

HOMESCHOOL *Arizona*



A PUBLICATION OF ARIZONA FAMILIES FOR HOME EDUCATION

Spring 2025

**Federalism:
From Founding Principles
to Modern Practice**

Tyler Bonin

**Finding Competitive
Opportunities for Your
Homeschooled Student**

Natalie Mack

**Key Advice for
Attending Your
Homeschool Convention**

Kathy Kuhl

**What's Next? Answering
High School's Most
Unwanted Question**

Courtenay Burden

IN THIS ISSUE:

Capitol Day Recap, Legislative Update,
AFHE Used Curriculum Sale

2025 Convention
Preview



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ABOUT AFHE

Arizona Families for Home Education (AFHE) is the statewide organization that has been serving the needs and protecting the rights of Arizona's homeschooling families since 1983. AFHE is a 501(c)(3) non-profit educational, religious, and charitable corporation directed by a Christian board. AFHE membership is available to all Arizona homeschool parents.

OUR MISSION

AFHE exists to: **INSPIRE** parents to homeschool their children; **PROMOTE** parent-directed, privately funded, home-based education; **PRESERVE** the freedom to homeschool; and **SUPPORT** parents who choose a home-based education option for their children.

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Featured Articles

8 Federalism: From Founding Principles to Modern Practice

Tyler Bonin, 2025 Capitol Day Civics Workshop Presenter

10 Finding Competitive Opportunities for Your Homeschooled Students

Natalie Mack, 2025 AFHE Convention Featured Speaker

14 Key Advice for Attending Your Homeschool Convention

Kathy Kuhl, 2025 AFHE Convention Featured Speaker

29 What's Next? Answering High School's Most Unwanted Question

Courtenay Burden

In This Issue

- 4 AFHE Spring 2025 Legislative Report
- 6 Homeschool Day at the Capitol Recap
- 12 AFHE Used Curriculum Sale

2025 CONVENTION PREVIEW

- 17 Keynote Speakers
- 18 Featured Speakers
- 20 Registration Rates and Options
- 22 Teen Programs
- 23 Volunteering at the Convention
- 23 Admission Discounts
- 24 Moms Night Out with Carrie De Francisco
- 24 "Thank You!" to our 2025 Convention Sponsors
- 25 Educación en el Hogar Mini-Conferencia
- 26 You Can Homeschool! Mini-Conference
- 27 ASVAB Opportunity; Reaching Higher Expo

Advertisers

- 2 America's Navy
- 13 Answers in Genesis
- 13 BJU Press Homeschool
- 28 Trail Life USA





SPRING 2025 LEGISLATIVE REPORT

by Michelle Jibben, AFHE Director of Government Affairs

AFHE's Government Affairs team has been busy this spring serving our community and actively working to safeguard hard-won freedoms for Arizona homeschool families.

The First Regular Session of the Fifty-Seventh Legislature began on January 13 and is in full swing. Our team has reviewed over 1,800 bills, resolutions, and memorials, watching for legislation on any topics that could impact homeschooling, such as school choice, parental rights, compulsory education, teacher certifications, student testing, and more. Our process involves people power, and we are thankful for a dedicated team that diligently watches bills daily which could have direct or indirect impact on homeschools. Each session, we see well-meaning legislators introduce bills that would unintentionally cause vulnerabilities to homeschool statutes. When this happens, we meet with legislators to discuss the impact of these bills, occasionally seeking amendments to resolve any concerns. We attend House and Senate committee meetings, utilize the Request to Speak (RTS) system to register an opinion, and speak as needed.

Another area that we monitor is ESA legislation, as these bills can have implications for homeschools depending on how they are written. In this session there have been over 20 bills which aim to add regulations to the ESA, none of which were heard in committees. This continues to be an area of contention among legislators, and AFHE is resolved to maintain clear distinctions between homeschooling and other at-home educational options. It benefits everyone for there to be an educational option that remains outside of government funding.

Educating the public as well as school district staff about homeschooling is an ongoing part of our work. We recently became aware of information on a district website that was misleading parents regarding accreditation for their homeschools and GEDs for their graduating students. The truth is that neither measure is necessary for you to provide your graduate with a valid diploma and transcript in Arizona. We are actively working to resolve this issue and we happily address concerns such as these on your behalf.

The First Regular Session of the 57th Legislature began on January 13, 2025. Even before the session opened, AFHE's team started reviewing bills and we are tracking:


1,800+
bills, memorials,
and resolutions
introduced


Bills that are
assigned to
committees and
undergo multiple
"reads."

Bills which
"cross over" for
consideration in
both chambers.

You can find more information on our website at afhe.org/az-law-and-affidavit. And if you have questions or you receive information that you are uncertain about, reach out to us at legislative@afhe.org or homeschool@afhe.org.

Because bills in other state legislatures could also be attempted here in Arizona, we must carefully watch what is happening across the nation. Other states are currently experiencing attempts to roll back homeschool freedoms through the organized efforts of a coalition of disgruntled former homeschooled students.

 **VIRGINIA** homeschoolers worked to defeat a bill this session which posed a serious threat to religious liberty and homeschool freedom. Their state organization's government affairs team tracked daily developments and unusual legislative maneuvers, eventually blocking the bill in committee.

 In **ILLINOIS**, a bill currently working its way through the legislature would have a sobering effect on homeschooling. This bill would place teacher qualifications on parents, allow for government review of

curriculum and student work, require compliance with public school health and immunization regulations, and more. Despite overwhelming public opposition, the legislature has so far continued to advance this bill (at the time of this printing).

Freedoms that have been won through decades of effective advocacy are facing new threats across the nation, and we must diligently seek to protect those freedoms. Your participation in these efforts, by joining AFHE to stand together as a strong membership organization and paying attention to legislative reports such as these, helps us to continue to advocate for you and your family.

AFHE believes that parents are best equipped to determine how to educate their children, and we are thankful to live in a state where parents have a variety of options available and that the freedoms we appreciate as homeschoolers are plentiful. Our efforts remain focused on preserving the maximum freedom option of homeschooling in Arizona as well as on retaining the homeschool-dedicated statutes that have taken over four decades to come to fruition. Please continue to pray with us and for us in these endeavors.



Arizona State Senate in session

afhe Homeschool Day at the Capitol

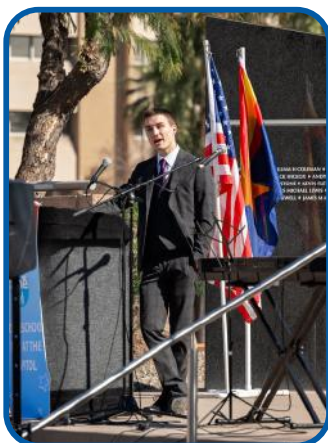
We gathered to learn about and celebrate freedom in Arizona!



On a bright and beautiful day in February, AFHE hosted its biennial Homeschool Day at the Capitol. Families gathered at Wesley Bolin Memorial Plaza for a rally that celebrated the blessings and freedoms that come with educating children at home. We were also joined by special guests and legislative staff members.



The special day began with a civics workshop for high school students, held in the Historic Senate Chambers of the Capitol Museum. The students examined the history of the first ten amendments to the U.S. Constitution and how they were carefully designed to protect individual freedoms. Tyler Bonin, the Civics Education Specialist at the Goldwater Institute's Van Sittert Center for Constitutional Advocacy, led the class.



