



The Relaxed Home Schooler®s Newsletter

May/June, 2015



Coming Up: (Immediately!)

MAY 7 !!!!! 7:30 EST to 10:30 EST
Reading Clinic sponsored by TOS
Magazine

Mary will be speaking 8:15-8:50. If
you get this on time, register by going
to [this link](#). It is free but you must
register!

URL:

<https://attendee.gotowebinar.com/register/5472063027050415617>

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 conven-

tions. 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

Welcome to all our new readers! Hope we help you to relax and enjoy life at home!

From Mary:

Hello again!

Welcome to our e-newsletter.

Earlier issues discussed such topics as
John Holt, Chris Davis, Charlotte Mason,
Raymond Moore, and Valerie Bendt.
If you'd like to read the other issues,
you can find them on our website,
www.archersforthe lord.org.

In addition to writing this newsletter,
I am a regular columnist with The Old
Schoolhouse Magazine. We
also have a facebook group if you'd
like to join...[relaxedhomeschoolers-
ARCHERS](https://www.facebook.com/relaxedhomeschoolers-ARCHERS). If you have trouble find-
ing it, friend me and I'll invite you.

If you have an idea or would like to
submit something for our spotlight
section, email me at
mary.e.hood@gmail.com.

So glad you are all here! Please also
come and visit us at our website

URL:

<http://archersforthe lord.org>

Welcome to our new readers from
California! I enjoyed my time out there
in February and hope you will stay in
touch via this newsletter and our
website.

I'm including an article I wrote on
"Excellence in Education" in Monrovia.
It is the closest thing I've ever seen to
the resource center we used to run in
Kennesaw, GA, and the philosophy of
the Fortes, who run the center, is very
similar to my own. For those of you in
California, they are an excellent
resource for you. Feel free to contact
them with any of your questions. They
are both eager to serve!

I also wrote an article for this edition
called, "Do I Have Any Regrets?",
answering one of the most common
questions people ask me.

Finally, I'm including an excerpt from
an article I wrote in the Sept 2012
issue of TOS, entitled "Planning for
Middle and High School on a Tight
Budget" It is the the third part of a
series on homeschooling on a budget,
and you can find the earlier parts in
the last two newsletters, which you
can read for free on our website,
www.archersforthe lord.org.. You can
also read the entire article as well as
other back issues at their website,
www.theoldschoolhouse.com.

By the way, the column I write for
them, which has been called "The
Ordinary Home Schooler" has recently
changed titles to "The Relaxed
Homeschooler®"

Feel free to forward this to friends!

Spotlight On:

Carolyn and Marty Forte of Excellence in Education

For many of you in California, no introduction is needed to Carolyn and Marty Forte! For those of you who haven't had the pleasure of meeting them, they run a homeschooling resource center in Monrovia, California, just northeast of Los Angeles, near Pasadena. The name of the center is "Excellence in Education".

The center has a large bookstore, various classes for homeschooling students, occasional parent workshops, and lots and lots of personal attention from Carolyn and Marty! They love to serve you and are one of the most helpful resources in the entire California area.

Carolyn started out as a teacher, teaching kindergarten, first grade, and sixth grade, before she had her children. They had two daughters, Tenaya and Tylene, born in 1977 and 1979.

In 1981, influenced by a helpful neighbor, and by the works of Dr. Moore and John Holt (who were both featured in this newsletter in previous editions, available for reading on our website), the Fortes began homeschooling.

Tenaya homeschooled all the way through twelve grade, and went to college at 17. Today she is a semi-retired flight instructor and homeschooling mom of three children. Tylene homeschooled through tenth grade and finished up at Western Christian High School. Both girls graduated from Christian Heritage College in El Cajon. Tylene now works part time at Skyline Church in Rancho San Diego where her husband is on the pastoral staff. Their three children attend a rural public school.

The Fortes started EIE in 1991, out of their home. In 1992, they began Excellence in Education Academy to help homeschoolers in California by providing a legal alternative to public school. In 1994, they opened up the bookstore in Monrovia, and later moved the school office there, too. After several years of helping at the conventions and speaking engagements, Marty quit his day job and joined Carolyn in the store as soon as it was making sufficient money to replace his income.

According to Carolyn, "We started EIE because it seemed we could serve the homeschool community and help new homeschool families. We are true believers and really want to promote homeschooling in general. I never had any idea that it would grow to the size it is. This is God's doing and we are just trying to follow the program as best we can. We aim to support homeschoolers in any way we can, so we have a bookstore, classes, park days, field trips, local speakers and events and helpful seminars. We are also Learning Success Coaches with the Learning Success Institute in Ventura, CA. We do Learning Style Profiles to help families develop a curriculum that works for each child."

