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# Homeschooled children benefit the community because they are not shaped by peers but by parents.

Mary Kay Clark



## DEADLINES

ISSUE DATE	ARTICLES	ADS
Fall – September	July 20	July 31
Spring – March	January 20	January 31
Graduate – May	March 20	March 31

## PUBLISHED BY:

North Carolinians for Home Education  
4441 Six Forks Rd., Suite 106, PMB 144  
Raleigh, NC 27609 • (844) 624-3338



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### PHOTO CREDITS:

Front cover: NCHE alumna Mereda Hart Farynyk



# Do I Really Have What It Takes to Homeschool My Kids?

by Matthew McDill

One of the greatest concerns for both prospective and current homeschool parents is the question: "Do I really have what it takes to homeschool my kids?" This concern is completely understandable. Homeschooling requires dedication, and the stakes are high! However, I firmly believe that, with rare exceptions, parents are more than capable of successfully homeschooling their children. Let me share six compelling reasons why you can approach homeschooling with confidence.

## God Has Entrusted Our Children to Our Care

I'll be transparent from the start—I approach this topic from a faith perspective. I believe God created the world, made all humans in His image, and established families. Despite the brokenness we experience in this world, God creates each person and places them within a family structure. He gave us our children and entrusted them to our care, fully aware of our imperfections. He knows we'll make mistakes and that parenting presents significant challenges, yet He has still called us to this task.

Scripture calls parents, particularly fathers, to "bring their children up in the discipline and instruction of the Lord" (Ephesians 6:4). While our community will help us in various ways (more on this below), we cannot transfer this fundamental responsibility to others. Those of us who homeschool see it as a natural extension of our calling to raise our children in faith. We can be confident that God made no mistake in entrusting these children to us and calling us to raise them for Him.

## God Will Empower Us to Do His Will

In the middle of a discussion about Christian giving, Paul establishes this comprehensive principle:

"And God is able to make all grace abound to you, so that having all sufficiency in all things at all times you may abound in every good work." (2 Corinthians 9:8)

What a powerful promise! God will provide abundant grace so we have everything we need for His work. Both parenting and homeschooling qualify as good works. We can confidently look to Him for assistance in fulfilling this wonderful privilege and responsibility. Do you believe this? This truth leads to another important insight.

## God Uses Weak, Imperfect, Ordinary People

The Bible consistently shows how God works through imperfect, ordinary people. Scripture repeatedly explains that God delights in revealing His glory and power through human weakness (2 Corinthians 12:9). When we doubt our ability to homeschool or parent effectively, there's some truth to those concerns—we all have weaknesses and imperfections.

Some of us excel at organization. Others are more creative, spiritually mature, diligent, or relationally gifted. When we observe others with different strengths, we often become acutely aware of our own limitations. This is why comparison can be so destructive. Instead of comparing, we should return to the foundation: God gave us these children and can provide everything we need to raise them. Embrace the gifts and abilities He's given you while also committing to grow in areas where you're less strong. Ultimately, we know we won't be perfect parents. We'll make mistakes, and there will be gaps in our homeschooling approach. This brings us to our next point.

## God Will Fill in the Gaps

Although God has entrusted our children to us, we aren't their ultimate caregivers. Sometimes we assume too much responsibility, placing unreasonable pressure on ourselves. We can't shield our children from all harm, teach them everything, control all their circumstances, or ensure they always make ideal decisions. God loves our children even more than we do, and He has good plans for their lives. As they commit themselves to Jesus, He makes the same promise to empower them to fulfill His purposes. We can trust God to provide all the grace needed to compensate for our shortcomings and mistakes.

## No One Knows and Loves Our Children More than We Do

Apart from their ultimate caregiver, no one knows and loves our children more than we do. No degree, training, or teaching experience

matters more than this deep connection. This uniquely qualifies us to teach and disciple our children. Our love motivates us to do the difficult work and make necessary sacrifices to raise and educate them. Our intimate knowledge allows us to identify their individual strengths and weaknesses, enabling us to connect with and teach each child in the most effective way for them and making us the best possible teachers for our kids. At the same time, we should remember that we don't need to handle everything alone.

## We Have a Community to Help Us

First, ensuring both parents are involved in discipleship and education will help to address gaps and bring more resources to your children. Beyond this, our churches and communities provide valuable information, resources, classes, instruction, support, and encouragement. When you recognize that your children need something you struggle to provide, don't hesitate to reach out to other people and resources.

So, do you really have what it takes to homeschool your kids? With all these considerations in mind, I confidently answer: "Yes!" When doubt and discouragement arise, be sure to take time to connect with the Lord, pray, read His Word, and reflect on these encouraging realities and promises.



*Matthew McDill and his wife, Dana, homeschool their nine children in Clemmons. Matthew is the executive director for North Carolinians for Home Education and continues to serve as president of the board. Through his ministry, Truth to Freedom (truthtofreedom.org), he teaches and writes about discipleship, marriage, family, parenting, home education, and church.*

*Matthew holds a bachelor's degree in communication, along with two master's degrees and a doctorate in biblical studies. Matthew and Dana will be speakers at the 2024 Thrive! Conference.*



*Trust in the Lord with all your heart and lean not on your own understanding; in all your ways acknowledge him, and he will make your paths straight.*

*(Proverbs 3:5-6)*



# Casting Vision for Your Teenager

by David Beroth

As my oldest son was approaching thirteen years old, it was vital for me as a father to cast a vision for what the Lord desired for him in these teen years. Over a long weekend trip to Asheville, including hiking, tennis, and white water rafting, I discussed ten key topics with him that I see as outward growing concentric circles for a blessed life.

III John 4 says, “I have no greater joy than to hear that my children walk in truth.” Does your child know this to be your greatest joy? This Scripture is a great place to focus as your children transition into adulthood. Beckoning them anew to walk in the ways of the Lord will impact their trajectory for a lifetime. Don’t let this special season pass by without intentionally connecting with your child and discussing this overarching question, “What is a life well-lived for the glory of God?”

These are the ten topics.

## 1. God and the Bible

At the heart of life’s journey lies a need to embrace the Gospel and deepen our understanding of who God is and what He desires for us. Scripture exhorts us to love the Lord with all our heart, soul, mind, and strength (Mark 12:30-31), as it underscores the centrality of God in every aspect of our lives. Life can only be appropriately understood if we embrace the fact that we exist for His purposes and not for our own. When His desires become our desires, we can have fulfillment in life. Challenge your youth to foster a lifelong pursuit of Him so that they might grow in the discernment and understanding needed to navigate the uncertainties that lie ahead. Immersing ourselves regularly in His Word, developing a biblical worldview of the fundamental issues of life (origin, meaning, identity, morality, and destiny), and focusing on His transcendent purposes solidify one’s foundation for a lifetime.

## 2. Time

Ben Franklin's quote captured my imagination when I was young—"If time be of all things the most precious, wasting time must be the greatest prodigality." Ephesians 5:15-16 admonishes us to redeem the time, and Ecclesiastes 12:1 beckons the reader to remember the Creator in our youth. We need to exhort our young men and women to steward carefully this most precious gift and resource. I challenged my son to use this time of youth intentionally to maintain good habits, develop his mind, manage media consumption, learn various practical skills, and embrace responsibility. In a culture marked by frivolity and distraction, learning to prioritize our time and investing in pursuits that align with God's purposes is essential for maturity.

## 3. Family

There is no doubt that how a young person relates to his family in the present will significantly impact how they relate to a spouse and children in the future. Life skills such as developing healthy relationships, edifying communication, and conflict resolution are best learned at home when young and when the consequences of misbehavior are still small. Nurturing these foundational familial relationships now with grace, humility, and meekness will serve a young person well for a lifetime.

## 4. Learning

School may come to an end, but education endures for a lifetime. Encourage your child to embrace this journey to be a lifelong learner! With the rapid expansion of knowledge, your child will not be able to thrive in life if learning stops upon graduation. Constant learning, applying, and aspiring opens doors for more growth and more opportunities. I also discussed pursuing a marketable online skill (Quickbooks, coding, etc.) while still in school with my son. Though college is not obligatory, we talked about three areas to consider about higher education: 1) curriculum, 2) culture, and 3) cost. Many a life has been wrecked by an ungodly curriculum, a worldly culture, or an excessive cost. Pursue the fear of the Lord as the foundation for learning and then prayerfully start planning for what types of learning (technical training, dual enrollment options, college possibilities, etc.) you think will be needed for the future.

## 5. Church

Christ loved the church and gave Himself for her (Ephesians 5). Even so, we should teach our young men and women that God's plan for their lives involves the church. It plays a vital role in spiritual development, healthy accountability, and mutual edification. It is God's plan for the church to be the spiritual family that complements our natural family. The church also provides the platform for service and preparation for

spiritual battle, which we find in Ephesians 6. With our young people seeing us engage the body of Christ, they see that we are not islands unto ourselves.

## 6. Work

Work is a gift; it is a sacred calling entrusted to us by God Himself. From the beginning of creation, God ordained work as a means of stewardship, provision, and fulfillment. Instead of resisting it, young people must learn to embrace it. Colossians 3:23-24 reminds us to work heartily unto the Lord as our labor has eternal significance. You can help your teenagers to focus their energy and time so that they can explore fields of work in which they can thrive for many years within the gifts and purposes to which God has called them. It is often the case that the focus and preparation through the early twenties will determine one's potential in life. Make the most of this season! Henry Wadsworth Longfellow aptly observed that greatness is not achieved overnight but through diligence and perseverance—"The heights by great men reached and kept were not attained by sudden flight, but they, while their companions slept, were toiling upward in the night." For inspiration, I also commend to you Henry van Dyke's poem titled *Work* which I had to memorize in seventh grade and which has often encouraged me in life.

## 7. Money

As I have been a CPA for over twenty-five years, I find money to be a very important topic. Cultivating wise financial stewardship is an important part of life! One's use of money has the potential to be a tremendous blessing or a horrendous curse in life. Discuss at least these five foundational financial principles—1) be diligent, 2) increase the value you provide to others (thus growing your income potential), 3) spend less than you make, 4) be generous and honor the Lord with your wealth, and 5) invest your savings wisely. Managing real money through small jobs or allowances gives your youth opportunities to implement and experience financial lessons before they launch into life. Start making financial plans for college, a car, and a house someday. All these lessons will be invaluable. Also, learn as much as possible from Proverbs, such as Proverbs 22:4, which says "by humility and the fear of the Lord are riches and honor and life." These are the underlying qualities that will truly make for an abundant life.