Rally attendees enjoyed hearing from several students who shared their talents. The American Heritage Girls Troop AZ 1318 opened and closed the event with a flag ceremony. The crowd sang the national anthem led by Katie Wasylenko, and the Boone family led singing for a selection of patriotic songs. Jack Spurling shared an original speech. Elizabeth and Josephine Lee performed "Sleepers Awake" by Bach on keyboard and flute, and Silas Miera played guitar and sang "God Bless the USA."



February 20, 2025

Thank you to all who attended and contributed!

We were joined by special speakers including: Kevin Boden, staff attorney with the Home School Legal Defense Association (HSLDA); Arizona State Treasurer Kimberly Yee; Aaron Kushner, a homeschool graduate and faculty member at ASU's School of Civic and Economic Thought & Leadership; and Tyler Bonin who had led the high school civics workshop. The speakers all spoke of placing high value on parental rights, homeschool freedom, and American civic values.



We heard updates on the upcoming 42nd annual Arizona Home Education Convention in July – *Learning Together Arizona* – as well as a report on the current legislative session.

Beautifully packaged homemade goodies were provided to many legislative offices thanks to homeschool families who baked and prepared their delicious favorites.

The event ended with the opportunity to picnic on the grounds, tour the Capitol Museum, and learn about how to register for an account to use Arizona's Request to Speak program. It was a lovely day filled with learning, celebration of freedoms, and encouragement for the road ahead.



Photographs provided by Candice Melton Photography



FEDERALISM

FROM FOUNDING PRINCIPLES TO MODERN PRACTICE



The powers delegated by the proposed Constitution to the federal government are few and defined. Those which are to remain in the State governments are numerous and indefinite.

James Madison, Federalist 45, 1788

by Tyler Bonin

Having traveled and lived across the United States, I have witnessed firsthand the amazing diversity in geography and regional cultures that make up the fabric of this country. Phoenix is my home now, and being an avid hiker and trail runner, I find myself greeted daily by rocky peaks and towering Saguaro cacti. However, Arizona seems a world away from where I grew up in New England, which was marked by frigid, snowy winters and craggy coastal shores.

It's not just the topography—preferences and priorities among various states' citizens differ widely as well. That's why public policy must be tailored at the local level, in order to reflect the values and concerns of citizens. How can a nation as large as the United States ensure responsive decision-making? It's called "federalism"—and it's the mechanism which the Framers sought to provide for national unity while ensuring states' autonomy.

WHERE DID FEDERALISM COME FROM?

Supporting the Constitution's ratification in June of 1788, "Federalists" sought to establish a stronger (but still not *too* strong) central government compared to what had existed in the United States' first try at a government framework, the Articles of

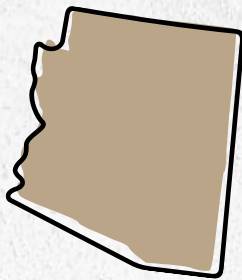
Confederation. The Federalist Papers, authored by Alexander Hamilton, James Madison, and John Jay under pseudonyms in 1787 and 1788, presented a series of over eighty essays that offered insight and argument for the ratification of the Constitution. Meanwhile another group known as the "Antifederalists"—who were even more worried that the Constitution would give way to excessively centralized government power—did succeed in having the Constitutional Convention create a Bill of Rights.

Thus, the Constitution catalyzed a system in which the federal government was given the power to address issues of a national nature, which affect all citizens, such as international treaties, national defense, and interstate commerce. However, the Tenth Amendment ("The powers not delegated to the United States by the Constitution, nor prohibited by it to the States, are reserved to the States respectively, or to the people") made it crystal clear that the federal government's powers were limited to those explicitly granted to it by the Constitution.

Therefore, myriad pieces of legislation related to education, family matters, and general governance are to be made at the state and local levels, where

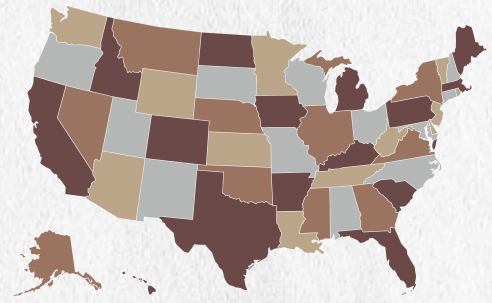
the relationship between lawmakers and the people exists in proximity, rather than by government workers thousands of miles away.

Federalism offers several benefits that help ensure a balance between local interests and national unity. First, it allows states to maintain control over matters that are best handled at the local level, ensuring that policies can be tailored to the specific needs of a region. When it comes to land management policy, for instance, public concerns in Arizona will be vastly different than those found by citizens in a coastal New England state.



Decentralized decision-making also allows for innovative approaches to pressing societal problems. In 1932, Supreme Court Justice Louis D. Brandeis wrote, “A single courageous state may, if its citizens choose, serve as a laboratory and try novel social and economic experiments without risk to the rest of the country.” State legislators are thus better positioned to respond to problems with new approaches, the efficacy of which can be measured by a voting constituency. Most recently, the principle of federalism ensured that individual states like Florida, Georgia, or Arizona could more quickly reopen schools and businesses in the wake of COVID lockdowns, even as national “experts” and teachers’ unions pushed for ongoing blanket closures across the country.

Furthermore, federalism ensures a system of checks and balances. The states can challenge the federal government’s authority when they believe it has overreached its constitutional limits, while the federal government can also step in when it deems that a state law violates the U.S. Constitution. This balance of power ensures that individual liberties are protected.



FEDERALISM AND THE FRICTIONS OF GOVERNMENT

In recent years, however, this balance of power envisioned by the Framers has been upended. The federal government has increasingly expanded its reach, at the expense of state-level autonomy. This has also created a system in which issues related to states’ powers and federal overreach are increasingly resolved by the Supreme Court.

FEDERALISM TODAY AND TOMORROW

Federalism is a cornerstone of our constitutional republic, ensuring that the balance of power between national and state government protects individual freedoms and promotes local decision-making.

If you’re interested in learning more about the philosophical foundations of the United States, and you’re passionate about liberty, consider entering Goldwater Institute’s 2025 Vision of Liberty Scholarship Competition. This is a great opportunity for students to delve deeply into America’s founding principles such as federalism, make their creative voice heard, and earn up to \$1,000 in scholarships (in addition to awards up to \$500 for their classroom or homeschool teacher). Whether through an essay or a creative video, students can inspire their peers to learn more about the foundations of the United States. Learn more at goldwaterinstitute.org/visionofliberty.



TYLER BONIN is the Civics Education Specialist at the Goldwater Institute’s Van Sittert Center for Constitutional Advocacy. Prior to joining the Institute, Tyler managed marketing efforts at State Policy Network and the Classic Learning Test (CLT). Tyler served as a U.S. Marine and is a veteran of Operation Iraqi Freedom. He holds degrees from Campbell University and Duke University.

[GOLDWATERINSTITUTE.ORG](https://goldwaterinstitute.org)

FINDING COMPETITIVE OPPORTUNITIES

for your homeschooled student

by Natalie Mack

Let's discuss an important topic: finding competitive opportunities for your homeschooled student. You might wonder, "Why is this necessary? Isn't competition something that happens in public school?" While it's true that public schools often have more structured competitive environments, homeschooled students can greatly benefit from similar opportunities. Let's explore why these experiences matter and how to find them.

