confusing language and restating exactly what the law requires for a curriculum description.

HOMESCHOOLERS NOW PART OF THE MEADE SCHOLARSHIP PROGRAM

HEAV worked with the Virginia Department of Education and the State Council of Higher Education to develop a mechanism to handle the selection process for homeschoolers for the Meade Scholarship Program. HEAV reviewed the homeschool applicants and selected five to send to the Department of Education. Homeschoolers were in competition with



David with Yvonne Bunn

selected public and private school students statewide. One of our homeschooled students, **David Delane Jones**, was a recipient of an \$8,000 scholarship to be used in a Virginia college.

One of several students to win the scholarship, David is a member of several honor societies and plans to major in marine science at Old Dominion University before pursuing graduate studies. He graduated in the commencement ceremonies at the 2012 HEAV Convention in June.

Letters

THANK YOU TO HEAV

I am writing to express my profound gratitude to you and the Home Educators Association of Virginia for your efforts to make the Granville P. Meade Scholarship accessible to homeschooled students. I am honored to receive this scholarship and am indebted to your diligence in promoting home education. It is my hope that I am only the first of many homeschooled students to receive this honor. I pledge to make the best possible use of the Meade Scholarship as I pursue my college education.

Sincerely,
David Delane Jones

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MENTORSHIPS, INTERNSHIPS, AND APPRENTICESHIPS

Nancy Coleman

The options available for high school graduates today can be overwhelming. For some, college is an automatic choice after high school, but if students graduate with no experience, they sometimes struggle to find jobs. For others, a trade makes sense, but lack of experience can hinder them from finding employment too. Fortunately, options do exist so that the “experience gap” on a resume can be filled.

MENTORSHIPS

Mentorships come in many shapes and sizes and can be molded to accommodate a wide variety of needs. For some, mentoring is informal and focuses on personal development. In all cases, it is an ongoing relationship centered on dialogue, learning, and challenge. A mentor or a trusted counselor encourages the person being mentored and challenges him or her toward growth.

Some parents request other adults to “mentor” their children, encouraging them in their spiritual growth and emotional maturity. Some companies request seasoned employees to mentor new hires in an effort to assist the new employee’s adjustment. When my husband graduated from college, he sought out an older, more experienced engineer who helped guide his design skill. Just knitting in the presence of an older woman who has knitted for sixty years allows me to learn “new” techniques that I never would have figured out myself, but which make the task infinitely more manageable. Those are informal mentoring relationships.

Beginning in 2003, Susannah Miller was mentored and apprenticed in graphic design

by her mother, Anne Miller, a graphic designer and HEAV’s former director of publications for twenty-one years. When asked how they chose that path, Susannah smiled and said she was on a robotics team that needed a brochure. Anne, as team mentor, assigned her a Q&A section to lay out. Instead of working on layout—and unbeknownst to her mom—Susannah switched programs to Photoshop and designed a sophisticated graphic combining text with a cutout of team members. Susannah had never used Photoshop before and amazed

**Options do exist
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can be filled.**

her mom. With this newly discovered talent, Anne wanted to encourage Susannah to develop it, and so they began the mentoring and apprenticeship process.

In the beginning, Anne tasked Susannah with helping to create convention brochures and magazine fillers, paying her for her help. She also provided resources, including books, design magazines, and even a \$600 video course on using InDesign and Photoshop. Susannah’s learning curve was significant, but with patience and encouragement—and

hands-on experience—she morphed into a talented graphic design artist who now designs this *Virginia Home Educator* magazine cover to cover, and many other HEAV publications, as well as books, business cards, logos, and brochures for others.

When asked about the benefits and drawbacks of the arrangement, Susannah replied that having her mom as her mentor meant that she knew how much Susannah could handle, and could help her set boundaries and learn time-management skills. Her mentor really knew her strengths and weaknesses and could communicate in her language. She also had someone to bounce ideas off of. And by learning design in a hands-on way, the process became ingrained in Susannah and stayed with her longer.