## 8. Health

Our bodies are temples of the Holy Spirit—we need to take good care of them. It is important to steward our physical well-being. Honoring God with our bodies involves nourishing them with healthy food, maintaining regular exercise, and prioritizing rest. These habits we establish in our youth will generally carry into adulthood. Bodies also change in these

teen years, and it is best for these types of discussions to be initiated by parents and not by others.

## 9. Friends

The company we keep has a profound influence on our character and behaviors. Proverbs 13:20 and I Corinthians 15:33 make it clear that being friends with the foolish causes harm. We must emphasize the need to choose friends carefully and not just settle for any available friends. Or as I tell my children, "Be friendly with all but don't be friends with all." The friends of their youth will either encourage them in the paths of righteousness or wickedness. The power of influence will invariably shape their lives. Participating in Trail Life as part of our homeschooling has provided a good opportunity for us all to grow in healthy friendships and to determine the type of friends we should be. It is also good to cast a vision for a godly spouse for your child. Stress that marriage will be one of their most important decisions in life. They need to prepare themselves well for marriage and then to seek the Lord for a godly and virtuous spouse. It is also beneficial to describe a biblical way to pursue marriage that is not through the worldly dating game. Talking through what God has to say about friendships at this stage will help save your child from grief in years to come, Lord willing.

## 10. World

The world undoubtedly wants to shape our children (Romans 12:1, 2), so it is incumbent upon us to squarely address it. Discuss ways you see the world trying to shape your family and the lives of your children, along with what God's desires are. Your youth are entering a real spiritual battle; prepare them for it. The world may glitter, but it is passing away. Challenge your youth not to love the world but to pursue the will of God in the midst of it (I John 2:15-17). With your children, seek to be ambassadors for Christ in a broken and hurting world. By assisting your children, you can help them learn how to navigate the world with the corresponding discernment and not be ensnared by it. We don't want to shrink from the challenges before us but address them for the glory of God and the advancement of His kingdom.

## Conclusion

Yes—as you can imagine, my son and I spent quite a bit of time talking. Talk is not action, but it does lay the framework for activities and choices we will consider in the coming years. I concluded the time with my son in 1 Timothy 4:12. Here, Paul says to be an example to believers in word, conduct, love, spirit, faith, and purity. The taller the tree is going to be in life, the deeper the roots will need to be, and so, too, must young men and women invest in the foundations of character, faith, and integrity that will sustain them through a lifetime. By casting a vision grounded in the truth of God's Word and seeking to walk in obedience to His purposes, we can help our youth navigate the complexities of this season with confidence, purpose, and hope.

I leave you and your youth with the challenge I gave to my son. Are you willing to pay the price in this season to enjoy the blessings of a lifetime?



*David Beroth and his wife, Annalisa, homeschool their five children in Charlotte. David has been a CPA for over twenty-five years and has served as CFO at the Billy Graham Evangelistic Association for the last eight years. He enjoys serving the Lord, riding bikes with his children, and overspending at the annual conference vendor hall while his wife waits for him to finish his purchases!*



*The fear of the Lord is the beginning of knowledge, but fools despise wisdom and discipline.*

(Proverbs 1:7)

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# How to Survive, Thrive, and Set a Healthy Example for Your Teens

by Laura S. Greer

"I'm just a mom." That was often my response when asked what I do. Yet, I knew the statistics. The demands of being a mom are like having two and a half full-time jobs, and that's only if you're not also employed, self-employed, or side-hustling.

I should've held my head high in this declaration, but I was an exhausted mom and, honestly, a bit lost and wandering as my kids entered their preteen years. My identity as a mom was shifting into something new. I felt like I wasn't needed as much, although, looking back, I now understand that I was still very much needed—it was just a different type of need I had to learn to navigate.

If you take into account the teenage hormones and our own emotions as we start to look ahead to surviving the roller coaster ride that eventually leads to empty-nesting, it can feel like we're stuck in survival mode from all the demands. In our family's case, a degree of neurodiversity was also thrown into the mix, including my own undiagnosed ADHD, which wasn't even on my radar at the time.

Welcome to the *Hot Mess Express*; hang on for dear life. The good news is we don't have to camp out in survival mode. There are things we can do as we navigate the hormones and our children's differentiation while still being the moms they need us to be. Not only can these steps help us and our families thrive through the teenage years, but they can also prepare us as moms to navigate the path to empty-nesting better.

As homeschoolers, being with our children in such an integral way becomes a part of who we are as moms. When our kids begin to differentiate and become more independent, we can feel left behind as we desperately try to hold on to the familiar connection we've had with them while they are often testing boundaries and pulling in the opposite direction as hard as possible.

I realized my degree of direct involvement in their daily life had become unhealthy for both me and my children. Fear of what could happen to them led me to cling onto motherhood as an idol. I never thought of myself as a helicopter parent, but when their youth director jokingly referred to me as a *smother mother*, it caused me to re-examine my role in that season. Sure, the comment stung a bit deeper than I'd like to admit, but it spurred me to realize that this was only just the beginning of our transition toward empty nesting; I needed to differentiate almost as much as my kids did, for everyone's sake.

Sweet Mama, there is hope. Now that my kids are young adults, I can attest that the hormones will settle, and the prefrontal cortex will develop. You can have a wonderful new kind of relationship with your adult children beyond the hormones and roller coaster rides. But what should we do about the years that must be navigated from puberty to young adulthood? How do we survive as we also prepare ourselves for the empty nest?

Not only can we survive those years, but we can thrive and set a healthy example of resiliency and growth for our children as we navigate and prepare ourselves for the empty nest. Here are some thoughts to help you get started on this journey:

### 1. Identify what you can control.

When things get heated with your preteen or teen, take time to respond thoughtfully rather than react in the moment. When things seem out of control, it's important to understand we can control ourselves and our responses.

Our kids are inevitably going to test our boundaries. Expect it, and be prepared to step back and assess before you respond. Taking time to consider what is underneath the presenting issue with our children may not only help us respond better, but it will also set a healthy example for them not to react impulsively to life's situations. It will create space for communication and develop trust with our teens so that they can come to us with the hard things.

*Have I not commanded you? Be strong and courageous. Do not be afraid; do not be discouraged, for the Lord your God will be with you wherever you go.* Joshua 1:9 NIV

### 2. Recognize the codependency of over-identifying with your roles.

It's not hard to fall into the trap of codependency. Any roles we take on in life, such as wife, mom, home educator, homemaker, volunteer, employee, or beyond, can become idols if we allow them. How do we recognize that

this has happened? When our own inner peace and joy feel as though they depend upon the circumstances and people around us, it's time to step back and examine why. Are we pouring into those roles out of our own unmet needs that go deeper than the role itself?

I entered the role of motherhood from a struggle with PCOS and infertility, which left me coveting the role of a mom at an even deeper level than I thought possible. Because of that experience, I poured myself into motherhood at a level that neglected my other relationships. I put myself on the back burner and neglected self-care, which ultimately affected not only my mental health but my physical and spiritual health as well.

*Remain in me, as I also remain in you. No branch can bear fruit by itself; it must remain in the vine. Neither can you bear fruit unless you remain in me.* John 15:4 NIV

### 3. Affirm your worth.

We are so much more than just moms! Our worth is not attached to our roles. Our worth is inherent and God-given. When we begin to understand how we are created with our gifts, personalities, and talents and examine our natural bent toward certain values combined with our experiences, we can begin to peel back the layers of fear, insecurity, and comparison to find our true selves as God created us.

When we begin to understand that we are each created as a unique reflection of God for the lives we touch, the path ahead becomes clearer. We can more easily discern and focus on the best of what is being set before us. We are less likely to be distracted, realizing that even the things we consider to be good can be a distraction from God's best.

I struggled with my worth for a long time. When I left my job to be a stay-at-home mom and homeschooler, I transferred my over-identification with my job into being a mom, wife, teacher, and wanna-be-housekeeper. I was trying too hard to be all these things, thinking that's where I'd find my worth—but I was stretched so thin that it wasn't sustainable. It wasn't until I embraced that my worth is inherent as an image bearer of Christ that I began to heal.

*Are not five sparrows sold for two pennies? Yet not one of them is forgotten by God. Indeed, the very hairs on your head are all numbered. Don't be afraid; you are worth more than many sparrows.*

Luke 12:6-7 NIV

### 4. Self-care is absolutely not selfish!

Taking the necessary time to nourish our body, mind, and soul adequately is an investment in ourselves and in the lives of those we touch. It is vital for moms to take time for self-care.

Self-care is especially needed in the season of changes that comes as our kids differentiate from us. There is a natural grieving that takes place when our role as mom changes. Taking care of ourselves during this time can help us through this process and allow us the bandwidth to see and embrace the hope that is ahead of us in the new season.

Quiet time, movement, nutrition, hydration, and rest are often the last things on our minds but are the first things we should be nurturing. When we take better care of ourselves, we can then pour into the lives of those around us from a place of fullness instead of lack. We can be more discerning with our choices, embracing a *holy no* to those opportunities and situations that may seem good and worthy but aren't the best of what God has planned for us.

I had to learn to enforce boundaries around my need for self-care lovingly. Having been a people-pleaser most of my life, this was a challenging mindset shift. My natural inclination is to be a helper, but the helper can't help if she's drained dry! Put needs first in some way each day. I know you're busy with all the things, but all the things will come much easier if you've spent even just five or ten minutes on some way of caring for yourself in the process.

Quiet time, deep breathing, exercise, or even a hot shower can change the trajectory of your day. We can go from draining exhaustion at the end of the day to a tiredness that carries a level of satisfaction at having done our best from a place of being true to our most authentic selves.



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*Therefore, I urge you, brothers and sisters, in view of God's mercy, to offer your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and pleasing to God—this is your true and proper worship. Do not conform to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind. Then you will be able to test and approve what God's will is—his good, pleasing and perfect will.* Romans 12:1-2 NIV

Precious mom, where do you struggle most in these teen and pre-empty nesting years? Whether it seems like it or not, they're watching and learning from you. What better example to give them for a healthy adulthood than to do your own inner work in these areas? Allow them to see you grow and become more resilient so they can do the same as they become adults. Give yourself some grace for where you are in the process, and allow yourself time to explore steps that bring deep peace and calm into your life. In so doing, you'll not only survive, but you can thrive throughout the teenage years and be more prepared for the empty nest.



