

WESTERN PA HOMESCHOOLERS

A Network for Sharing Local Information about Homeschooling - Newsletter #5
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Working with our newsletter and network has really broadened my world! In the past few months I've been so pleased to be able to meet so many homeschooling families that had only been names to me before. We've taken advantage of our regular trips to Pittsburgh to stop in on the Wilson's in Crafton and the McHughs in Pleasant Hills. In February, Nancy Edmondson and Diane Brajek organized a very friendly homeschooling support-group meeting in Franklin for about nine families. A Handspinner's festival where we sold some of our black sheep fleeces was topped off by a visit with Bettelou Roberts and family north of Mercer. New faces have turned up a month at the Beechwood Farms Nature Reserva Homeschooling programs. The April La Leche League Conference homeschooling sessions were a great success and very well attended. with Lynn Schmidt, Sandy Speck, Claire Pore, Kathy Terleski, Diana Baseman, Kandi Beam, Beth Spatz and myself all working on the panels. I was able to meet Mimi Wagner there, and several others on our mailing list, as well as make many new contacts. Finally, Beth Spatz and I have just returned from Nancy Plent's "Spring Get-Together with John Holt" in New Jersey, staying over with Janet Williams near Gettysburg (Janet puts out the PA Unschooled's Network Newsletter) on our way there. And some people worry that homeschooling families must feel ISOLATED!!!

Through all these visits my boys have learned a lot about map reading and changes and beauty of Western PA's geography! They've met many new children, and discovered that many other families are also now reading the Laura Ingalls Wilder books or other old favorites, and have found several new favorites on these new friends' bookshelves. They've seen the Wilson's musical "inventions", heard the youngest McHugh's latest piano piece, and listened while I've struggled through simple recorder duets with several families. I always take my soprano recorder with me everywhere, just on the chance that I might run into another player! One of my best "partners" right now is homeschooler Joshua Redmore, almost 7-- we both brought our recorders to Beechwood one month and had a grand time playing together.) Jesse and Jacob have had a chance to see pet ducks, rabbits, horses, and ponies, tropical fish tanks, different breeds of goats, and a big variety of new dogs and cats. They've seen other children's art work, and toys and hobbies. And we've enjoyed lots of good car ride conversations on the way to all these new places.

WESTERN PA SCHOOL DISTRICTS THAT HAVE COOPERATED WITH HOMESCHOOLING FAMILIES...

Fox Chapel
West Jefferson Hills
North Hills
Woodland Hills
South West Butler
Pittsburgh Public Schools
Titusville
Armstrong
Jefferson-Morgan
Shaler
Kiski
Trinity
Kane

Several other school districts have also cooperated with families, but are not listed here. One district did not want to officially approve a family as homeschooling, although the superintendent was very supportive, but did suggest that the family enroll their son in a non-public school that was formed for "independent study" in their district! The district's lawyer felt more comfortable with this type of arrangement, and the family had been given no trouble.

Do keep me up to date on any new districts that are working cooperatively with homeschooling families. Note too that many children are attending their public schools on a part-time basis, taking a specific course or two that interests them, or using school facilities such as the library or gym.

WPA Homeschoolers' masthead
designed by Jesse Richman