The drawbacks of a mentorship/apprenticeship, as opposed to a traditional classroom experience for Susannah, were that it took longer to learn some of the technical terms of graphic design and some of the techniques that make it easier. If she’d had classroom training, she would have already spoken the technical language of graphic designers and printers. When asked if she would do it again she responded affirmatively, but said that she would choose to take a few technical classes that covered the more abstract areas of graphic design.

Susannah laughs at her early mistakes in graphic design and says she is grateful for the opportunities she has had. While most young adults are graduating and seeking employment, she has already developed a significant portfolio from the work she’s done for HEAV and other clients.

INTERNSHIPS

An internship is contracted, supervised, practical, on-the-job training. Interns exchange free or inexpensive labor in order to gain experience. Ryan Benson, a rising senior at VCU, and Tyler Grigg, a second-year student at UVA, interned at a local engineering company in Fredericksburg.

Both spoke highly of their time at the company, stating that they were allowed to perform tasks that applied what they had learned. They also had to interact with vendors and contractors, learning skills that are not part of a college experience. They obtained quotes and price lists and communicated with customers. Tyler traveled with the engineer to whom he was assigned and helped test one of the products on which he had worked. He even had to interact with an angry customer, which was definitely not part of his textbook education.

Teamwork is key in an engineering environment, and both young men had to work with the group so that the item they each designed would fit in with what the other engineers were working on. They were able to see a product go from design to prototype to manufacturing, and to observe what is required to get an item to the marketplace. Tyler stressed that what they designed this summer had to actually work as opposed to what he used to create with Legos® as a kid.

Both were grateful that they had obtained applicable experience through their internships, and were encouraged that they had indeed chosen an occupation that fit their talents. They were thankful to the engineers who encouraged them, oversaw their work, and allowed them to gain the

experience they had hoped for. Their internships definitely enhanced what they had learned in college, and they gained valuable experience prior to entering the workforce. Ryan did mention a friend, however, who “interned” with a different company last summer and did nothing but shred documents for ten weeks. Students need to verify ahead of time what they will be doing!

Although he does not have a formal internship, my son Christopher spoke with several photographers and located one who was willing to let him “second shoot” (be a second camera) at weddings. Chris’s skill and technique are being honed while he observes what she does, and she gains a second set of hands and eyes at a fraction of what she would have to pay someone more experienced. He is learning technique as well as how to handle nervous brides and their mothers, less-than-stellar weather conditions, and extraordinary circumstances that require professionalism and a gentle sense of humor.

APPRENTICESHIPS

Apprenticeships involve training while working as a paid employee for an employer who helps the apprentice learn a particular trade. The more formal arrangements also include some classroom hours. Often an apprentice agrees to continue working for a set number of years for that employer. The U.S. Department of Labor says that apprenticeship is a combination of on-the-job training and related instruction in which workers learn the practical and theoretical aspects of a highly skilled occupation (www.dol.gov/dol/topic/training/apprenticeship.htm).

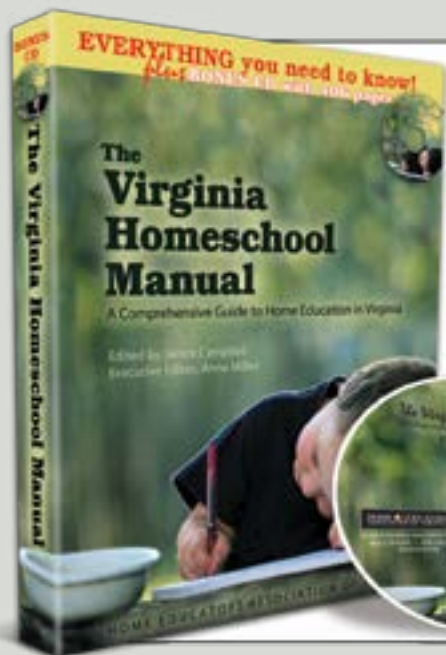
Virginia is a formal sponsor of appren-

ticeships. Employers operating registered apprenticeships provide apprentices with a minimum of 2,000 hours of on-the-job work experience and a minimum of 144 related instruction hours. There are currently more than 300 approved and active apprenticeable occupations in Virginia, and more than 800 nationwide. You can go to www.doli.virginia.gov/apprenticeship/sponsors_occupations.html to discover which occupations are apprenticeable or to find a registered sponsor in your area. To speak to someone in the Virginia Department of Labor regarding apprenticeships, go to www.doli.virginia.gov/apprenticeship/representatives_headquarters.html. From there you can contact either the headquarters office in Richmond or click on the link for your regional field representative.