*Laura Greer is in joyful recovery from juggling too much on the balance beam of life. As her journey from brokenness to healing continues, she desires to help homeschool moms find their inherent worth beyond the roles they fill. Laura is a blogger, speaker, and life coach for moms, especially those preparing for the empty nest. As a professional coach, Laura is a member of the Homeschool Counseling Resources Network. She and her husband of thirty-one years (if you don't count the bump in the road) homeschooled their children from pre-K through high school graduation in Western North Carolina. Laura can be found at [IntentionalGrowthandWellness.com](http://IntentionalGrowthandWellness.com) or contacted at [Laura@IntentionalGrowthandWellness.com](mailto:Laura@IntentionalGrowthandWellness.com).*



*For we are God's workmanship,  
created in Christ Jesus to do good  
works, which God prepared in  
advance for us to do.*

(Ephesians 2:10)



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# Why I'm Glad I Was Homeschooled

by Agnes Willis

Sure, there have been tough days. I'm the oldest of five children, and as my mom says, that means that, on average, there is one child in a funk every day. Because there are five of us, we don't get to do many extracurricular activities. We're all 4-H members and in choirs or orchestras. That's about it. But despite this, and despite being the "test child" who tried out a lot of programs before Mom found the right one, I'm incredibly grateful that my parents homeschooled me. Here's why.

## My siblings are my best friends.

Some parents might balk at this. After all, every child needs to have good friends outside the family, and I do. But, the best friends and the ones that have the best chance at being friends for life are siblings. I am two years older than my sister, but we usually forget that fact when we're together. (It's only when strangers are looking at us that I remind her—she's five inches taller.) Were we always friends? We weren't. We fought like crazy when we were younger. Now that I'm older, I can't imagine life without her, and my story is not unique. In my opinion, our time together is the best spent time of my life so far, and thanks to homeschooling, I've had a lot of it.

## I have excellent study habits.

There is no way my mom can be present all the time with each of her children. Instead, she makes a planner page for each child. We complete all the assignments we can do without her, and she just checks every now and then to make sure we're doing well. It took practice and some discipline, but now I don't need reminding that it's school time, nor do I need to be told to study. If there's one way I feel prepared for college, it's that I know how to study, and I'm motivated to do it.

## I had time to develop hobbies.

What I didn't do in extracurriculars, I made up for in crafts. Thanks to shorter school hours, I had time to read for fun, knit, garden, play the piano and organ, sing, cook, write poetry, dance, play board games, collect coins and rocks, and sew. I am hardly ever bored. I'm writing this just after Hurricane Helene hurtled through my part of North Carolina. I was without power for eleven days. Was I a little bored at times? Of course I was, but for the most part, only when the sun went down, and there wasn't enough light to read or knit. I'm not sure how I could have gotten through those eleven days without my hobbies.

## Christ was always at the center.

I learned every subject in the context of Christianity. My parents answered all my questions about my faith (and trust me, I had a lot), but they also taught me to do everything for Christ—my school, my chores, my hobbies, everything. Public school teachers aren't allowed to do that. Thanks largely to my parents' decision to homeschool me and all the sacrifices they made in doing so, I can safely say that I will never leave my faith.

Don't ever be scared you'll mess your children up. Don't worry they won't have any friends or that they won't be prepared for life in the real world. You have no reason to fear. God gave you children for a reason. If

you feel called to homeschool, He will give you everything you need to make your children successful in the ways that matter most.



*Agnes Willis is an NCHE intern. She is a homeschooled senior who's been homeschooled from kindergarten. She loves the opportunities homeschooling has given her, like being able to play the organ at her church, as well as all the family time she's had. She enjoys reading, writing, playing music, gardening, and knitting on the porch steps. Next year, she plans to attend Benedictine College to study economics, theology, and music.*

*Brothers, I do not consider myself yet to have taken hold of it. But one thing I do: Forgetting what is behind and straining toward what is ahead, I press on toward the goal to win the prize for which God has called me heavenward in Christ Jesus.*

(Philippians 3:13-14)

An advertisement for Tiger World. The top half features a large image of a tiger's face. Below it, several children are seen from behind, looking at a large black panther in an enclosure. The text "EXPLORE THE WONDERS OF THE WILD" is prominently displayed in large, bold, white letters. Below that, "HOMESCHOOLERS ONLY \$8!" is written in a stylized font. The bottom left corner features the Tiger World logo and the text "TIGER WORLD ENDANGERED WILDLIFE PRESERVE Conservation through Education".



# Is Your Child a Bougainvillea?

by Diane Helfrich

A friend told me about moving to Hawaii years ago and buying a house. Outside was a long wall covered with barren vines when they moved in. They asked a neighbor about the vines, wondering if they should cut them down. The neighbor responded that they should wait because the flowers would be beautiful. So, they waited and waited. Several weeks later, they asked the neighbor again. She smiled and told them to wait a bit longer. Several more weeks went by, and the owners became frustrated with the ugly, dead-looking vines along the wall; they decided that they would cut them down the next day since they clearly were dead. When they went out that next morning, much to their surprise, the entire wall was ablaze with beautiful fuchsia flowers. What seemed dead was, in fact, quite alive after a long period of dormancy. The bougainvilleas (pronounced boo-gun-vail-yuhs) were stunning. In our lives, many times we think things aren't working, when in fact, they are, but we can't see the progress.

Have you felt that way with your schooling? I can't tell you how many questions I answer on social media when a parent is concerned that their child isn't reading at an appropriate age or math seems lost on them. Try as they might, a parent can't seem to convey the material to the child. Even when toilet training with their child, parents can be anxious that it isn't happening fast enough. One of my favorite pediatricians back in the day was T. Barry Brazelton. In a talk one day, he said, "...until a child is ready to be toilet trained, it's called parent training." Oh. So that's what this is! Are you parent-training reading, math, or writing?

Does that mean you should stop? Sometimes. Sometimes, our children just aren't ready for a concept, and we need to

work on other things with them. Sometimes, like with reading, we need to read more to our children until they are ready to take up the mantle on their own. (By the way, we need to read to our kids long after they become independent readers because of the different brain pathways exercised.) Sometimes, it means we keep working on it and know that a child will eventually grasp the concept.

Sometimes, a developmental or medical issue interferes with learning. That's where discernment comes in. Are there other signs that something is amiss? Understand that getting an outside assessment is okay whenever you can't figure out what's happening. But also, don't be afraid to give it some time. Even when you think nothing is happening, your bougainvillea might just be getting ready to bloom, and you just can't see it coming. Keep watering, feeding, loving, teaching. One day that light bulb will go on! For me, that's the true joy of homeschooling.

There is a biblical side to this, too. Hosea 12:6 says, "So by the help of your God, hold fast to love and justice and wait continually for Him." Psalm 31:14-15 says, "But as for me, I trust in You, O Lord. I say, 'You are my God.' My times are in Your hands..." Galatians 6:9 says, "And let us not grow weary of doing good, for in due season we will reap, if we do not give up." Of course, we are all familiar with Romans 8:25, which says, "But if we hope for what we do not see, we wait for it with patience." Waiting is throughout the Bible. Our human nature is impatient. Remember the tale of the bougainvilleas—because your child might need a little more time.



*Diane Helfrich is a retired fourteen-year veteran of homeschooling. She is married to David, and they have two children who have flown the nest. In addition to her passion for helping homeschoolers and volunteering as the development director for NCHE, she enjoys reading, card-making, and being part of a ukulele club.*

*Have I not commanded you? Be strong and courageous. Do not be terrified; do not be discouraged, for the Lord your God will be with you wherever you go.*

(Joshua 1:9)

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# NCHE's 2025 Graduates



**Aniya Alford**, from Winston Salem, graduates with honors after homeschooling for four years. Aniya's passions as a creative and an arts enthusiast have spearheaded her homeschooling journey. Her talent is evident in her writings, book reviews, and extracurricular activity choices. Aniya will be attending college in the fall to further curate her career in literature and creative writing.



**Shelby Anderson**, daughter of Brian and Joanie Anderson of Garner, graduates after eleven years of homeschooling. Through FRC Shelby, she advocated for girls in STEM. She spoke to the IVLP at the Pentagon and met with Sen. Tillis to promote STEM funding. She plays violin, is a second-degree brown belt, blood drive coordinator, 4-H member, and three-time Gold Presidential Volunteer Service Award recipient. She plans to study chemistry and forensics.



**Richard I. Anthony**, the son of Altheia Anthony, graduates after homeschooling for twelve years. He is a first-degree black belt, athlete, honors student, Beta Club member, and international missions. He served as NC Senate and House page. He will major in meteorology in NC. Also, he is committed to health by helping people with chronic illnesses. Keeping God first, Richard is set to impact the world through science and leadership.



**Abigail Austin**, daughter of Brad and Rebecca Austin of Monroe, graduates after homeschooling for thirteen years. Abby is graduating with honors and plans to attend Anderson University. An amazing heart for the Lord and for everyone around her has led her to serve in our church for years. Abby is a treasure to all that know her. Her smile brightens a room, and her kindness and loyalty speak of her character and love for Jesus. We are proud of you!



**Ashe Balliet**, son of Andrew and Candida Balliet of Burnsville, graduates after ten years of homeschooling. He is active in taekwondo, competing on an international level with AAU/USA team and NASKA in the Junior Olympics and Warriors Cup. He recently received his second-degree black belt and will continue training and competing. He also intends to open a martial arts school. Ashe also enjoys reading, chess, volleyball, judo, jiu-jitsu, and karate.



**Ava Barton**, daughter of Robert and Kimberly Barton, graduates after homeschooling for seven years. She is very passionate about digital illustration and enjoys anime and collecting vintage game consoles. She plans to pursue a career in cybersecurity.



**Rita Marie Boody**, daughter of David and Kelly Boody of Huntersville, graduates after homeschooling for three years. Rita enjoys singing, painting, and Irish dancing. Her kind and loving nature has led her to volunteer with special needs individuals. Rita plans to study biology for a career in animal care and conservation. We are so proud of you! You have shown great perseverance through adversity, and we know you will be successful in all you do!



