

# Nebraska Homeschool

The Home Educators Network, Inc.

January 2017 Volume 11, Issue 1



Shout for joy to the LORD, all the earth. Worship the LORD with gladness; come before him with joyful songs. Know that the LORD is God. It is he who made us, and we are his; we are his people, the sheep of his pasture.

Psalm 100: 1-3





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**The Homeschool Resource Edition** 



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**Scripture Version** Unless otherwise noted, all Scripture quotations are from NIV.

**Columnists** The views of guest columnists do not necessarily reflect the views of NH-HEN.

**Submissions** to newsletter must be received by the 20<sup>th</sup> of each month via email at media@nebraskahomeschool.org.

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## Notes from the Board...

I'm excited to head into 2017. I'm already practicing my victory dance as I see my girls are half way through the current school year. If you're anything like me you're assessing what you've managed to accomplish, looking at what you still hope to achieve, and considering possible modifications to the plan. FYI: my kids both love and hate it when I work through this process. Love it – because they may get to trade out something they're not crazy about for something new and exciting; hate it – because they might get more than they bargained for. They have the misfortune of having a mother with big vision.

Proverbs 29:18 (KJV) says, "Where there is no vision, the people perish: but he that keepeth the law, happy is he."

Some may call me an overachiever. I prefer visionary. After all, aren't all things possible? Yet, some may ask, can a vision be too big? I don't think so, not when we remain focused on God. Achieving something to the glory of God is a vision we should never let go of. So let's seek to pursue the things He desires for us. When we set our hearts and minds on God's will and keep His commandments, the guideposts are in place. Keep His law and we will be happy, no matter where the path takes us.

Open to His vision, Kathryn Dillow President



Nebraska Homeschool
The Home Educators Network, Inc.

## **Network News**

It's free to everyone!
Subscribe on our website Home Page.

www.nebraskahomeschool.org

#### The Road Ahead

#### **Nebraska Homeschool Board of Directors**

Homeschooling is a powerful tool in the hand of God and we want to ensure we are faithful servants when we apply that tool within our individual families and our community. It is the vision of Nebraska Homeschool to realize an effectively networked and supportive homeschool community within Nebraska and the surrounding area, to the honor of Christ. For this reason we are involved in continuous improvement. As we do this, we find it is helpful to consider where we have come from and where we hope to go. So join us as we reminisce about 2016 and then step forward with us on the path for 2017.



#### Reminiscing about 2016:

**Revised and documented our vision, mission, and core values.** If we were going to chart a path, we needed to know where we are headed. We also needed to clearly articulate who we served and what we valued. Flowing from this, we updated our *Statement of Faith* and *Position Statements*. These are posted on our website at <a href="https://www.nebraskahomeschool.org">www.nebraskahomeschool.org</a> under the HOME tab.

**Rebranded with a new name, new logo, and a new website.** We needed to incorporate the words *Nebraska* and *homeschool* into our name so it would be easier for folks to find us on internet searches. We updated our logo to incorporate the "n" and "h" of Nebraska Homeschool, and migrated to a new web host with a fresh new look. Our new site offers great potential and we continue to expand the content at every opportunity.

**Stood up new Facebook and Pinterest pages.** We became acutely aware that many homeschoolers use social media as a way to connect and share information. For this reason, we thought it was important for Nebraska Homeschool to have a presence in two forums frequented by homeschooling parents. This has allowed us to network with groups and individuals that we would not have otherwise encountered. There remains great untapped potential in the area of social media.

**Broadened networking across Nebraska.** With a new name, new website, and social media connections, we were poised to broaden our networking efforts. We've been reaching out to many homeschool groups across Nebraska in an effort to improve communication and collaboration. We have also been increasing our contact with community resources and businesses that we believe will benefit Nebraska homeschool families.

**Joined Nonprofit Association of the Midlands (NAM).** Our board acknowledged we needed to learn more about running a nonprofit. To help us learn, we joined NAM. NAM offers training for nonprofits, as well as many valuable resources. We are committed to learning how to grow, network, and evaluate our organization so we can continue to serve you for as long as God chooses.