EXCELLENT NON-TRADITIONAL EDUCATION

As our world continues to shrink and technology continues to explode, the specialization that can occur in a profession becomes more pronounced. As this occurs, the traditional forms of education morph and grow. The opportunities for our children are limitless, and sometimes matching their skill set with their interests requires non-traditional forms of education. Mentorships, internships, and apprenticeships provide excellent alternatives.

Nancy Coleman describes herself as a crazy, home-educating mother to eight children and Nana to three. She runs half marathons so she doesn't go postal, and is moderately rational...most days. She recognizes a Sovereign God is in control of the insanity of her life.



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I was so moved by the depth of teaching this year. The title of the convention was so perfect...it really seemed that every workshop I went to touched my heart. I walked away with knowledge and tools for living a better life, being a better parent, and homeschooling for the purpose of raising a disciple first, then a scholar. It was just amazing. ~ Amy



Exciting changes at this year's convention blessed families and made this HEAV's largest convention ever, with more than 12,000 participants! Lower, bring-the-whole-family pricing, fabulous speakers, and an expanded Exhibit Hall brought rave reviews from attendees. The extended area allowed for more exhibitors, hands-on exhibits, a demonstration stage, seating areas, an extra concession stand, and larger aisles—giving shoppers extra space to shop in a relaxed atmosphere.

Families savored the environment of shared learning, encouragement, and support, and by God's grace—and through the efforts of hundreds of dedicated volunteers—the hearts of many homeschool families were touched and inspired!



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*Exhibitor sessions, Transcript Boot Camp & Dr. Catherine Millard's sessions were not recorded.



...God really spoke to my heart and gave me a peace that I hadn't had since we decided to homeschool. Thank you for providing these classes. It was exactly what I needed to feel confident that this is the plan God has for my three children and for me. ~ A.C.

The theme "Touching the Heart" was **not** an overstatement. The lessons gleaned from the workshops were priceless. The Holy Spirit convicted me in many of my attitudes, and I am so excited to start our coming school year. Thank you! ~ C.H.

I Am Your Child's Future Employer

Rick Boyer

Hello. I am your child's future employer. No doubt you've thought about me though we haven't met. You're teaching your child at home because you want the best future possible for him (or her). One of the things you're concerned about is your child's preparation for a career. That's wise. Everybody has to make a living doing something, and it's not a good idea to wait until they're grown up and on their own before some preparation is made for that. So I'm going to do you a favor. I'm going to tell you in advance what I look for in a young person I'm considering hiring.

Because of your own schooling, you may be more concerned about grades and tests than you should be. They make a big deal out of such things in school but, frankly, I couldn't care less. Sure, I want your kid to be literate when he comes to see me about a job. I need basic reading, communication, and math skills. But I don't give a rip what your kid's SAT score was. That doesn't translate into a good employee.

If you stop to think about it, you don't care all that much, either. As a consumer, have you ever asked the plumber, your doctor, or the chief of the fire department what sort of test scores he had in school? No. You're not concerned about what he did twenty years ago as a student; you want to know what he can do now. As a professional. For you.

That's where I'm coming from. I've had bright kids and not-so-bright kids work for me, and I've seen good and bad in both. I don't see any way that real intelligence can be measured on tests, but even if it can, that's not what makes an employee a winner in my eyes. I've had too many intelligent jerks on the payroll.