**Gregory Bramer**, son of Andrew and Nikki Bramer from Richlands, graduates after twelve years of homeschooling. After graduating, Gregory will pursue a career in the US Coast Guard, working in damage control. Gregory loves eighteenth and nineteenth century reenacting. He enjoys working with his hands doing leatherwork, blacksmithing, construction, and sewing. Gregory has been volunteering at Tryon Palace as a historic interpreter for three years.



**Nathaniel David Brown**, son of Jaron and Chenelle Brown of Concord, graduates after twelve years of homeschooling. He is an active member of his church and has served on the technical team for several years. He acquired an apprenticeship position at a HVAC company where he has learned the trade of installing. He will continue with a full-time position after he graduates and continue on to achieve his certification. Nathan, we are so proud of the

young man you have become, and we look forward to what the Lord has in store for you. Psalm 37:23



**Angela Christine Brunson**, daughter of James and Dr. Jamilah Green of Charlotte and Christopher and Sherley Brunson of Cary, graduates with honors after being homeschooled for three years and dual enrollment at Central Piedmont CC and Arizona State University. She is an accomplished dancer with the Dedrick's Dance District Senior Elite Company in Charlotte. She volunteers in the community supporting domestic violence survivors. She is honored to further her education as a presidential scholar at Johnson C Smith University, majoring in criminology and political science.



**Madison Grace Bush**, daughter of James and Angie Bush of Walnut Cove, graduates with honors after homeschooling for thirteen years. Madison participated in cheer for four years. She enjoys crafting, writing, baking, animals, and spending time with family. Her favorite Bible verse is Psalm 23: 6. Madison plans on

attending community college. Her dream is to open her own business and name it Papa's Pet Barn in memory of her papa, Jerry Linville.



**Rachel Byrne**, daughter of Dr. and Mrs. James D. Byrne of Creedmoor, graduates after homeschooling for thirteen years. Rachel adores art and participated in her debut art exhibit this past year. She homeschooled in Virginia for seven years and six years in North Carolina where she met her ride-or-die friends. She plans to attend Aveda Institute of Hair. Her goal is bridal hair dressing.



**Lillian Marie Campbell**, daughter of Jamie and Ezra Mills of Raleigh, graduates after twelve years of homeschooling. A lifelong dancer, she still treasures her Irish dance roots. Lillian is passionate about helping others and plans to pursue degrees in elementary and special education, aiming to equip children with the tools to embrace their unique strengths. Her kindness and resilience will surely impact the world around her. We are so proud.



**Miles Carter**, son of Daniel and Alexa Carter, loves learning and sharing his knowledge with others. He is passionate about physics and is a National Merit Scholar, state geology and forensics champion, high school physics teacher, and sound technician. He is fluent in four programming languages and has explained relativity to his little brother. In addition to academics, Miles loves to swing dance, play the classical guitar, and sing in choir.



**Benjamin Kristopher Clark**, son of KC and Julie Clark, graduates with honors from Bridge Academy after ten years of home education. He helped start a local youth group and worship nights with friends. Ben works part-time and enjoys music, art, weightlifting, and baking. He will continue serving his community while furthering his education in ministry and digital design. We believe in the dreams God has for you, Ben! Enjoy your life! Phil 4:6



## *Madison Grace Bush Class Of 2025*

*Madison,*

*We are so proud of you. Watching you grow has been one of God's greatest blessings in our lives. We can't wait to see what God has planned for you. Always remember to keep God first, be proud of who you are, and know how much you are valued and loved.*

*Love, Mommy and Daddy*

*Psalm 25:1  
In you, Lord my God,  
I put my trust.*





**Elizabeth Hope Clay**, daughter of Mark and Debbie Clay of Fuquay Varina, graduates after homeschooling her entire life. She is very active in her church, helping with set-up and take-down, volunteering in the children's ministry, and participating in her youth group. She enjoys playing the piano and art, especially printmaking. She is currently attending WTCC as a CCP student and plans to continue there to earn her degree in interior design.



**Elizabeth Anne Coulombe**, daughter of Greg and Alissa Coulombe of Statesville, is graduating with honors after homeschooling for thirteen years. She has been dual-enrolled at Mitchell CC completing courses in the Associate in Arts pathway. She has also studied under the Classical Conversations Challenge program. Through the years, Elizabeth has participated in many extracurricular activities including Awana, piano, baseball, ballet, and Muay Thai kickboxing where she served as a junior instructor. She has also held various volunteer positions including at the Rescue Ranch providing animal care. Elizabeth enjoys crafts, movies, music, and gaming in her free time and will continue to pursue further education after graduation.



**Charish Covington** is the daughter of Tonya Simpson and Kelly Covington of Fayetteville. She has been homeschooled for twelve years. She will attend FSU; she's majoring in business management with a minor in economics. Charish loves science and the arts. Her talents are painting and drawing, just to name a few. Playing volleyball, curating science experiments, and learning about other cultures are some of Charish's hobbies.



**Onesti J. Covington**, daughter of Tonya Simpson and Kelly Covington of Fayetteville, has been homeschooled for twelve years. She is fluent in Korean and Spanish and will continue her studies at FSU, majoring in computer science. She enjoys art, such as drawing, anime, and voice-over characters. Onesti's hobbies include listening to music, traveling, and exploring new foods—she's a baker at heart. She is ready for the next chapter in life.



**Sarah Cwik**, daughter of Paul and Heidi Cwik of Garner, graduates from Saint Bystrik Academy after ten years of homeschooling. Sarah loves art, crocheting, and sharing her faith with others. She is an honors student with a strong interest in American history and politics. She plans to attend an out-of-state Catholic university, which shares her core values and will help her develop into a godly young woman.



**Cole Edmondson**, son of Nate and Jen Edmondson of Greensboro, graduates after homeschooling for thirteen years. Cole is an Eagle Scout, competitive gamer in the NC Varsity Esports and STEM League, youth group A/V operator, videographer for a jewelry company, summer intern for YWAM Richmond, and rock climber. Before attending NCSU to major in computer science and computer engineering, he plans to attend Discipleship Training School with YWAM in Santiago, Chile. We are very proud of all he has accomplished and look forward to seeing how God will use him in the future.



**Garrett Tristan Charles Edwards**, son of Heather and Derrick Edwards of Wadesboro, graduates after eleven years of homeschooling. He is a fourth-degree black belt and instructor at MATI Anson. He and his dad own and operate the dojo. He has been in musical theater with Eagle's Wings. He has been in six productions including Madagascar Jr. and Les Misérables. After graduation, he will be on summer staff at TVR Camp and continue his karate career.



**Jacob Thomas Ehrmann**, son of David and Sarah Ehrmann of Oak Ridge, graduates with honors after twelve years of homeschooling. A member of the Civil Air Patrol, he achieved rank of captain, graduated from the Honor Guard Academy, and served as cadet commander. Jacob sings on his church worship team, serves as a middle school small group leader, and works as a soccer referee. He enjoys reading, history, soccer, skiing, playing the guitar, and being outdoors. Jacob completed dual enrollment with Liberty University and will pursue a degree in national security and intelligence, as an Honors Scholar and recipient of the Valedictorian Scholarship. We love you. May you seek the Lord with all your heart, mind, and soul wherever He leads you.



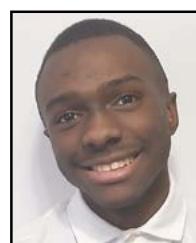
**Gracelyn Eichmann**, daughter of Stephen and Polley of Tarboro, graduates after homeschooling for thirteen years. Coffee is her love language, as she enjoys one or more cups to get her through the school day. As an avid hockey fan, she cheers for the Philadelphia Flyers, win or lose. Gracelyn has always had a gift for brain puzzles and consistently impresses those around with her sharp attention to detail. As a faithful friend, she puts others ahead of herself, although she does have the gift of sarcasm. She's looking forward to seeing what God has for her in this next season of life.



**Kaitlyn Virginia Evans**, daughter of Leisa Hepler of Advance, graduates with honors after four years of homeschooling. She has won multiple awards for her photography. She enjoys travelling across the country, outdoor activities, and is an avid reader. She plans to continue her studies on the college level in a field of science and hopes to pursue a career embracing animals and nature. I am so proud and will love and support you always! Mom



**Lauren Eileen Evavold**, daughter of Kevin and Candie Evavold of Asheboro, graduates after nine years of homeschool. Lauren has been a proud member of Randolph Youth Theater Company for many years. She has been working for the Randolph-Asheboro YMCA for nearly two years. Lauren enjoys working with children and writing. She even wrote a book for the YMCA nursery titled, *Mystery of the Missing Mop*. We love you and are so proud of you!



**Dominique Gabriel Faucette**, son of LaDonna Brown and Preston Faucette, Sr., graduates after six years of homeschooling. Dominique enjoys long walks, listening to music and playing video games. Dominique is a loving and caring individual who looks for ways to help his family and friends. After graduation, he plans to seek employment while continuing to explore his career options and furthering his education.

*Whatever you do, work at it with all your heart, as working for the Lord, not for men . . .*

(Colossians 3:23)



**Landon Wayne Ford**, son of Jimmy and Alexis Ford of High Point, is graduating from Land J Christian Academy after thirteen years of homeschooling. His lifelong passion for music led him to becoming a talented guitarist and musician. He plans to pursue a career in music after graduation. Congratulations!



**Emily Fox**, daughter of Peter Fox and Gaye Mariane-Fox, graduates with honors from Grace River Academy after eleven years homeschooling. Born and raised until 2023 in CA, she brought her love of learning to NC where she found new opportunities for growth and her educational goals. She is learning Greek and Spanish and is dual-enrolled at FTCC where she will finish her AA then attend a university. She loves art, cosplay, writing, and languages.



**Sarah Elizabeth Garcia**, daughter of Mark and Tammy Garcia of Pfafftown, graduates after one year of homeschooling. Sarah enjoys spending time with her family, reading, singing, and helping out at church. Sarah plans to attend Forsyth Tech

Community College after graduation.