**Continued our events, programs, & services.** We continued to provide our standard events, programs, and services as in years past. The biggest changes in these areas were related to improving our nonprofit management and making technology work for us. We brought elements of our programs and services online through our website and social media outlets: media releases, event details, event registrations and payment, documents for download, and our monthly calendar.

**Revised our publications.** We started to modify the look of our member Newsletter (more to come) while striving to reach a good balance of content. We transformed our *HEN etree* into the *Network News*, complete with photos and specific sections.

A lot more has taken place behind the scenes and much more still needs to be done. Let us now turn our attention forward and share with you the plan for 2017.

#### Stepping forward in 2017:

Opportunity abounds in the homeschool arena and potential for our group is great. Perhaps the most difficult thing is to decide where to place our time, energy, finances and loyalties—all of which have competing priorities. For this reason, we continuously look back at our core documents and ask ourselves, why do we serve in Nebraska Homeschool? Our answer ultimately lands on our vision statement. Our core documents and seeking God's will are the guideposts by which we make decisions as a board.

**Our Primary Focus Areas for 2017.** We have selected five (5) primary focus areas to work on this year. This doesn't mean we will neglect other areas, it just means these areas will get extra attention.

<u>Area 1: Structure Relationships</u>. Homeschooling continues to grow across our nation and there are many changes in the demographics of homeschoolers in general. Families are homeschooling for a variety of reasons and may hold differing views on education. While Nebraska Homeschool is here to serve all homeschooling families, we must ensure we do that in a way that is consistent with the core values of our group. For this reason, we feel it is important to clearly define our relationships with other homeschool groups and with groups outside of the homeschool community (businesses and community resources).

Area 2: Refine and Create Relevant Services. Many of our services have been in place for quite some time. Over the past few years we have noticed some changes in how our services are being used—usage has decreased in some areas and increased in others. We don't want to presume to know the reasons why, so we plan to send out mini-surveys from time to time. We need your feedback to make our existing programs better. We also need to know about your unmet needs so we can prioritize our resources and respond appropriately.

<u>Area 3: Increase Digital Presence.</u> More families are relying on technology and digital resources today. Both new and veteran homeschoolers take to the internet for immediate answers, mentoring, or to find resources. We want Nebraska Homeschool information to be accessible. We also want to ensure the information that families obtain is connected with a responsive and accountable resource.

<u>Area 4: Increase Member Involvement & Interaction.</u> Our membership is diverse and the demographics are wide-spread. Our events, programs, and services are open to all of our members

and we even invite nonmembers to participate. Several of our members don't know each other and many don't know how they can become more involved with Nebraska Homeschool. We are interested in exploring ways to increase member involvement and interaction. We feel this ties in closely with Area 2 (above) and a newly developing Volunteer Program. In the near future we will be publishing more on our Volunteer Program and the various ways you can get involved in helping Nebraska Homeschool. For those who may not know, Nebraska Homeschool is an all-volunteer group. From the board members to the people who help out with a single item, all are volunteers.

Area 5: Build Nebraska Homeschool Leadership. We are blessed to have a dedicated and hardworking Board of Directors, but we need more people on the board. We are actively seeking three (3) new board members at this time. There are specific requirements for board membership. We have also established a Governance Committee to assist the board in developing policies and procedures. This committee is in need of members and will require less time commitment than board service. We will be publishing the requirements, job descriptions, and benefits for both of these in the very near future. In the meantime, we invite inquiries at <a href="info@nebraskahomeschool.org">info@nebraskahomeschool.org</a>.

Lastly, we are implementing board training as a regular part of our board meetings. Our NAM membership and individual training experiences are providing us with many materials. As our knowledge and understanding increase, we hope to be able to share what we learn with other homeschool group leaders.

#### How can YOU help?

**Pray.** The most important thing you can do is pray. Pray for us as we lead Nebraska Homeschool. Pray that God will bring the right people in His time to help us lead. Ask the Lord how you should be involved with Nebraska Homeschool. Listen to His promptings and respond.