I'll tell you what I'm looking for. And if you're smart, and if you want the best for your kid, you'll pay attention. I've been in business for a long time. I've hired a lot of people, and I've had to fire quite a few. It's not fun being a boss at a time like that, but it comes with the territory. I can't afford to employ your kid because he needs a job or because he's a nice person or because you're a personal friend of mine. But I'll tell you what will make me eager to be your kid's employer, and I can say it in one word. That word is character.

Yes, I said character. With a capital C. I'm not looking for young people who know everything; I'm looking for young people who are good people. I can teach them the job skills they need, but only you can teach them good character.

HONESTY

To start with, I need the character quality of honesty. You'd be surprised how hard it is to find people I can trust to come to work, do their jobs, and not walk out with a bunch of my property. Besides stealing from me, which is terrible, it's even worse when employees steal from my customers. The people who do business here trust me, and I take that seriously. I won't keep an employee who delivers a product or service that is less than the customer intended to pay for. If I send an employee to someone's home to make a delivery or perform some work, I don't want to have to worry about him lifting some of their jewelry or silver. If I can't trust an employee's basic honesty, I can never have a moment's peace or rest.

DILIGENCE

I need diligent people. People who don't have to be horsewhipped to keep them working at a responsible pace. I'm not a slave driver, but I want a real hour's work for an agreed-upon hour's pay. That doesn't sound like I'm asking for much, does it? Yet



you'd be amazed at how few people have any sense of obligation about work. That is, you'd be amazed if you've never been an employer.

HUMILITY

I need humble people. People who don't know everything and don't mind being told there's a better way to do it and are willing to do things the way I prefer, just because I prefer it. After all, I'm writing the check. I want what I want for that money, just as much as you want the exact product or service you expect when you're writing the check as a customer.

LOYALTY

I need loyal people. I don't ask anybody to work for me forever; I understand that people sometimes need to better themselves vocationally or just want to move on to something different. And I understand that loyalty is a two-way street. I try to take care of my people. All I ask is that they give me a decent amount of consideration and act as if I have needs, too. Because I do.

RESPECT

I need people who are respectful. If your kids backtalk you all the time, if they're mouthy and rude, please don't send them to me. I know they're driving you crazy, and they'll do the same to me. Worse, they'll be a thorn in the flesh to their supervisor and co-workers. Your kid does not have enough talent to make up for the problems he'll cause here if he doesn't respect authority and—well, just basic human dignity. If he doesn't respect people, I don't need him.

THOROUGHNESS

I need people who are thorough. A lick and a promise just aren't good enough for my customers. Surely you've had the experience of paying good money for a car with hidden defects, kitchen knives that won't stay sharp, an overdone steak, or a cup of lukewarm coffee. Don't send me your kid with a resume in his hand if he won't follow through on projects and get them done all the way.

PATIENCE

A little patience would be helpful, too. Your kid will have to work with bosses, fellow employees, and customers. If he can't control his temper and put forth the effort to hide his natural irritations a bit, he'll constantly wage word-wars with the other workers—and probably with some of the people who give us their money in exchange for our services. After all, they're people, too. They

occasionally have a bad hair day and may need a little forbearance. If an employee has the maturity to control his temper, we can satisfactorily do business with most people. If not, a moody customer may become an ex-customer. I can't afford that.

CONTENTMENT

Have you ever thought about contentment as a job qualification? By that I don't mean a guy who never wants to rise above his present position in the company. I like ambition and I respect it. I reward it in my company; the person who is always trying to be better gets raises and promotions here. The contentment I'm talking about is the willingness to tolerate the little discomforts of the present situation and accept them as a normal part of life.

One of the most annoying things for an employer is workers who constantly gripe. Nothing is ever good enough for them. If something about the work or the company policies or the boss is less than ideal, these folks make sure to spread the discontent. Suffering in silence is not an option, nor is going through the chain of command and trying to work out a reasonable solution. No, these types have to gripe and fuss and make it a lousy day at work for everybody around them. It never seems to occur to them that I really try to make this a good place to work. Or that there are limitations on me as well, and I can't control every little detail of the situation. For Pete's sake, we're not being paid to have a party; we're being paid to do what the customer wants us to do. We can try to have everything just as we want it after work, but even that's pretty hard to pull off.

