

# NATHHAN / CHASK

**CHASK - Christian Homes And Special Kids**  
**NATHHAN - National Challenged Homeschoolers**

**Spring 2008**

**Volume 16 No. 1**



**Charity Goulding, looking lovely!**

**Reaching Out - CHASK**

**Erratic Behavior? Could it be Allergies?**

**Why Do You Homeschool?**

**Opportunities for Smiles**

Articles, letters, and reviews printed in the NATHHAN NEWS are not to be taken as legal or medical advice. Please seek the services of a qualified source.

Also please note: What you read and the resources you find through NATHHAN may not line up with your Christian convictions. Some of the resources we share with you may not be necessarily from a home-schooling perspective. We simply point you, with your shovel, and hope you will dig! Please pick and choose carefully.

## Goal and Purpose of NATHHAN

To encourage homeschooling families with special needs children in ways that glorify the Lord Jesus Christ. To find Christian homes for children with special needs.

## NATHHAN / CHASK

National Challenged Homeschoolers  
Christian Homes And Special Kids

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www.NATHHAN.org

www.chask.org

### Front Cover Picture

Charity Goulding is a sweet young lady that was born with Down syndrome. Her family found her through CHASK. We have been so blessed to have followed her little life from the beginning. See page 24 for her story.

### Correction Notice:

Linda Rau's correct e-mail address is lindarau7@yahoo.com Sorry for the misprint Linda!



### Letter from the Editors:

Welcome to the 2008 Spring / Summer issue of the NATHHAN / CHASK News!

We trust you survived winter and are enjoying warmer weather. (Hopefully not too warm). Our family is grateful to be outside once again. Our garden is now well on its way to being planted and we can see lots of flowers on our strawberries and raspberries.

Our garden looks much more rewarding this year, thanks to the 6 foot new fence that Josh put up. No more Bushnell's Deer Buffet. It is very unrewarding to have all of our fruit and veggies disappear over night. The deer are crafty and numerous.... and not afraid. We are enjoying a freezer full of the critters this year... but they are still very plentiful~

Together, we (Tom and Sherry, along with assorted children) have been working on Saturday mornings, at the local farmer's market. This has given us a chance to meet families in our community and to let people know about A Blessed Beginning, our crisis pregnancy center and NATHHAN / CHASK.

Josh was kind enough to make up about 15 chainsaw carved bears of various sizes that are selling really well. Sherry and the girls are making 100% whole wheat bread from local wheat, local honey, Celtic sea salt yeast and olive oil. It is very flavorful and really good for you too. Folks must think the same way, as we never have any left over to bring home. They are also making sturdy hot pads, and tiered skirts. We set out free ice water, several folding chairs and just wait for folks to come by to chat. Certainly it is a high point of our week!

Tom is working diligently on his schooling. He is going through Oakbrook College of Law in California. He takes his baby bar in October of this year. He really enjoys the challenge of law.

His favorite branch of law so far is contract law. Studying, directing NATHHAN and CHASK and being home to help home-school the older boys, has dove-tailed nicely in his overall daily plan.

Sherry will have finished her midwifery schooling through Association of Texas in August of this year. The book-work part is done. Now for the rest of her births to qualify for taking the NARM (National Association of Registered Midwives exam) She is scheduled to take the test in October of this year.

All of this information about newborn babies and pregnancy has come in very handy in ministering to birth moms, both over the phone and in our little crisis pregnancy center called A Blessed Beginning. Several churches and families from the community have gone out of their way to minister to different birth moms that have come in. Thankfully, our family is good at chipping in to help when mom is feeling overwhelmed with household chores. She is still writing for the NATHHAN / CHASK NEWS and helping Tom manage the office.

Jake (24) is working on NATHHAN / CHASK's customer relations management system. He has found several new ways to save money and time from our original computer program plan. We look forward to the finished project some time this

Josh (22) along with working on chain saw carving bears for the local farmer's market, is doing fencing and landscaping for different folks in the area.

Jordan (19) has been very happy to be outside more. Having Down syndrome may limit him intellectually, but not from being a blessing to us! He likes using left-over building materials and creating structures. He appreciates being useful in moving rocks, and pinecones off the lawn. (He also LOVES mowing the lawn. We bought a lawn mower that he uses in erratic patterns all over the lawn. It's good exercise though!)

Sheela (19, born without eyes) is home from Faith Mission Home, in Free Union, Virginia. She is facing some health problems and we

are working through each one. Other than not looking forward to surgery in July and numerous tests and blood work, she is happily assisting Jim and Jerri Unruh (NATHHAN board members) with household tasks and feels very much grown up with a real job.

Zack (16) is working for a contractor. He is working on getting his GED, but with a heavy work schedule all summer, that will need to wait until winter again. He bought a dirt bike and likes jumping. He'll be getting a driver's license soon and that will make 3 of our boys driving now.

Lynny (15) has added the skill of putting away dishes that have been washed. She also likes to take out the trash. This is pretty amazing, as she has autism and cerebral palsy. She has the use of only her right hand and does not walk at all. Her wheel chair is getting almost too small, so we are looking at getting an adult size one. She really enjoys drawing elaborate cartoons of people and doing jig saw puzzles.

Zeph (14) is doing school and working through algebra and 10th grade English. He is working odd jobs for Josh, neighbors, Grandpa and friends. Very much a book worm, he devours thick books with relish. He is going to 2 weeks of outdoor boy's camp again this year and will be spending lots of time hiking, and enjoying high country in the mountains.

Sheraya (12) is finishing her school work and working 1 day a week for a family with special health challenges and younger children. She also loves to read. She is looking forward to summer camp this year with her AWANA group.

Mercy (10) is enjoying singing with a community Choir called Swinging On A Star. She and Jacob share a common love of singing. Last Friday she cheerfully got up with mom at 6:30am and make a huge batch of banana bread to sell at the farmer's market. They all sold right away and she was thrilled! Mercy is planting lots of flowers in the garden and hopes to be able to share some with others too.

Jayben (6) Making things for the local Farmer's Market has been of great interest to our youngest son. He is doing really well on his school work in the math area, and is now just putting together the concept of reading. Each letter really has a unique sound and letters put together have a different sound too. He is so eager to succeed. We bought a new dump truck load of sand for the summer and he is eager to make new roads. Finally the snow stopped and went away till fall!

ShaHannah (3) Giving mommy kisses and snuggling in the morning are all top priority. But giving kisses and snuggling with all her sisters and our helper, Victoria (Tori) is just as fun too. She can write "Mom" and "Dad" and find places other than paper to express her new-found ability... like pen on her arm and the wall. ShaHannah absolutely loves gardening with mom and was a real help in planting the potatoes and peas last week.

Tori (20) Our helper from Colorado, comes from a large family. She is capable and has brought a special element to our home. She is very patient... in more ways than one. Even when the kids tease her... We are very thankful that she is here for us.

Office news:

We said goodbye to Tim and Angie Childers, our house and office workers, as they moved to Kooski, Idaho, to be with Tim's dad. Tim entered many, many crisis pregnancy centers into our data base, in spite of feeling very sick a lot of the time. Tim was injured in a logging accident many years ago and uses a wheel chair and is on dialysis for kidney failure. We will miss them very much and are very thankful for the time we did have to work together. May God Bless you Tim and Angie!

Several local families are sharing our Sunday day of worship in our home. Together, we have been inspiring each other to earnestly seek Jesus in every aspect of our lives.

Our worship/fellowship time starts at 10:00 am. We sing, pray and then have a time of

sharing, with all the men all contributing around a theme. (Or anything else the Lord is laying on their hearts.) We then have a great time of sharing lunch and fellowshiping until about 3 - 4:00.

Opening our home for Sunday fellowship again brings back all kinds of special memories of when we lived in Washington state and had the NATHHAN Family Camp.

What has the Lord been teaching your family lately? He is teaching us what it means to be meek. Let me assure you, meekness does not mean weakness! We have been teaching our children and ourselves working on what being meek really requires. In fact, it is very hard to be meek in the face of hurts, relationship disappointments, or someone who has wronged you. We cannot be meek when we have unforgiveness or bitterness in our hearts. (Bitterness is the silent, deadly, tool of the enemy) Remember to let the Lord be the vindicator in all things. He sees our struggles, and ALL of our needs. Psalm 37 is a great encouragement for those of us who are learning meekness.

If you are in the area and want to meet our family and the NATHHAN / CHASK staff this summer, we'd love to have you. Just call ahead, so we can be on hand to welcome you. Blessings on your family,

Tom and Sherry  
Jacob, Joshua, Jordan, Sheela,  
Zack, Lynny, Zeph, Sheraya,  
Mercy Grace, Jayben, ShaHannah  
Bushnell  
**And the NATHHAN / CHASK staff**

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## History and Information About NATHHAN

NATHHAN began with a telephone call from one mother of a child with Down syndrome to another mother homeschooling her son with Down syndrome in the early spring of 1990. Acting on the Lord's prompting to begin a network of parents helping one another, Diane Macbeth in PA wrote Kathy Salars in Texas on March 17th, 1990, thus announcing the birth of NATHHAN.

In the fall of 1992, due to NATHHAN's exponential growth from 2 to over 600 families, it became impossible for these moms to keep up. Tom and Sherry Bushnell offered their assistance and NATHHAN's main office was moved to Olalla, WA. The NATHHAN/CHASK office now operates in Moyie Springs, Idaho.

A board meets periodically to make decisions. Its officers are Jim and Jerri Unruh in Bonner's Ferry, ID; Ralph and Debbie Poole, Cheney, WA; John and Diane Ryckman, Creston, BC; Tom and Sherry Bushnell; and Andy and Linda Dillon, Camano Island, WA. Financial Advisory: Dennis and Linda Lamphere, Moyie Springs, ID; William Byler and Dayton Skrivseth, Bonners Ferry, ID; James and Dana McKenzie in Battleground, WA.

In the Fall of 2002, as an outgrowth of NATHHAN, CHASK was born. CHASK, Christian Homes And Special Kids, matches special kids with families for free, no agency fees or referral costs.

NATHHAN / CHASK's web page and magazine strive to equip and encourage parents with special needs children, assisting them in finding the will of God for their lives.

Fall of 2007, CHASK opened A Blessed Beginning, an on-site pregnancy resource center.

### NATHHAN 's Ministry

#### National Challenged Homeschoolers

**NATHHAN NEWS** - This magazine, printed twice a year, includes resources, articles from parents and professionals, and lots of letters from families, plus much more.

#### NATHHAN WEB PAGE [www.nathhan.org](http://www.nathhan.org)

Updated quarterly. A full service web page with all the features of the print style NATHHAN NEWS plus a discussion board, and on-line applications for the lending library and family directory. A password is needed to access the NATHHAN membership portion. Hundreds of articles from the last 14 years of NATHHAN are included.

**FAMILY DIRECTORY** - Although some of us will never meet this side of heaven, we can still encourage and share a bit of our lives with each other. The directory is on-line, password protected, updated once a year and is available to members willing to be in the directory.

**LENDING LIBRARY** - The library is operated through the mail for NATHHAN members. Members donate postage to and from library when they use it. The NATHHAN Lending Library Catalog can be reviewed on the web site [www.nathhan.org](http://www.nathhan.org). Book donations are gladly accepted.

**All this for only \$25.00 / year.  
Unbelievable!**

### CHASK's Ministry

#### Christian Homes And Special Kids

Parents can raise their disabled child with joy and competence. Christ is the answer to making it through any crisis.

Our goal is to *match* every special needs child that God brings to us who needs a home, before-born or already born, with a Christian family. No agency fees.

**[www.chask.org](http://www.chask.org)  
[chaskinfo@aol.com](mailto:chaskinfo@aol.com)**

#### Gift Memberships

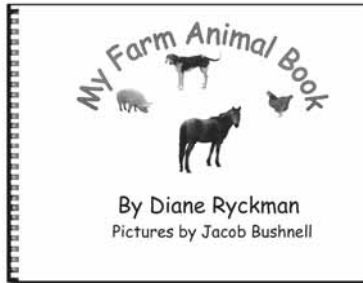
Gift memberships are available for folks facing financial difficulty. A NATHHAN/ CHASK gift membership entitles the family to NATHHAN/ CHASK's internet services. NATHHAN/CHASK's gift program is funded solely by other homes sharing out of their concern and abundance, giving so other Christian brothers and sisters can receive the encouragement they need. We want you to get the support you need. If your home cannot afford the \$25.00, don't hesitate to send us what you can afford and request a gift membership.

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# If phonics doesn't click, try **Farm Animal Words Reading Kit**

Designed to assist you in teaching sight reading skills, **Farm Animal Words Reading Kit** consists of a book called **My Farm Animal Book**, a double set of flashcards, and an instruction booklet on how to teach sight reading.



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**Farm Animal Words Reading Kit** has been developed by Diane Ryckman, and has been thoroughly tested on her son Andrew, who just happens to have Down syndrome.

For more information visit [www.DownHomeLearning.net](http://www.DownHomeLearning.net)

E-mail: [ryckman@downhomelearning.net](mailto:ryckman@downhomelearning.net)

Phone: (250) 428-7798

John and Diane Ryckman  
1453 Evans Rd. RR7  
Creston, B.C.  
V0B-1G7

\$23.00 Includes shipping and handling.



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**HOME SCHOOL  
LEGAL DEFENSE  
ASSOCIATION**  
Advocates for Family & Freedom

**Want to homeschool tomorrow?  
You need HSLDA today.**



# Special Needs Support Groups

## **Deaf Ministries List**

Earl and Shirley Wilbers  
221 W. Gay St.  
Harrisonburg, VA 22802  
E-mail: EEARL2@aol.com  
Website: Deaf Ministries List  
[www.deafministriesconnection.netfirms.com](http://www.deafministriesconnection.netfirms.com)

**Especially Yours** - a support group for families homeschooling children with special needs. All are welcome.  
Call Patricia Rendoff.  
(303) 937-3428 or [atprdiggie@juno.com](mailto:atprdiggie@juno.com)

## **Shepherd Boy - Strategies for Autism**

4241 Faye Drive  
Olive Branch, MS 38654  
[www.shepherdboy.org](http://www.shepherdboy.org)  
Hands-on, practical ideas for working with individuals with autism and related disabilities.

