



# The Relaxed Home Schooler®s Newsletter

March/April, 2014



## Coming Up:

March 29, 2014

Mary is keynote speaker at South Florida Home School Fair Ft. Lauderdale FL

For Info:

URL: <http://www.homeschool-life.com/fl/browardhomeschool>

**Mary is available to do Relaxed Home Schooling Workshops, talks on Common Core, SAT prep workshops for teens, or workshops or keynote addresses at homeschool conventions. For info, go to our website**

**URL:**

**<http://www.archersforthe lord.org> and click on the the "speaker's page" or contact her directly at [mary.e.hood@gmail.com](mailto:mary.e.hood@gmail.com)**

## Welcome to the first edition of our new e-newsletter!

### From Mary:

Hi! Welcome to our new e-newsletter. We had a snail mail newsletter for years, which eventually grew to 8,000 subscribers! It became so expensive and time-consuming we had to stop it. I've been missing this form of communication, though, so finally decided to jump into the 21<sup>st</sup> century and start an on-line one.

I suggest you do one of two things: either print them out and keep them in a three ring binder (which people used to do before), or make a file labeled "ARCHERS" in your documents, and save them there. (You do want to read them again and again, right? ) I'll also see if I can keep copies on our website. Every new step on the way to technology is a major one for me, but I'm really trying!

In each newsletter, we will have four pages, this front page with "coming up events" ; a "spotlight on" feature, a short article by me, and something from our archives, typically from the old newsletter.

If you'd like to submit something for our spotlight section, email me at [mary.e.hood@gmail.com](mailto:mary.e.hood@gmail.com).

### Our Guest Contributor:

Gina Loomis and her husband, Andy, have been married for 25 years, and homeschooling since 1999. Her oldest daughter, Stephanie, is 20 years old, a homeschool graduate who is an intern for Acquire the Fire, and enrolled in the Honor Academy School of Worship in Texas. Her son, Aja, is 10, loves LEGOS and soccer and plays the piano.

Gina writes, "Starting this ARCHERS group has been a challenge for me, as I am generally quiet and introverted. I was surprised that the group came together quite easily. I started off with a couple of family friends and went from there! In spite of myself, God is providing every step of the way, and I am so grateful!"

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So glad you are all here! Please also come and visit us at our website, Also feel free to contact me at [mary.e.hood@gmail.com](mailto:mary.e.hood@gmail.com)

URL:

<http://archersforthe lord.org>

## ***Spotlight On: ARCHERS Support Group in Crossville, TN ( By Gina Loomis, Leader)***

Before we started our ARCHERS group, we had been participating in a different group, where we still have some good friends. However, we needed something a little less demanding and a little less school-like for our family.

I remembered that ARCHERS mentioned support groups on their website so I asked about it. There weren't any in my area, but I decided to go through the process to start up an authorized group. It wasn't very difficult at all! Mary Hood had one of her workshops coming up, which I attended with my teenage daughter. Going to the workshop confirmed to us that we had been relaxed home-schoolers all along and didn't even realize it!

Shortly after attending Mary's workshop I discovered Cumberland Mountain State Park had week long, planned activities during the summer, which sounded like a great way to kick off our new ARCHERS group. We participated in fishing, crafting, and riding in canoes and paddle boats. We attended two wildlife presentations on snakes and owls. We even got to hold a corn snake! Our week was topped off with learning how to start a fire so

we could have a campfire, where we roasted hot dogs and sang to our hearts content! Utilizing the State Park's activities made our initial planning easy, not to mention FREE!.

The rest of our summer and early fall we met every other week either at the park or the beach for some fun in the sun. As the weather grew colder we started meeting in our homes. We had planned on entering a Christmas tree in our local Parade of Trees contest so our meetings turned to making homemade Christmas ornaments for our tree.

As we grew, we decided to meet at a local church twice a month and take a few field trips. We also invited a homeschooling dad to help us with teaching some unit studies, and have plans to start a LEGO club, God has been providing every step of the way and I am so grateful!



# What is “Common Core”?

By Mary Hood

“Common core” is a set of standards for K-12 in the areas of language arts and math. The stated goal is to develop students who are college and career ready.

Sounds good, right? At first, I thought it probably was just fine, albeit a lot of educational gobbledy-gook, something that would be one more phase, and would come in and go out like so many other educational fads amidst a lot of teacher-speak while we homeschoolers went on our way without a care in the world.

I was wrong.