PRUDENCE

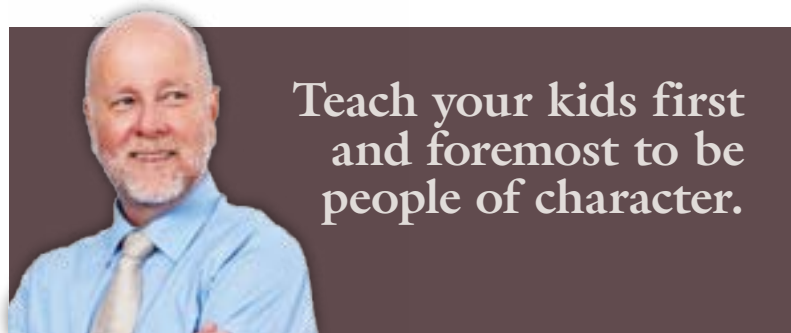
Finally, I'd appreciate it if you'd teach your kid some prudence. I mean good, old-fashioned common sense. Some of the people who have worked here didn't seem to know enough to come in out of the rain. The sort of people you have to leave a trail of bread crumbs for if you want them to get to the right place at the right time. Call it prudence, call it good sense, call it wisdom if you want to. It's an aspect of character that reduces waste in time, energy, and expense. It is critical to productivity, efficiency, and even safety. You

wouldn't believe some of the stupid things I've seen people do, causing endless problems for others and even putting fellow employees in danger, just because of a lack of judgment.

CHARACTER COUNTS!

I'm not saying your kid has to be a cherub to work here. I'm not perfect, and neither is anybody else in the company. All I'm asking is that applicants show up with a good attitude and act as if they have a decent degree of consideration for the needs of others. If they have that attitude, they will meet the needs of the job and climb up the career ladder at a good pace.

So if I may offer a little advice from the other side of the employment relationship,



teach your kids first and foremost to be people of character. They'll make the workplace a better place for themselves and everybody else. If they work for me, I'll see to it that they make more money, get more appreciation, and rise faster in position than any straight-A whiz kid who ever walked through my door thinking he was doing me a favor by applying for a job here. A young person of character can do well in my business or in any business in which he chooses to work.

Come to think of it, though, that may not last long. Young people like that usually end up being their own boss.

Often described as the Will Rogers of home education, Rick Boyer's unique blend of scriptural wisdom and sidesplitting humor makes him one of the most sought-after speakers for homeschool conferences. Rick and Marilyn began teaching the eldest of their fourteen children at home in 1980 and are still homeschooling their three youngest. They have authored several books on homeschooling and Christian parenthood. Visit the Boyers at www.thelearningparent.com.

If you missed Rick speaking at the convention, it is not too late to order an MP3 of his talks! Go to www.resoundingvoice.com/catalog/?cid=46.



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WHAT MY FATHER TAUGHT ME ABOUT BEING

an entrepreneur

MIKE CHENEY

I was thirteen and my brother Jay was ten when we first went into business for ourselves. We considered our eight-year-old brother Steve to be a liability due to his tender age. Also, we didn't think he could pull his share of the work but we were convinced he would drink as many sodas as us big boys. Steve was out—too much of a drain on capital. Our first hard-nosed decision was behind us.

THE BEGINNING

We'd had some prior experience as newspaper delivery boys and babysitters for hire. However, this was to be our first bona-fide entrepreneurial venture. We had a business plan, business cards, operating capital, and equipment. The business plan consisted of our agreement to go door to door through the neighborhood, hand out our handwritten business cards, and promise to mow lawns with our dad's mower. Our market area was limited to the distance we were willing to push the mower down the street. Our operating capital was enough to buy gas for the mower and keep us in sodas on those hot summer days. What else did two young brothers need in order to strike out on their own? The world of mowing lawns for profit was ours for the taking.