**Watch.** Keep an eye on your emails from Nebraska Homeschool, the Network News, and our Newsletter. We will be releasing information about the Volunteer Program, volunteer opportunities, Board of Directors, and the Governance Committee in these forums. Please take the time to read through the information, consider it, and respond.

Share. Share information about Nebraska Homeschool with those who are exploring homeschooling or currently homeschooling. We are here to help them. Share the benefits of membership in Nebraska Homeschool (visit <a href="www.nebraskahomeschool.org">www.nebraskahomeschool.org</a> top navigation bar <a href="JOIN>Member Benefits">JOIN>Member Benefits</a>) and encourage families to join. You can also let friends or businesses know about Nebraska Homeschool and what we do. As a nonprofit, we appreciate sponsors and donors. All of these help us expand our programs and services in the homeschool community. Encourage them to contact us at <a href="mailto:info@nebraskahomeschool.org">info@nebraskahomeschool.org</a> if they are interested in sponsorship or possibly advertising.

**Participate.** We ask that you seek ways to become more active in Nebraska Homeschool. The programs and services that we have in place at this time are there because homeschooling parents stepped up and offered their time and talent to make it happen. Please take advantage of the services we offer, attend the events for your benefit, attend events to support your peers, or volunteer at an event so another homeschool parent can be served.

Step out into 2017 with Nebraska Homeschool and let's see where the path may lead.

## Thank You for Sponsoring Nebraska Homeschool



Meet Brain Balance, Our New Mastery Level Sponsor\*

Brain Balance is a comprehensive program that combines physical and sensory motor exercises with cognitive skill training and healthy nutrition, placing both hemispheres of the brain back in sync. This allows kids to live a more functional life and achieve more with academics.

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\*[NH-HEN does not endorse products or services. Disclaimer on Page 2]

#### **DID YOU KNOW??**

NH-HEN Members enjoy a \$20 savings on Home School Legal Defense Association (HSLDA) membership when they use our *Discount Group* number. Login to the member website or email us for the number at info@nebraskahomeschool.org.

**Joining HSLDA for the first time?** Using our *Referral Affiliate* number will save you \$20 and help our group at the same time. Applies to first-time membership only. Must complete application online and enter Referral Affiliate number at that time.

Referral Affiliate # 2291040

Join today at <u>www.hslda.org</u>.

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# Homeschool Foundation Ambassador Fund

www.homeschoolfoundation.org

Please select NEBRASKA to designate funds for NE homeschool families

## **Meet Your HSF Ambassadors**

## **State Ambassador**

Kathryn Dillow

Email: hsf.ne.amb@gmail.com

**Community Ambassador** 

Heather Gladney

thegladneys@yahoo.com

Contact us if you are a homeschooling family that is struggling financially. We want to help you through the tough times so you can keep on homeschooling.

## The (Military) Child With Special Education Needs

According to the National Center for Education Statistics, in the academic year 2013/14, there were 6.5 million children and youth, ages 3-21 years, that were served under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA); that's 13% of the total enrollment of students. Additionally, the National Association of Gifted Children states there are anywhere from 3-5 million, or 6-10%, academically gifted or talented children in the total K-12 student population. These statistics represent children enrolled in public and private school settings. The number or percentage of homeschooled children with special needs is unknown, but it appears to be growing. Regardless of school setting, meeting the special educational needs of a child poses a variety of challenges. Parents need to equip themselves with information and resources, sometimes resources that will reach across state boundaries or perhaps even internationally. This is especially true for military families.

The term special needs child applies to any child who demonstrates a disability or gift. **Disabled learners** are students, children, or youth with a physical disability, mental disability, medical condition, learning deficit, or behavioral disorder that qualifies for special education.<sup>3</sup> **Gifted learners** are students, children, or youth who give evidence of high achievement capability in areas such as intellectual, creative, artistic, or leadership capacity, or in specific academic fields, who need services and activities not ordinarily provided by the school in order to fully develop those capabilities.<sup>2</sup> For a comprehensive discussion on gifted learners please visit the <u>National Association of Gifted Children</u>.