WHY COMPETITIVE OPPORTUNITIES MATTER

Many parents think competition might be stressful or unnecessary, but there are plenty of positive aspects:

- **Skill Development:** Participating in competitive activities helps students develop crucial life skills—teamwork, communication, and leadership. These skills are essential whether your child plans to attend college or enter the workforce directly after high school.
- **Stepping Out of Comfort Zones:** For younger students, engaging in group-oriented activities can make the transition to high school smoother. It can be daunting for a ninth grader to suddenly be thrust into group projects and competitive environments without prior experience. Starting early can help them become comfortable in these settings.
- **Personal Growth:** Engaging in competitive activities allows students to discover their passions, learn how to advocate for themselves, and communicate their values. It also provides them with the tools to navigate differing opinions and collaborate effectively.

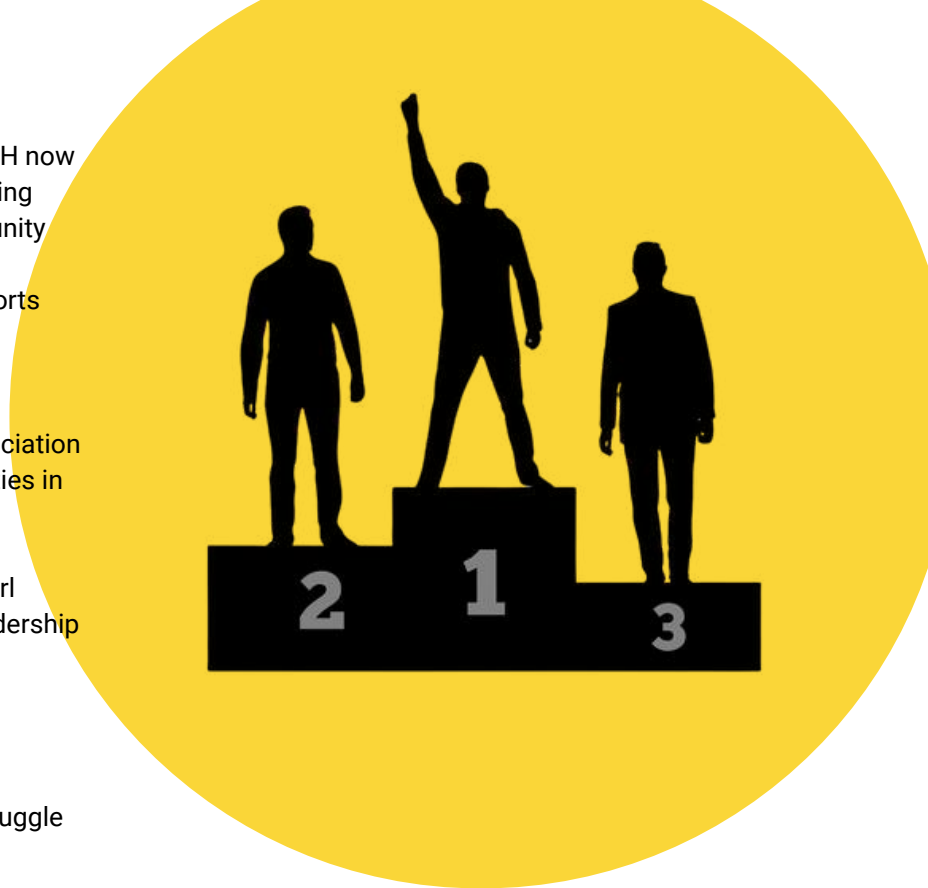


TYPES OF COMPETITIVE OPPORTUNITIES

Now that we understand why competition is beneficial, let's look at some specific opportunities available for homeschooled students:

- **National Beta Club:** This organization offers leadership summits and competitions in academics, arts, and service. It's a fantastic way to get involved with other motivated students.
- **Toastmasters:** Specifically for young speakers, Toastmasters offers clubs for kids to develop their public speaking and leadership skills.

- **4-H:** While often associated with agriculture, 4-H now encompasses a wide range of activities, including STEM projects, leadership training, and community service.
- **Sports:** In addition to physical activity, local sports teams and leagues provide teamwork and competitive experiences.
- **Debate Clubs:** Organizations like the National Christian Forensics and Communications Association (NCFCA) and Stoa offer competitive opportunities in speech and debate, which can greatly enhance communication skills.
- **Scouting Programs:** Groups like Boy Scouts, Girl Scouts, and American Heritage Girls foster leadership and teamwork through various activities and challenges.



BALANCING TIME AND COMMITMENT

As a homeschool mom of five, I understand the struggle of fitting in extracurricular activities with our busy schedules. The key is to choose a few meaningful opportunities rather than overwhelm your student with too many commitments. The benefits of this approach will pay off later in life.

Additionally, if your student plans to apply for college, these carefully selected competitive activities can strengthen their applications. Admissions committees often look for well-rounded candidates who have engaged in meaningful extracurricular activities.

ENCOURAGING PARTICIPATION

When it comes to encouraging your kids to participate, remember that you know what's best for them. While it's great to discuss options, sometimes you may need to make the call. Present the opportunity, explain its importance, and involve them in the decision-making process—but ultimately, trust your instincts.



My other children have often told our youngest, “Listen to Mom; she knows what she’s talking about.” It’s a testament to the value of these experiences in our family.

Finding competitive opportunities for your homeschooled student is vital for their personal development, skill-building, and future success—regardless of their academic plans. Take the time to explore what’s available in your community, and consider how these experiences can enhance your child’s education.



NATALIE MACK is an author, TEDx speaker, and experienced twenty-three years military home educator. She encourages homeschoolers that you can homeschool to college successfully! Natalie is a retired Navy chaplain’s spouse and mom of four college graduates and a 12th grader. Natalie will be a featured speaker at the 2025 AFHE Convention.

NATALIE-MACK.COM

Two Essay Contests!

Vision of Liberty Scholarship Contest
 This is your chance to dive into America’s founding principles and earn up to \$1,000 in scholarship prizes! Entry deadline is 5.31.25.
goldwaterinstitute.org/visionofliberty/

Naval Horizons STEM Essay Contest
 This contest introduces students to cutting-edge STEM topics through an engaging video series! Entry deadline is 6.16.25.
navalhorizons.us

Used Curriculum Sale



Stretch Your Homeschool Dollars at the AFHE Used Curriculum Sale!

Mark your calendar for **Saturday, June 7th**—
AFHE is hosting the biggest homeschool bargain event of the year!

At the **Statewide Used Curriculum Sale (UCS)**, you'll find an incredible selection of **deeply discounted** books, curriculum, and educational resources—all donated by generous homeschool families across Arizona. Whether you're stocking up for next year or searching for that one missing piece, this is your chance to **SAVE BIG** while supporting a great cause!

WHY SHOP THE UCS?

- ✓ Save Money – Get high-quality homeschool materials at unbeatable prices.
- ✓ Support Other Families – Every dollar raised goes to the **Hope for Homeschool Fund**, helping families in financial need continue their homeschool journey.
- ✓ Sustainable & Smart – Give great curriculum a second life and keep resources in the homeschool community!