Our ISP (or PSP) is designed to make homeschooling user friendly. We keep requirements to a minimum; basically we stick to what the state law requires and we try to help parents develop a lifestyle of learning for their children. We will work with any homeschool philosophy, but we always recommend your Relaxed Homeschooler style and the Moore Formula to anyone who will listen."

(Mary's note: The ISP Carolyn is referring to is the program that they run which provides a legal alternative to public schooling. In California, one of the options for homeschooling is to go through such a program.)

The resource center is located in an industrial park in Monrovia, just south of the cute little downtown area. The building itself is large enough to have two classroom areas, an office, and a large retail area. It is wonderful to see new homeschoolers come in and have the ability to peruse the available materials. In other areas, most people have few options other than viewing things on line or waiting for curriculum fairs or used book sales.

Carolyn is always ready and willing to discuss the needs of individual families, and show them the various materials. Her own specialty is working with math games, and she loves to give talks at the local home school fairs about keeping the fun in arithmetic instruction.

Marty is also a valuable addition to any event, as he speaks from the standpoint of a homeschooling dad. Be sure to come out and see them if you ever get the chance!



Do I Have Any Regrets?

By Mary Hood, Ph.D.

One of the most frequent questions people ask me, after spending over twenty-five years homeschooling my own children, is whether or not I have any regrets.

Obviously, I do. Although we are told in Matthew 5:48, “Be ye therefore perfect, even as your Father in Heaven is perfect”, none of us ever is! The best we can do on this earth is to try our hardest to reach that ideal, and thank God that He sent His Son to span the breach that still exists between us and perfection.

So, what specifically do I regret? Here are a few that come to mind, in no particular order.

1. I regret taking the easy way out too many times. I regret not having more of an adventurous spirit. I wish we had gone on more adventures together as a family, rather than always giving in to the difficulty of doing things when I had a baby in tow and a whole bunch of toddlers. I wish we had done more camping and hiking when the kids were little.

2. While I loved spending time with our extended family, I regret having spent almost every vacation going to see grandparents. If I had it to do over, we would have taken one vacation a year to see the country, to go to the beach, to see the Grand Canyon, to visit more historical places.

3. I regret ignoring the fact that I was not very good at math for the first several years, and relying on a curriculum to teach the older children what I was not competent to teach myself. Later on, I did become proficient at math, and the younger kids did fine, but my oldest son was hurt by my incompetence in this area. Much later on, he struggled with calculus in college, and he should have been strong in this area.

4. I was homeschooling for over 25 years. That was a time of great personal growth and the development of much spiritual maturity on my own part. When I first started out as a mother, I didn't know much of anything. I really had few role models. There's an old saying that “We get so soon old and so late smart!” I wish that I could go back to the days when I had very small children and have the maturity I now possess. I could have handled a lot of things much better than I did.

5. I wish I had included Bible memorization in our daily work. We did learn all the Bible stories, and when they became teenagers I encouraged them to study the Bible on their own, but teenagers aren't always ready to follow through by themselves in this area. I wish I had used the middle school years to have them memorize those verses that would have helped them during moments of crisis. Middle school is the perfect time to work on memory work, whether it be Bible verses or poetry or whatever.

6. I regret that I let busyness creep into my life as my children became older. When the older children were little, we sat on the couch every day and read books together.

The youngest ones had less of this cuddle time, less reading of quality literature. While all of my kids are great readers and writers, I can sense that the older ones have more of a love for this than the youngest. Of course, the younger ones also had opportunities the older children did not have, primarily because of the resource center that we ran which was the source of most of my busyness! So it was a two-edged sword.

What do I NOT regret? I will never regret the decision to teach my children at home. I will never regret giving up the possibility of a lucrative career being a college professor. I will never regret living in a house that is constantly in need of work, and doing without so much in order to stay home with my children.

I will never regret the conscious decision my husband and I made to avoid getting a nicer house in a nicer neighborhood, and going into debt. Now that we are older, we have no mortgage to worry about any more. I'm so glad we are still here and not in a fancy subdivision with a huge mortgage.

I will never regret using my degree to help out homeschoolers, even though it has never led to financial success on my part. I know that I have helped more than one generation of parents and children to discover the joys of homeschooling, and it has been very rewarding for me to develop my own skills as an author and speaker. Even if it has not been a financial success, neither has it been a failure. I've had a business, which then morphed into a nonprofit organization, for over twenty years. Many such businesses fail within the first three years, but God was faithful, and the bills always wound up paid somehow or other.