While there doesn't seem to be a concerted government effort in identifying gifted children, federal and state government do attempt to identify disabled or developmentally delayed children from birth. A quick overview of the **Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA)** provided by the <u>American Psychological Association</u> website will help explain. IDEA has four distinct sections; Parts A, B, C and D. Part A of IDEA lays out the basic foundation for the rest of the Act, defines terms, and designates oversight and responsibility for carrying out the requirements of IDEA.

Part B of IDEA sets forth the educational guidelines for children 3-21 years of age. It requires states to educate students with disabilities and provides financial support for state and local school districts. Federal funding is contingent upon compliance with six (6) main principles set out in Part B of IDEA: (1) every child is entitled to a free and appropriate public education (FAPE); (2) a student, 3-21 years of age, is entitled to an evaluation in the areas of concern when a school professional believes a disability may impact learning; (3) in response to the identified needs an Individualized Education Plan (IEP) is created to guide everyone as they help the student work towards defined goals inside a (4) Least Restrictive Environment (LRE), and if possible, minimize separation from a typical education setting. Throughout this process (5) parents and the student must be able to participate and give input. Lastly, (6) if a parent feels an IEP is inappropriate for their child, or that their child is not receiving needed services, parents have the right under IDEA to challenge their child's treatment (due process).

Part C of IDEA recognizes the need to identify and reach children 0-2 years of ages who demonstrate a developmental delay or those who are at high risk of a delay. Families are entitled to several services through part C of IDEA: (1) every family is **entitled to appropriate, timely, and multidisciplinary identification and intervention services** for their very young child and these services <u>must be made available to all families with infants and toddlers</u>; (2) identified families are required to receive an **Individualized Family Service Plan (IFSP)** which defines priorities, resources, and concerns of the family, plus describes the goals for the child, the services to be provided, and the steps for eventual transition to formal education (Part B of IDEA). Throughout this process (3) **families have a right to participate** in

the creation of the IFSP, and <u>must give consent prior to the initiation of intervention services</u>. Lastly, (4) **parents are entitled to timely resolution of all conflicts or complaints** regarding the evaluation or services provided to their child.

The last section of IDEA, Part D, describes national activities to improve the education of children with disabilities (grants, transitional services, support programs, etc.). The <u>Nebraska Early Development</u> <u>Network</u> and its collaborating program, <u>Nebraska ChildFind</u> implement many of the IDEA requirements in Nebraska.

In addition to IDEA, there is Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 which is a federal law designed to protect the "civil" rights of persons with disabilities in relation to public education. Section 504 specifies requirements for entities that receive federal funding from the U.S. Department of Education. Perhaps the most important thing for homeschooling families to understand about Section 504 is that it may generate a **504 Plan** for a child who has, or had, a disability that impacts learning. It is also important to note that a 504 Plan speaks more to accommodating a disability and may or may not carry implications for modifying content of educational materials. For a detailed explanation of the interrelationship of IDEA and Section 504 visit the <u>U.S. Department of Education</u>.<sup>5</sup>

So what does all of this have to do with homeschooling? Nebraska does not have any additional requirements for parents who elect to homeschool a special needs child. With election to homeschool, parents reclaim full authority and responsibility for their child's education, and thus need to decide how and when to seek evaluation or services. Homeschoolers' access to resources through the public school system depends on state law and how the state chooses to manage funding. The <a href="Home School Legal Defense Association">Home School Legal Defense Association (HSLDA)</a> states about 90% of public school funding for special education comes from the state itself and the state may determine how to distribute those funds. For the portion that comes from the federal government through IDEA (~10%), homeschoolers in "homeschool law states" may not have access to the IDEA funds, but in states where homeschooling is conducted under "private school law," homeschoolers are eligible for services funded by both the federal IDEA program and state funding. A summary from HSLDA says homeschooling in Nebraska is considered "private schooling." They go on to cite Nebraska Revised Statute § 79-2, 136 which allows exempt school students access to public school programs. From this HSLDA surmises, "While this law does not specifically refer to access to special needs programs, a reasonable interpretation would seem to allow homeschoolers access to them." §

Additionally, HSDLA offers the following advice. "HSLDA believes that with receiving government funds, certain freedom and privacy is lost. Each homeschooler should weigh the cost against the benefit he or she would receive from accepting public school services. To enable families to not feel obligated to take government support for their special education students, HSLDA has established a private fund through the Home School Foundation that makes support available." HSLDA also offers the Homeschooling a Struggling Learner program to the homeschool community. It contains excellent advice, encouragement, and links to many resources.