WANT TO DONATE?

Do you have gently used curriculum collecting dust? Pay it forward! Donate your materials to the UCS and help other families while making a real impact. Scan the QR code here to set up your donation.

SCAN TO DONATE



EVENT DETAILS

 Saturday, June 7, 2025  Location: Love of Christ Lutheran Church
 Time: 9 AM - 4 PM 1525 N Power Rd, Mesa, AZ 85205

Visit afhe.org/used-curriculum-sale for more details on shopping, donating, and how YOU can be part of this exciting event!

Shop smart. Give generously. Support homeschooling. See you at the UCS!

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BJU Press Homeschool curriculum gives you the tools you need, rooted in the solid biblical foundation you want. Our textbooks, video lessons, and digital learning tools can flex to fit your homeschool style and ensure your student confidently steps beyond homeschool, ready for whatever God has next.



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bjupresshomeschool.com

key advice for attending your HOMESCHOOL CONVENTION

by Kathy Kuhl

I once heard a convention center worker ask, “What do people do at a homeschool convention?” The second answered, “Buy textbooks?” That’s like guessing people go to the beach to take walks. True, but not the whole story.

Homeschool conventions are not bookstores. A homeschool convention can feature dozens to hundreds of workshops, a huge selection of books, cool educational toys, and kits. I tell parents and teachers that even if you plan never to homeschool, you should visit a homeschool convention!

Of course, conventions *especially* feature fellow homeschoolers to meet and learn from. Don’t underestimate the connections you can make with others at a convention. It inspires me to be together with other homeschoolers from different places and perspectives, united in our mission to teach our children well.

I love it when I can connect parents. I have sometimes introduced two moms after learning they both had adopted children with similar special needs. Nearly everywhere I speak, I have the privilege of connecting parents homeschooling kids with similar challenges. Once a mother lamented to me that she knew no one else anywhere in her county who homeschooling a child with Fetal Alcohol Syndrome (FAE). But, providentially, the other mom visiting my booth had just told me a similar story. So I introduced them. Twenty minutes later, they tore themselves away, exchanging hugs and planning to meet.

Read on for some ways you can make the most of your time at the convention!

prepare ahead of time

- **Plan ahead** which workshops to attend. Read the workshop list before you go, those descriptions, and the speaker biographies. Some speakers are so good you will want to hear them, even if their topics aren’t your top priority.
- **Look at the schedule.** Does the convention schedule allow enough time for shopping? You may want to skip a workshop or two in order to shop, especially if you can buy recordings of the talks.
- Notice which **booths you don’t want to miss.** Mark them on the vendor hall map before you leave home.
- Wear **comfortable shoes.**
- Bring a **water bottle.**
- If you might buy curriculum, bring a **comfortable backpack**, a rolling cart, or even a wheelee suitcase. A tote bag full of books gets too heavy. [At the AFHE Convention you can utilize the Book Locker to store your purchases!]
- **Bring your spouse** to the convention. You can attend workshops together or split up to cover more ground.
- **Plan an easy supper** for when you return home.



Photo Credit: Jeanette Brown
(In The Light Photography)
and Maria Bain

maximize your experience

At the homeschool convention:

- Go up and down **every aisle** in the exhibit hall. You never know what you'll see!
- As you go up and down, **mark up your exhibit hall map. Note the booths** you want to return to.
- Some things sell out early. **Don't wait until the last minute** to buy!

stay sane!

If you're taking along a child with any sensory issues, or if you personally find conventions a bit overwhelming, consider these tips for sanity:

- **Pack a lunch they'll enjoy** in a cooler and retreat to your car for a break, if the weather and distance from the parking lot permit.
- **Take a break outdoors**, or find a quiet hallway to regroup. I like to review my notes and map, and think over what I've been learning.
- **Take earplugs** to reduce the noise if your child or you are sensitive to noise and you are attending a very large convention.
- If you're bringing your children, **consider what activities are available for kids**.
- **Go with a friend (or your spouse) and give each other breaks**. Take the kids to an activity or to a children's area for 30-45 minutes while the other shops, then trade.
- **Bringing a sitter or an adult relative** and paying their admission may be worth it. (Could friends or grandparents keep the kids for the day?)

MY TOP TIPS:

- **As you take notes, star any action items:** visit this website, buy that book, ponder this issue, ask that question.
- Before you get home, **summarize those starred action items on a single page. Pick one to do first**. Otherwise, like me, you may find your notes months later and discover you've forgotten much of what you meant to do.



why buy directly at the homeschool convention?

Like a particular vendor? Want vendors to come back? Say it with your wallet. Vendors spend thousands of dollars getting to each event, renting a booth, and paying for travel and food. No matter how professional they are and how great their products look, you'd be surprised how many are small family-owned businesses with tight margins. That \$150 curriculum may not give them much return after they research it and write it, print it, and ship unsold copies to the next convention. Every year, some vendors decide they can no longer afford to go to conventions.

When you buy at the convention or order from the vendors afterwards, you encourage them to come back. The Internet's a good way to shop, **but there's nothing like holding the books and materials in your hands**. Plus, the folks behind the counter probably either used or wrote the material and can answer questions. One author even let me know his curriculum would probably not be good for us, once I explained my child's learning challenges.

So, plan ahead and bring the right gear. Pace yourself and make special preparations if you or your child are going to find the busy atmosphere tiring. Support those who produce good materials by buying directly from them.

HAVE A GREAT TIME AT YOUR YOUR **homeschool convention**



KATHY KUHL equips parents to help children with learning challenges, combining information and insight with practical suggestions, humor, and personal experience. After homeschooling a bright, dyslexic, creative, and highly distractible son, she interviewed 64 families and wrote *Homeschooling Your Struggling Learner*, to help anyone supporting teens and children who "learn differently." Kathy will be a featured speaker at the 2025 AFHE Convention.

LEARNDIFFERENTLY.COM



LEARNING TOGETHER ARIZONA

42nd Annual AFHE Home Education Convention
July 18-19, 2025

Join parents and families from around Arizona for the greatest weekend of encouragement and inspiration of the year! The AFHE Convention is an absolute game-changer for your homeschool.

It brings together professional development for the parent home educator with a one-of-a-kind homeschool shopping experience, plus a reunion of friends for two uplifting days!

It's a weekend planned especially for you!

LISTEN TO *encouraging* SPEAKERS

Attend workshops on a wide variety of topics taught by outstanding featured speakers.

GET EQUIPPED FOR *successful* *homeschooling*

It's a professional development conference for the home educator! Gather ideas, tools, and practical tips for the road ahead.

ENJOY *community*

There's nothing like coming together with so many families who are sharing the homeschool journey.

JOIN THE *fun*

There's so much waiting for you at this year's AFHE Convention, whether you are new to homeschooling or have years of experience.

FIND *curriculum* AND *resources*

Compare and shop in person for the quality curriculum and resources you need.

Visit [AFHE.ORG/CONVENTION-2025](https://afhe.org/convention-2025) for all the details.