**Asani Gerald**, daughter of Kyndra and Reggie Scott and the late Anthony Gerald Jr., graduates after homeschooling for six years. Asani is graduating from God's Blessings Homeschool with a 3.5. She also was enrolled in early college where she graduated with her associate's degree with a 3.5 all while maintaining her business, being an amazing big sister, and leader on her praise dance team. She will be attending Johnson and Wales in the fall.



**Skyler Jewel Gore**, daughter of Micheal and Tamarra Gore of Bolton, is graduating with honors from Arbor Roots Coastal Academy after homeschooling four years. Skyler has an amazing personality with a love and compassion for people. She's also an involved member of her church and community. She has a passion for history, and enjoys historical based novels and movies. Skyler has enjoyed dual enrollment with Southeastern CC. Skyler will complete her journey to obtain a diploma for medical office administration this summer. She plans to continue her education at SCC to obtain her associate's.



**Kiyan Green**, daughter of Keisha McMurrin from Grandy, North Carolina, graduates after homeschooling for three years. She is dual-enrolled at College of the Albemarle, pursuing a nursing degree. With a 3.3 college GPA and 3.8 high school GPA, she excels academically while ensuring her faith and ministry come first in her life. A talented dancer for ten years and a flutist for five years, Kiyana is thoughtful, caring, and generously volunteers her time to helping others. We are incredibly proud of you, Kiyana!—with love and admiration, Mom, Kenny, Grandma, Granddad, Santos, Kathie, and Gary.



**Nathaniel Greenley**, son of Josh and Becky Greenley of Franklin, graduates after twelve years of homeschooling. Nate has been dual-enrolled in Southwestern CC pursuing an AA degree. He is employed by a local ministry called The Inn where he does maintenance and grounds work. Nate enjoys technology, gaming, primitive camping, and traveling adventures. He is considering getting a CDL or the military. One day, Nate would like to run his own business.



# Sarah E. Garcia

CLASS OF 2025

Sarah, Congratulations on your graduation! You are such a blessing to our family. We are so excited to see where God leads you. We are so proud of you!

LOVE, DAD AND MOM

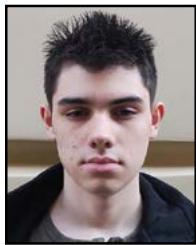




**Madilynn Rose Handkammer**, daughter of Robert and Marcel Handkammer, graduates after having demonstrated an insatiable curiosity and dedication to excellence during her nine years of homeschooling. Her academic journey launched at Charlotte's International Language Immersion School, where she quickly became fluent in German. Her passion for the environment led her to compete in NC's Envirothon at the state level and to join the FIRST Robotics Team Yeti 3506 where she contributed to the design/build of competitive robots and competed at the international level for two consecutive years. Madilynn is an accredited speaker with Toastmasters International and an ACE-certified golfer with The First Tee of Charlotte. A true Renaissance woman, Madilynn is an avid lover of literature of all genres and spends countless hours honing her artistic talents. We look forward to her bright future ahead.



**Madilyn Elise Hedrick**, daughter of Jim and Charlotte Hedrick of Lexington, graduates after homeschooling since kindergarten. Madilyn has been active in 4-H, her church, and American Heritage Girls her whole life. Madilyn received the highest achievement in AHG by earning her Stars and Stripes Award. Madilyn has been dual-enrolled at DDCC and plans to finish her associate's degree in arts next semester and then backpack the entire AT in 2026.



**Eli Henry**, the son of Dominick and Sarah Henry, graduates after ten years of homeschooling. Eli has been a member of Civil Air Patrol and karate for several years. Eli has been involved in community projects and enjoys traveling, hunting, gaming, and welding. Eli has been attending Gaston Community College and plans to transfer to UNC Charlotte upon completion of his associate's degree. We wish Eli all the best. Congratulations!



**Haley Elizabeth Hullett**, daughter of Michelle and William Shelly of Conover, graduates after homeschooling for ten years. She has completed dual enrollment classes at CVCC, achieved her CNA certification, and plans to continue to pursue her degree in nursing. We are so proud of the young woman you have become! Chazak! Be courageous! Deuteronomy 31:8



**Dylan Robert Jeffords**, son of Darryl L. and Viki L. Jeffords of Raleigh and grandson of Robert H. Gordy and the late Betty J. Gordy of Warrenton and John W. Jeffords and the late Gloria L. Jeffords of Waterford, CT, is graduating

with high honors from DRJ Academy after twelve years of homeschooling. He has excelled in his studies, especially science and history. When he is not studying, he is an avid golfer, and enjoys reading and animals. He has such a kind heart and loves to help others. He has a contagious laugh that blesses everyone he comes in contact with. To continue helping others, he is going to college, pursuing his doctorate in psychology. We are so proud of him and the amazing adult he has turned into. We know he will go far.



**Ellie Jones**, daughter of TJ and Hannah Jones of Winston-Salem, graduates from Legacy Christian Academy and from Forsyth Tech CC with her associate's degree in emergency management. Ellie has demonstrated her commitment to her community by serving as chief of a cadet firefighter program. In addition to her community service, she enjoys caring for her pets and has aspirations of owning a coffee shop. Congratulations, Ellie! We are so proud of you!



**Caleb Evan Kepley**, son of Ricky and Jessica Kepley of Randleman, graduates after homeschooling his entire academic journey. His talent in art and music emerged early and it's been a joy to see him cultivate those gifts. He was employed throughout his senior year and has shown an excellent work ethic. We're proud of him as he finishes this chapter and steps into the next. As Scripture instructs, we encourage him to use his gifts to serve others!



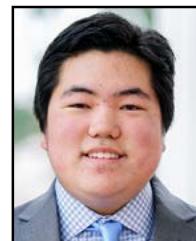
**Rebecca Grace Kepley**, daughter of Ricky and Jessica Kepley of Randleman, graduates after homeschooling her entire academic journey. She's diligent in her studies and always up for adventure outdoors. Her serving heart

carried on from home to community, volunteering for Meals on Wheels. She begins each day with God's Word, and we're certain she'll begin her next chapter with Him too. We're so proud of her and share her excitement for her future!

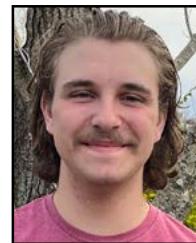


**Gabriel Kersey**, son of Jon and Laura Kersey of Mooresville, graduates with honors after ten years of homeschooling. He has enjoyed training at his jiu-jitsu academy and also loves hiking and traveling. Gabriel will be

continuing his education at Mitchell Community College with a degree in computer science.



**Andrew Kristoff**, son of Larry and Sharon Kristoff of Clayton, graduates with honors from Manna Christian Academy after homeschooling for thirteen years. Andrew enjoys mountain biking, snow skiing, and hiking. He serves as a volunteer at his church with the Compassion Project, a ministry addressing food insecurity in our community. Andrew is an active member of Eta Sigma Alpha National Home School Honor Society, Theta Nu Chapter. He has earned dual enrollment credit from Veritas Scholars Academy and Cairn University. Next fall, Andrew will attend Liberty University where he will participate in the honors scholars program and major in biology. We are so proud of you, Andrew, and look forward to seeing what God has planned for you.



**Axel Lang**, son of Sara and Markus Lang, graduates with honors from Stoneridge Prep after homeschooling for five years. Axel plans to serve his community as a first responder. He has recently completed his training at the Fire Academy and received certificates as a firefighter and EMT. We are very proud of you, son, and look forward to watching all the ways the Lord will continue to work in your life.



**Emily Lanae Leahy**, daughter of Mark and Tara Leahy, graduates after homeschooling for one year with honors and nineteen college credits from Wake Tech through their CCP Program. While completing her studies,

she has worked part-time for a local catering company and has enjoyed the benefits that come with working hard. She enjoys reading, music, going to the beach, hanging out with friends, shopping, and traveling. She is smart, kind, outgoing, loving, and a compassionate friend and daughter and plans to use her gifts to pursue a degree in psychology in the fall. We are so proud of you, Emily! We can't wait to see what the Lord has planned for your future! Jeremiah 29:11.



**Luther Lilly** is the son of Brooke Lilly and the late Shanna Wray of Eden NC. He is graduating after six years of homeschooling. He was raised by his grandmother Rene Wray and aunt Mandy Wray. His grandfathers who are looking down from Heaven include Timmy Newcombe and George Gill; his grandfather here on earth is Luther Brooke Lilly III. He graduates with honors, having a 4.0 grade average. He wishes to thank all of his family.



**Tanner Dalton Logan**, son of Kevin and Julie Logan, graduates after four years of homeschooling. He has completed dual enrollment classes at DDCC and will graduate with a degree in agriculture. Tanner has been active in Cross Trail Outfitters and his youth group at Mt. Pleasant Church. He plans to pursue a career as a firefighter and to continue in his passion for farming. Tanner, we are proud of you and all you've accomplished and overcome. We love you and wish you the best! "Seek his will in all you do, and he will show you which path to take."



**Rebekah Grace Madl**, daughter of Richard and Denise Madl, graduates after thirteen years of homeschooling. She is the second youngest of seven siblings. She was a competitive dancer and just finished her twelfth year of dancing. She enjoys writing, babysitting, photography, baking, traveling, and spending time with her family. She plans to continue her education at JCC for two years to study psychology and then transfer to a Christian college.



**Daniely Raquel Maldonado**, daughter of Luis and Elyjanette Maldonado of Cameron, graduates after being home educated all her life. She is a loving daughter and sister. She enjoys baking, writing fiction stories, listening to law lectures, and oral arguments. She is interested in pursuing a law degree. We love you!



**Grace Nicole Martin**, daughter of Brent and Shannon Martin of Cornelius, graduates after homeschooling for twelve years. Grace works as a teacher at Kid City USA and plans to continue her education and career in this field. Grace is an instructor with In His Steps dance ministry and teaches

Sunday school weekly. She enjoys dancing, traveling, and horseback riding. We love you and are incredibly proud of you. Congratulations! Joshua 1:9



**Antonio R. Martinez** is the son of Ayesha and Oscar Martinez. Antonio has been homeschooled for twelve years, and dual-enrolled for two years with the local community college. We are super proud of Antonio and all his accomplishments, and his will to make this world a better place one day, one accomplishment at a time. Antonio plans to continue his education at Niagara University in New York to become a nurse. Congratulations Antonio, we love you!