**HOPES - Homeschooling Our Precious Exceptional Students.** We meet on the first Thursday night of each month. For more information contact Jim and Mary Rees, Traveler's Rest, SC Phone: (864) 834-0264

## **Bethel Baptist Academy**

P.O. Box 10035  
Fullerton, CA 92838  
Norm and Sharon Wallace (714) 527-5807 or Matthew and Julia Hoch (714) 990-0199. We help Moms write their IEPs through our workshops. Our resource specialist is Marian Soderholm. She can be found at (562) 425-7886 or e-mail at [mercedchristian@yahoo.com](mailto:mercedchristian@yahoo.com)

## **Almaden Valley Christian School & AVCS Books**

Consulting services, curriculum resources and support for families of special needs children.  
Sharon Hensley, MA— Director  
16465 Carlson Dr.  
Morgan Hill, CA 95037  
408-776-6691  
[sharon@avcsbooks.com](mailto:sharon@avcsbooks.com)

## **H.A.N.D.S. ON!**

Support group for special needs homeschoolers in PA  
Newsletter: [www.groups.yahoo.com/group/hands\\_on\\_westernpa](http://www.groups.yahoo.com/group/hands_on_westernpa)  
Online forum: [www.groups.yahoo.com/group/wpahandson](http://www.groups.yahoo.com/group/wpahandson)

## **S.N.A.C.K.S. of Delaware**

(Special Needs and Christian Kids)  
Helping families and churches to minister to their special needs children. Serving the greater Delaware Valley and Tri-State region  
Contact: Tita Wyatt  
Email: [tewjr@flash.net](mailto:tewjr@flash.net)

## **Christian Cottage School**

(303) 688-6626 Sedalia, Colorado  
Mike and Terry Spray founded CCS for diagnostic testing and prescribing curriculum.  
[www.christingcottage.com](http://www.christingcottage.com)

## **Specially Gifted c/o the Pegrams**

7217 South Drive Richmond, VA 23225-1622  
(804) 323-1786  
[StrengthuntoStrength@juno.com](mailto:StrengthuntoStrength@juno.com) A support group for families homeschooling special needs children. Part of a Christian family-based ministry operated by Dave and Deb Pegram. Also operate a private Christian "umbrella" school that provides transcripts, IEP's, testing and evaluative services.

## **PRAISE**

Parents Reaching Academically in Special Education  
A homeschool support group for parents homeschooling special needs children.  
947 Park SW Grand Rapids, MI 49504  
(616) 451-3620  
Contact Shannon Bloemendaal Email: [sbloemen@aol.com](mailto:sbloemen@aol.com)

## **Parents Instructing Challenged Children (PICC)**

[picc@twcny.rr.com](mailto:picc@twcny.rr.com)  
PICC has a lending library and publishes an annual directory of families homeschooling special needs children.

## **O.U.C.H. Ohio's Uniquely Challenged Homeschoolers**

(formerly C.H.O.S.E.N. Christian Homeschool Special Educational Needs)  
Renee Silvaroli—Support Group Coordinator & Workshop Speaker. Meets at Silvaroli's home.  
Phone: (440) 944-4782  
Email: [RCHOSEN@visn.net](mailto:RCHOSEN@visn.net)  
Please RSVP.  
"Ohio Special Needs Resource Packet" available (at cost of \$10.00 plus \$2.50 postage/handling); State Newsletter \$5.00 (5 issues); workshops and special needs consultation available (\$1.00 for sample newsletter).

## **Braille Sharing Library/ Lydia Schuck**

1981 Eden Rd.  
Mason, MI 48854 (517) 676-4621  
[laschuck@juno.com](mailto:laschuck@juno.com)  
We have a list of braille to share. Braille can be sent to me. Please label what is in the box and contact me by phone or e-mail before it is sent.

## **Down Home Learning**

Does your child have Down Syndrome? Need someone to talk to? Have some ideas to share? Contact: Diane Ryckman  
1453 Evans Rd. RR 7  
Creston, B.C. V0B 1G7 CANADA (250)-428-7798  
Email: [ryckman@downhomelearning.net](mailto:ryckman@downhomelearning.net)  
[www.downhomelearning.net](http://www.downhomelearning.net)

# Special Needs Support Groups

## Rock of Refuge

Resources & support for families coping with Special Needs. Offers caring encouragement for parents/caregivers of those with special needs. Meets 1st Monday each month 7pm-8:30, just north of Tampa, Florida.

Victorious Life Church  
6224 Old Pasco Rd.  
Wesley Chapel, FL 33544  
813-973-2230 church office  
Contact : Sheri Nelson 813-996-3366 home  
E-Mail: RockofRefuge@aol.com

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## Carrying To Term Resources

### American Association of Pro Life Obstetricians and Gynecologists.

[www.aaplog.org](http://www.aaplog.org)

AAPLOG National Office Contact Info:

Phone: (616) 546-2639.

Email: [info@aaplog.org](mailto:info@aaplog.org)

## Be not Afraid

### [www.benotafraid.net](http://www.benotafraid.net)

An online outreach to parents who have received a difficult prenatal diagnosis. The family stories, articles, and links within this site are presented as a resource for those who may have been asked to choose between terminating a pregnancy or continuing on despite the diagnosis. The benotafraid.net families faced the same decision and chose not to terminate.

## Waiting with Love site

[www.erichad.com/wwl](http://www.erichad.com/wwl)

## The Gloria M. Silverio Foundation

“Safe Haven for Newborns”

[www.asafehavenfornewborns.com](http://www.asafehavenfornewborns.com)

1-877-767-BABY (2229)

## Post Abortion Resources

Rachel's Vineyard Retreats  
1-877-HOPE-4-ME (1-877-467-3463)  
[www.RachelsVineyard.org](http://www.RachelsVineyard.org)

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Healing Hearts Ministries  
(on-line counseling)  
[www.HealingHearts.org](http://www.HealingHearts.org)  
1-888-792-8282

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Ramah International  
[www.RamahInternational.org](http://www.RamahInternational.org)

## NATHHAN Web page

NATHHAN Lending Library catalog is arranged by subject.

Family Directory- Folks are listed by state and list disability. Form your own support network. Find families homeschooling with the same special needs you are dealing with. Search the *entire web site* for a subject of interest when you participate in the NATHHAN family directory. Additional password needed for security.

Discussion board - Live time. Get your questions answered by moms who are competent and experienced. A variety of subjects and responses makes just reading the discussions of others VERY interesting.

Classified Ads • Letters from Families •  
Deuteronomy Dads • Mommy's Musing •  
Children waiting for Moms and Dads  
Favorite Resources

**Just \$25.00 / year for membership!**

**[www.nathhan.org](http://www.nathhan.org)**



## 1st Straight Talk

A Parents Guide for Correcting

# Childhood Mispronunciations

Written by  
Marisa J. Lapish, M.A. in Speech Pathology

- Charts explain normal sound development
- The *Consonant Cookbook*, suggestions to help with each consonant's correct sound
- Test forms and score sheets
- Word training lists

*An excellent resource for parents wishing to implement a quality speech therapy program without spending lots of money or going to the public school. We've used it successfully for over 10 years.*

—Tom Bushnell



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30 min. video supplements the manual.

Video is \$20.00 separate from the manual.

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Order online at [www.nathhan.org](http://www.nathhan.org) or use the order form on page 38!

## 2nd Straight Talk

*A Parent's Guide to:*



# Language Development

**A Christian Perspective**

Written by

**Marisa J. Lapish, M.A. in Speech Pathology  
and Tom and Sherry Bushnell, Directors of NATHHAN**

- Exercises in Learning to Listen
- Nuts and Bolts of Language Training
- Increasing Auditory and Visual Comprehension
- Language Development Activities for the Christian Home
- Tests to Determine Exactly Where Your Child Needs Help
- Suggestions for Working with Children Ranging from Non-verbal to More Advanced in Language.



**\$45.00**

**112 page manual, free shipping!**

***An excellent resource for parents helping their  
children overcome language delays.***

**Order online at [www.nathhan.org](http://www.nathhan.org) or use the order form on page 38!**

## CHASK—Christian Homes And Special Kids

# Reaching out...

By Tom and Sherry Bushnell

Our eyes have been opened to the raw grief lonely and confused birth parents feel. Has Jesus put on your heart a desire to do more than just sing songs about helping the hurting or lost?

Through CHASK, we see first hand the results of ordinary people like you stepping out to minister the love of Christ. This blesses us so much!

Living a godly life as an example in our communities is important, but there are CHASK families that have chosen to go beyond their comfort zone. They have risked being made a fool in order to reach out. They have purposely chosen to walk into abortion clinics and hand out brochures. CHASK families walk up to people in grocery stores to share hope. They have walked into hospitals, found the hurting and ministered comfort and shared in their pain and their lives.

Granted, not all of us can leave our homes and reach out like this... but can we invite single moms and dads over for supper and share fellowship? How many of us are able to look past a rejected teen's shoulder (complete with piercings) and see Jesus beckoning us to love them?

What about our local crisis pregnancy centers? Do they have a name of a mom needing a friend. Offer to take her out to lunch. Listen and share. Meet her needs as you are able or find someone who can. Your resources are so much greater than hers.



### Raw Data...

Currently there are over 2,500 pregnancy resource centers in the US meeting the needs of women and providing alternative to abortion.

Yet last year alone, 1,325,610 babies were killed by abortion. Many who could have been saved if someone had spoken up in time to share hope and help. If you think that this is just happening "out-in-the-world", statistics say that 43% of these women professed to be Protestant. Only 1% of abortions are done for cases of rape, and only 1/2 of one percent for incest.

\*All statistics are from the Alan Guttmacher Institute (Planned Parenthood's Research Affiliate.)

This tells me that ministering hope to pregnant moms facing the birth of a baby with special needs is important...even up to the birth of her baby and afterward, not just in the first few months of pregnancy. Grief squeezes the hearts of birth parents. A birth mom may feel trapped, with no hope for the future. If she doesn't have Jesus to trust, she may decide to terminate the pregnancy, just to relieve the momentary pressure. Family members, the medical community and friends who "hate to see you hurt", can be a huge deciding factor in a mother's choice to take the life of her baby.

Many CHASK moms say that they just cannot imagine taking the life of their baby... but remember, our heavenly hope makes all the difference.

Imagine not having Christ's hand to hold, no grace to carry you through, and the people who love you trying to convince you that choosing life for your baby is a poor decision.

For every 3 babies, 1 is aborted.\* To us this means that it is our children, grandchildren, neighbors, and friends' children, that are becoming pregnant and getting an abortion. I am praying that God will open my eyes to women and teens who are needing help. Most of all needing hope.

**Here is a letter from a woman who wrote to CHASK about her own experience about nearly getting an abortion, and how God touched her:**

I've never been so excited about someone soliciting money than when I received your letter! *(Editor's note: Yes, we do send out fundraising letters. If you want to get a letter from us, send in a donation and you will be added to the mailing list!)*

I'd wanted to give from a portion of some Christmas money I received. Your letter was God's hand delivering an answer.

Nearly 11 years ago, I made the decision to abort my unborn child. While sitting in the clinic, I fainted! Just 15 minutes away from the procedure I changed my mind and was delivered from a life-time of anguish and not knowing my son, Gavin! Today I live, truly transformed by my relationship with Christ. My husband and I have 3 sons: Gavin (10), Brant (7) and Quinn (2). We are in the beginning stages of adopting an orphan. We have even considered a special needs adoption. Your ministry and many others have helped renew my thinking to that which is Christ-like, instead of the filth this world offers. It is a privilege and honor to give on behalf of those facing an abortion on demand. Keep up the kingdom work. You are in our prayers.

With Christ's love,



Alec, Kendra Harnden and the boys!!!

P.S. Your articles help me to live more compassionately toward people with disability. I was raised in a home and church that was always smiling upon those with special needs. God has given me a desire towards those with Down syndrome which was greatly initiated and has grown through NATHHAN. Thanks...

**Through CHASK, women have been lead away from doing permanent harm to their bodies,**

emotions and mental stability. A CHASK mom (who needs to remain anonymous) visits the abortion clinic in her home town every once-in-a-while. She enters the clinic with some CHASK brochures tucked into her purse. She carefully places some CHASK brochures on the waiting room table here and there and then sits down in the waiting room to await her turn to ask some "questions" at the desk. As women come in, she watches them pick up the brochure and read it. She knows that today several woman have been exposed to life choices.

A book I was reading recently told the story of a woman who aborted her baby, after much consideration. She actually felt a close relationship with her unborn baby, but felt she couldn't handle caring for a baby right then in her life.

Years later, after being married, and giving birth to a baby girl, 7 months later, she became depressed (even suicidal). Thinking off and on about her now dead baby, had not disturbed her severely... until now. The whole situation literally haunted her. She was hardly able to function.

In a mental facility, she was able to get help in at least identifying her desperate need for help. She came into contact with a competent counselor who assisted her in walking through her pain. This was not a Christ-centered book, and the resolution was not a Christian one, where the woman came to know Jesus. In fact, through a set of circumstances, she settled in her mind, by "realizing" that her new baby daughter was the baby that she had aborted.

In spite of the strange ending, this touched my heart. How deeply the sting of abortion touches the deep emotions of women who are unsuspecting. They think that getting rid of the

“problem” solves the immediate crisis. But in the long run it does not. It only creates a monster load of pain.

### CHASK stories from the last few months.

If only we could leap off this page, and give you all a big hug to say thank you!

The grandmother of a birth mom with mild mental disability, contacted us regarding finding a placement for her great-grandson due in May. This little guy has Down syndrome. They were very open to bigger families and just wanted someone to love him dearly and care for him. 4 CHASK families were willing to share their hearts and homes with him and their CHASK bios were sent to the birth mom to look at. After talking with several families and seeing their joy in the whole idea of raising her son, the young lady decided to try parenting, with her grandma’s help. They are very grateful for CHASK families continued involvement in their lives.

One of the hard things about working with CHASK is learning to let go. That’s right, letting go and letting God manage a hard set of circumstances. This was one of them.

We only wish the best for this mentally challenged little birth mom and her precious grandmother who has a heart to help her granddaughter and great grandson with Down syndrome.

A pregnancy care center called us regarding a birth mom with severe eczema. The doctors were insisting that the medication that she takes will make the baby severely handicapped. This brave birth mom has opted to forego the medication for now, although the pregnancy makes the eczema worse. The medication she took may still have had an effect on her baby, but she is unwilling to terminate and has decided to leave the results in God’s hands.

A homeschooling mom called us and counseled with us several times. Her husband left her and her young children, leaving her without a way to make a living and now pregnant with

#5. We were able to find a church and church family to comfort her and make a way she could survive and carry her pregnancy without having to work out of the home.

Nancy is a mom who was 5 ½ months pregnant with a baby at the time she called, and has an older child with autism. She is completely overwhelmed and was contemplating an abortion to ease her stress. Thankfully Nancy was able to spend some time counseling with her local crisis pregnancy center. CHASK provided information and one-on-one support for helping her cope with autism and a new baby.