KEYNOTE *speakers*



HEIDI ST. JOHN

Heidi St. John is the author of nine books, including *Becoming MomStrong: How to Fight with All That's in You for Your Family and Your Faith* and *MomStrong 365: A One Year Devotional to Encourage and Empower Everyday Moms*. Her first children's book, *The Mouse and the Sea*, was published with Brave Books. Her podcast, "Off the Bench with Heidi St. John," has been downloaded over 24 million times. Heidi has been married to Jay, her college sweetheart, since 1989. The St. Johns reside just outside beautiful Vancouver, Washington, where their non-profit organization, Firmly Planted Family, and the Homeschool Resource Center are based. The St. Johns have seven children, all of whom have been homeschooled, and four grandchildren.

ABRAHAM HAMILTON III

Abraham Hamilton, III (Abe) is a husband, father of six wonderful children, homeschool dad, lawyer, Bible teacher, and national radio and television talk show host. He serves as American Family Association's General Counsel and host of "The Hamilton Corner" which airs Monday through Friday at 5 PM CT on the American Family Radio Network (AFR). He also hosts "The Hamilton Corner" television program, which airs Friday evenings at 8 PM CT on the National Religious Broadcasters Television Network (NRB TV). He has an undergraduate degree in New Testament Biblical Literature and a Juris Doctor degree. Abe is a Home School Legal Defense Association Board Member (HSLDA) and is licensed to practice law in Texas and Louisiana.



— Special Guest Speaker —

MARK HANCOCK

Mark Hancock began his career by founding a national advertising agency and running it for fifteen years. His conversion to Christ led him into ministry as a Youth & College Pastor, Associate Pastor, Homeless Ministry Director, and Global Events Director for an international ministry. Mark holds two master's degrees in mental health counseling and has taught at secular and Christian colleges. An award-winning writer, Mark is the author of *Trail-Ready: 101 Devotions for Dads with Boys*, *Why Are We Sitting Here Until We Die?*, and *Too Much Tubular*, and co-author of *Flight of the Falcon*. He serves as Chief Executive Officer of Trail Life USA and lives near Greenville, SC, with his wife of over 35 years. They have two sons.





Featured

speakers



DEAHDRALYNN ATENCIO



KATHY BECKER



KEVIN BODEN



CHRISTIAN CÓRDOVA



CHRISTINA GARRETSON
& GALE JONES



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PATRICK NURRE



JESSICA PARNELL



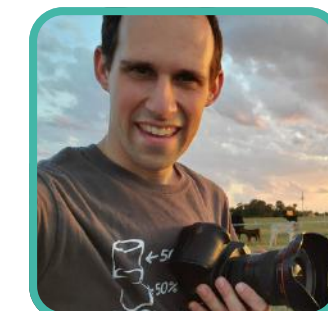
GRETCHEN ROE



PENNY ROGERS



AMY SAGER



JAMES STADDON

speaker bios & workshop details

afhe.org/speakers-and-workshops



CARRIE DE FRANCISCO



DR. SEANN DIKKERS



KIMBERLY FARLEY



JULIE FRITZ



KIMBERLY SORGIUS JONES



KATHY KUHL



KELLY LOVE



NATALIE MACK



DAVID & SHIRLEY QUINE



DR. BRIAN RAY



DR. JENNIFER RIVERA



MARISOL RODERO



CHAD STEWART



NICOLE THOMAS



DR. MARISA TILLERY



LISA VARNER

2025 Registration

REGISTER EARLY

AFHE Members have the opportunity to pre-register for the AFHE Convention at the best early pricing April 14 - June 27, 2025.

The earlier you register, the better the price for adult admission!
Register online.

BOOK YOUR HOTEL

We have a discount room block at the Hyatt Regency Phoenix for AFHE Convention attendees. Book your room early. Reservation link is on the AFHE website, or call 602-252-1234 and request the AFHE Homeschool Convention room block.

VOLUNTEER

Volunteers are essential to the AFHE Convention. Join the team of men and women serving as greeters, workshop hosts, ushers, and more! Volunteer 5 or more hours for free adult admission. Teens can join the Youth Service Team!

AFHE membership required.

CONVENTION REGISTRATION

Registration details online at afhe.org/registration

| ADULT ADMISSION Individual adult or married couple | LOWEST PRICE! | | | REGISTRATION ONSITE JULY 17-19 |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| | PRE-REGISTRATION APRIL 14-30 | PRE-REGISTRATION MAY 1-31 | PRE-REGISTRATION JUNE 1-27 | |
| MEMBER | \$65* | \$75* | \$85* | \$95* |
| NON-MEMBER | Join or renew to take advantage of pre-registration | Join or renew to take advantage of pre-registration | Join or renew to take advantage of pre-registration | \$130 Admission purchase includes annual membership. |

*Pre-registration adult admission prices do not include AFHE annual membership fee. Join or renew for \$35 at afhe.org/membership for these member prices. Membership expiration of August 1, 2025 or later is required.

Rates & Options!

DISCOUNT ADMISSION

Complete a request form (April 11 - June 30) for \$35 off the adult admission price.

- First-Time Attendees
- “Come and See” Offer
- Military members
- Single Parents
- Christian pastors

AFHE membership required.

EXHIBIT HALL

Many of the finest homeschool curriculum publishers and resource providers will be gathered in our huge exhibit hall, allowing you to compare and shop in person for the materials you need.

Watch for special convention pricing!

BUY IT HERE!

Shop onsite from Convention Exhibitors and enter a drawing for a \$100 cash prize! Buying onsite encourages the return of quality exhibitors who travel the country to serve homeschool families at events like ours.

Must be present to win Saturday 5:45 PM

Child, Teen, & Grandparent Admission

Rates for children, teens, and add-on options are the same during pre-registration and on site.

Children and teens may attend with their parents who are registered for the Convention. Children under age 12 must remain with their parent or an adult.

YOUTH ADMISSION

Age 6-18

Under age 6 free of charge

\$12

TEEN PROGRAMS

Age 12-18

3 options; includes convention admission

Program details and pricing on page 22.

HOMESCHOOL GRADUATE

Unmarried young adult attending college or living at home, through age 22

\$12

GRANDPARENT ADMISSION

Non-homeschooling must register with their child who is a homeschool parent

FREE

The 2025 AFHE Convention offers a two-day program that will inspire and inform students, as well as two additional photography-related options for teens. At registration parents will select **Youth Admission** or one of our three **Teen Program** options for their students aged 12-18 who are attending the Convention. Convention admission and teen program materials are included in any Teen Program registration. See more details on page 22. Each Teen Program option has a specific age range for eligibility.

TEEN PROGRAM OPTIONS

Teens attending the Convention with their parents can select from three programming options.

Complete details are at the [TEEN PROGRAMS & KIDS ACTIVITIES](#) page at our website.

AFHE.ORG/CHILDREN-AND-TEENS



INTRO TO THE WORLD OF ANIMATION

How does animation affect us in today's tech-saturated world? Animation is part of our daily lives, but what actually goes into creating this fascinating form of art? How can learning about the world of animation be useful in whatever you decide to do in the future? Teens will enjoy this hands-on, interactive program!