Overall, sometimes I wish I could go back and fix some of my mistakes. I wish I could help my older son with his math. I wish I had read more to my youngest children. I wish I had taken more time to have adventures. I really wish I had been able to live in the country, raise some animals and have a better garden. However, when I think like this, I also remind myself that I always tried to do the best I could, with whatever knowledge and resources I had at the time, and that is really the most important thing.

Would I do it all over again? In a heartbeat! I loved homeschooling my kids. I hope I can continue to help you discover that same love of homeschooling for many years to come.

The bottom line is that we all have regrets. The key to moving forward is to forgive yourself, to ask forgiveness of others, to seek God's forgiveness, and then to let it go. I rarely dwell on these regrets, preferring instead to remember the good things and go forward with my life from this point on, continuing to do the best I can.

From the Archives:

“Planning for Middle School and High School on a Tight Budget”

(Continued from last issue: Part Three of a Series)

Excerpted from Mary’s Column in The Old Schoolhouse Magazine, September, 2012

A basic high school plan involves four main subject areas: English, science, social science, and math. Within these areas, it is more important to focus on developing appropriate skills rather than the simple amassing of credit hours. In English, it is all about helping students develop not only skills but also a love of reading and writing as a means of excellent communication.

In science, most colleges want to see at least a couple of courses that involve lab work, typically Biology and Chemistry. Remember, though, that all “lab” work means is a high level of experiential work, as opposed to mere textbook/video study. This might be a high-level greenhouse experience, chemical experiments, volunteer experiences with marine mammals in a setting such as Sea World, or physics experiments created and carried out by the students.

Social sciences are basically topics such as political science, economics, U. S. History and an in-depth study of our own political system, including the Constitution. No textbooks are really needed to learn these subjects. All that is needed is a good outline, which you can develop by looking through a textbook. Free library resources can be used to teach these subjects with just a little effort put into planning.

Math, as always, should emphasize the development of understanding, and advanced courses should never be pursued beyond the student’s level of understanding simply for the sake of including certain courses on a transcript. If a student is lacking a course later on, he can always take it in college, even if it has to be done as remedial coursework for no credit. On the other hand, if he doesn’t understand concepts and principles that he supposedly should have studied and mastered already, he won’t be able to move on successfully.

Be sure to add in some foreign language study, especially if college is in your student’s future, since most colleges expect two years’ study of a particular language. Since motivation is so important in learning a foreign language, be sure the student is the one who chooses which language he or she wants to study.

Don’t neglect the “extras” during the high school years in areas such as music, art, vocational electives, home economics, and so forth. For some of your students, these skills may be more important than the academic ones!

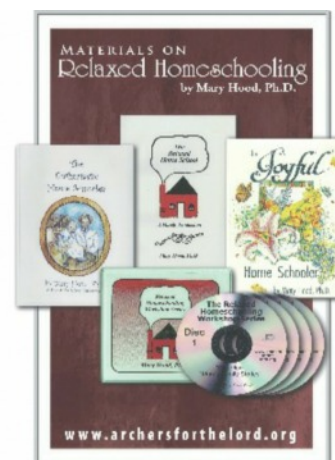
Record keeping becomes more important during the high school years, so make sure that you are keeping sufficient records so you can help your students move into college, the military, or wherever their paths may lead when the time is right for them to leave the nest!

In younger years, I recommend the following for recordkeeping: a daily or weekly journal for your own eyes only, a summarized end of year assessment written by you (usually paragraph style) that you could show to the authorities if needed, and a list of the books you have read over the course of the year. In addition, you should keep the results of any standardized tests you have taken. Don’t ever throw these away! (Be sure you begin by knowing the laws of your own state concerning recordkeeping.)

In the high school years, I would take this record keeping up a notch. If you are declaring subjects, keep a folder for each one. You don’t have to keep every single piece of paper the kids have worked on, though! If you used a textbook, write down the author’s name, publisher, title, and copyright year. You may want to photocopy the table of contents. If there were tests, you might want to keep at least the end of chapter tests that you took.

For those that didn’t use texts, write up a summary of the activities that you did do, sort of “scrapbook style”.

Above all, even in the high school years, stay family-centered and treat your students as individuals. If they wind up as mature, highly skilled adults, moving out into the world with motivation and a well-deserved sense of competence, they will be able to do anything that they feel led to do once they determine what their proper path may be.



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