THE EXPERIENCE

Our dad told us that we were to conduct ourselves as gentlemen, start and finish on time, and complete any job we agreed to take, even if it turned out that we had underbid the work. As I recall, we picked up a few mowing jobs and managed to get the work done without any accounting scandals or serious workplace injuries. We proved to be entrepreneurs, although mowing lawns was not to be our life's work.

Dad's **praise and encouragement gave us confidence to proceed even when we were short on experience.**

A couple of years later, as budding young apartment and house painters, we landed the contract to paint the interior of an old mansion in downtown Denver. The majority of our prior experience came from helping

our dad paint apartments, as he had a side job as assistant manager of the apartment complex where we lived. We thought the owners of the mansion were taken by our professionalism and brimming confidence. Our enthusiasm and excitement had gotten in the way of our clear thinking, however, and we'd bid the job far too low. This became evident to us shortly after work began. Dad told us we would have to complete the job as agreed. However, he helped us do the work and paid for many of the supplies out of his own pocket. Though the job was a financial disaster, we had a great time working together, laboring far into the night, eating fast food, and sleeping on the floor of the mansion in order to save driving time to and from home. The customer was pleased and we survived the experience, learning some terrific lessons in the process.

THE RULES

During our formative years our dad was not self-employed. Nonetheless, he was involved in the development and execution of our plans. The fact that our dad had a full-time job did not keep him from working with us. He missed some sleep, used his influence, and—we found out later—spent some of his own money on our ventures. He was an encouragement to

our dreams and aspirations. Dad let us know that he was excited about what we were doing and that he was proud of us. He let everyone else know it, too. His praise and encouragement gave us confidence to proceed even when we were short on experience.

He saw to it that we kept our word. Whether our mistakes were big or small, he demanded that we finish the job. In the mansion-painting caper, he helped push us over the finish line.

Sometimes he let us fail. I know Dad used to bite his lip as my brother and I, guided by a half-baked plan, headed over the cliff of failure. I don't think we would have learned the lessons without experiencing the full reality of the consequences.

THE RESULT

As young men, my brother opened an HVAC service company and I entered the real estate business. He recently sold his company. I am still in the real-estate and property management business.

Eventually Dad also became self-employed in the real estate and property management business. Like sons, like father.

Be not afraid to start.

Mike Cheney and his wife, Roxie, have two children whom they have homeschooled since birth. The Cheneys have served Christian Home Educators of Colorado as conference coordinators since 2001, and Mike has served as CHEC's operations director since 2002. As the current director of the national AME Program (Apprenticeship, Mentorship, Entrepreneurship – www.ameprogram.com), Mike has a passion to share a vision for discipleship in all kinds of businesses, and he is involved in several entrepreneurial ventures.



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LEADING THE TROOPS

JOHN SMITH

As an Air Force Lieutenant Colonel and former commander of a C-5 airlift squadron, I have a lot of experience leading troops to achieve objectives. Similarly, as a father of seven homeschooled kids, I have a lot of experience trying to raise kids to love God and be the best that they can be. After twenty-one years in the Air Force and seventeen years as a parent, I've learned that principles of motivating others remain the same; it's only the audience and the techniques that differ. So in our homeschooling I try to make use of the same three pillars on which I based my command of a squadron: mission, training, and recognition.

MISSION

Troops need to understand the mission. It provides a framework for all that takes place in the squadron and is a means to judge unit success. The mission of my C-5 squadron was to provide combat-ready aircrews to move airlift sorties safely and efficiently around the world. We did this in support of war efforts, regional contingencies, and in response to natural disasters like earthquakes or floods. We flew wherever the government of the United States directed. When we landed, we made life better, we saved lives, and we brought hope.

Homeschooled kids need a mission too. All of us have a mission to serve God using the talents He has given us. Easily said, but how does that apply to a twelve-year-old boy who complains that math has nothing to do with serving God as a professional baseball player someday?

In addition to the standard parental arguments about why it's good to learn math, I have tried to break the "mission" down to a more basic, near-term, obtainable level. "Your mission is to complete school by two o'clock this afternoon." Better yet, "Your mission is to complete math in the next ninety minutes." Even soldiers have an easier job understanding what they need to do when told to "take that hill!" rather than "win the war!"