A very sweet NATHHAN mom called us. She had just found out her baby boy had Down syndrome. Already exhausted with the care of 6 children under age 13, including 2 with different special needs, she felt totally overwhelmed. They were strongly looking at the idea of placing him for adoption. Several NATHHAN moms, that have already walked a mile in her shoes, were able to surround her with encouragement and love. The Lord made a way for them to keep their baby.



A mom in TX called with an urgent request. She had been planning on placing her baby for adoption and had been working through an attorney. When it was found out that she had been taking alcohol and drugs during pregnancy, the potential adoptive family declined. Now, days to delivery, she had no family for her baby. The state was looming, waiting to take her baby, considering her now an unfit mother. A CHASK family was found within 24 hours and everything was ironed out. This blessed baby boy will be welcomed at birth into the arms of a loving Christian family that will raise him to love Jesus.

A family in South Carolina spoke a Guatemalan dialect called “Q” and some limited Spanish. (No English) A CHASK family was located that was able to communicate enough with them and counsel them about adoption versus keeping their baby girl, who was going to be born with spina bifida soon. They decided to keep her.

A family in Texas, where the mother spoke only Chinese, needed to decide about whether or not to place their baby who was born with Down syndrome up for adoption. A CHASK family found someone who spoke Chinese and could talk with the birth mom.

A family from India, who also had a baby girl born with Down syndrome, through the help of CHASK, decided to keep their baby! Overcoming huge cultural hurdles, we are very happy for them.

A single mom called us, with tears in her voice. She had just found out that her 29 week old unborn baby had 1 P 36 deletion and cleft lip. She felt that she was not able to care for a baby with special needs. She decided to give her baby life, and chose a CHASK adoptive family for her daughter. (See page 54 for story).

Shaina was planning on giving her baby up for adoption. She worked with an attorney / agency. All was going as planned... until ultra sound revealed that her baby has holoprosencephaly and hydrocephalus. CHASK was able to locate several adoptive families for the birth mom to choose from.

Today, Judy called us from California. A few days ago, she had gone in for an abortion. When they did the routine ultrasound before the abortion, she was found to be too far along to legally do the abortion in her state. She really felt like she was between a rock and a hard place. No abortion. No help. For the last few days, she had been looking for an agency to assist her in finding a home for her baby boy. Because she had been drinking alcohol before she knew she was pregnant, no agency will agree to place her baby. One adoption law firm told her to contact CHASK. Within 2 hours, we had 4 families for her to look at as potential families for her baby.

Because of you, we can confidently say to a birth mom, looking for help so she does not have to abort her baby, "YES! We can find a home for your child, no matter how potentially disabled he / she might be."

Your generous giving is testimony to the world that Jesus Christ loves grieving birth parents. He has not forgotten them in their time of need and neither have

you. Birth moms, who choose life for their baby with special needs of any kind, have an up-hill battle in the medical field. If they do not find out about CHASK, and they cannot parent a child with special needs, then termination, in their minds, may be the only choice.

We are homeschoolers with special needs, with a unique ministry to the unborn with medical concerns. Help us share Christ's love with families facing disability. Families who do not know our Heavenly Father and Christian parents are both struggling with grief, need the encouragement that only you can give. Jesus lives in you and it is apparent. No longer is "disability" an excuse to kill an unborn baby.

We appreciate your extra kindness in sharing a generous donation right now. There should not be a single child that we turn away, because of lack of funding to answer phones and contact potential adoptive parents.

Your compassion is very much needed today. Perhaps you know of someone who can help you assist birth parents. Get together, pray and ask God to open your eyes to pain and hurt around you in your community. Support those ministries that are meeting the needs of parents facing the idea of disability in their lives for the first time. Let them know that by God's grace, they will succeed.



### How does CHASK work?

- Adoptive family fills out a CHASK application (page 17 or [www.chask.org](http://www.chask.org))
- A birth mom in crisis contacts us. Are there any NATHHAN families willing to take her pre-born baby or child with special needs?
- We contact adoptive families, getting permission to send the birth mom their information.
- We send the birth mom 3 families to choose from, including their Dear Birth-Mom letters. After choice is made....
- Potential adoptive family and birth mom handle details such as communication, transportation, lawyer fees.
- Some financial help for adoptive costs may be available by private gifts from NATHHAN families.

**Adoptive family should:**

- Look into having a homestudy. •Adoptive family should locate an adoption lawyer and be aware of their state's laws. (In some states, in order to avoid the appearance of impropriety, the adoption should be handled through an adoption lawyer. We can help you find a pro-life lawyer.)
- Adoptive family should be willing to pray and receive God's will for the birth mom's, baby's, and their lives, no matter what the decision reached by the birth mom.

### Please join us in ministering to birth parents.

NATHHAN /CHASK P.O. Box 310 Moyie Springs, ID 83845  
[www.chask.org](http://www.chask.org)

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

Phone: (\_\_\_\_) \_\_\_\_\_ E-mail \_\_\_\_\_

**Please send me \_\_\_\_\_ CHASK brochures.**

I am interested in sharing with birth parents in crisis.

They can contact me via  e-mail  telephone  letter

Disabilities I can share about with birth parents:

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

I am interested in adopting a child with special needs. We are interested in getting more information about how CHASK's matching service works. Please refer to [www.chask.org](http://www.chask.org) for more information also.

**We'd love to help.** Included is our donation of \$\_\_\_\_\_ I want to help share Christ with birth parents in crisis and support CHASK's unique ministry to the unborn with special needs.

NATHHAN /CHASK is a 501 c 3 not-for-profit ministry. All donations are tax deductible and are used to directly assist in saving the lives of babies with special needs and ministering to parents with special needs children. Credit cards accepted. Please make your checks out to NATHHAN / CHASK .

# CHASK Application

## Christian Homes And Special Kids

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1. Last Name \_\_\_\_\_ 2. First Names \_\_\_\_\_

3. Address \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_\_ Zip \_\_\_\_\_

4. Phone (\_\_\_\_\_) \_\_\_\_\_ 5. E-mail \_\_\_\_\_

7. Number of children in your family living in your home. \_\_\_\_\_

8. Describe your family. (Use a separate sheet if you need to. Pictures are nice.) \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

9. What age of child are you considering? \_\_\_\_\_

10. Are you open to adopting a child of mixed race or color? \_\_\_\_\_

11. What disabilities would you feel comfortable with at this time? (For a more complete list to consider, see CHASK application on the internet [www.chask.org](http://www.chask.org))

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

12. Name of Church \_\_\_\_\_

13. Describe your faith in Jesus Christ: (You may want to use a separate sheet of paper.)

\_\_\_\_\_

14. Name and phone of pastor .....Name \_\_\_\_\_ Phone # (\_\_\_\_\_) \_\_\_\_\_

15. Please give us a 2nd reference ..Name \_\_\_\_\_ Phone # (\_\_\_\_\_) \_\_\_\_\_

16. What are your reasons for adopting? (Use your sheet of paper.)

17. Dear Birth Mom Letter. (Please carefully write a letter sharing your heart about adoption, special needs, and your vision for your family. For a sample letter see [www.chask.org](http://www.chask.org) under "Waiting Families".) We also need 1 family picture that we can scan into the computer with your entry.

**CHASK/NATHHAN**

P.O. Box 310 Moyie Springs, ID 83845

(208) 267-6246

[www.chask.org](http://www.chask.org)

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# Siblings Giving Back

## **My Sister** ***(Forever a draft!)*** By Christine Dillon

My sister is a burden, many say  
She cannot walk, she cannot talk  
She must be bathed, she must be fed  
She is such a burden, is what they say

My sister is a blessing, I respond  
Her bright smile fills the room  
Her happy spirit cheers our family  
My sister is the blessing, is what I say

My sister is deprived, the experts declare  
Her quality of life is sub-optimal  
Oh, how she must suffer, constrained  
in such a body  
She is destitute, is what they say

My sister has a response which they  
cannot understand  
If quality of life was measured by joy  
and cheerfulness,  
By the size of a smile or the quality of a laugh  
My sister has a better life than they will ever know

My sister is unproductive, DAILY  
calculations state  
Society will never get back the labor  
invested in her  
She has reduced the economic productivity  
of our country  
She doesn't contribute to our society,  
is what they say

My sister is a teacher, I reply with a grin  
She provides the opportunity for others to show  
perfect love  
For, is this not our most valuable skill?  
My sister brings out the best in our society, is  
what I say

My sister should be pitied, the  
righteous announce  
She will never win a swimming competition  
Never get first place in a spelling bee,  
or learn ballet  
We should be grateful for our abilities,  
is what they say

My sister knows a secret, they do not  
True happiness does not come from  
possessions, competition and success  
But from unhindered love, unconstrained  
by worldly concerns  
My sister knows true happiness, of this,  
I am sure



**Anne Dillon,  
Sister of Christine Dillon  
Daughters of Andy and Linda  
Dillon, Washington State.**

# Thank You, Peter

By Katherine Bruening



I was frustrated. My eleven year-old brother simply could not understand that fifteen plus three was eighteen, not two. While my frustration turned to anger, I realized we both needed a break, so we played our favorite game.

The rules were simple: first one to laugh lost. It was easy playing with Peter. He always lost. I winked at Peter and he burst into laughter. When he laughed, I could not help but wonder how he was able to find such effortless delight despite the daily harassment and challenges he faces because of his Down syndrome. If I had to endure one day of his life, I doubt I would be able to find such joy. As soon as Peter laughed, I did too. With his laugh, I was able to rid myself of my anger and frustration; my patience and perspective returned.

Eleven years ago I sat on the hospital bed, disappointed that my parents had ignored my simple request to have a sister; they explained to me that Peter would never be the same as my other two brothers. He would never talk as well, run as fast, grow as tall, understand as easily, or be treated as fairly as others would. Not quite understanding what my parents were telling me, my mother gently took my hand and looked at me intently. She told me that life would be much harder for Peter, that people are going to think he is strange, and that he will not always feel accepted. She explained that it was my job to be his big sister, to make him feel accepted at home, and to give him extra love. This would be a job for all of us. Though I was still unaware of what was to come, it was at that moment I set aside some

special love – love designated only for my special brother.

As I became older I grew more aware of my own disabilities and shortcomings. Being home schooled through the third grade, I did not possess all the social skills that other children my age had acquired throughout their years together at a mainstream school. But I was able to adapt and be accepted. Peter was not as fortunate as I. As Peter grew up, his disabilities became increasingly apparent, and the love I reserved for him proved to be more vital that I ever could have imagined. All that my parents predicted about my precious brother became a reality. When Peter started school, mainstream children did not understand why Peter acted and looked so different from them, and as a result, it was not uncommon for Peter to be name-called and taunted. Unlike me, however, he is still not able to communicate his thoughts and feelings and his pains and joys to others. Yet, Peter was and is able to continue through these moments with a smile.

Today I often wonder how Peter views his life and if he has any idea how much he has impacted mine. It is natural for one to have moments of frustration or even anger. I know I that I do. But Peter, my younger brother, has shown me how to accept not only my shortcomings but also my abilities. Furthermore, he has shown me patience: patience for others as they struggle to overcome their limitations as well as patience for myself as I struggle.

I am human; I get frustrated, angry, and exasperated. But because of Peter I have learned how to be a more loving sister. I have learned how to be more accepting and patient with myself and with others. Without my little brother I would not be the same person I am today – his impact on my life has changed me forever. I am thankful everyday that I am fortunate enough to have such a wonderful person in my life.

Thank you, Peter.

# Take a peek at a few new resources:

## Dyslexia:

1. [www.brightsolutions.us](http://www.brightsolutions.us) - "A Goldmine!" - says one NATHHAN reader
  - Free web casts
  - "Dyslexia: Symptoms and Solutions"
2. [www.bartonreading.com](http://www.bartonreading.com) - Explains a curriculum that works for teaching dyslexics how to read!

## The Great Plains Laboratory

### **A testing service for many special needs!**

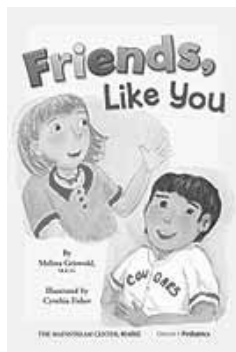
The Great Plains Laboratory helps children and adults with conditions such as autism & PDD, ADD/ADHD, Down's Syndrome with autistic-like symptoms, Fibromyalgia, Chronic Fatigue, MS or MS-like symptoms and more!

To find our more, go to:

[www.greatplainslaboratory.com](http://www.greatplainslaboratory.com)



## **"Friends, Like You",** by Melissa Griswold, M.E.D.



This is an ideal teaching tool for raising awareness about hearing loss and encouraging friendships among young children.

The kit includes a 32 page, full-color children's book, an educator's guide and a children's activity book. Additional sets of 30 activity books are sold separately. For more information, go to:

[www.clarkeschool.org](http://www.clarkeschool.org)



## **Reeces Rainbow**

A ministry dedicated to matching families to children with Down Syndrome in need of a home.

[www.reecesrainbow.com](http://www.reecesrainbow.com)



## **Totally Words**

New resource by Love and Learning

Computer program #1 - over 830 words used over 12,000 times. Allows child to regulate amount of assistance needed. Program speaks, allowing child to hear word over and over when mouse is rolled over word. Can be used even with fairly severely affected children, if they can use a mouse. [www.totallyworks.com](http://www.totallyworks.com)

## Failure Free Reading!

"Our product is specifically designed for students who have been unsuccessful learning how to read and need an alternative method. We have been very successful with special education students of all disability types..." - B.N. Educational Consultant

For more information, go to:

[www.failurefree.com](http://www.failurefree.com)



## ADHD -of the Christian kind



A web site built on the Word of God to enable Christian parents, children and families who struggle with ADHD.

They have amassed a myriad of resources from Bible studies and curriculum ideas, to helpful articles and support groups.

For those who homeschool and those of who don't, you can all find something here!

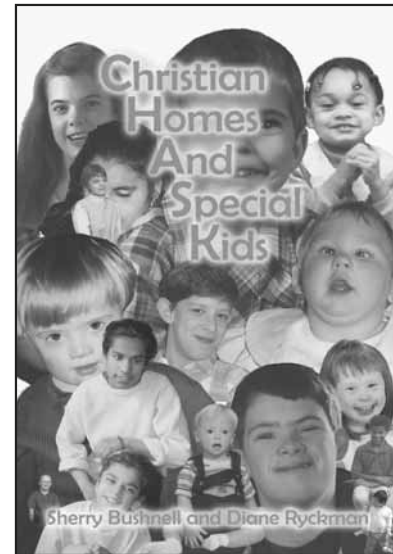
[www.christianadhd.com/hstools.php](http://www.christianadhd.com/hstools.php)

# A book written by NATHHAN families

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## Christian Homes And Special Kids

## CHASK



Warmly penned, practical resource written by homeschooling parents.