Common core is a set of standards, yes...untested, untried standards written by a team consisting mainly of businessmen and test makers, with little or no input from teachers, and, of course, zero input from the parents or students. It was written without consultation with child development specialists. The minute the standards came out, 500 child development experts sent a letter stating that the standards would not work with young children. They were ignored.

What are some of the reasons we should be concerned?

The standards are driving curriculum, because of the linking of standards to tests. Suppose you tell someone, “here is a pot of beef stew. At the end of the year I will come back, and you will show me the beef stew you made. It must be identical to mine in all aspects, taste, texture, color, etc.” How many recipes could be used to create an identical stew? Basically, one. Therefore, the standards will drive the curriculum, and teachers will have little choice when it comes to deciding what is best for their individual classrooms or students.

The standards are copyright. Therefore, when a parent goes to discuss something with a teacher, the teacher will not be able to make any accommodations. The parents will be told that only the private corporation who holds the copyright can make any changes.

The standards completely ignore everything that is known about child development. Young children are being asked to think abstractly, and they are winding up in tears and having huge melt-downs because they think they are stupid, when it is really the standards that are misguided.

The powers that be are not stopping with just massacring the language arts and math curriculum. They are also getting rid of family and student privacy through a huge data mining project.

In “Tenacity, Grit, and Perseverance”, a Feb. 2013 Dept of Education document, plans were laid out for such items as “posture chairs”, which can detect slouching, “pressure mice”, which can determine if a student is gripping his mouse too tightly, iris-scanning devices and functional MRIs, all very “1984-ish” devices designed to further invade familial privacy.

Standards have also been developed in Science and Art, and the language arts standards are being used in other subjects, extending their influence into other areas of the curriculum.

The man known as the architect of common core is now the president of the College Board, so the SAT is being rewritten (i.e. dumbed down) to conform. It turns out that “college ready” actually meant ready for a non-competitive junior college!

The president of a major technical college has stated that the use of the Common Core Curriculum will result in students who are unprepared for his college.

To read what I have told homeschoolers concerning common core and how it might affect them, go to our Facebook page, and read my recent post about our meeting in Braselton, GA.

<https://www.facebook.com/groups/maryhoodgroupies/>

There is so much more to tell...and so little space here! I hope to write a short book soon to further educate parents. Watch for it on our website.



Meg Norris, Ed. S. addresses a group of parents about common core while Mary Hood, Ph.D., looks on.

## From the Archives:

### “A Primer on Relaxed Homeschooling”

Taken from the Spring, 2006, issue of our newsletter

Lately, in a number of forums discussing our work, I have noticed a lot of references to “unschooling” again. When I first wrote, “the Relaxed Home School”, our kids were still very little. Also, our first-born, Sam, was really an unschooler at heart. Besides, that was a long time ago, and I’ve had other experiences since then that have modified some of my views. At this point, I really wouldn’t call myself an unschooler, and I realize this sometimes confuses people.

To me, the heart of relaxed homeschooling is a belief that God’s intended plan for us all was to learn, live, and grow together as families. The key points are as follows:

- You are a family, not a school.
- You are a mom, not a teacher.
- You have individual relationships with your children, not a “relationship” to a class of students.
- You are free to set your own goals, rather than relying on someone else’s ideas of “what you should be doing in third grade”.
- You are free to select materials, choose methods, and create experiences whenever you want...at the start of the school year, or in April, or at 3:00 in the morning.
- You are free to think through where you are on the path to your goals in any way that makes sense to you...rather than being stuck in a test, grade,label kind of mindset.
- You are free to get rid of the question “What curriculum am I going to use?”, and replace it with, “What is going to work with THIS kid, THIS week, for THIS purpose?”
- You are free to lose all those lessons plans and teacher’s guides, and you don’t even necessarily have to know what you are doing tomorrow when you get up.

BUT!!!

- You do need to have an interesting lifestyle, filled with opportunities for learning and growing.
- You do need to know what your goals are, as a family and for each individual child.
- You do need to constantly assess the strengths, weaknesses, learning styles, personalities, and goals of each child.
- You do need to recognize the changing needs of children, and adjust expectations and lifestyles as they get older.
- You do need to communicate with your husband what your goals are and where you are on the path to achieving them.
- You do need to have some kind of a stable schedule for your household and maintain balance.
- You do need to go to the public library regularly and read to the children a lot.
- You do need to find some like-minded individuals, or, if there are none in your area, read about relaxed homeschooling and communicate with others through the mail or by phone, so you don’t feel so alone!



All of Mary’s talks are now also available as MP3s!