TRAINING

Training is essential to the military. Airmen were regularly coming and going in my squadron. Consequently, our squadron worked very hard at training all crew members so that they could pass their flight examinations and continue to upgrade to higher crew qualifications; otherwise, all the experienced crew members with the highest crew qualifications would eventually leave the squadron with no one able to replace them. I had a saying, "Training is like breathing. It must happen constantly in order to survive." A well thought-out training program is imperative for homeschooled kids as well. Jana, my wife, handles the day-to-day instruction. But I have played a significant role in advising her on curriculum, courses, and other activities (sports, debate,

Scouts, AWANA, volunteer efforts, etc.) that challenge our kids, build their character, and prepare them for greater responsibilities as they grew older. Every kid is different so we have tried to tailor what our kids get involved in to polish what we see as their God-given abilities.

An important aspect of training is testing and validation. A method we use is a homeschool co-op where we pick some courses with classroom instruction once or twice a week. Our instruction gets reinforced and validated by another independent authority. This has the additional benefit of greatly cutting down conflict at home.

RECOGNITION

One of the best parts about being a squadron commander was recognizing aircrew members for their outstanding performance. I made a big event out of promoting my troops and awarding medals.

I really enjoyed putting on my Service Dress and holding a formal event at least once a month. There, I brought the squadron to attention and called these individuals to the front. I had the executive officer read the citation and then I promoted the airman or pinned on the medal. The front row was reserved for spouse, family, and friends. I took the opportunity to praise and thank these individuals as well, for without their support, the airman would not have been able to experience such success.

Another favorite technique of mine was to say good words about an airman to a third party whom I knew would relay my comments back to the airman. I think there are few greater motivators than an individual knowing that the boss is talking well about them behind their back.

Likewise, recognizing our kid's performance is absolutely vital to their success, confidence, and self-esteem. At the dinner table, I publicly praise the success of one in front of the others. At other times, I'll talk privately to Jana, but loud enough for an intended child to hear, about how well they did in a certain endeavor. I tell our older kids of the successes of a younger one and encourage them to go and make a big deal of it with their sibling.

We make every attempt to attend award ceremonies and cheer on our family members. Also, I try to remember how much Jana has contributed to their success. From helping them study to taxiing them around, she deserves praise too.

So, if I understand the mission and can break it down into manageable chunks for my kids, if I get them involved in challenging training that's reinforced by other authority figures, and if I take every opportunity to publicly recognize their performance, then I will lay a good foundation of motivation to encourage them on to success both in the sight of God and men.

John and his wife, Jana, have been married for twenty-nine years and have eight children—four boys and four girls. Their third child, Zane, died from leukemia when he was two years old. John is a twenty-five-year veteran of the Air Force and has more than 3500 hours as a pilot. He is currently serving as a contractor supporting the Air Force Science and Technology directorate at the Pentagon. This article originally appeared in The Virginia Home Educator, Summer 2003. Reprinted with permission from the author.