**Isaiah Matthews**, the son of Dr. S. Talley-Matthews and Mr. Tovaris Matthews of Charlotte, graduates after homeschooling for ten years. Isaiah is a very hard working and caring person, always willing to put others before himself. Isaiah has participated in the marching and jazz band during his high school career. Isaiah plays the trumpet at his church. After graduation, Isaiah will be studying business with a minor in e-sports at JCSU.



**Josiah Matthews**, the son of Dr. S. Talley-Matthews and Mr. Tovaris Matthews of Charlotte, graduates after homeschooling for ten years. Josiah is a very advanced student with a lot of leadership skills. Josiah has participated in both marching and jazz band during his high school career. Josiah plays the piano, saxophone, and bass guitar. Josiah is a musician at his church. After graduating, he will attend JCSU majoring in STEM.



**Zechariah Matthews**, the son of Dr. S. Talley-Matthews and Mr. Tovaris Matthews of Charlotte, graduates after homeschooling for ten years. Zech is a leader, very goal-oriented, and he has a giving spirit. Zech has participated in the marching and jazz band during his high school career. Zech is the lead drummer at his church. He is also involved in the youth department at church. After graduating, Zech will be studying business at JCSU.



**Allison Rose McLamb (Allie)**, we congratulate you! We are so proud of you! Allie is graduating with high honors and plans to pursue a degree in music therapy. She has excelled in both her homeschool and community colleges classes.

Along with academic and artistic achievements, we are most proud of the beautiful, caring soul that Allie extends to everyone she meets. We love you so much! All our love, Mom, Caleb, Katie, Jonathan, and MaMa



**Madelyn McNeill**, daughter of Ryan and Melanie McNeill, graduates with honors as she completes her homeschool journey. Madelyn has studied all over the globe after calling three continents home. She is happy to now call

the Wilmington area home where she has been actively involved with her church youth group, club swimming, and serving as the president of the local TPUSA chapter. Madelyn, a member of the National German Honor Society, plans to continue studying German in college while pursuing a degree in exercise science. Madelyn plans to obtain her DPT and continue traveling abroad.



**Josiah Kurt Mills**, son of Kurt and Jana Mills of Raleigh, graduates after twelve years of homeschooling. He has completed dual enrollment classes at Wake Tech while working part-time his junior and senior year. He actively serves on the servant leadership team at church, has a passion for physical fitness, and plays baseball on the South Wake Sabres varsity team. He loves to hang out with his friends and work on his truck. After graduation, he plans to complete his personal trainer certification and join the local fire department.



**Habeebah Nassef**, daughter of Mohamed Nassef and Niveen Fahmy, graduates with honors after homeschooling for thirteen years. Habeebah is a very dedicated and hardworking individual. She is an avid reader and loves learning. She likes baking, art, writing, and video editing. Habeebah plans on pursuing her bachelor's degree in deaf studies and creative writing from UNCG. Habeebah is an amazing young woman and an incredible blessing to her family.



**Emily Hope Neal**, daughter of Freddie and Jerri of Otto, graduates after being homeschooled all her life. Emily has an eye for art and enjoys painting. She is a babysitter, a server/hostess at a local restaurant, and she is a children's volunteer at church. Emily dual-enrolled at Southwestern Community College and will continue taking classes there after graduation. We are excited to see the adventure God has planned for her! Philippians 1:9-11



**Isaac Neal**, son of Jason and Courtney Coleman of Hamptonville, graduates from Coleman Christian Academy. Isaac is an intelligent and humorous student who has many hobbies and talents, fishing, golfing, and mechanics,

but his greatest is basketball. Isaac is a great brother to his seven younger siblings. He has been with Chick-fil-A for three years. Isaac has been called to preach and is seeking the Lord's will for his next season. Isaiah 6:8



**Rylynn O'Daniel**, daughter of Robyn Hudson of Charlotte and Ransey O'Daniel, graduates after homeschooling for four years. She is a blessing to our family, and we are pleased with the progress she makes on a daily basis. Her future looks

bright, and we look forward to what the Most High has in store for her as she continues to thrive! Philippians 1:6, Isaiah 40:31, Proverbs 23:18



**Abigail Owens**, daughter of Erica Alexander and Johnathan Owens, graduates after homeschooling for ten years. Throughout the years, she has participated in youth group, 4-H, worked on her family's farm, and has started a small business.

She is an avid roller-skater and loves music. She has strong character and a true passion and love for animals. Abigail is exploring career options and hopes to continue her work with animals in the future.



**Kimberly Joy Petterson**, daughter of David and Alison Petterson of Lincolnton, graduates with honors after homeschooling for eleven years. Kimberly is an active member of the Denver Gospel Hall where she is involved in children's ministries and youth activities. Kimberly enjoys travel, photography and music. She plans to attend Gaston College and pursue a career in healthcare. "Do everything in the name of the Lord Jesus..." Colossians 3:17



**Kayla Addison Parker**, daughter of Thomas and Diana Parker of Highlands, graduates after homeschooling for ten years. She will be attending South Western Community College for two years and then transfer to UNCW. Kayla's dream

is to become a marine biologist. She would like to specialize in coral research. We are so proud to be her mom and dad and know that she will conquer her dreams.



**Arwyn Elizabeth Perry**, daughter of Kristina Perry and Leah Gragg of Mount Olive, graduates after homeschooling for eleven years. Possessing a fiercely independent personality, Arwyn taught herself to read at age four and continues to be an avid reader. Additional hobbies include dancing, singing, and hanging out with friends. Arwyn plans to pursue a career in social work. We are proud of you and are excited to watch you continue to excel.



**Emilee Ann Pierce**, daughter of Steve and Traci Pierce of Lillington, is graduating from Excel Academy with honors. Emilee is enrolled at CCCC and hopes to transfer to Wake Tech's radiography program. She enjoys working at Chick-fil-A and playing the piano, guitar, and ukulele. The Lord is with you, our daughter, directing your steps! "Be strong and courageous. . .for the Lord your God will be with you wherever you go." Joshua 1:9

*So whether you eat or drink or whatever you do, do it all for the glory of God.*

(1 Corinthians 10:31)



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**Trenton David Pierce**, son of Steve and Traci Pierce of Lillington, is graduating from Excel Academy with honors. Trent managed his high school studies while dual-enrolled at CCCC and working at Chick-fil-A. He plans to pursue EMT training, then major in marketing. We are proud of you, son, for all you have accomplished; we look forward to seeing what the Lord has planned for you next! "If God is for us, who can be against us?" Romans 8:31



**Arwen Price**, daughter of David and Yan Price of Bennett, graduates after homeschooling for ten years. Through this journey of self-discovery, Arwen has developed a passion for music, art, literature, and a path to becoming a clinical psychologist to harness her empathetic nature for others. After graduation, she plans to study humanities and linguistics in China before returning to US to pursue a master's degree in psychology.



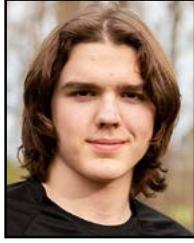
**Lindsay Redmon**, daughter of Derek and Tracey Redmon of Kernersville, graduates after homeschooling for thirteen years. Growing up, she enjoyed horseback riding, competitive gymnastics for many years, and played three years of varsity basketball for FHE Hawks. She teaches gymnastics and works at the YMCA Kid Zone. She has a natural gift for photography, has taken thousands of action shots during games, Media Day pictures, and designed the senior banners. She is active in her church and sings in the choir. She will play basketball for Greensboro College and major in exercise science.



**Dakotah Reed**, daughter of Buffy and Charles "Wes" Reed III of Elizabeth City, graduates after homeschooling for nine years. She also completed a number of college classes as part of the North Carolina community college dual-enrollment program. She has been active in the youth group at New Community Church, participated in numerous hours of volunteer work with the church and local homeschool group, and ran a business in home-sitting and pet care. Her summer jobs were with a local water park for three seasons. She enjoys shopping, hanging out with her friends, drawing, and writing. Dakotah has a heart of gold and aspires to help people as a counselor after college, working with others to make their quality of life better.



**Eliora Grace Sams** is the daughter of Jeremy and Crystal Sams of Archdale. She graduates with highest honors from Sovereign Grace Academy. While attending high school, she has been dually enrolled with DDCC and will receive her associate's degree in applied science in December. Eliora's name means "God is my light." With all praise to God, her parents gave her the life verse, Psalms 27:1 ~ The Lord is my light and my salvation, whom shall I fear?



**Caleb William Shaver**, son of Gregory and Dawn Shaver of Monroe, graduates after being homeschooled since birth. Caleb has enjoyed competing in swimming, acting in Image drama group, and volunteering in the children's ministry at church. He also works for Chick-fil-A and is an active member of his church. His plan is to complete his associate's degree and then pursue future college.



**Dylan Lee Shaw**, son of Bryan and Tori Shaw of High Point, graduates after twelve years of homeschooling. He loves history, reading, and making people laugh. He's made it to National Fine Arts competitions multiple times with large dramas, stand-up comedy routines, and short sermons. Dylan was selected as a Presidential Scholar and awarded a place in the Siegfried Leadership Fellows Program at HPU where he will be studying to become a historian.



**Emma Sloan**, daughter of John and Amy Sloan, graduates from thirteen years of homeschooling with sixty college credits, an associate of science degree, and dozens of indoor plants. When not sewing, baking, or reading, she's co-hosting the Kids Talk Church History Podcast or having fun with calculus. She plans to demonstrate that extroverts can be accountants. She is beloved by four siblings. Her chief end is to glorify God and enjoy Him forever.



**Anna Elizabeth Sperling**, of Smithfield, graduates after homeschooling for thirteen years. Anna loves baking, reading, working out, and playing travel softball for NLTC. She launched her own baking business in 2023 as a teen entrepreneur. She works as a barista in a local coffee shop and attends JCC in the Career and College Promise program. Anna will attend Guilford College to play softball and has received the J. Floyd Moore Scholarship.



**Clarke Stem**, son of James and Katherine Stem, graduates with honors from Axiom Academy. Clarke has played baseball with the FHE Hawks and basketball with the GC Heat throughout his high school career. He serves as a leader in youth ministry. He enjoys studying finance, accounting, and sports broadcasting; and will further pursue those tracks during his collegiate career. He is thankful for God's faithfulness as He has led him through many trials.