Here are moms and dads, just like you, living Christian lives and raising their special needs child for the Lord!

CHASK is packed full of tips, stories and advice from families that have been there. We know you will love reading it again and again.

Over 270 pages, 6" by 9"  
Compiled and edited by  
Sherry Bushnell  
and Diane Ryckman

Chapter 1 - You Can Do It!

Chapter 2 - How To Begin

Chapter 3 - Pre-School Years

Chapter 4 - Elementary Years

Chapter 5 - Teens/ Adult Vocational Training

Chapter 6 - Therapy / Adaptive Technology

Chapter 7 - Character Development

Chapter 8 - Individual Education Plans

Chapter 9 - What's it Like Raising A Child With...?

Chapter 10 - The Ministry Of CHASK

**PLUS** a large topical subject and resource index.

**See order form on page 30**

## Has it been a long time since your family enjoyed a restful week together?



### **Join us for a week of family camp.**

Meaningful family life does not come easy. From out of nowhere come stress and pressures that cause strain on your family's relationships. In a family affected by disability, sometimes it doesn't take much to push it over the top. Since 1991 families from around the country have attended

Joni and Friends Family Retreats seeking a time of rest and recreation, Christ-centered encouragement, and the tools to build a stronger family. Held at accessible camp and conference centers across the United States during the summer, Family Retreats provide dynamic five-day programs that refresh and strengthen your whole family. Joni and Friends Family Retreats provide a lifeline to families – families just like yours – who want hope and encouragement that will last. You and your family will be blessed, inspired, and make new friendships that will last a lifetime. Join us this summer at a retreat near you.

**[www.joniandfriends.org](http://www.joniandfriends.org)**

**or call 800-523-5777 and ask for the family information packet**

# Our Charity

By Elizabeth Goulding

Charity Rose has been such a joy in our lives for over two years now. She is a delight and a blessing and a gift. We were praying for her long before she came to us. We waited almost two years for this little girl from the time that we first attended an informational meeting about CHASK until the day when the phone call came announcing her arrival into the world. It may very well have been one of the happiest days of my life...What can you say when God gives more than you ever thought you could ask for? Many, perhaps most people thought we were crazy to adopt when our youngest child was seven months at that time, but I could relate story after story of how our lives have been touched, and made better because of this little girl. She is special!

One example, is how our older children in particular have become very sensitive to people with disabilities. They reach out to other children who are different and who need friends. They are not afraid of others who make "funny" noises, or act strangely. I have observed them watch for a moment then quickly decide that this must be one of God's extra special people! They are particularly excited when we find another child with Down Syndrome who looks like their Charity. As a mother I am thrilled to see my children loving others regardless of the disability that sets them apart from the norm.

In regard to our Charity, one of our favorite scriptures is Psalm 139. We love to read it again and again, mindful of the fact that God made her unique, and without mistake. He didn't have an "oops" moment, since He always makes us in His image!

I imagine God knitting her together inside of her mother's womb. I can guess that it was especially fun for Him, as he chose her eye and hair color to match our family perfectly. He probably laughed out loud as He fashioned her fat little fingers that curve in their own special way. I am sure that it was with extra tenderness that He gave her body one extra chromosome that would forever set her apart to be "one of those" people. He knew that "those" people are gifts and without doubt He chose

our family to be a part of His amazing plan. I could just about weep with thankfulness for His goodness. Charity was made without error and without mistake. She was planned before time and she is a precious part of our family.

## Charity Rose



## Elizabeth with husband Will and their children







Currently in America, thousands of families are homeschooling children whose special needs range from attention deficit disorder to severe multiple handicaps. Parents often find that when they bring these children home to be educated, they come out of the "deep freeze" that has kept them from making significant progress in traditional settings.

For children who are learning disabled, who function best with "real-life problems" rather than artificial worksheet tasks, homeschooling may be ideal. For children who are medically sensitive, learning at home provides the opportunity for careful monitoring. For children who have attention deficit, who function best with uniquely structured time and fewer distractions, homeschooling usually proves to be the answer.

After hundreds of hours of research, writing, and thoughtful graphic design, HSLDA is proud to announce the latest addition to the Home School Legal Defense Association website: Homeschooling a Struggling Learner.

HSLDA's special needs coordinators Betty Statnick and Dianne Craft, and the HSLDA communications department and web department have partnered to produce this innovative approach to helping families homeschooling students who learn differently.

We all struggle with learning in one way or another, but most of us have learned how to compensate. In the case of struggling students who learn differently from the majority of children, the goal is to discover how they learn best, and then to motivate them as they learn.

The decision to homeschool a child with spe-

cial learning needs is a weighty one. Parents may meet pressure from the school district, or even the state, to enroll their child in the "system." Many encounter criticism from well-meaning family and friends, and most must deal with their own fears of inadequacy. Nevertheless, in record numbers, parents of children who have special needs are choosing to home educate, and most are finding that the rewards far outweigh the costs.

Here is help. The heart of HSLDA's new online resource is a series of tools that allow parents to do some analysis on their own. They begin by trying to help parents understand the learning process, so they in turn can understand why their children may not be responding to conventional teaching methods. Then, based on the latest brain research, we explain what experts call "the four learning gates" and offer checklists to help diagnose why a child's particular "learning gate" isn't functioning correctly.

Equally important, they are compiling tried-and-true resources, from techniques parents can implement on their own to programs, books, videos, and organizations offering insight into correcting and compensating for learning difficulties.

Their hope is that the new web pages will be a great aid to many homeschoolers—and minimize the amount of time and money they spend in search of information.

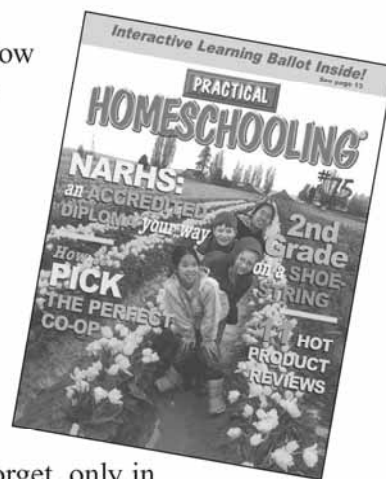
Help may just be a click away!

[www.hslda.org/strugglinglearner](http://www.hslda.org/strugglinglearner)

# TAKE A PAGE FROM OUR MAGAZINE

You're never alone when **Practical Homeschooling**® is your window on the homeschool world. Every issue — six times a year — we bring you the best of:

- **What's new** for your homeschool
- **Preschool** how-tos on a shoestring
- **The 4 R's** and how to teach them
- Columns that take the "ick" out of "mathematics" and put the "sense" back into "science"
- Inspiring homeschool **success** stories
- Our **exclusive** "Day at Our House" diaries
- **News & views** from the world of education
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## PRACTICAL HOMESCHOOLING

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.....Needing *something* to put down on your child's IEP as a curriculum for teaching your disabled child?

Plain & Simple Part A and B was designed by a homeschooling family with moderately and severely disabled children. Using it successfully in their own children with cerebral palsy, Down syndrome, autism and learning delays, they have made it available for other homeschooling families whose children may not be able to read, write, speak or even point.

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**\$20.00** Postage is included in the price.

No tabs, or binder, it is 147 pages

**Part B** - includes review of vowels, consonants, consonant blends, and early words. **\$30.00** Postage included in price.

(No tabs, or binder, it is 204 pages)

—This is not a complete phonics program, but created for children with delays that need to move V..E..R..Y slowly. Some of our special children CAN learn to read via the phonics method. This is an excellent (and cheap) way to practice. Find out if phonics is possible for your child.

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<input type="checkbox"/>	<b>CHASK Book—<u>Christian Homes And Special Kids</u></b> _____ \$17.00. Price includes shipping. <a href="http://www.chask.org">www.chask.org</a>
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	CHALLENGE? _____

# NATHHAN Resource Room

---



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**By Sherry Bushnell and Diane Ryckman.....\$17.00**



**God's Special Child** - This is the story of a family, working with their son who had Prader Willie syndrome. They candidly share their success and failures. The results are an encouraging book that shows God's faithfulness and the wisdom of following His ways.  
**By Donna Adee..... \$10.00**



**Phonics Plain & Simple Part A** - includes colors, shapes, left/right and up/down etc.. abc's, early phonics and the vowels.

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**Individual Education Planning Manual For the Homeschool Handicapped Student** - IEPs are now easy! Create your child's professional looking IEP specific to the special needs of your student.  
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	God's Special Child	\$10.00	
	Phonics Plain & Simple Part A	\$20.00	
	Phonics Plain & Simple Part B	\$30.00	
	1st Straight Talk (See page 9)	\$45.00	
	1st Straight Talk with DVD	\$55.00	
	2nd Straight Talk (See page 10 )	\$45.00	
	I.E.P. Planner By Debbie Mills	\$67.00	
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Please e-mail your ad to [nathanews@aol.com](mailto:nathanews@aol.com) and send a check. Ads must be received by the deadline date below, to be printed in upcoming issues. Please phone first, as we fill up very fast.

We hope you understand... we reserve the right to refuse ads we feel are inappropriate. (Please, no multi-level style products or companies.)

\$500/ full page, \$250 / half page, \$125/quarter.  
Deadline dates: Sept 15th, January 15th

Please call to verify ad space and arrangements.

## FREE ADS

### NATHHAN Members!

Thousands of NATHHAN families read this section. This is a great way to get support or questions answered from a Christian homeschooling perspective.

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Part B - includes review of vowels, consonants, consonant blends, and early words. \$30.00 Postage included in price. (No tabs, or binder, it is 204 pages)

—This is not a complete phonics program, but created for children with delays that need to move V..E..R..Y slowly. Some of our special children CAN learn to read via the phonics method. This is an excellent (and cheap) way to practice. Find out if phonics is possible for your child.

— A great program for children needing lots of repetition. No hand printing required. Photo copying encouraged for your own use!

See order form pg. 38  
More info at [www.nathhan.org](http://www.nathhan.org)

## Stevenson Learning Skills

Younger and older children who are struggling with learning to read will find this program easy to use. Mnemonics helps them remember letters and spelling rules.

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- Sherry Bushnell - NATHHAN

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# Classified Ads

I am an **independent tutor** in the **North Hills of Pittsburgh, PA**, serving special needs students K-8. My tutoring is guided by Orton Gillingham principles. I favor a multi-sensory, systematic approach to learning reading and math. **If you are looking for additional support for your child**, please contact me! Thank you, Amy Evens Phone: 724-935-0163 E-mail: evens@connecttime.net.

.....

**Child's manual wheelchair** - Zippie GS - magenta color - fits pre-school to young elementary school child - adjustable - has removable tray - good quality and very sturdy - doesn't fold but can be partially broken down if needed - originally new over \$2000 - **will give to a needy NATHHAN family in exchange for a donation to NATHHAN/CHASK** - located near Salem, Oregon - (would be expensive to ship) Marilyn - 503-873-8451 E-mail: agenbroads@verizon.net

.....

## Looking to buy or sell used curriculum?

We are one of the largest sites on the web for buying and selling new and used homeschool materials, and for finding and announcing homeschool groups, activities, and events.

Explore thousands of other's listings, or post your own! To learn more, go to: [www.homeschoolclassifieds.com](http://www.homeschoolclassifieds.com)

## ICAN-DO

It's a great program! National website is [www.icando.org](http://www.icando.org)

National phone number is: (253) 588-5177

ICAN-- International Christian Association of Neurodevelopmentalists Email: specialhelps@hotmail.com My personal info is: CAN-DO Cyndi Ringoen P.O. Box 9822 Spokane, WA 99209 [www.ican-do.net](http://www.ican-do.net) 509-292-2937 cdarling@icehouse.net

.....

I am Christian, homeschool supporter and a facilitator with the Davis Dyslexia Association International Free informational packet **Uniquely Gifted** Janet Confer 949-589-6394 [uniquelycreated@cox.net](mailto:uniquelycreated@cox.net) [www.dyslexia.com](http://www.dyslexia.com)

.....

## Resource for teaching children with Autism about the Bible.

(or any age child who is a visual learner).

David C. Cook Ministries Scripture pictures.

[www.davidccook.com](http://www.davidccook.com)

Reference from NATHHAN member, Donna Glick 920-296-5462

HaysKids: Pathway to Understanding Raising Kids with Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder [www.hayskids.com](http://www.hayskids.com)

## Teaching Jeremiah A Blog on Asperger's



I am a homeschool mother of four. My youngest son Jeremiah has Asperger's Syndrome. I have started a blog showing the challenges and rewards that come from teaching him and being taught by him.

My hope is that it will encourage others with special needs children in their decision to homeschool.

To visit  
"Teaching Jeremiah"  
go to:

[www.homeschoolblogger.com/teachingjeremiah](http://www.homeschoolblogger.com/teachingjeremiah)

## FREE

Independent Living Skills Test Developed and Distributed by Daniel Memorial Institute. 4203 Southpoint Boulevard Jacksonville, FL 32212 1-800-226-7612 ext. 1006

Test can be found on [www.hayskids.com](http://www.hayskids.com) web site. Click on Daniel - Independent Living Skills Assessment.



# Letters From Families

## Working from home ideas?

Does anyone have ideas for fund raising or work at home ideas for parents? They have 5 kids, all homeschooled, who recently had a severe injury in their family resulting in one of their children being disabled. They are looking for help with the mounting bills, equipment, and home remodeling needs.

Thanks,  
Dawn [dawn@bfree.org](mailto:dawn@bfree.org)

.....

## In need of a resource for a picture Bible...

I have a 2 year old daughter that is deaf and we are looking for a way to explain the Gospel to her. With our children we simply buy a picture Bible and explain at their level. We are in need of a Picture Bible with signs on the page. Do you know where we can get one?

Thanks, John  
[emptywithoutjesus@yahoo.com](mailto:emptywithoutjesus@yahoo.com)

.....

## Homeschooling With 19 Children....

I could really use some homeschool advice. We have adopted 19 kids in 11 years, most recently 4 from Africa. There ages are 2,3,3,5,6,6,6,6,7,8,8,8,8,9, 10,10,10,14 and 17. I feel the Lord has called us to homeschool but it seems to be a HUGE challenge at every turn. When we could afford it we hired a teacher, which was a challenge in itself finding someone who felt the same way we did about raising our children for Jesus.

Now.... affording it is no longer an option and I need to find a way to teach them without getting a little crazy myself.

We live in a 6,000 sq. ft. home and just trying to keep it clean, laundry etc. keeps me so busy... and our kids all help with the house and their siblings.

I have seen awesome results with keeping my kids home. Character improvements, closeness as a family, Jesus traits, and the list goes on.

