



The California Homeschooler

February 2016

"There isn't any known way to bulk educate. It's all custom work."

~John Taylor Gatto

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*"We became members because the conference is a highlight of our year. We have remained members because I love having a way to be connected to homeschoolers across the state. I also *greatly* appreciate the [line by line directions for filling the PSA](#). I use it every year." --Amanda Tobler*

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This is an opportunity for family members, grown homeschoolers, friends, and other supporters of homeschooling to show their support. Every individual counts!

2016 Conference

July 28-31

Hyatt Regency San Francisco Airport

CALL FOR SPEAKERS AND WORKSHOPS

What makes HSC's Conference so amazing? YOU! Our fabulous network of talented kids, teens, young adults, mamas, papas, and elders are the heart of our organization and our conference. So put on your thinking caps and get ready to submit *YOUR* presentations and funshop proposals! Our Speaker/Workshop Proposal System will open on February 1st at www.hscconference.com. We can't wait to see what you dream up for this year!

Suki Wessling, author of *Hanna, Homeschooler*



Suki Wessling, writer and mother of two living in Santa Cruz, has spoken at the HSC conference since she began homeschooling.

Why do you offer workshops?

"I've always loved the cooperative aspect of homeschooling. With some other moms I helped start a physical homeschool co-op in our town. At first, I went to HSC for ideas, support, and fellowship; I've continued now that I'm a "veteran" because I love sharing with other homeschoolers. I find that no matter how long I've homeschooled and how much experience I have to impart, I learn as much from the participants in my workshops as they do from me. I never heard the term "lifelong learner" until I became a homeschooler, but once I heard it I thought, "Well, that's ME!"

What workshops/speakers have you enjoyed as an attendee?

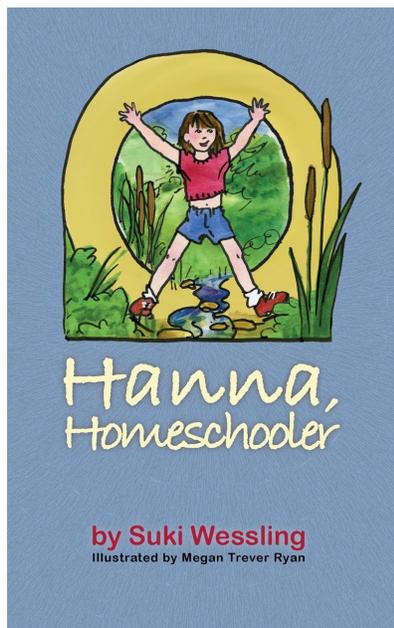
"So many! I discovered homeschool writers David Albert and Linda Dobson there. I learned about cool math games. I found out that other homeschooling parents shared my concerns and challenges. I was exposed to great resources. I did Zendoodles. In fact, my HSC Zendoodles are posted on the bulletin board right behind my computer monitor!"

What's your background (as a homeschooling mom and as a writer)?

"I was one of those kids who was always a writer, in spite of what public school attempted to do to me! I wrote stories and poems just for fun, though I never had any encouragement or audience. I ended up getting an MFA in Creative Writing, and before I had children I taught college-level writing classes, ran a small poetry press, and had work published in literary journals and anthologies.

I never meant to be a homeschooler. It turned out that my daughter had extreme problems in kindergarten, and I remembered that I had once met a homeschooler so I sent her an email to ask for information. I started homeschooling in crisis, and then found out that not only did I love it, but I realized it was a better mode of education for my children. My son, who had always been in school, came to homeschooling as well. My writing has always reflected my life, so as soon as I had children there was a shift, and once I started homeschooling there was a major shift. I started writing articles about education, parenting, and academically gifted children, and I wrote a book, *From School to Homeschool*, which is a manual to help parents shift from a school-based to a homeschool-based mindset.