**Larson Stem**, son of James and Katherine Stem, graduates with honors from Axiom Academy. Larson's high school career was filled with baseball, basketball, dog training, and Bible studies, just to name a few. His most enjoyable classes included biology and animal science, which he plans to study at Pfeiffer while playing baseball for the Falcons. He thanks God for each and every breath and desires to honor Him in all he does.



**Aven Strickland**, son of Tina and Marko Schrader of Nashville, graduates after nine years of homeschooling. He loves basketball, watching NASCAR, and is active in his church youth group. He plays on his church softball team and the county all-star basketball team. His future plans after graduation include continuing his employment with George's BBQ Sauce and one day owning his own custom auto modification shop.

*Trust in the Lord with all your heart and lean not on your own understanding; in all your ways acknowledge him, and he will make your paths straight.*

(Proverbs 3:5-6)

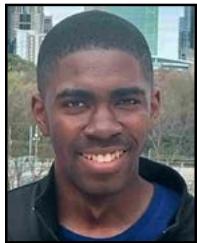
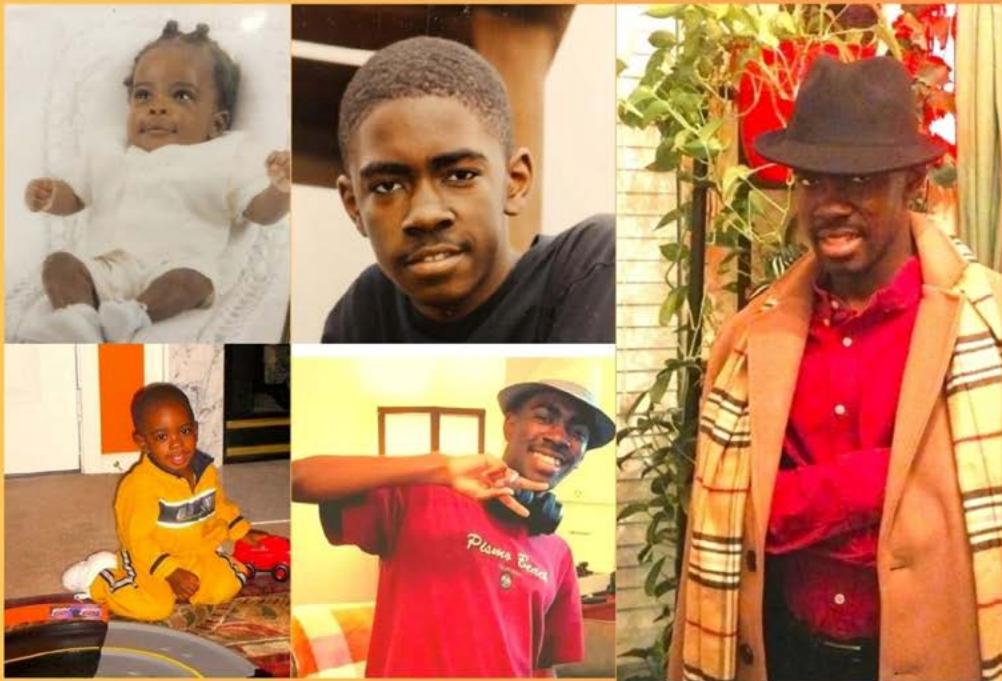
# DAVID BRAXTON THOMPSON

Son, always keep your soul grounded and let

God guide you in everything you do!  
Continue to be the spirit filled, well-mannered, thoughtful, polite, and considerate person that you are. You represent the epitome of peace, love, wisdom and light.

Congratulations son!

We are immensely proud of you and love you beyond measure!



**David Braxton Thompson**, son of David Thompson and Lisa Davis of Charlotte, graduates with honors after four years of homeschooling. Known as "DT3," David is the brother of sisters Crystal and Lauryn.

Diagnosed at three, he proudly represents the autism community and overcame many hurdles. Now, he manages a YouTube channel and does sports commentating on the Carolina Panthers, Charlotte Hornets, UNC Tar Heels football/basketball. He enjoys his friends, playing the piano, creating music beats and cartoons, gaming, bowling, swimming, driving, and working at Coverall. This fall, he'll attend CPCC to pursue a degree in 3D modeling-animation. Through it all, we'd like to thank God and our village (Great Grandma Ella, Grandma Francinna, Grandma Sherry, Grandpa David, Aunt Letha, Uncle Brian, Ygrene, Gabriel, Mrs. Helen, Mrs. Kim, Ms. Parks and Back Creek Christian Academy). Way to go son!



**Colby Townsend**, son of Scott and Kristen Townsend and brother to Parker, graduates with honors after homeschooling for thirteen years. In addition to being a dual-enrolled student focused on his academics, Colby has demonstrated extraordinary athletic talent and leadership abilities. Colby is the command chief petty officer of the United States Naval Sea Cadet Corps (CLT Division). A competitive ice hockey player and referee, golfer with First Tee of Greater Charlotte, swimmer, youth coach, and FeedNC grassroots grocery guide, Colby is a dedicated athlete and passionate volunteer. Throughout high school, Colby served his community as a volunteer junior firefighter earning Lincoln County's Junior Firefighter of the Year Award in 2024. Colby plans to study marine transportation, earning his US Coast Guard Third Mate Unlimited Tonnage license and pursuing a career as a merchant mariner.



**Zoey Trogdon**, daughter of Paul and Naomi Trogdon of Asheboro, graduates after homeschooling for thirteen years. She has completed some dual enrollment credit at CFCC and RCC. She plans to attend RCC and possibly UNCG to pursue a career in either social work or teaching.



**Annie Clara Walker**, daughter of Grant and Wendy Walker of Erwin, is graduating after a lifetime of homeschooling. A true artist at heart, Clara has brought beauty into the world through music, dance, painting, poetry, and crafting. Beyond her artistic gifts, Clara has been deeply involved in church ministry, serving on the student leadership team and participating in multiple mission trips. While often found in her "dream world" of flowers, colors, and sparkles, she remains firmly rooted in her faith. This unique blend of creativity and devotion gives her a refreshing perspective on life. Clara plans to pursue cosmetology at Paul Mitchell, where she will combine her love for people, beauty, and ministry. We are incredibly proud of you, Clara! We love you and know that you—and God—have beautiful things ahead.

*Commit to the Lord whatever you do, and your plans will succeed.*

(Proverbs 16:3)



**Shirley Estelle Walker**, daughter of Grant and Wendy Walker of Erwin, is graduating after a lifetime of homeschooling. As the oldest of her triplet siblings, Estelle has always been a natural leader. She has a keen eye for detail, noticing things others might miss—like a skilled navigator charting a course. She sees the bigger picture, anticipates obstacles, and ensures everything stays on track. Estelle has taken on countless leadership roles in Civil Air Patrol, church ministry, and within her family and many other endeavors. Driven by a heart for service, truth, and justice, she plans to continue pursuing these passions at Liberty University, studying government and policy. She is deeply devoted to God, her family, and her friends. Estelle, we are so proud of all you've accomplished and can't wait to see what God has in store for your future!



**Thomas Jack Walker**, son of Grant and Wendy Walker of Erwin, is graduating after a lifetime of homeschooling. Jack possesses an incredible passion for learning, approaching knowledge like a detective—sharp-eyed, relentless, and always seeking the bigger picture. Throughout high school, Jack served in the Civil Air Patrol, was active in church ministry as part of the student leadership team, and participated in multiple mission trips. He plans to further his love of learning, books, and goodness at Liberty

University, where he will study theology, philosophy, and economics, with hopes of studying abroad in the future. Teaching Jack has been like trying to light a candle that is already glowing brightly. We eagerly anticipate how God will continue to lead him. Jack, we love you and are so proud of who you are and the godly man you are growing into!



**Allen Waters**, son of Melanie Waters and family of Magnolia, graduates after ten years of homeschooling. Allen is a gifted writer of science fiction and horror stories. He also displays promising talents in the field of culinary arts. Allen has a gentle spirit and shows compassion and kindness to all. Allen has overcome many obstacles in his life and is such a blessing to his family and all who meet this amazing young man. Allen you are truly our blessing from God, and we know you are destined to fulfill your greatness. Enter into this new phase in your life with strength and determination.



**Emily Patricia Werner**, daughter of Michael and Kristen Werner of Winston Salem, graduates after homeschooling for four years. Emily has dual-enrolled at DDCC for the past two years. She plans to continue her

education next year at DDCC and then transfer to Forsyth Technical to study medical sonography. Emily plans to become an ultrasound technician. Emily loves spending time with friends and playing basketball. We are very proud of you, Emily!



**Lauren Abigail Whittington**, daughter of Sam and Emily Whittington of Staley, graduates from Rampart Academy after completing grades K-12. Lauren is a considerate, loving, and caring person, especially for her friends. She has attended Randolph CC and hopes to attend UNC Greensboro in the fall. Lauren enjoys reading, volleyball, and time with friends. She is loved and supported by her parents, sister (Katherine), grandparents and friends.



**Halli Noel Williams**, daughter of Jeff and Leigh Williams of Wilmington, graduates after homeschooling twelve years. She plays guitar and has been active in acting and dance with lead roles. Halli is an entrepreneur, owning Hal's Farm and Goods inspired by her farm animals. She plans to own a farm, focusing on livestock and agribusiness. Halli thanks her parents, grandparents, Christian Homeschool Center, and Jesus Christ for support and guidance.