I get the NATHHAN/CHASK News. We are on

your adoption list and hear about how wonderful you are constantly in the adoption world. I was just hoping you had some advice.

In HIM,  
Tanya - [rontanya777@aol.com](mailto:rontanya777@aol.com)  
.....

## A Mom and Dad's struggle with future risky pregnancy..

Is it selfish to desire more children when there are known risks? Due to a translocation I carry, we run a very high risk of having a baby with T-13, better known as Patau's Syndrome. Our OB suggested termination in this case, an idea we wholeheartedly reject.... Even in our Christian community we are being labeled as "playing with fire" for pursuing pregnancy..."

Please send responses to  
[chaskinfo@aol.com](mailto:chaskinfo@aol.com) Be sure to label it: Response to T-13 Pregnancy Struggle

### Response from the Editor:

*Dear Mom and Dad,*

*I think that all of us who have given birth to a child with a defect go through these thoughts. You are so right about God being the one who creates and allows for His purposes.*

*Without knowing more about the defect, I am hard pressed to assure you that it probably won't reoccur. However, most chromosomal anomalies are random (with age being a greater risk). I myself had a baby with Down syndrome at age 25. I later gave birth to 6 more children, each being unique and just as special, but without disability.*

*Some genetic mixes are potentially more prone to specific problems. But God can still intervene. I would hesitate to do anything*

*permanent about having more children. It could be that the Lord needs to do some work in our hearts before we conceive. I know that in each of my pregnancies there was a difficult time, as I was fearful about the future. Yet I can honestly say that the Lord used each pregnancy in a very special way to fashion me to be more like Him.*

*Looking back, I would not have denied myself any one of the potentially difficult situations to make life easier now.*

*Thanks,*

*Sherry Bushnell.....*

### **Anyone going to a church with a special needs program?...**

I am a mother of 6 boys. 3 are married and 3 are still at home. One son has cerebral palsy. Through the years we have attended different churches, yet none of which had anything that met his needs. Don't get me wrong they were all nice to him, but he always looked out of place since most didn't know how to relate with him or were nervous because of his needs. I said all that to say this, I asked my pastor if I could start something for the kids with special needs, so they feel important, feel like they really fit in and their needs would be met, as I share with them the awesome message of how much God loves them and what Jesus has done for them. I am excited about this new adventure yet I am very nervous also, I want to do my best in this area and would really like to know if any of you are going to a church or know of a church that is doing what I would like to do. If so, I would really like to get a hold of whom ever is in charge so I can get some good suggestions and great advice of how to best make this a successful ministry for all the special kids that will be coming.

Any and all information can be sent to me at

**mrssixkids@yahoo.com**

Thank you so much

Rejoice in the Lord always,

Debbie

.....

### **Concerned mom looking for ways to introduce the idea of a monthly period to her special needs daughter...**

I have a daughter who is 11 and will be 12 on Feb. 29th. She is very advanced and we had the "sex" talk and the fact that she was going to start her period at some point way back when she was seven. It was a very easy, light conversation and she understood everything very well.

I have a 10 year old who will be 11 Sept. 15th. She is special education and has just started to learn to read and is at about a first to second grade level. Unfortunately, her body and puberty isn't as behind. I have no clue how to introduce the fact of her period starting. I am not interested at all in doing any type of sex talk like I did with my older one, but I don't want to ignore the problem and have her start her period and not know what is happening. I don't want her to think she did something wrong and she would be apt to throw her underwear in the trash and not tell anyone. I was looking for some assistance in introducing this to a child that isn't quite academically there on understanding.

The two sisters are both very close and the older sister does do a lot to help her younger sister understand things. This is our first year homeschooling. She's attended child abuse and stranger seminars in public school and at church, but I'm not sure how much she understands.

Thanks, Concerned NATHHAN Mom

*Please send any replies to:*

*chaskinfo@aol.com Don't forget to label it "Concerned Mom and SP Girls and Their Monthly Cycle"*

### **Response from the editor:**

*One of our daughters, who is mentally and physically disabled, was 15 when her period started. We decided that from the beginning our goal was to have her able to handle her menses independently. This took a few years to implement.*

*1. It was a big step just to get her to tell mom when her period started.*

*Then when she did catch on, she did so none to discretely at first... but our boys were patient...*

*2. One of her sisters offered to help her get her pad in and panties on, adjusted right. At this point, her periods were fairly light.*

*3. We taught her from the beginning, the proper way to dispose of the pads. We walked her through the steps, the same way each time.*

- *Find pad in cupboard (same place each time, fully accessible).*
- *Open package, take stick-um off back of pad, place pad in underwear, adjust.*
- *(Changing pad) take pad out of underwear, place in paper lunch bag, fold down top several times.*
- *Place in trash.*
- *Clean toilet, floor and self, if needed, with damp washcloth.*

*This is all done in a "get-the-chore-done" type manner, matter of fact, no scolding, just a "get-it-clean" type attitude.*

*After 2 years, as of right now, we still need to bring her attention to an occasional mess on the toilet and floor once in a while. The mess is understandable, because she is fully disabled (does not have the use of her legs or left arm or hand). She must get on and off the toilet from the wheel chair and staying clean is harder. Her moderate autism is the greater handicap though. ~ Sherry Bushnell*

.....

**"...God decided that this child with Osteogenesis Imperfecta type II would survive and thrive..."**

I am very interested in being a resource to any mommy that has a child with a prenatal diagnosis of lethal skeletal dysplasia.

Our son is 7 years old and was born with Osteogenesis Imperfecta type II which is supposed to be lethal. We took him as a foster child who we were planning on caring for until the Lord took him home.... At this moment, he is sitting in the kitchen decorating Christmas cookies. We finalized his adoption when he was 3 years old. He still breaks his bones frequently and has dwarfism, but is the biggest joy and greatest gift that God has given our family. His

is the happiest of all of our children! The doctors now say he has Osteogenesis Imperfecta type III severe because he survived. I guess they can not accept that God is Great and He alone decides who survives! God decided that this child with OI type II would survive and thrive.

I belong to a yahoo group of other parents who have children with this disorder and we offer hope to new moms with a difficult diagnosis. Some of those babies do not survive, but lots do. It is hard work and heartbreaking at times to parent these fragile angels, but if they choose to stay here and be so happy, we need to smile right along with them and walk on this journey hand in hand, with joy and love of the Lord.

Feel free to use this letter, or any other information from our family and our story to help other parents. If it will save one child, or if God chooses to use our family as the home of another child with this disorder, we are willing to do whatever He asks of us. I am including some websites that have information on us, and our dear Jacob.

Sincerely in Christ,  
Jeannie and Family  
Send any replies to: [gryslan@grics.net](mailto:gryslan@grics.net)  
[www.geocities.com/grysmom](http://www.geocities.com/grysmom)  
[www.gopetition.com/online/11829.html](http://www.gopetition.com/online/11829.html)

.....

**That Egg and I - Jacob Bushnell**

Breakfast around our house is pretty much "on your own", so yesterday I fixed up some leftovers and sat down to eat. My six-year-old little brother Jayben was cooking some hardboiled eggs and gave me one. I cracked it open to eat while he was looking on with great anticipation, hoping I would enjoy it. Unfortunately it hadn't been cooked very long... just enough to turn the egg white to a pale, jelly-like whiteness...rather runny. The yolk was just simply warmed up....Oh no!

Here I had on my plate, a most disgusting egg.... and my little brother looking on with rapt pride at his ability to cook for big brother! What could I do... but eat it? I liberally anointed it with salt, closed my eyes and bravely gulped down one half, gagged and swallowed. He, seeing that I was

enjoying my food, went to cook himself another one. As soon as his back was turned, I quickly slipped the remaining half into the trash...and made a hasty exit to work before he could offer me another!

.....

**Remember the unwanted embryos in the last NATHHAN / CHASK NEWS with possible special needs?**

*A Mommy For Our Embryos!*

Hi Sherry, Great news!

We received an inquiry from a family who would like to adopt the eight embryos featured in the newsletter.

Both the adoptive family and the donating family have reviewed each others' profiles and determined this would be a good match for each of them. I'm sending them the application and we have noted that no fees are being charged.

I am so grateful for your help in reaching out to your families on behalf of these embryos. They are getting the love and the chance at life they deserve. Thank you. Please let me know if there is anything you need from me at this time, or anytime in the future. Sincerely,

Megan Corcoran, Snowflakes Program Director  
 NightLight Christian Adoption  
 714-278-1020  
 megan@nightlight.org

**Mom in need of resources for assistive technology...**

I am a home school mom in Kentucky with a child who has learning differences. My son, Will (11 yrs) has recently finished evaluations revealing dyslexic dysgraphia and executive processing dysfunction. We are in need of assistive technology in the areas of writing, planning and organization. His scholastic scores were near grade level with exception of writing which showed scores of second grade level. I need help with determining what technology I need, how to use it, and where to affordably obtain it.

**Vivian**  
 vjheato1@iglou.com

.....

**Do you have a question, a need, a helpful resource or a story to share?**

Submit your article or letter to us at the NATHHAN/CHASK office and we'll review it for publication in our next magazine!  
**nathanews@aol.com**



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# A Message From:

**Diane Macbeth**

**A NATHHAN Founder**

.....

Hi, Tom & Sherry! Hope all is well.

Right now, Robbie is in need of a little help. Last year when I put out a distress signal, I was overwhelmed with the response for help. His knee injury of 10/2/06 is completely healed and we needed no orthopedic surgery. All of the rehab was done at home. That's a story for another day!

But the struggle for special needs adults is still the struggle for complete and caring dental care. Robbie's first brush with dental surgery was in 1989 when he was 13 years old. The wonderful ENT at Children's Hospital in Philadelphia combined tonsillectomy and adenoidectomy with the dental team at Children's and he had 2 teeth extracted and 4 root canals with caps. . YES, ALL AT THE SAME TIME. And this was DAY SURGERY!!!! The miracle of Tylenol with codeine got him through the pain for about 3 or 4 days and he was off and running.

I am not sure if all children and adults have the same reactions when it comes to dentistry, but Robbie is a complete dental phobic. He cannot even sit in a dentist chair without breaking out in a sweat. . . last year when we went for a 'friendly' visit with my personal dentist, he nearly had a heart attack in the chair just sitting under the huge light. And let's not even bring any type of stainless steel surgical tools into the room. . He gets the strength of 10 men and gets up and leaves!!!

About 8 months ago I thought I had found a wonderful place (which shall remain nameless) at Temple Hospital in North Philadelphia. To make a long story short, it was a total chamber of horrors. . .

They WALKED Robbie down a long dark hallway into an operating room which was not even cleaned up from the last patient! I'll spare you the rest of the details. No, he was NOT EVEN OFFERED PRE-SEDATION!!!! But, at this writing. . .one of

those metal caps from 1989 has broken off leaving the nerve in his tooth exposed and him with nowhere to go for help.

Believe me, there are tons of caring dentists here in this part of PA, but because of the insurance nightmare of Keystone Mercy - none are able to help - BECAUSE HE IS OVER THE AGE OF 21. Sad, isn't it. So, I guess this is what I need. . .A SMALL MIRACLE FOR ROBBIE. If there is anyone out there, ANYONE who has a connection with a dental SURGEON with access to a full hospital setting who is willing to help us? If so, I may be able to persuade the insurance company to work along with me so that Robbie can be relieved of his pain. He has had absolutely NO DENTAL work done in almost 20 years. Remarkably, he has had no cavities to speak of and has NEVER COMPLAINED about a toothache. Not even with this incident. . it presented itself as swollen glands and ear pain.

The family doctor cleared him today of an ear infection, but has him on an antibiotic because of the exposed nerve and breakage of the tooth.

Is there anyone out there with a child or adult with Downs who has had similar experience with dental phobia? Are there any dental surgeons out there with whom I could speak who may be willing to point me in the right direction? I am open for suggestions.

Robbie is such a great 'kid'. He will be 32 in May. . .I can't believe it. And those doctors said he wouldn't make it to see age 2!

I give you full permission to post my letter and I'll accept any and all suggestions.

Please email all responses to: [dlnmacbeth@verizon.net](mailto:dlnmacbeth@verizon.net) Please use: Robbie Dental in the subject line so that I'll know it's not spam! Thanks! Or telephone :610-212-2493.

All of our children deserve the best that medicine has to offer and I know there ARE people out there who can help. . I JUST NEED TO FIND YOU! Thanks so much and I'll keep you posted. God Bless and keep you in His care!

*Diane L. Macbeth ~ Romans 8:28*

# Erratic behavior? Could it be allergies?

By Bev Parrish

Could your child's erratic and volatile behavior be a result of environmental or food allergies or sensitivities? Our son Jack's was.

A little history is in order. My pregnancy with Jack was normal, with the exception of my having bronchitis twice, lasting a total of 8 weeks. We lived in Austin, Texas, in a rent house where the previous renter had had 11 indoor cats, and was an extremely poor housekeeper – there was cat fur everywhere! The house was very, very dusty (and furry), even though we vacuumed every day with a “wind tunnel” type vacuum cleaner that doesn't allow flow through dust to be expelled into the air. Lastly, Austin is home to lots of cedar and oak trees.

The only thing of note about Jack himself as an infant was that he came out of the womb with a terrible case of eczema in the crooks of his arms, and behind his knees. It never left him.

I breastfed Jack for his first year, introducing solids at about 10 months, beginning of course with rice and slowly adding in other foods.

When Jack was 6 weeks old, we moved out of the rental house and to Houston, Texas. This home's previous owners were also indoor cat lovers, smokers, and the house was old.

Everything seemed fine until Jack reached about 18 months to two years of age. He began hitting himself in the head repeatedly. He would frantically (as opposed to typical toddler “artistically”) scribble on the walls with whatever was handy. Any loose paper he could find was immediately cut apart – again, frantically, rather than creatively. He would hit me without any provocation. His eyes were constantly swollen, but this had come on so slowly, that we really didn't notice that it was abnormal. He had dark cir-

cles under his eyes, and a persistent “drugged” expression on his face. Frequently, for no apparent reason, he would dissolve into tears or a fit of rage.

I love to read, and happened on Is This Your Child by Doris Rapp. It's about children and allergies. I found Jack in the pages of that book. We took him to the allergist for testing for environmental allergies. They did the standard small set of pricks for a toddler. After the pricks, I was lying on the examining table, with Jack calmly resting on my chest, waiting for the pricks to “take effect.” After about five minutes, he reared up on his elbows and swung a

fist at me. His ears were beet red, as was his back in several places. They immediately administered Benadryl to him and he calmed down within a few minutes.