Details:

- Complete two-day program, four sessions each day
- Supplies for hand-drawn animation and class materials included
- Ages 12-18
- Registration \$60/person

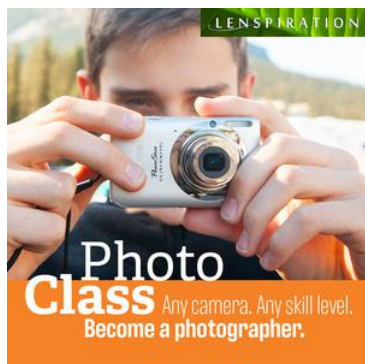


PHOTO CLASS FOR TEENS: LEARNING TO SEE LIGHT

James Staddon from Lenspiration will offer a four-session Photo Class, open to teens age 14+. Come with any camera and any level of skill or experience! The class will meet twice on Friday and twice on Saturday, with assignments to complete during other hours.

Details for Photo Class:

- Two sessions each day: Friday, July 18, and Saturday, July 19
- Ages 14-18
- \$48/student (all four sessions included!)
- What to bring: Any camera you are familiar with using (including mobile devices), a method for taking notes, and a flashlight



ADVANCED LEVEL PHOTOGRAPHY TEAM

Also by Lenspiration, this year we are offering an Advanced Level Photography Team for qualified students. This course has several prerequisites, and specific equipment is needed to participate. This option has space for only 10 students, age 15+.

Details for Advanced Level Photography Team:

- Friday, July 18 and Saturday, July 19
- The photography team is an all-day commitment for both days, beginning at 8:15 AM at the Lenspiration booth in the Exhibit Hall.
- Ages 15-18
- \$85/student; team size is limited to 10 students.
- Specific equipment and supplies are required to participate.
- Must complete prerequisites as listed at our Photography for Teens page. Students enrolling in this program should do get registered ASAP and begin the required coursework.

The AFHE Convention needs you!

Run almost entirely by volunteers, the Arizona Homeschool Convention hosted by AFHE is a strong and thriving in-person event due in large part to the amazing service of 100+ men and women. Our volunteers help keep costs to a minimum while providing an excellent experience for our community. We are thankful to each and every volunteer who works so hard to make this event possible!



Volunteering at the AFHE Convention is a lot of fun, too! Many of our volunteers sign up to help at the Convention every year. We appreciate each of our volunteers and pray you are blessed as you serve others and contribute to making this event a wonderful experience for all!

Earn free admission by volunteering!

5 service hours for FREE admission

We are looking for mature, responsible, reliable adults to volunteer in a variety of positions at the AFHE Convention including workshop hosts, registration volunteers, booth hosts for speakers, and more.

Current AFHE membership is required. The opportunity to volunteer is a benefit of membership.

If you are not a current* member, please join or renew before registering for the Convention.

(*Membership expiring August 1, 2025 or later is required.)

Complete details and application form: [AFHE.ORG/CONVENTION-VOLUNTEERS](https://afhe.org/convention-volunteers)

Admission Discounts

Certain attendees can qualify for a discount on convention admission.

Please visit our website to learn more if you belong to one of these qualified categories:

- **First-Time Attendee**
- **Christian Pastor**
- **Single-Parent Family**
- **Military Family**

“Come and See” Offer!

Current AFHE members who have attended the convention before can invite a first-time attendee — and BOTH of you will qualify for an additional discount! Details available on the AFHE website and the request form.



Visit [AFHE.ORG/DISCOUNT-ADMISSION](https://afhe.org/discount-admission) to complete the request form for your discount.

Discount request forms will be available April 11-June 30. No new requests will be processed after this date.

Discount code may be used during pre-registration or at the door.

Register early for best member pricing!

Coffee Dates are Essential

Art & Dessert with Friends

Join Carrie De Francisco and Artastic Art for a refreshing **MOMS NIGHT OUT**



Friday, July 18 | 7:00-8:30 PM

\$35/person
dessert & beverages included

Tickets available at Registration.

Come with friends ♥ Make memories ♥ Enjoy warm fellowship



Enjoy a special message from Carrie De Francisco + Create a themed art piece with Artastic Art!

Just breathe and take a sip of coffee. Yes, coffee dates are essential!

In this fun evening of art and fellowship, Carrie will share why moms need to make time for four important coffee dates: Coffee Dates with Jesus, Coffee Dates with Hubby, Coffee Dates with Friends, and Coffee Dates with Older Kids (if you are in that season of motherhood). Carrie will give simple tips on how to make time for personal quiet time with the Lord, how to make date nights a priority, making time with friends a reality, and if applicable, how to make dates with your teens and adult children a weekly habit.

We will have an art lesson and create a project that reflects the "coffee dates" message from Carrie.

All materials are included, and you will take home a unique, personalized reminder of this fun evening and the importance of these connections in our lives.



Convention Sponsors

We are grateful for the support of these committed partners!



Educación en el Hogar Mini-Conferencia

Sábado, 19 de Julio

The homeschool movement is growing rapidly. Parents are becoming convinced of its effectiveness for learning, benefits for the family and society, and potential for individualized attention to a child's unique learning needs. AFHE is honored to walk alongside Arizona families who are looking into homeschooling or are ready to get underway and serve them with support and resources—in English and in Spanish!

The 2025 AFHE Home Education Convention will offer a full day of workshops in Spanish. These sessions will provide practical and inspiring information, offered by experienced homeschool mentors from the Hispanic community.

Educación en el Hogar Mini-Conferencia will be embedded in the regular convention schedule, on Saturday, July 19, 10:30AM-5:00 PM. Convention registration is required, but no advance sign-up is required to attend the sessions in this mini-conferencia. ¡Es para padres y abuelos también!



SPONSORED BY AMERICA'S NAVY

Please help us spread the word! Share this page with friends, make sure they have information about the Convention, and refer them to the mini-conference webpage: [AFHE.ORG/EDUCACION-MINI-CONFERENCIA](https://afhe.org/educacion-mini-conferencia).

Orden del Día (provisional)

- 10:30 AM ¡Bienvenida!
- 10:40 AM Sesión 1 - Marisol Roderó; Escogiendo el Mejor Método Educativo para Tu Homeschool
- 11:30 AM Descanso para almorzar
- 1:00 PM Sesión 2 - Christian Córdova; Educación en Casa de Principio a Fin
- 2:30 PM Sesión 3 - Marisol Roderó; La Neurociencia de la Enseñanza
- 3:30 PM Refrescos
- 4:00 PM Sesión 4 - Marisol Roderó; Homeschooling y el Orden en Casa: Cómo Organizar tu Mente, tu Hogar y tu Agenda

Exhibit Hall Highlights

Visit the **AFHE website today to see the directory of registered exhibitors** and make your list of where you want to shop.

Stop in at the **Mentoring Connections** booth to ask questions, get advice, and enjoy connecting with moms who are there to help you navigate the convention and the homeschool journey.

The **Book Locker** is where you can store and stash your purchases, rolling carts, and/or strollers for a small fee each day.

Enjoy a **break and a snack** from the concession stand or the ice cream cart.

Hang out at the **KidsCorner** for some fun playtime or a short program presented by one of our exhibitors.

Chat with speakers and sponsors at their booths for more great information.

Attend an **exhibitor workshop** to learn about a specific program or curriculum.

Don't miss shopping with our hardworking and inspiring **Young Entrepreneurs**.

Visit the **AFHE booth** for resources and information. **View the commemorative display** celebrating the history of homeschooling in Arizona.

Free Events on our Pre-Convention Bonus Day!

YOU CAN HOMESCHOOL!