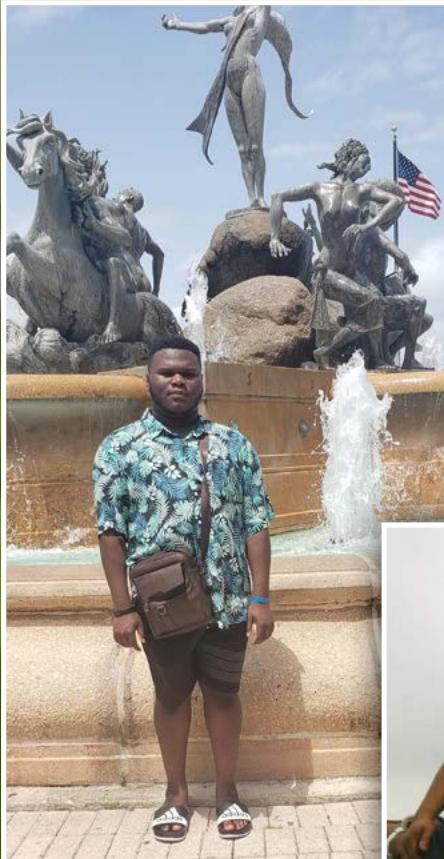
# Allen Waters

*Allen, we are so proud of you! You have worked so hard to push through the obstacles that have come your way. You have such a kind heart and gentle soul. You are my one and only, my heartbeat. God granted me the opportunity to be your mother, your protector. We, as a family, love you and want nothing but the best for you. We are here to encourage, support and help you to grow into the wonderful young man you are set to be.*

*As you go forth in life, remember God has you and so do we.*

*Our love is endless.*

*Your Mom, Grandma, Great-Aunts, Cousins, Uncle(s) and Aunties alike. Our Village!*





**Novina Williford**, daughter of Danny and Kristine Williford of Oxford, graduates from Olliophia after homeschooling for one year. She is dual-enrolled at VGCC where she plans to complete her AS and will continue to earn a BS in entomology. Throughout her life she has played soccer, run cross country, cheered, showed horses, played various musical instruments, performed in theater, volunteered in her community, and was a member of her local 4-H.



**Callie Willis**, daughter of Lee and Sabra Willis of Hampstead, graduates after eleven years of homeschooling. A devoted scholar, passionate about classical ballet, Callie trained extensively with City Ballet of Wilmington while nurturing her deep love for reading, history, and philosophy. She will attend NC State University, majoring in philosophy, with plans to pursue a law degree and eventually realize her dream of becoming a judge.



**Addisyn Wilson** is the daughter of Brian and Lindy Wilson of Monroe. Addisyn is a competitive athlete and has been signed to Wingate University's Acrobatics and Tumbling team for the 2025-2026 school year. She has cheered with Charlotte Homeschool Cheer since its founding and has coached elementary and middle school teams. She is an avid dancer and ice skater, as well as tumbler! She plans to pursue a doctoral degree in physical therapy.



**Caroline Elisabeth Wireman**, daughter of Sean and Mia Wireman of New Bern, graduates after seven years of homeschooling. A dedicated student, she has excelled academically while refining her artistic talents and deepening her interest in psychology and human dynamics. Through dual enrollment at Craven Community College, she has completed several courses and will continue working toward her AS degree. Her family proudly celebrates her achievements!



**Heaven Winston**, daughter of David and Tiffany Winston, graduates with honors from Sandystone Academy of Math and Science after homeschooling since kindergarten. From an early age, she has enjoyed reading, drawing, story writing, and photography. She is a bright and bubbly young lady with an avid interest in birds. She plans to pursue a degree in biology. We are very proud of her hard work and dedication. May God lead and guide her life.



**Tyriq Ha'kiem Wright**, son of Kimberly Wright and Darnell White, graduates after nine years of homeschooling. As a star student in Lego robotics, Ty was granted the opportunity to team up with a robotics team from SC He and his team won second place at the state level. In addition to robotics, Ty also loves acting. Theatre has been an integral part of his life since he was nine years old. He participated in local plays throughout his academic years. He continues to pursue his love of theatre through acting classes. He plans to continue his pursuit of the arts as a student at Old Trolley Theatre in Summerville, SC.

# Heaven Winston

Class of 2025



Congratulations on your graduation. We are so very proud of you. Keep smiling and caring for animals with your loving heart. We look forward to what God has planned for your life. Love, Team Winston

# *Congratulations* GRADUATES!



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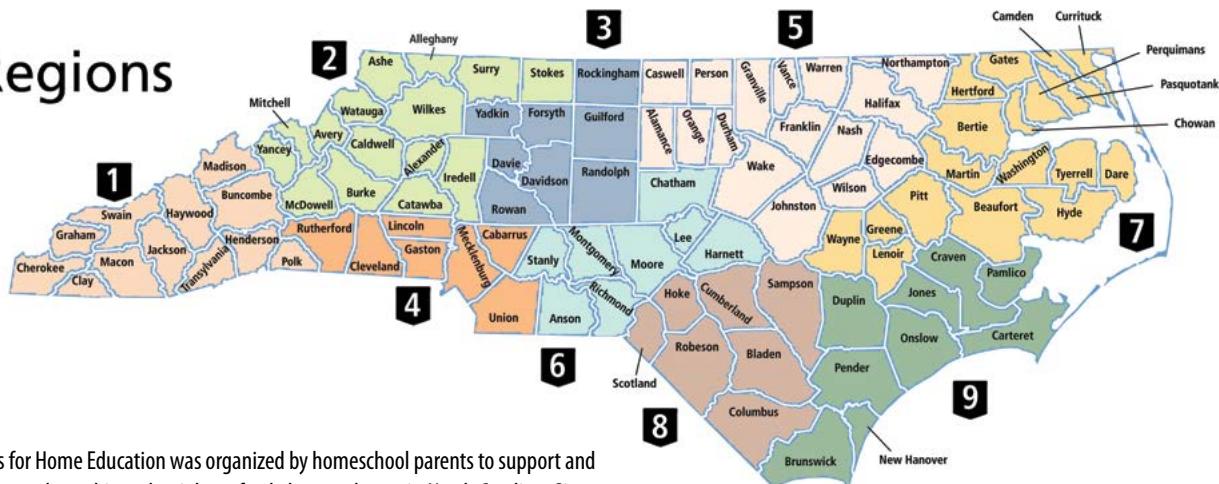
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## NCHE Regions



### About NCHE

In 1984, North Carolinians for Home Education was organized by homeschool parents to support and encourage home educators and to achieve the right to freely home educate in North Carolina. Since that time, NCHE has endeavored to serve the homeschoolers in NC. NCHE continues to work to promote the excellence of home education, provide support for those who choose to do so and protect the right to homeschool. Our name was selected so as to include all who are for home education, not just those who are currently homeschooling. NCHE is governed by a working board of directors who volunteer their time and efforts to serve homeschoolers. A non-profit organization, NCHE operates on the basis of biblical principles and welcomes members of all races and religions.

### GREENHOUSE Information

The GREENHOUSE is the periodical of North Carolinians for Home Education. It is published twice a year, spring and fall. There is also a special graduate publication in May. It is mailed to all members and posted online. The name GREENHOUSE was chosen to represent the type of care homeschooling parents are able to give to their children. Children are lovingly "tended" in a protected and nurturing environment until they are sufficiently mature to go out and take a place of service in the world. Letters and articles addressed to the GREENHOUSE become property of NCHE with full right to publication without further permission required. Ideas and opinions expressed in articles do not necessarily represent those of NCHE.

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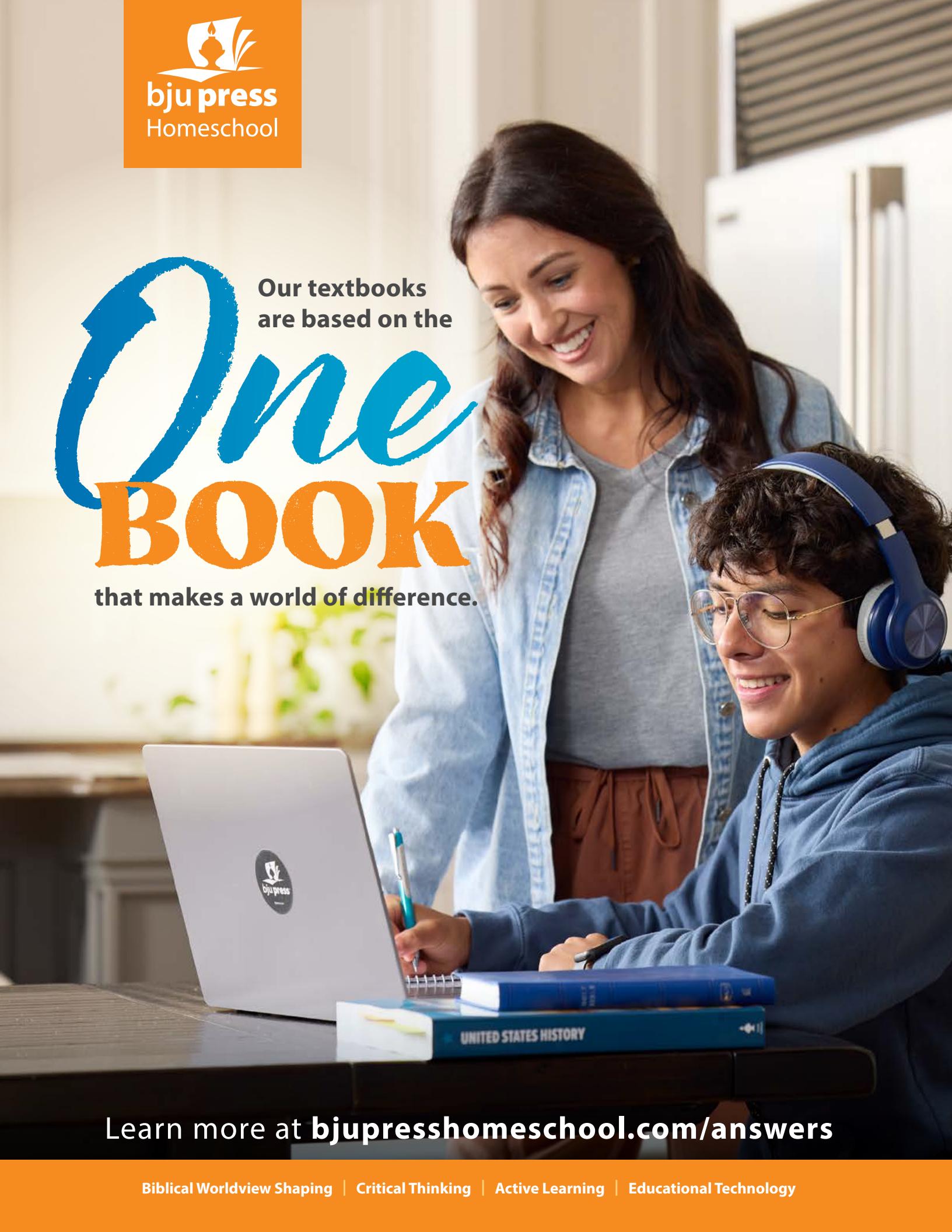
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