Turns out he was allergic to cats, oak, dust and dust mites – all of which we were exposed to in abundance in our rent house during my pregnancy with him, and some of

which he was further exposed to in our home now. The allergist told us that sometimes babies could develop sensitivities to allergens in the womb, if mom is overexposed to them. That appeared to be the case.

The allergist prescribed steroids for the short term and antihistamines for the long term – with the prospect of allergy shots later. We didn't like the idea at all, but decided that to help Jack immediately, we needed to try the medication. It worked. But it also made Jack sleepy. We didn't want to give him antihistamines forever, so we took additional measures.

Over the course of about 9 months, we eliminated any offenders in our home that we could. We replaced carpet with hard floors (and lived without proper flooring while we saved



money to replace it), installed a whole house filtration system, replaced all the old air ducts and put air filters in every bedroom. This helped immensely. Jack was a new kid! No more hitting, cutting things, drawing on walls, etc. He began to say, "I love you, Mommy," where he had rarely said that before. His eczema began to clear up. It was as if he had been trapped in a world created by allergens.

Soon, however, the old behaviors resurfaced. We noticed a connection between his unusual behavior and the food he ate. *Is This Your Child* talked about food allergies too, but we thought we'd taken care of everything with the airborne allergies.

I was overwhelmed by the thought of following an elimination diet as prescribed in the book, so we just decided to eliminate the common offenders, that are also common ingredients in kid friendly foods – wheat, dairy, and eggs. Jack improved immediately. We had been giving him an orange at least once a day, for its anti-inflammatory properties, until we noticed that it seemed to set him off. So we eliminated citrus, too. As we replaced his wheat cereal with corn, we noticed that the corn seemed to bother him, so we eliminated that as well. Now we seem to have hit upon all the things that bother him, and have eliminated them.

This is wildly, profoundly inconvenient, not to mention expensive! We could only keep Jack's diet completely free of offenders for about three or four weeks, but this seemed to be enough to give his immune system a chance to relax and not react to everything. The allergist had told us that this could happen.

Over time, however, we have learned that he seems to tolerate things I make from scratch using organic wheat, eggs and milk. That allows him to enjoy on occasion things the rest of the family eats. Trial and error has even proven that he can tolerate some prepared food – such as bread (and not organic) from the store, if it is free of additives and artificial colors and flavors. He only gets these things in small quantities, but in a pinch, he can have them.

He drinks rice milk, eats rice cereal, oatmeal, fresh fruits and veggies (although over time, if they aren't organic, it seems to bother him), wheat free cookies and crackers, etc. We try to eliminate

additives and artificial colors. I'm learning to bake things he can have, and it's good for the whole family to have more variety in the grains we eat anyway.

We have settled into a food routine that works for Jack and is doable for me. It's not perfect, I'm sure, but it's one we can all live with.

If you feel this might be a problem for your child, read *Is This Your Child?* You have nothing to lose by trying the suggestions, and your child has possibly everything to gain.



### **Our New, Happy Jack!**

*For additional reading on the effects of food sensitivities and children, I highly recommend a seemingly unrelated book:*

***Unraveling the Mystery of Autism*  
by Karyn Seroussi.**

# Life with Julia...

By Jim and Jerri Unruh

Julia smiled today! Actually, her first smile came while we sat in church on March 2, 2008. Jim grabbed my arm and then we both just stared at her. We wanted to jump up and down to tell the whole congregation, but instead we quietly relished this very special moment. You may wonder why such a thrill—some of you know. Sweet Julia is still like a newborn. Not just any newborn though, a floppy newborn that weighs 18 pounds and is 28 inches long. An eight month old newborn with no development milestones yet achieved. Except...a smile!



What is life with Julia like daily?  
Hmmm....sleep, eat, meds, seizures, diaper, open eyes, smile, cuddle, sleep, bath, physical therapy, eat, meds, sleep, diaper, eat, open eyes, smile, seizures, yawn, get kissed by sister or brother, sit up in wheelchair, sleep, diaper, cuddle, eat, sleep, smile, diaper, meds, hug my pink teddy and sleep some more!



**Daniel, Sean and Lily giving  
luvins to little sis, Julia**

Last Fall when Julia was in the hospital for a new feeding tube she was officially diagnosed with Ohtahara Syndrome or Infantile Epileptic Encephalopathy. (A seizure disorder) It is not known for having a very positive outcome; with many dying in infancy. After the initial tears we again thanked the Lord for His amazing blessing in allowing us and trusting us to care for His precious jewel. Only He can number our days. With Julia I am so aware of God giving her to us and I trust Him for her life. Since our life with Julia began I have become keenly aware that I did not trust Him the same for my natural born children. I had not relinquished control of them as I had of Julia!

When we were first made aware of Julia I felt that we needed her as much as she needed us. It was not Julia that needed us, God could have placed her with any family He chose. In His wisdom and sovereignty He lovingly handpicked us. With each new day the Lord is faithful to show us our need to sacrifice ourselves and to reach out to Julia with the grace and love we have received from Him. Thank you Lord and thank you Julia.

Our adoption was final in January. Julia Hope Unruh is now officially ours in the eyes of the world, but she was ours in our hearts long before then.



Those of you who have expressed a willingness to adopt a CHASK baby I urge you to be home study ready. So many of these babies need homes immediately from the hospital and without one, they may end up in state care. Julia was blessed to be with a private Christian agency who could find a private foster home; where, I add, she was adored; while we expedited all our paperwork---we were not ready! They were kind and patient; they truly loved Jewels Emily, as they called her then. There was a network of people, churches and organizations praying for her. We will always be thankful.



**Jerri and her "jewel", Julia**

Jim and Jerri Unruh are NATHHAN/CHASK Board Members and have been involved for many years. What a blessing for them to have their own happy ending CHASK adoption story.

## Don't face homeschool burnout this year!

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# Opportunities for Smiles....

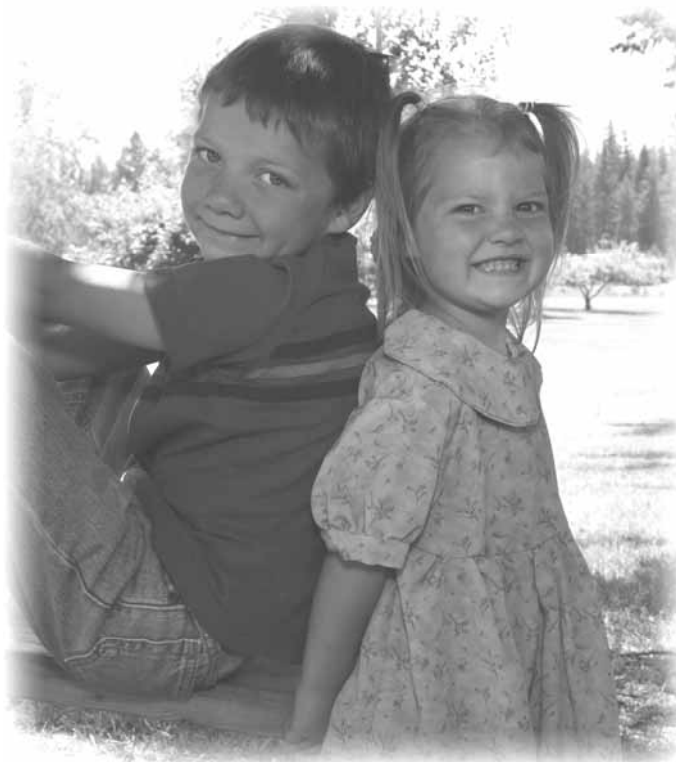
By Tom and Sherry Bushnell

A unique way of looking at negative behavior in our children, is to make what could be a “fight” into an opportunity to change a heart. Just like God uses our “bad”, as a way of working good in our Christian walk, so can we use our children’s mistakes as an opportunity for good.

If you are like us, as parents, it is easy to take our children’s disobedience personal. This translates into our choosing to take offense when our children argue, talk disrespectfully, choose to “forget” a task, or “push our buttons”. In fact, as a mother, I have been known to wake up from a sound sleep, with a child on my mind and roll my frustration around until I have found a good enough way to get even!

When our children were young, (and some still are) it was pretty simple (it seemed more complicated back then...) Child disobeys, child gets punished.. We move on...this worked well with most of our children.

I guess that after 24 years of raising children, we are what you call “seasoned parents”. I know that we are not as diligent with correcting negative behavior in the youngest set. (Which drives the older set practically crazy.) But with our advancing age, perhaps what appears as neglectful, is actually the result of a little more patience. God’s heart is plenty patient with us too.



Jayben and ShaHannah Bushnell

Practical application for today:

If you have a child who really struggles with sit-down seatwork, every day becomes a nightmare around mid morning when school starts.

Instead of taking away privileges or a spanking for not sitting still, think ahead of a fun activity to do together AFTER school work is done. Positive motivation, instead of force-feeding school work, actually works better. If a child cannot think that far ahead and anticipate, then immediate rewards (such as healthy food) becomes appropriate.

Negative attitudes are always hard to work through, especially when we have a basket full of our own.

Praying that God changes my heart does wonders for the attitude in my children!

Honestly, sometimes I do not see how I am contributing to the negative part of the situation. (All I see then is my child’s refusal or rebellion.) Could I be missing seeing the results of a hurting heart? Maybe my child's reactions are the result of something stressing or troubling them. Is it in my power to eliminate that stress?

God grant me patience and the ability to see past disobedience and see what the Lord sees inside my children, so I can really make a difference in their heart for good.

# Resources for Correcting Difficult Behavior

There is almost nothing more frustrating for a parent than consistent, negative behavior from a child we love dearly.

If a child is adopted, and continually rejects a parent's values and chosen standards, then bitterness in a mother or father's is a real possibility.

Here are some resources that are recommended by NATHHAN parents as a way of moving a child in a more positive direction. Parents need hope. Kids need to work through hurts in their past to move onward to a healthy life.

It is hard to box-up something that is working for us and then tell you "do this and your child will change for the better." Each family is unique in how they relate to each other, and what a parent is dealing with in their own lives. All of this combines to create a one-of-a-kind environment for either growth, or destruction of a family.

Things do not usually stay the same... they either go down hill, or get better. Here are some ways to help families grow better.

How dads and moms relate to each other makes all the difference in managing a child who is challenging them. If a wife is disrespectful in attitude or action toward her husband, children will naturally check into her side of the issue. If a husband is unkind, and cutting down his wife, the children will often despise both and disregard any attempts to make a heart-change in obedience themselves. The whole picture needs to change for the better. Here is a great set of DVD's that will work good in your marriage.

## Love & Respect

Dr. Emerson Eggerichs  
Hardcover book and DVD set  
[www.loveandrespect.com](http://www.loveandrespect.com)

In this groundbreaking book, Dr. Emerson Eggerichs introduces the revolutionary message of biblical respect that has revived and energized marriages across the country.

DVD set based on Ephesians 5:33 *Nevertheless, let every one of you in particular so love his wife, even as himself; and the wife see that she rever-*

*ence her husband.*

## The Total Transformation A Parent's Program for Managing challenging Behaviors in Children

By James Lehman, MSW

By Legacy Parenting Company

1-800-782-1182 hot line for parents

1-800-460-2235

[www.thetotaltransformation.com](http://www.thetotaltransformation.com)

This is a DVD and audio combination, step-by-step program to help you understand and manage disrespectful, obnoxious and abusive behavior in your child or grandchild. Ultimately, it is a comprehensive program for change. Each lesson builds on the one before it. Sections include:

Why Does My Child Act This Way

Why Won't My Child Listen To Me?

Breaking Through

Transformation Tools

Understanding Faulty Thinking

What To Do After Your Child Acts Out

How To Stop It Before It Starts

We have reviewed this program and have found it very helpful. It is one of the first of its kind to really address parents who are dealing with

Oppositional Defiance Disorder,

Fetal Alcohol Effects,

Reactive Attachment Disorders

Mr. Lehman definitely speaks to the heart of the matter with parents. He has experience in how these kids feel, as he feels he was one of them and can relate. There is some slightly rough sounding language, yet the message is terrific and very helpful. There are LOTS of concrete suggestions and solutions.

# Loneliness in Special Needs Children

By Dr. James MacDonald

*Editor's Note: This came to us in a round about way from a special needs e-mail loop support group.*

Perhaps the main reason I have worked for many years to build the Communicating Partners program is because for over 40 years now I have seen over and over again the worst problem children with developmental delays (DS, Autism, Apraxia, and many other concerns) have is not cognitive delays (the focus of most schools and therapies) or to talk just right---- The major problem is LONELINESS...

We have known many children and adults who learned to be social and imitative, enjoyable playmates and turn-taking partners-- but never developed the cognitive or language skills hoped for. They are still happy because they are social.

But what does it matter if your child does well in school and shows increases in an IQ, if his daily life is lonely?

I have a suggestion.

Spend three times a day for ten or more minutes doing nothing....except being with your child in what he likes to do and acting just like him. Don't teach, don't correct, don't take the lead just act and communicate in ways he can do, show a little next step. Respond to his interests, be a playmate not a teacher, and tell your self...absolutely nothing has to happen other than my child being happy with me.

You can't buy that and that is what your child needs. Aren't you tripping over too many toys? And aren't we all embarrassed at how many things our children have (and ignore) and how little intimate time they have with us???

The mom that started this discussion did us a big service wondering about her lonely child. That is a travesty and I see it all the time with chil-

dren with DS, Autism, and many other delays.

We have found that if we stop making children 'school smart' and make them more social instead, I promise that they will eventually become more cognitively smart--IQ-- since we all learn much more from our social interactions than from what we are directly taught.

Another idea, when Grandma or Uncle Joe ask what to get your child, suggest they get him a card, and in the card is a voucher for so many hours of play in your child's world, without teaching, without the TV on, and one to one.

The more matched partners your child has, the more he will communicate and the less lonely he will be.