Mini-Conference for New-to-Homeschool Parents

THURSDAY, JULY 17

Phoenix Convention Center
33 South Third Street
South Building, Room 155-157
9:30 AM - 12:30 PM

FREE EVENT!

**No RSVP or AFHE membership required—
Come to learn or bring a friend who's considering homeschooling!**

We look forward to welcoming you to this special introductory mini-conference, created to provide essential info about homeschooling, Arizona's legal requirements, and three special workshops focused on your needs and questions.



Kimberly Sorgius Jones
Not Consumed Ministries

What to Teach: Creating an Educational Plan Your Kids Will Love

Are we teaching the right things at the right time? Will there be gaps if we teach outside the box? This session is all about fostering a LOVE of learning and creating a flexible, interest-driven curriculum all while meeting the academic needs of your kids and keeping the important things in focus.



Jamie Mehan
Cozy Cottage Bookshop

Bringing Literature into Your Homeschool Days

Good literature is crucial to education. But what exactly is good literature and how do we integrate it into our school days? How can we create a culture of reading in our families? We have access to books all around us, but many of them won't nourish our children, and indeed, ourselves. Based on the belief that what your family reads matters, this workshop shows the characteristics of quality literature and how to use it to help your children grow in their understanding of the world around them, as well as delighting in the simple joy of a wonderful story!



Carrie De Francisco
Coffee with Carrie Homeschool Help

Ten Essentials of Simple Homeschooling

There are 10 Essentials needed for a joyful homeschooling journey. You might be surprised to find out they aren't using a perfect curriculum, reading a particular book, or following a specific methodology. The 10 Essentials of Simple Homeschooling are far more foundational than that (and they are super easy to apply this week)! In this session, Carrie shares the 10 Essentials and how to incorporate them into your homeschooling today, whether you are new to homeschooling or you have been homeschooling for years.

MINI-CONFERENCE SPONSORS



DON'T MISS THESE!

◆ NUTS-AND-BOLTS INFO ABOUT HOMESCHOOLING IN ARIZONA

◆ DOOR PRIZE DRAWINGS

◆ DISCOUNT OFFERS AVAILABLE ONLY AT YOU CAN HOMESCHOOL!

afhe.org/new-homeschooler-mini-conference

Free Events on our Pre-Convention Bonus Day!

OPPORTUNITIES FOR TEENS & PARENTS

Your student can sign up to take the **ASVAB-CEP (Career Exploration Program) assessment!**

Thursday, July 17

9:00 AM - 12:00 PM

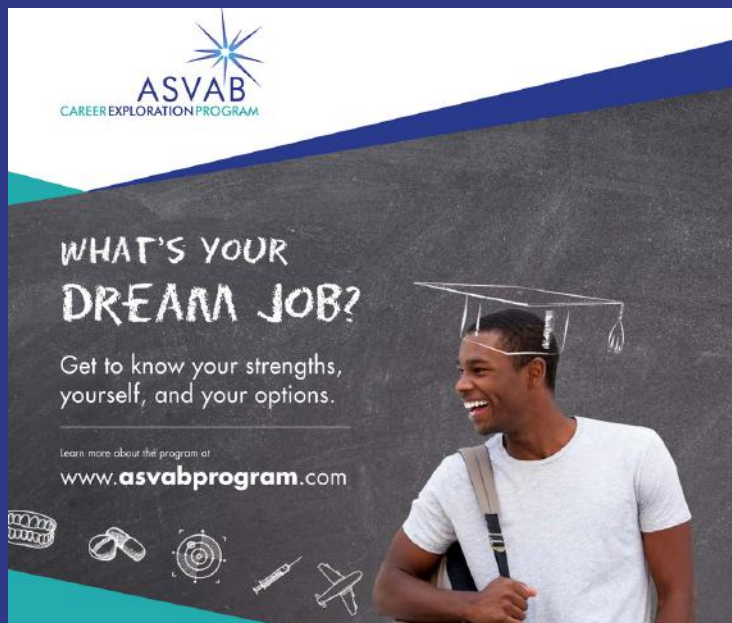
Phoenix Convention Center
South Building; room 160

Test is free; **AFHE membership required.**

Students in grades 10-12 or homeschool graduates enrolled in post-secondary institutions are eligible to participate.

Read more at asvabprogram.com about the robust career exploration resources available when you enroll!

Reserve your student's spot by using the form on our Member Benefits page. (Logging in on your AFHE member profile is required to access the form.)



REACHING HIGHER EXPO

Thursday, July 17, 2025
Phoenix Convention Center
1:00-4:00 pm

Parents and teens (and parents of all future homeschool graduates!), please join us for an in-person expo where you can visit with representatives from universities, colleges, trade/tech schools, gap year programs, and MORE—all in one place!

No AFHE membership or convention registration required. **FREE!**

POST-SECONDARY OPPORTUNITIES FOR HOME EDUCATED STUDENTS

- *Colleges & Universities* • *Tech & Trade Schools* • *Training Programs* •
- *Military Careers and Service Academies* •
- *Gap Year Programs* • *Christian Missions & Ministries* •

PLUS Workshops to help you navigate the many options and decisions!

Visit afhe.org/reachinghigherexpo for a list of participating organizations and workshop details.



Trail Life®

Adventure › Character › Leadership



65,000+ Members | 1,300+ Troops | 50 States

WARNING!

Adding Trail Life to Your Homeschool Community May Cause the Following Side Effects:

• **DIGITAL DETOX SYNDROME**

Immersion in outdoor activities may cause a drastic decline in screen time dependency. Side effects include a boy who actually wants to talk—without a device in his hand.

• **CHRONIC LEADERSHIP PREDILECTION**

After conquering challenges, your son may begin to lead more confidently and to walk taller—perhaps even smacking his head on doorways.

• **APATHY DYSPHORIA**

Watch for signs of increased work ethic, spontaneous “thank yous,” and a shocking willingness to help with chores. You might not recognize him anymore—but you’ll like it.

• **ACUTE LEADERSHIP PROLIFERATION SYNDROME**

Your son may develop an irresistible urge to organize, lead, and inspire. Symptoms include spearheading school projects, arranging youth group outings, and commanding patrol-level efficiency among his friends.

• **RAPID ONSET FATHER-SON BONDING**

Fathers and sons will forge unforgettable memories through shared adventures, creating bonds that strengthen family connections and resonate for a lifetime.



Trail Life is a meaningful way for dads to nurture spiritual growth, teach life lessons, and engage with their sons in homeschool education.

- Trail Life Dad

Enter for a Chance to Win a Giveaway!

Stop By the Trail Life Booth



Learn How to Bring Trail Life to Your Homeschool Community!

“What’s next?”

{ answering high school’s
most unwanted question }



by Courtenay Burden

You’ve been there more times than you can count.

The friendly old lady at church has already asked what grade you’re in. You’ve cringed inwardly, and smiled outwardly, and mumbled an unwilling “ten.”

(Technically, you’re doing eleven in language arts and nine in math because you switched curriculum a year into high school and you’re planning to catch up by doing two lessons a week over the summer—but you’re not even trying to explain that one to the lady at church!)

Instead, you squirm miserably and wait for the inevitable follow-up question. Maybe Pastor Dan will flag her down before she gets to it. Maybe the pianist will interrupt with a question about the Christmas program. Maybe—

No such luck.