If a disabled child is part-time or dual enrolled, then that child's education can be impacted by IDEA and possibly Section 504. Parents should familiarize themselves with these programs and learn how to effectively use them to enhance their homeschool plan. Some families choose to use the evaluation services only, while others want to see what the IEP has to offer before making a decision. Finally, some parents seek different alternatives all together through private health insurance, disability specific associations, and networking with other homeschooling families. In fact, one reason for the increase in homeschooled children with special needs is the frustration that parents experience with the process and services offered.

Parents are encouraged to take heart. As the homeschool community grows, and groups respond to the needs of homeschooling families with special needs children, information and resources are increasing. Please let us know how we can step forward to meet Nebraska Homeschool member needs.

#### References:

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#### Offutt AFB Resources:

**Exceptional Family Member Program (EFMP):** a uniquely active duty military program, but may impact Title 10 National Guard and Reserve personnel. Enrollment in EFMP is mandatory for military dependents (spouse or children) with special medical or educational needs. Enrollment ensures the needs of the family member are taken into consideration when a duty location is selected for the military member. The local military installation EFMP Coordinator Caroline Olson (402) 292-4329 is the best starting point for learning about EFMP and the vast resources they have to offer, including select camps for special needs children and respite care options for caregivers.

Military & Family Life Counselors (MFLC): a free self-referral counseling service for active duty military members and their families. Retirees and their families may use this service for six (6) months after retirement. Masters or doctorate-level licensed counselors provide short-term, non-medical counseling services. Services augment other military and family support programs. With the exception of child abuse, domestic abuse, or duty to warn services are private and confidential. Counselors are willing to meet in various locations on or off of the military installation, but will not meet in private residences. MFLC: Adult (402) 681-8387, CYB#1 (402) 681-5153, CYB#2 (402) 669-8854.

Military Interstate Children's Compact Commission (MIC3): deals with challenges of military children and frequent relocation: enrollment, placement & attendance, eligibility for enrollment & extracurricular participation, and graduation requirements. Children of the following categories are eligible: members on active duty (including Title 10 National Guard and Reserve), medically discharged or retired members for one year, families of deceased on active duty for one year, and uniformed members of Commissioned Corps of National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) and United States Public Health Services (USPHS). The Compact only applies to public schools, but may play a role for students who are part-time or dual enrolled in public schools. Contact your local School Liaison Officer (SLO) Michelle Pridell (402) 294-4329 for assistance or visit <a href="https://www.militaryk12partners.dodea.edu">www.militaryk12partners.dodea.edu</a>.

Next turn-in date: FEBRUARY 20, 2017



## **Eta Sigma Alpha National Home School Honor Society**

Attention High School Students!



Are you pursuing excellence in your high school career? Are you looking for recognition of your accomplishments? If you answered YES to either of these questions, then the National Home School Honor Society is for you.

Joining Eta Sigma Alpha, *Chi Zeta Chapter* allows your accomplishments to be independently verified and recognized by an impartial third party. The standards for entry and application forms are available at <a href="www.nebraskahomeschool.org">www.nebraskahomeschool.org</a>. Questions? Email <a href="mailto:info@nebraskahomeschool.org">info@nebraskahomeschool.org</a>.

Apply today for membership in the National Home School Honor Society!

#### Meet the 2016 Chi Zeta Chapter Inductees

John Beal Kimberly Duckworth Justin Myers

Josiah Beighley Sabrina Gorney Hannah Vogletanz

## We want YOUR stories!

We're asking you, our member families, to share a few lines about a funny or heart-warming episode from your homeschooling adventures.