James D. MacDonald, Ph.D./CCC  
Communicating Partners  
(614) 447-0768  
website: [www.jamesdmacdonald.org](http://www.jamesdmacdonald.org)



Dr. MacDonald's book,  
*Communicating Partners*  
Can be purchased at  
his web site above,  
or at  
**[www.amazon.com](http://www.amazon.com)**

# Why Do You Homeschool?

By **Kim Green**

Why do you homeschool? I get that question a lot- especially when people find out that we have adopted 8 kids- ages 8 and under! Why would I put myself through homeschooling them? ... they wonder. The Bible says:

*"See to it that no one takes you captive through hollow and deceptive philosophy, which depends on human tradition and the basic principles of this world rather than on Christ." (Colossians 2:8)*

*"Do not conform any longer 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 12:2)*

*"Do not be deceived: "Bad company corrupts good morals." (I Cor. 15:33)*

*"Timothy, guard what has been entrusted to your care. Turn away from godless chatter and the opposing ideas of what is falsely called knowledge, which some have professed and in so doing have wandered from the faith. Grace be with you." (1 Timothy 6:20-21)*

When making educational choices for our kids, we've looked at these verses and felt that to put our kids in public school was clearly not the right thing to do. They are still in training.... Many parents will give the 'salt and light' argument as to why they send their kids to public school. However, research shows that often times it's "reverse evangelism" that happens (Nehemiah Institute and Barna Group). It's interesting that while the research says that 70-88% of "Christian teens" leave the church by the 2nd year of college--- 94% of

homeschooled children stay in the faith. Mmmm... something speaks volumes there to me. Many parents say that they give their kids moral training at home but then leave the academics to the school system- by doing this, you are denying your children a Biblical worldview. The argument "but I'm not that smart" doesn't really hold up either because all you really have to do is stay a week ahead of them! :). I've also heard "I can't stand my kids that long" ... mmm... maybe there is something that needs to be fixed there then?!

Our culture is driven by a "get a good education so you can get a good job" philosophy. This philosophy only breeds materialism and a sense of being able to work hard and attain success on your own. Trusting in God is not part of the equation- again- a worldview. But the Bible says to "seek first the kingdom of heaven and THEN all these things will be added." (emphasis mine). Somewhere along the line, we've lost the Biblical model for bringing up our kids found in Deut. 6: "Listen, O Israel! The Lord is our God, the Lord alone. And you must love the Lord your God with all your heart, all your soul, and all your strength. And you must commit yourselves wholeheartedly to these commands that I am giving you today. Repeat them again and again to your children. Talk about them when you are at home and when you are on the road, when you are going to bed and when you are getting up. Tie them to your hands and wear them on your forehead as reminders. Write them on the doorposts of your house and on your gates."

Educating our kids is a 24/7 job the Bible says. Our ultimate goal for our kids should be to develop their character through the Word of God, and of course academics will follow... even flow naturally out of that foundation. But to do that, it requires sacrifice and discipline on our part as parents.

So what are some ways we (the Green family)

develop character in our eight children?

1- Daily family worship. We not only start out our school day in the Word of God, we end it there as well. The beginning of our school day starts with worship, prayer, memorizing scripture, and memorizing questions and answers out of a catechism (geared towards kids). We end our day with Daddy leading family devotions, discussion time, and prayer right before they go to bed. After this family worship time, my husband takes a minute with each kid to hug them, tell them he's proud of them and loves them.

2- First time obedience is expected of our children. When we ask them to do something, we expect a "yes mom/dad" and immediate action. By teaching our kids to obey us, we teach them to obey God's Word for us as well.

3- The curriculum we choose. By educating our children at home, we have the distinct advantage of choosing what enters their mind and what lense they filter all other information through.

4- "Words To Live By". We deal with issues of tattling and lying for example with laminated Bible verses that I have hanging in a folder in our kitchen. Verses such as "Keep what you know to yourself, and you are safe; talk too much and you are done for." (Prov 13:3) ... are all easily rattled off our kids lips when I give them "that look" after they've tattled. By applying the Word of God directly to their behavior, they really can't argue with "my rules" can they?

5- In our time out corner, there is a laminated sheet of paper with Bible verses about how to treat one another. After they've "done their time", the

appropriate verse/s are read with them before they go and restore the relationship that they damaged by their behavior.

Those are just a few of the ways we've tried to incorporate teaching our kids the character traits we want them to leave our house with. In addition, there are other things like daily chores, servant opportunities, and practicing the behavior we expect.

### Some additional resources that you may want to look at:

\**Parenting With Scripture: A Topical Guide For Teachable Moments* by Karen Durbin

\* *Five Minute Devotions for Children: Celebrating God's World As a Family* by Pamela Kennedy and Amy Wummer

\*[www.momsnotes.com](http://www.momsnotes.com)

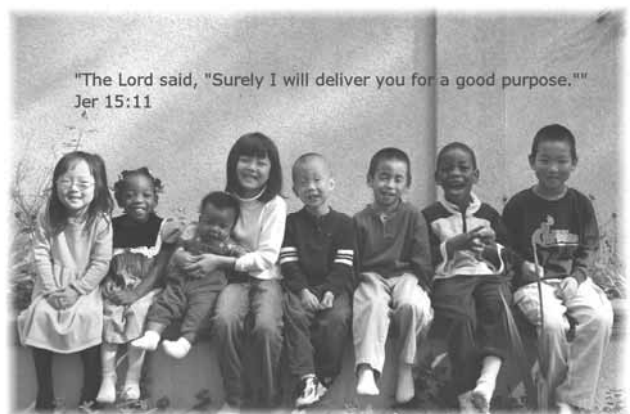
\**Children's Book of Virtues* by William J. Bennett and Michael Hague

\**Our 24 Family Ways* by Sally Clarkson

\**Hero Tales* by Dave and Neta Jackson



Ben & Kim Green



Benjamin (7), Parker (6), Kya (5), Caleb (5), McKenna (4), Eli (3), and Madisyn (2)... five times blessed from Korea and twice blessed from Liberia!

# Resource Reviews

## Ceana has CP

A Children's book about Cerebral Palsy

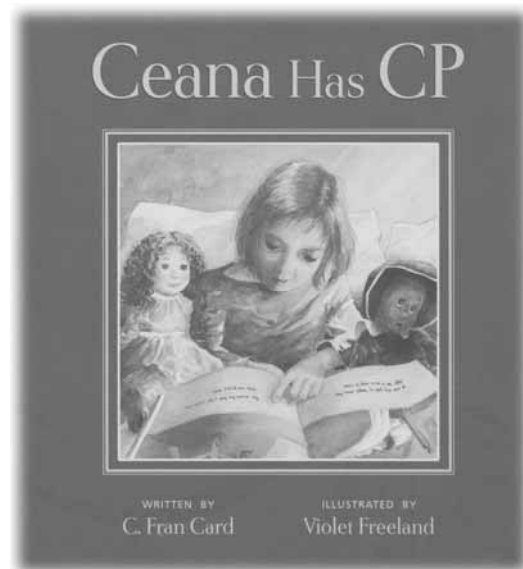
By C. Fran Card

*Ceana Has CP* is a wonderful children's story about a young girl with cerebral palsy. Ceana is a real child, granddaughter of the author, C. Fran Card, who wants other children to know what it's like to have CP.

Written for ages 3-7, Mrs. Card has given a glimpse into the life of a "disabled" child that is easy for young children to understand.

The focus of the story is on how Ceana's needs, activities and abilities are different from those of a child without a special need. From her daily muscle exercises, to how she struggles to walk properly. From making cookies with mom to waiting for big brother Cullen to get home from school, her troubles and

triumphs are revealed in this beautifully illustrated story. The author has literally created a window into the special needs world, and it's called *Ceana Has CP*.



*Ceana Has CP*

Can be purchased at  
[www.ceanahascp.com](http://www.ceanahascp.com)

### Too Wise To Be Mistaken Too Good To Be Unkind

**Written By Cathy Steere** - A family dealing with autism, professionals, homeschooling and successfully using Biblical child training

—An excellent book recommended by many NATHHAN families. This book has literally changed the lives of many families dealing with autism or special needs children with extra challenging behavior.

Grace and Truth Books 3406 Summit Boulevard Sand Springs, OK 74063  
(918) 245-1500

## Music Lessons For Special Needs

I am a guitar and piano instructor who specializes in teaching children, starting at age four. I would like to have the opportunity to work with special needs. I offer the convenience of coming to people's homes, and if the child is physically incapable of playing an instrument,

I can also come to the home just to sing and play songs.

I am willing to offer Homeschoolers \$25 a half hour for the first child and \$20 a half hour for each additional child. Lessons for Mom and Dad are available for no additional charge. **My service area includes New Castle County, DE; Cecil County, MD; and parts of Southeastern PA.**

I truly believe in the benefits of incorporating music into people's lives starting at a very young age and would love to spread the joy music brings to families around the community.

If you are interested, please contact me:

**Christina Elliott**  
Phone (302) 544-2890  
E-mail-  
chriztie1502@yahoo.com

## Pictures to Teach a Thousand Words

**S**tages® Learning Materials' real photographic picture cards are ideal for teaching basic language skills to children and adults with learning delays.

Stages® product line features up-to-date, real pictures that capture and hold the students attention. The products include: The Language Builder Noun and Occupation sets, The Lang-O-Learn® Series and now, Real Life Learning Posters.

The **Language Builder: Picture Noun Cards** include 350 cards divided into nine categories of animals, foods, vehicles, clothing, furniture, toys, shapes, colors and everyday objects. The set includes similar and identical images designed to teach basic matching skills, as well as individual images which are perfect for teaching receptive and expressive language, sorting, adjectives, functions, storytelling and more. Some images are on plain white backgrounds to reduce confusion, while others appear in their natural settings to promote generalization.

The **Language Builder: Occupation Cards** feature 115 cards depicting both men and women in the most common occupations. Meeting the NAEYC (National Association of Education for Young Children) standards for gender and ethnicity within education, these cards are great for labeling, role-playing, storytelling and other imaginative play.

The **Lang-O-Learn® Series** includes the most popular cards from our large Noun Set, broken down by category into five smaller sets. You can get a 50 card food set, a 50 card everyday objects set, a 30 card animal set, a 20 card vehicle set and a 20 card clothing set. As an added feature, the Lang-O-Learn® cards are also labeled on the reverse side in 17 common languages. This set is great for ESL and foreign language learners, as well as basic language and speech practice in English.

Stages® most recent addition, the **Real Life Learning Posters**, consist of four sets: 10 farm animals, 10 wild animals, 14 fruits & vegetables and six community helpers. Enlarged to 14" X 19" and printed on heavy cardstock, the posters are great for small group discussions and decorating the walls of classrooms, doctors' offices, nutritionists' offices and therapists' offices. The posters also provide a great transition for students going from one-on-one learning to a classroom setting.

Stages® Learning Materials is committed to offering you the best photo teaching tools possible. For more information on any of Stages® products, call us toll free at: **888-501-8880** or look for our products in educational stores and catalogs.

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# Free Homeschooling Downloads

By Joan Roberts

With the gas prices soaring and the general cost of living escalating, you may be wondering how you can afford to homeschool! But homeschooling has never been easier or cheaper. Our family has always homeschooled and maybe like you we did it on a tight budget. But that is ok because budgeting tends to make one more creative.

Buying used books at the thrift store quickly increased our library choices and the kids' interest in reading. Toy departments at stores were never able to compete with the book sections where our kids were concerned.

A few years ago we added a computer, scanner, printer and in general the "works" to the school room. I didn't know then how that would change our resource avenue. There is no substitute for books; however, having access to so much information has been quite a lot of fun. We started surfing the web when we wanted extra material for select subjects and of course monitored the use of the computer. I am not an advocate of computer games or one to encourage a lot of computer time for the kids, but there is a huge variety of wholesome material to read and to download. In fact, it was the free downloads that caught my attention, so I started a favorites list and began emailing the sites to friends.

This past week I was looking for additional activities to enhance my instruction on the United States for our 10 year old daughter Laura. Like many children with Down syndrome she needs lots of repeat material. She has been making progress learning the state names by working her new United States floor puzzle. I wanted to introduce the American flag so I typed in "United States flag coloring pages." I came up with a bigger

choice than I had time to use or look at. This search led me to my most favorite freebie site, [www.first\\_school.ws](http://www.first_school.ws)

From there you will see that you can choose puzzles, coloring pages, activities and practice pages for preschoolers. It is easy to use and you can download and print out worksheets in just seconds. We chose 2 pictures of the U.S. flag to color and then got carried away finding pictures of our famous presidents and reading activities to match! If you can stay up at night you can search out and print what you want to use for the next day.



This first-school site is so great for repetition work. I can choose the letter, number or counting practice page I need and print out enough to get her perfected in the exercise. The pages have continuous dotted figures to trace on the entire line. This is in contrast to the books I have found for sale which only have a few figures and then the kids are expected to make their own. That was very frustrating

for Laura; with these pages she has had a chance to build confidence before she had to print or write the letters etc. on her own.

The counting pages I use have pictures of acorns and they are in neat rows, which really aids in correct counting. There are also plenty of numbers under each picture so the child can count and have plenty of writing practice. There are also pages that can be printed in color with corresponding color names.

Recently I emailed the Dover Publishing company to request a catalog. I got the catalog and an invite to free email downloads every Thursday. They have been great and the choice is as fun as their books. If you need some busy work for some of your older kids you can't beat the pages here. Check it out! - *(Continued on the next page...)*

If you check out chat rooms on homeschooling, you will come up with more ideas from other homeschoolers. I use the [www.homesteadingtoday.com](http://www.homesteadingtoday.com) site. Go to the “classroom”. Then click on to the moderator, Traci. Click on to her profile; then go to “all her posts”; when you scroll down you will find where she listed her favorites. I downloaded all 40 pages before I realized how many there were!

I use a folder to keep the downloaded pages in; that is if I can get to them before Laura sees them coming out of the printer. She is learning secretarial skill through this. She’s gotten really proficient at arranging the pages into neat stacks.

I have found that thrift stores are still a super source for supplies; recently I came across a box of 5000 sheets of copying paper, the kind with the perforated edges. Of course these are outdated, but for \$3.00 they were hard to pass up. They were perfect to use for the download job and added to my savings.



## Selling and Buying Homeschooling Resources

### Looking to buy used curriculum?

A popular place to start is [www.homeschoolclassifieds.com](http://www.homeschoolclassifieds.com) You can post things for sale and items you want to buy. You can look up items by subject, curriculum name, by grade and more. You are buying from individual families selling things, not a company. Some folks do have paypal accounts, some accept personal checks or money orders.

#### Here are some handy tips to remember:

When making an offer, remember to include PPD (postage paid) price. This is much easier that way and saves times later. You don’t have to keep e-mailing the person and then have the item sold out from under you because your bargaining time took so long!

Make sure you keep you e-mail records. There is a rating system on sellers and buyers.

### Posting Items for Sale?

It is very helpful for those of us who are looking for books to know that the edition and year are. What is the condition and the price that includes postage. Most people send stuff via Media Mail, which is cheapest. Be aware, though, it also takes the longest.

Get delivery confirmation and insurance. It only adds about 1 or 2 \$ to your purchase price, but is worth it...

Buying used materials is a great alternative to buying brand new. You can often find items for 1/2 price or less. Don’t be afraid to make an offer.... Remember all they can do is say no OR come back with a different price.



Here is our little guy, Jonathan. He came to us last November through NATHHAN / CHASK. He is visually impaired (with no center vision due to having toxo-plasmosis) but he is doing very well.