Here it comes, in all its exasperating, uncompromising English. The question every high schooler hates—and homeschooled high schoolers hate even more than other people:

“WHAT ARE YOU DOING AFTER GRADE TWELVE???”

If we’re perfectly honest, this is a somewhat intrusive question. It’s also one that comes with a lot of baggage. For homeschooled high schoolers, educational pressure isn’t always something it’s easy to talk about—possibly because it hits in less traditional forms.

While some homeschooling parents may consciously push their students to succeed, many more have chosen an alternative educational path specifically to avoid the high stress levels that can accompany a public or private school education. But while academically centered

pressure may be lower in a homeschool environment, the pressure to succeed in order to justify the homeschooling model, satisfy skeptical friends or family members, and/or prove one's own self-worth can burgeon into a major stress factor when high schooled homeschoolers get asked "what's next?"

Answering this particular probe may never become your favourite activity, but the good news is, there are things you can do to make it far less intimidating.

Identify the Real Question

Have you ever had the privilege of watching somebody you really respect get asked a question they really don't want to answer? I have, and it taught me an extremely interesting truth.

Just because somebody opened a conversation doesn't mean your answer needs to address the question they actually asked. In fact, nine times out of ten, the question they asked doesn't actually express what they really want to know. There's a weird concept I came across recently in my library research training: humanity as a whole is remarkably bad at articulating their actual information request.

So before you answer the friendly old lady at church, take a step back and try to think about what she might actually be asking you.

Is she curious about your interests and hobbies? Is she curious about homeschooling as a whole? Is she just looking for a way to connect with you?

All of these questions can actually be answered without sharing the details of your post-secondary hopes and dreams. Instead of speaking directly to the question asked, try to identify the underlying area of interest the other person is communicating.

Talk About What You Enjoy

If you've got a clearly defined five-year-plan and a scholarship to the college your parents graduated from—by all means go ahead and talk about that. On the other hand, if you're with the solid majority of high schoolers who aren't really sure where life's taking them, and don't feel comfortable sharing with comparative strangers, then take the simpler route. Talk about what you *like doing*.

Are you passionate about maths and sciences? Do you love English literature? Do you spend hours of your free time pursuing art?

Chances are, saying something like, "Well, I really love history and writing, so I'd like to do something that incorporates those interests," is actually going to be enough. You've opened the door for a conversation about a topic you love—and even if your conversational partner suggests an ideal university and major for you, there's no obligation to explain whether or not that fits into your own picture of your future life.

Smiling and asking whether they know someone who followed a similar path will usually keep the discussion rolling just fine.

Surround Yourself with People Who Love & Support You

It may take some tough honesty to admit this even to ourselves, but being loved and being supported are two different things.

Yes, the nagging extended-family-member who won't let you alone unless you've enrolled in a business program at an Ivy League college does love you. In fact, the root of their unwelcome input into your life probably is their love—and their longing for you to have the very best in life. But at the end of the day, copious love does not replace a high schooler's need for support.

All of us need people in our lives who not only love us unconditionally, but who build us up and have our back when it comes to the path we are choosing in life.

If you already have those people around you, lean into them during these high school years. If you don't have them yet, make a commitment to putting in the time, effort, and courage it takes to find them. Every high schooler should experience both love AND support as they answer the question "What comes next?"

Let God In

Not only does every high schooler need human love and support to navigate their opening future—every high schooler needs God's love and support, too. The more secure you are in your relationship with Him, and the more in tune you are with His direction, the better prepared you will be to discover the path of His will. That goes for all of





ARIZONA FAMILIES FOR HOME EDUCATION

Save The Date! May 23, 2025



33RD ANNUAL SENIOR HIGH GRADUATION

Celebrating our graduates together!

www.afhe.org

Location:
Dream City Church
Phoenix

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WE INVITE YOU TO MAKE A TAX-DEDUCTIBLE DONATION

Thank you for supporting the work of AFHE with your annual membership! Your support helps us to **INSPIRE** parents to homeschool their children; **PROMOTE** parent-directed, privately funded, home-based education; **PRESERVE** the freedom to homeschool; and **SUPPORT** parents who choose a home-based education option for their children.

Arizona Families for Home Education is a 501(c)(3) non-profit educational, religious, and charitable corporation. Donations to AFHE and the AFHE Scholarship Fund are tax-deductible.



Annual AFHE Membership is \$35.

You may also join AFHE or donate by mailing a check to:

AFHE
P.O. Box 2035
Chandler, AZ 85244-2035

Contact Information required for membership and donation accounting:

Name
Address
City, State, ZIP
Phone
Email

Privacy Notice: The AFHE Membership list is held in confidence. Your contact information will never be shared or sold.

life, not just for choosing your route after high school, by the way!

This isn't about "be a good enough Christian and this stuff won't bother you." Navigating the step between high school and whatever's next is complicated. God doesn't promise that He'll magically remove that complexity. What He does promise is that He'll be beside us, right in the middle of all the uncertainty, all the questions, and all the mess.

Remember: This Too Shall Pass

My mom used to say this to me all the way back in primary and elementary school. (She didn't make it up. Neither did Abraham Lincoln. They were both quoting a traditional Persian proverb that popped into English somewhere in the early 1800s.)

The point of the saying is—nothing in this world lasts forever.

Being a homeschooled high schooler comes with its share of pressure—its share of opportunities—and yes, its share of annoying questions. But believe me when I say, you have no idea how quickly it will be past.

So on the days when all the questions, and all the opportunities, and all the pressure feel like they're consuming your whole world, give yourself permission to just ask for a compassionate hug.

This stage too shall pass!

Need an Easy Roadmap?

I get it—easy is a comparative word, here!

But just in case you're like me, and get an energy boost from filling out a brightly colored worksheet, I've created *What's Next? The Ultimate Roadmap to Answering High School's Most Unwanted Question*. This downloadable PDF is completely FREE! And it was created specifically for AFHE readers. Watch for the link in AFHE's next newsletter.



COURTENAY BURDEN is a homeschool graduate, author, and co-founder of Sheep Among Wolves Publishing. She loves working with yarn, playing the occasional game of chess, and discovering new ways to cook the humble potato. When she's not writing, you'll find her painting, reading anything published more than a century ago, or attempting to sing alto with growing confidence.

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Join thousands of Arizona parents and grandparents like you — dedicated to building their child’s best education possible, in the context of family and home.

LEARNING TOGETHER  *ARIZONA*
42nd Annual
AFHE Home Education Convention
July 18-19, 2025

Arizona’s largest homeschool event of the year!

Keynote Speakers



Heidi St. John
Author, Speaker, Podcast Host



Abraham Hamilton III
Lawyer, Bible Teacher, Talk Show Host

with Special Guest
Mark Hancock, CEO of Trail Life USA

- FREE seminar for new-to-homeschool on Thursday, July 17
- Full program & expo on Friday & Saturday, July 18-19
- 150 vendors in the exhibit hall
- 40+ speakers & homeschool experts
- 100+ workshops for you as a parent educator
- on-site mentoring and advising
- teen programs and activities for kids
- discount admission for first-time attendees
- sesiones en español

Join our email list for convention info!



Registration opens April 14 at homeschoolarizona.org



Proudly presented by
Arizona Families for Home Education
Serving Arizona since 1983