My chapter book, *Hanna, Homeschooler*, was born the day that my daughter, standing in front of the chapter book shelf at our library, asked why all the chapter book series were about school. I thought, she's right, homeschoolers need a Ramona! Although *Hanna* is purely fictional, much of the book is based on my experiences homeschooling younger children. In the book, Hanna is curious about her neighbors who go to school, but she lives a rich homeschooling life, doing projects at home with her mom and grandmother, going on field trips and to cooperative classes, and doing service work with her dad. I wanted to show a homeschooler who is living a life that doesn't attempt to replicate school."



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The Trickiest "R" of All



Cathy shares research-based strategies for helping children become better writers.

In the Big 3 of education – readin', writin', and 'rithmetic – writing is seen by many as the most difficult to teach. In some ways, this is surprising. Writing, after all, is a lot like talking – and almost all children learn to talk easily and early, with little or no formal instruction.

Also, isn't writing just the inverse of reading? Shouldn't they be about equal in difficulty?

Actually, the relationships between writing and talking, and between writing and reading, are complex. It's actually quite painful to read exact transcriptions of what people say – with all the “um's” and “okay's” – and when we talk, our facial expressions, gestures, and physical context often provide a lot of information to the listener that needs to otherwise be provided in written communications. As to comparing writing and reading, consider how much easier it is to read a great novel than to write a great novel. Even for professional writers, it's just not all that easy to write well!

Read more at [The Homeschooler Post](#)

Heroes-in-Training: Michael Patterson



One community service project seemed to lead to another for Michael Patterson. As Michael reminds us, "Kids don't have to wait to become adults to be heroes."

Every Thursday night, from when I was seven to about nine years old, you knew where to find me: glued to the TV watching *Hercules: The Legendary Journeys*. Watching great heroes of history live their entire lives traveling from village to town to city helping people simply because they could (and they felt it was their destiny), made one of the biggest impacts on me as a child...and the super-human strength was awesome, too. Ever since then, I knew what I wanted to do; I had to serve people and communities in the best way that I could.

One advantage of growing up as an unschooler was having the freedom to actually go out and begin following this dream immediately. My

On our Website: Professional's Guide

Absolutely Free to Print and Distribute All or In Part

Directed to doctors, lawyers, social workers, judges, therapists, school officials, or other professionals, HSC's publication, *A Professional's Guide to Working with Homeschooling Families*, is a ready source of well-researched and concise information about homeschooling.

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Save the Date

Agua Caliente Campout

March 13-18, 2016

[HSC Website Campouts Page](#)

[HSC Campers Facebook Group](#)

parents were very supportive and introduced me to a huge list of charities and organizations that were dedicated to many causes. We started out donating our old things, collecting canned goods for food pantries, and making blankets for *The Linus Project*. This was where I got my feet wet in the world of community service. I started volunteering my time and labor with Boy Scouts, Salvation Army, and 4H. I even helped with my sisters in their Girl Scout projects.

Read more at [The Homeschooler Post](#)



**20 Great Ideas
for
Community Service**

- The Linus Project
- Habitat for Humanity
- Teens Make a Difference Day
- Serve in Soup Kitchens
- Sandwiches for the Homeless
- Trail-clearing
- Adopt-A-Highway Program
- Race for the Cure
- Food Drives or Baskets
- Operation Teddy Bear
- Pick up Litter at Parks/Lakes
- Meals-On-Wheels
- Children's Book Donation
- Special Olympics
- Arbor Day Tree Planting
- Coat Drive
- Care Packages for Veterans
- Gloves and Mittens Collection
- Hand out Water Bottles at Charity Races
- Nursing Home Involvement
(songs, reading, table decorations)

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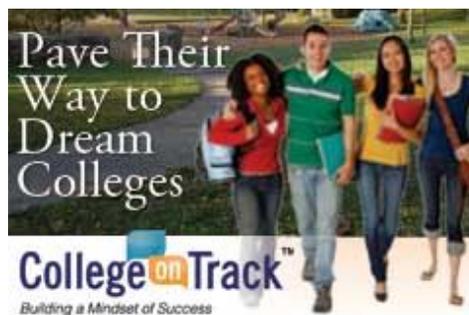
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