



# JOURNAL

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## MAYBE WE SHOULD CALL IT HOME LEARNING INSTEAD

By Charity Mile

Homeschooling is one of the hardest things that many of us will undertake, simply because of the weight of responsibility that we feel. The recent situation in Alberta has brought homeschooling back into media attention and we may have more opportunity than usual to talk to other parents and family members about the realities that we face when home educating daily.

I have read repeatedly in the news accounts of this event that “the education of these 3500 children is being disrupted” by the Alberta Education decision to close Trinity/WISDOM without warning. However, in actuality, for the majority of those students, home education can continue just as it was. Even if their facilitator visits are delayed, even if their funding is not provided, their education can continue. The responsibility for education has been taken by their parents. In that nothing has changed. It’s only the supervision of such that is taken by the school board. This is an important distinction...one that we need to keep in mind here in Saskatchewan as well.

When we started homeschooling, 14 years ago, in Alberta—before we moved back to Saskatchewan, I tried to recreate the school classroom experience in our basement – because it was all I had ever known. I had desks, a whiteboard, a book shelf and letters up on the wall as examples for printing practice. This didn’t work well for us for long. Many of the things I dragged my kids away from to sit down for “school work” were the things they were LEARNING the most from. When we started out I just couldn’t see the learning that took place outside of the curriculum I had purchased. And it was actually my facilitator in Alberta, who had homeschooled her own children that helped me see that.

The first time she came for our end of the year visit, I was stressed because the workbooks weren’t done and I wasn’t sure if we had covered enough. I didn’t feel like school had gone well for us. My daughter was happy to show our facilitator what she had done in the year, and had all sorts of extra things to show her that weren’t in our math and Language arts books. As they chatted, I got more and more stressed because I was convinced that school had gone so poorly.

When I received my year end report, I was surprised that it highlighted many of the things that I considered extras – the books we had read, the projects we had done, the little journal my daughter had kept of Central American post cards she had received from her uncle. This experienced homeschooling mom wrote very little about the SCHOOL curriculum, and more about the learning that had taken place.

A light bulb came on for me then, and has continued to get brighter through the years, and it needs to be illuminated for those writing about the school board upheaval in Alberta. Curriculum is great, and I still use it, but just like the reporters who have been reporting on this issue in Alberta, I had

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**MAKE sure to find THINGS TO KNOW on the second page—it contains communication from the SHBE board.**



Christmas brings with it a flurry of busy-ness—even for homeschool families. From parties to concerts and pageants, there are more opportunities to get together with others and celebrate. It can be easy to let the crazy schedule steal the joy we hear and sing about during the season. When our kids were younger we took the whole month of December off to bake extra goodies, visit more friends, etc. Now that our kids are a little older, and have more responsibilities, it is not as easy to give up a whole month—but I heard about this idea of a Christmas Bucket list—you can use this one that I found online and downloaded [here](#) or make your own with a few of the most important fun things for your holiday celebrations, no matter what you celebrate. Mine this year includes learning about holiday celebrations in other countries and cultures.

I mainly want to use it as a tool to focus my attention on the things that are priorities! The main one of which is enjoying my family. Take time to enjoy yours!





Many of you have heard about the situation that arose seemingly suddenly in Alberta where 3500 students were left without a school board when Alberta Education shut down the largest homeschool board in Alberta for allegations of mismanagement. There does seem to be some confusion on social media, and lots of speculation— Here is an update from HSLDA on the Alberta Government allegations against Trinity/ Wisdom. Read the full story on the [HSLDA blog](#), but here is a quick synopsis:

- 1) The allegations made by Minister Eggens are just that: allegations. Nothing has been proven.
- 2) Parents are not being told they have to send their children to school.
- 3) Due to work by Alberta Home Education Association (AHEA) and Home School Legal Defense Association (HSLDA), the minister has lifted the request to re-register home education programs with another school board.
- 4) HSLDA and AHEA have worked with several school boards on contingency plans, should decisions be finalized that are unfavourable to Wisdom.
- 5) AHEA held meetings in Calgary and Edmonton, with HSLDA present, to provide information and encouragement, as well as to hear directly from concerned parents.
- 6) WISDOM Homeschooling and Trinity Christian School filed an application for judicial review concerning the decision made against them, and also filed an injunction requiring AB Education to reinstate accreditation to WISDOM/Trinity. They have now been granted an interim injunction restoring their accreditation. From their [website](#):

***"Alberta Education's imposition of the closure upon the families of 3500 students, without due process, has been overturned Friday by due process. The rights of parents, upheld by the Canadian Charter, have been upheld by the Court of Queen's Bench."***

- 7) This is an example of how important it is for all home educating families to support their provincial home education association (AHEA, SHBE, etc), and to have an HSLDA membership. You can find information on HSLDA [here](#).

Rod Amberson  
SHBE Vice President

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to realize that homeschooling is not dependant on the SCHOOL part. Homeschooling needs to be more about the home part. Home education is about more than just academics...it is about family, about influence, but ultimately about learning—and LEARNING isn't reduced to school hours or workbooks.

Learning doesn't stop because a school board closes, or a program doesn't fit the needs of a family. Learning continues regardless. Learning continues even in the face of sickness. It continues during tragedy. It continues during the joy of a new baby in the family, or the upheaval of a change of address.

Now that I am in SK, and have been freed from the administrative burden of facilitator visits, it has caused me to learn how to evaluate my own progress, and I have had to figure out how to keep the real goals in perspective. We have not been successful at reproducing school—but we have been successful in Learning.

Let me encourage you that we are all in this together! If you are feeling discouraged, talk to a friend who has been at this longer, or maybe a new homeschooler who is still gung ho and excited. Read a book or a blog that will help you keep the bigger picture in mind, look through the archives of SHBE Journals to find encouragement from other parents who are walking this journey. Or take a PD day – it stands for Professional Development in the schools but we call them Priority Discovery days. All over Saskatchewan this fall we have had extended warm weather, I hope you have taken some time to enjoy extra time outside, or at least your kids have! And be encouraged that even if things have “disrupted” your plans or schedules, the goal of home education is not the mere repeating of facts, but learning—which continues in spite of what seems like interruptions!



Hearing that he needed to encourage his homeschooling wife, Tim gave it his best shot.



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