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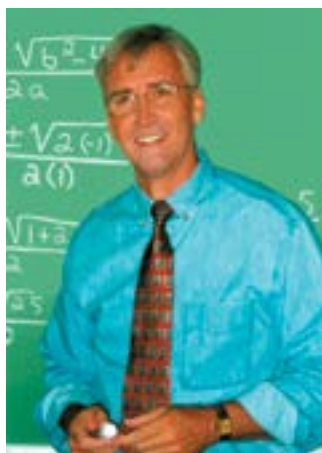
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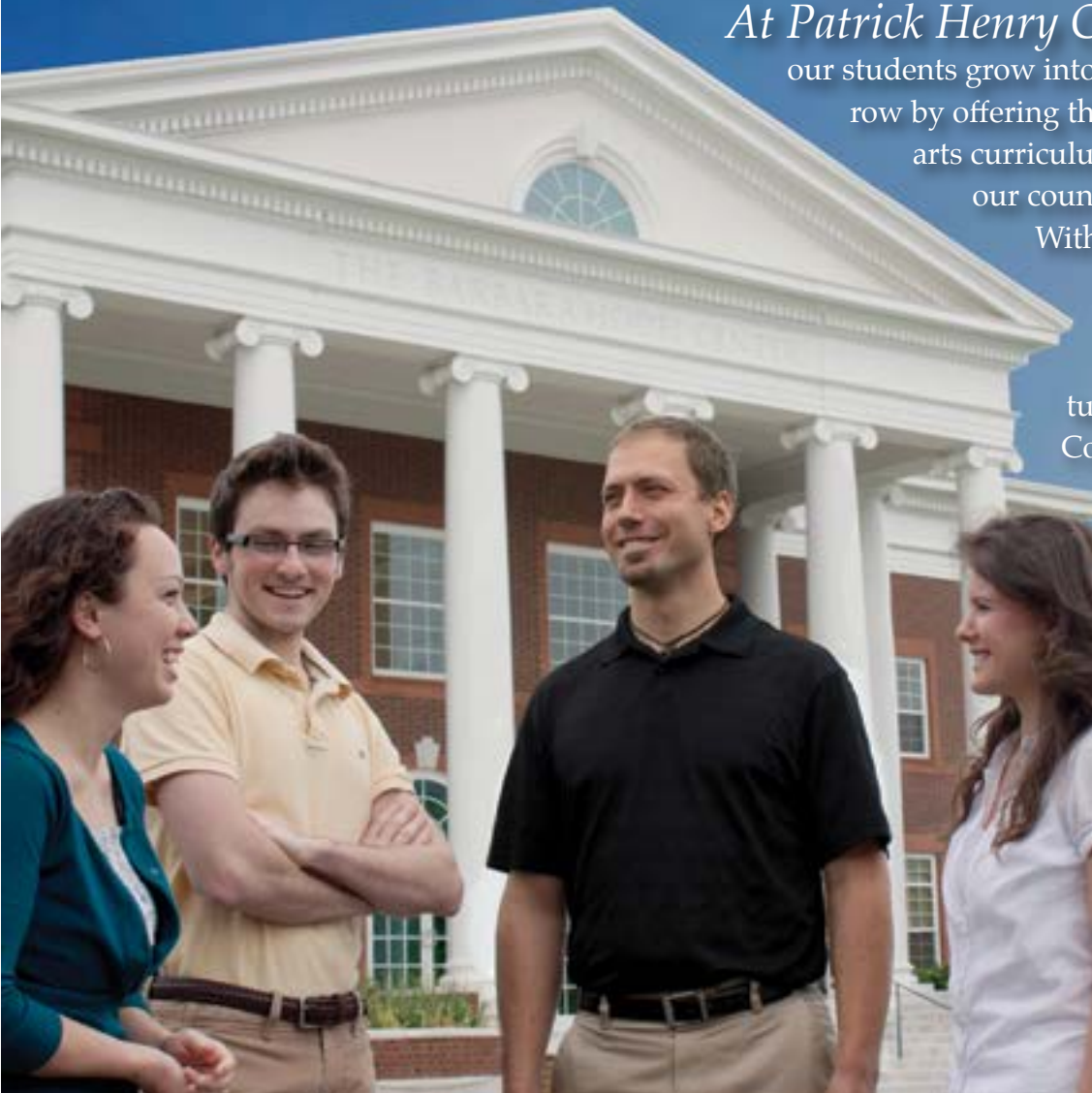
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September 20-21 ■ Asheville, NC ■ www.biltmore.com/groups/education/programs/home_school.asp

FRONTIER CULTURE MUSEUM

October 5 ■ Staunton ■ www.frontiermuseum.org

VIRGINIA STATE FAIR

October 1 ■ Doswell ■ www.statefair.com

NATURAL BRIDGE OF VIRGINIA

October 4 ■ Natural Bridge
www.naturalbridgeva.com/youth/default.php

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November 2 ■ Mount Vernon ■ www.mountvernon.org

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