We'll even take the anecdotal saying that your child offered up when you were quizzing them on some important educational fact. As they say, "out of the mouth of babes..."

Help us spread the joy of homeschooling as we jump into spring. Share in "For the L-O-V-E of Homeschooling" in our March newsletter.

Email your stories to media@nebraskahomeschool.org by February 28th.

We'll do our best to include your story.

# Legacy Yearbook

## the homeschool yearbook of the Omaha metro

The Legacy Yearbook is the premier homeschool yearbook for the local metropolitan area and has been in publication since the 1995/96 academic year - that's over twenty years! We're proud of homeschooling families and we want to share the highlights of each homeschool year - with one another, as well as our family and friends.

Our yearbook contains the traditional year group (grade level) pictures of each participating homeschool student, plus we proudly showcase homeschool events, clubs, sports, extracurricular activities, and individual achievements of homeschooled students in our area. The Legacy Yearbook is an excellent way to capture homeschool memories in a beautifully formatted keepsake.

**Submissions** to the Legacy Yearbook are accepted throughout the entire school year. In fact, we prefer that you send your photos in as soon as you take them. This helps our Yearbook Staff plan the best possible layout.

Many homeschool students participate in our Homeschool Picture Days each fall and we include their portraits in the Legacy Yearbook at no charge. There is no portrait sitting fee and parents decide (opt in/out at time of sitting) if they want their child's photo included in the Legacy Yearbook. Student portraits are grouped according to grade level as indicated by the parents.

If a family was unable to participate in our Homeschool Picture Days, we invite them to submit digital portraits of their children for inclusion in the Legacy Yearbook. Again, there is no fee for including your children in the yearbook.

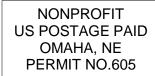
- Submit photos: yearbook@nebraskahomeschool.org
- Order your yearbook online <u>www.nebraskahomeschool.org/</u>
- Sponsor or Advertise with Legacy Yearbook: <a href="mailto:info@nebraskahomeschool.org">info@nebraskahomeschool.org</a>



**Share Your Homeschool Events:** Do you or your group want an event listed on our calendar? If so, just email <a href="mailto:info@nebraskahomeschool.org">info@nebraskahomeschool.org</a>. Be sure to place "Calendar Submission" in your email subject line and include full details in the body of the email. We are interested in homeschool events, clubs, sports and arts activities. We also accept some community events as well. Please submit your item as early as possible so we have time to contact you if we have any questions. Submission is not a guarantee of posting. NH-HEN holds full discretion on which items to post.

### **Next Issue:**

Adventures in Opportunities – a Nebraska Homeschool odyssey Supporting Each Other – explore ways to build up one another





PO BOX 323 Boys Town, NE 68010-0323

NH-HEN Newsletter will NOT be forwarded. *Please update your address in your Member Profile* or submit to:

Nebraska Homeschool - HEN PO Box 323 Boys Town, NE 68010-0323

Email: info@nebraskahomeschool.org

#### Nebraska Homeschool

Join Today

If you're interested in joining the **Nebraska Homeschool** and receiving our Newsletter in your mailbox - join.

1. Join ONLINE or print a paper application at:

www.nebraskahomeschool.org

2. You can also request an application by emailing us at:

membership@nebraskahomeschool.org

Just send the form and payment to:

Payable to Nebraska Homeschool

Nebraska Homeschool Membership PO Box 323 Boys Town, NE 68010-0323

## Many reasons to join..

New homeschool support, mentoring, high school & beyond workshops, national society, graduation ceremony, honor spelling bee, picture day, yearbook, mailers, weekly newsletters. used curriculum sale, annual conference, member exclusive benefits & discounts, group collaboration, community networking, representation in the local and Nebraska community with the Department of Education. All of this and more! Join us and support homeschool freedom across Nebraska!

## Did your membership expire?

Renew online at <a href="www.nebraskahomeschool.org">www.nebraskahomeschool.org</a> or email <a href="mailto:info@nebraskahomeschool.org">info@nebraskahomeschool.org</a> for help.