We were not sure if or how he would do walking because it could be very scary for him. But just 2 weeks ago he took his first independent steps and he is doing better each day!

Jonathan loves playing with his big brothers Ben and Kendy. Their favorite part of the day is when they get to “baby-sit” Jonathan. We all love him so much!! There is usually a long line of people at church waiting to hold him. What a precious gift you have given us!

# Bringing Samuel Home...

By Kris Breneman

My husband connected emotionally to Samuel well before I did... I figured I'd "feel connected" once I finally saw him and held him. Until then, I had too much logic pumping through my tired brain to really feel much. Too much medical jargon and adoption technicalities consuming my every waking thought.

We received our call from CHASK on Valentine's Day just three months ago. I sat down with the phone, a pen, and several scraps of paper in hand, along with a single name and phone number to get me started. Life would never be the same again.... One minute I'm putzing about thinking about making a few last-minute Valentine's cards for my husband and four children, the next minute I'm sitting with my head in my hands after a few phone calls, wondering what I had gotten myself into!

The good news for us was that we hadn't gotten ourselves into anything. God was, in His sovereignty, controlling everything. "Awesome" is the word that best describes what it feels like to be moving within the divine Will of God. Later, during our 10-day stay in Southern California, my husband and I both recognized how powerfully God had gone before us. He was, indeed, our Vanguard, our Rearguard, and our mighty Standard.

In the midst of that first day of phone calls, I remember the distinct impression of feeling as though I was trying to put together a complex puzzle, with no box-lid picture to guide my effort. Additionally, the size of the puzzle seemed to grow exponentially with every phone call I made!!

Samuel was born Monday, February 11th, in Southern California to birth parents who had already made an adoption plan for him pre-natally, when they first learned of his anticipated special needs. However, despite their best efforts to provide him with an adoptive family, their plans

evaporated after the first couple arrived from out-of-state and sat down with the cardiac surgeons. They were under the impression that this baby boy had nothing more than a heart murmur.

Angry and disappointed, the first couple left the hospital – later, a second couple did likewise. The baby's social worker at the hospital had already contacted Social Services by the time we were contacted, and the birth parents were heart-broken and desperate for someone to accept their child.

A week later, when they learned that we were on our way down from north Idaho to California to adopt their baby, they were incredulous. Why would we do this for them?

Samuel was diagnosed at birth with Heterotaxy Syndrome and Asplenia. Heterotaxy results in severe cardiac defects.

Samuel had an Unbalanced Atrio Ventricular Septal Defect with Pulmonary Atresia, as well as a few other anomalies. Basically, he was born with such a large defect in the septum in his heart, that he essentially had just one Atrium, one Ventricle, and one valve between the two, with no pulmonary artery to route the blood flow from his heart to his lungs. Instead of a four-chambered heart, he was born with a two-chambered heart. Later he was also diagnosed with gut malrotation, which is not uncommon in babies born with Heterotaxy. Not being a medical professional myself, I began a one-week crash course - intensive training on the human heart by making full use of our internet access, while I waited for our home study to be updated so that we could travel.

Because his birth parents had intended to release him for adoption at birth, our little baby boy was nameless when we learned of him. Over the weekend I had a long discussion with the Cardiac Nurse Practitioner in charge of his care.



She filled in plenty of details about his cardiac condition, and some hurdles that he would need to overcome in the weeks ahead. He had been placed on full life support shortly after birth, and had just come through his first open-heart surgery at four days of age. He was small, weighing just 5lbs 3 oz at birth, and the medical professionals caring for him were not overly optimistic about his recovery. Coming through the surgery was just the first step on the road to eventually seeing him discharged. In the weeks ahead he would need to learn to eat – a skill that is “automatic” at birth, but must be learned if there has been a delay. As the nurse spoke of him, without a name to call him by, I offered her the name that we had chosen for him. “Samuel David” (meaning “asked of God” and “Beloved”). I could tell she was greatly relieved to finally have a name for this sweet little baby.

I mentioned that my husband connected emotionally well before I did. In fact, he was committed that very first weekend. He was able to rejoice over a new life being given to us, as well as weep and mourn for the son that would, most likely, not outlive him. For me, it took a few more days. For one thing, I was continually considering that he might die before we could even travel to see him. What then? Six days after hearing of him, that following Wednesday, I spoke with the baby’s hospital social worker. After sending her some basic information on our family, along with a photo of us, she was willing to consider that we might just be the ones to follow through and adopt this child. Her final question to me was the shock-to-commitment that I needed. She asked me, “On a scale of 1 to 10, how committed are you to this baby?” I paused for a moment to check my heart, and then responded, “10! He’s ours. We’ll be coming down to get him, even if it means bringing him home for a funeral here.” Her reply echoed my own thoughts at that moment, “Wow!! I guess you can’t get any more committed than that!” Yes, my thoughts exactly! My mind had finally committed, and now my heart was at risk. No more guarding my heart against disappointment and tragedy. Now my heart was entirely exposed – naked and laid bare. Pondering this thought, I realized that I had just removed my heart from my breast and laid it in the very hands of God... But, is there any safer place for it? I knew

my Lord’s love for me was real and tender. He could be trusted implicitly. Yes, my heart was in the safest of hands.

Worry? Doubts? Fear? Yes, those were still daily companions at that point. One night, when I couldn’t sleep, I had a short talk with the Lord. “But Lord, what if he dies?” I cried out. His response? “Kris, Who gave him the breath of life?” I replied, “You did, Lord.” Again His voice spoke, “And Who has the power to revoke that breath of life?” With dawning realization, I answered, “Oh... Only YOU Lord!” What amazing peace flooded my soul with that understanding. No matter what God’s Plan was for Sam or for us, we could trust Him to carry it through according to His Will. There’s nothing wiser or greater than God’s Will. We could trust Him and His Plan, no matter what transpired.

We traveled to Southern California on the 25th of February, and spent an incredible week learning all we could from the Drs., nurses, and hospital staff. We were repeatedly confronted with joy and excitement from all those around us as they learned who we were and what we had come to do. Again, it was evident that God had gone before us and prepared the way. One of the main things we needed to learn was how to feed Sam. As it was explained to us, because of his cardiac condition, his calorie burn was the equivalent of running a marathon every day. He needed extra calories with every feeding to offset how hard he had to work to get the food into him. Just eating one ounce of formula was a major chore, which left him breathless and panting after just a few sucks. We learned to make him pace his eating, so that he would have the stamina to finish the required 40cc (just over 1 oz) at every feeding. Both my husband and I practiced with him under the guidance and direction of the hospital feeding experts. What a fantastic experience!

After just 18 days in the hospital, Samuel had amazed the Drs. and nurses with his rapid progression in feeding on his own, and he was discharged into our care on February 29th. When we finally had clearance to travel inter-state with him, we flew home. The Drs. required that we

have oxygen support on the flights home, which Sam tolerated relatively well. We were greeted at the airport in Spokane, WA by our four older children – Kate (13), Tabitha (12), Caleb (11) and Rebecca (9) – along with my Dad, who had been able to travel out from Michigan to stay with the four kids while we were in California collecting Samuel. A prouder bunch of kids you’ve never seen! Every one of them has gotten involved with feeding him, carrying him around and reading or singing to him. I’m blessed every day as I witness our children’s total love and acceptance of Sam. For my husband and I, it had taken only a day or two of spending time with him and holding him for us to bond in such a way as to feel as though he had always been our very own. It wasn’t awkward or forced; it was the most natural feeling in the world. Now, back home with our four older, biological children, we were seeing the same natural progression of total love and acceptance borne out in each one of them. Incredible!

Sam’s now 3 months old, and it’s been a long, sleepless road so far. I’m averaging four hours of sleep a night, and after 9 weeks, the strain is telling. He’s been a very fussy baby since we brought him home, and he’s had a difficult time with the different formulas we’ve tried with him. A few weeks ago we had him seen by a GI specialist (gastroenterologist) and she was very helpful in identifying some of the root cause of his fussiness. Because of his chronically low blood oxygen levels (cyanotic heart) his bowel is damaged. She described his pain by explaining that his digestive system was inflamed and any food that moves through his system is like sandpaper on an open wound. Ouch! She recommended some changes in his meds and a change in formula to an amino acid based medical food. We’ve seen some great improvements in him overall since this change, and he’s gaining weight more steadily now as well – still only weighing a mere 8lbs at 3 months of age. Despite all of the stress and demands, we still move, day in and day out, with hearts of compassion, understanding, and acceptance for Samuel – just as we would have with each of four other children. Only God’s grace could enable us to claim that.

Up ahead, Samuel will need two more major heart surgeries to improve his heart function so that he can continue to survive.

I praise Him that He has moved in our lives

in such a way as to cause us to step in and become Samuel’s advocates and defenders – his loving, protective family. Yes, it’s worth it all, just to know that we’ve counted one life as precious and of great worth.

Are we scared? Occasionally. But when my emotions start to rule me, I am reminded of God’s promise to be my constant Resource. I’ve found that coping with the stress of Sam’s special needs requires daily time in the Word of God and in prayer, so that I can stay “tapped-in” to the Source of my daily strength.

**Editor’s Note:**

***On June 3rd, we received a phone call letting us know that Samuel went to be with Jesus. In the hospital, he was just hours away from his next open heart surgery.***

***Around 3:30 pm, the nurses took Sam to the treatment room. While they were getting the IV inserted and drawing blood in preparation for surgery, Samuel stopped breathing. His pulse stopped shortly after that. Both the cardiologist and surgeon were called and they tried for 45 minutes to get his heart restarted, but it would not continue to beat for more than 15 seconds at a time. His lab work showed his blood acid levels so high that he would be brain dead, if they got his heart started again.***

***They elected to stop the chest compressions and let him go home to Jesus after kissing Samuel good-bye.***

***Kris writes, “Samuel’s broken heart is now completely whole. Unfortunately, our broken hearts will take longer to heal.***

***I never knew it could hurt so much.. We all loved him dearly, I don’t think it could have hurt any more if we had lost one of the children we have brought into the world. Our family is no longer complete without Sam.***

***God gave him life for a reason. His days were numbered from the beginning of time. We just praise God that He allowed our family to bring joy into his little life for the short time he was alive.***

***Cards, letters, and gifts to offset expenses for the Breneman family can be sent to NATHHAN / CHASK’s address in the front of the magazine. chaskinfo@aol.com titled Breneman Family***

## Emma Gabrielle... Happy Mother's Day!

By Annette DeWitt

I was given the opportunity to meet and spend some time with our new daughter's birth family. I anxiously accepted. So, as we were being discharged from the NICU (Neonatal Intensive Care Unit), we were immediately ushered in to a nice family room style conference room, where there awaited our daughter's birth mother, her 9 yr old son, her mother & her grandmother, as well as our daughter's birthfather's mother and 2 brothers.

Not knowing what to expect of the day, I began praying early, "Jesus, please be with me." And He is ever faithful. As I stepped in to this meeting, all anxiety melted away and I was so graciously greeted with hugs and kisses from EVERYBODY! And I was so humbled as they loved on me and Emma, and said their Thank you's. And all the while I was screaming inside, "No, you don't understand...THANK YOU!"

They asked if they could hold her and have some pictures, of course I said yes, they even wanted pictures of me with the baby, they also asked if they could give her the gifts they brought, if I would allow her to have them. To that as well, of course, I said YES. Then the most precious moment of all. When I handed our new daughter to her birth mother, she held her, rocked her, stared into her sweet little face, and just cried silently. My words can not even do justice to express what those moments were like. How my heart soared and crashed with each breath I took.

Then, she wiped her tears, and smiled so sweetly and said, "it's time." She handed me our new daughter, we hugged each other, and exchanged "Happy Mother's Day." She then, looked into my eyes and said these very words..."I can't even imagine her not going home with you."

Words cannot fully express the priceless gifts that I've received this Mother's Day-the gift

of a child & the gift of sharing all those precious moments, with those precious women, Emma's birth mom, her mom and grandma, and her birthfather's mom. I love them, for the strength I saw in them this week, I love them for the love they showed me, I love them for the love they have for Emma and choosing to give her life, because

I can't imagine life now without her. I love them for the priceless gifts they've given me this Mother's Day.

Once, again, words cannot express how thankful we are for what CHASK does.



# Changing Our Identity

By Dennis and Linda Lamphere (Sherry Bushnell's Dad and Mom)

**Ever come to a crossroad in your life? Does something need to be different?**

I have. Deep down inside, I really knew I could do much better about the way I acted and the way I thought.

In my Bible study time a few days later, it really came home to me that Jesus acted very different from other people. He was not politically correct or even socially acceptable. His answers, statements, stories and teachings (even general conversation) were unique and not the common way of communicating.

Considering the fact that God sent Jesus to earth, to sacrifice himself, die on the cross like a common criminal to save us from hell, Jesus *had* to be incredibly different from us.

He *had* to be the Supreme example of how to live, how to talk, and how to act toward others.

As I looked at my own heart, I could see that I *really* did not line up very well with His characteristics. HELP! How could I ever come closer to identifying more with Jesus.

First of all I prayed with all my heart. I found a quiet spot and emptied all my thoughts out



to Him and said, "I just don't get it."

I remember a still small voice saying "Finally! Maybe I (God speaking to my heart) can put something back in you worth keeping."

That day, when Jesus spoke to my heart, He changed my life. Here is the starter order for me:

Be patient. - (I needed to start with this one.)

Be kind. Practice kindness. Pray for others who are difficult for me to be kind to.

Do not demand my own way.

Don't be irritable (Guess I'm going to have to forget about keeping score! I'm going to just have to forget all the wrongs done to me.)

Smile and rejoice whenever truth wins out. (This part was easy... but I better be careful.)

Keep the faith. Never give up. He promises to never, ever leave us or forsake us. We cannot be embarrassed or ashamed of Him or what He asks us to do. (Including saying, I'm

sorry.)

I knew that it was impossible for me to do even one of these on my "love-list" unless God would help me. Setting aside my own identity, my natural desires, would require more effort than I could ever have. However, God, through Jesus Christ, placed a desire in me to change.

The more I work at striving to be like Him, the more areas I can see I need to change!

Yet the wonderful part is, the more I am able to see my need for change, the more I am able to show God's love to others.

When I changed my attitudes and responses, my wife, our children and grandchildren began to respond differently too. It all started with my first prayer ... "Dear Lord, please change my heart."

As I thought back to all those millions of wrong responses and decisions in the past, I could see that keeping a log book of all my blunders would just move my heart further from Jesus. Now I can see that it was God's plan all along to get me to the point where I desperately needed Him.

Changing my identity to be more like Christ's isn't that hard. After all... we are all God's work in progress anyway!

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**By Deborah Mary Kathleen Mills**



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