

Western PA HOME SCHOOLERS

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A Network for Sharing Local Information about Homeschooling

This past fall has been an active one for homeschooler's in Western PA! Much good publicity, many informal get-togethers and visits. Katie White and I were asked to talk about homeschooling on the KDKA Roy Fox Show in late August. Roy had Mr. Billman from the Dept of ED in Harrisburg on the line also, who stressed that Pennsylvanians were lucky to have three ways to meet the compulsory education requirements-- public, or private schooling, or home/tutorial teaching. Several families told me that they'd been seriously considering homeschooling, and hearing the radio show gave them the boost needed to really get going making it a reality.

KDKA-TV also ran a spot about homeschooling family, the Tribou's on Evening Magazine in the early fall. Many phone calls came in from the show, and some good new contacts made. Interestingly enough, the family was chosen for the feature when the mother called the station to try to arrange for a visit for their daughter to see how a TV studio operated. The station inquired about what school the child attended, saying that they usually only took school groups for tours. Upon finding out that the child was taught at home by her parents, KDKA turned the tables and said that they had been wanting to do a piece on homeschooling, and could Evening Magazine visit them!

The PGH Urban Christian Coalition School is interested in aiding and working with local homeschoolers. Carol Wilson or Katie White can give more info on this. At their October Education Conference they invited Merry and John Dorean to lead a session on Homeschooling. Merry wrote to me afterwards that partly because of not being in contact with any other homeschooling families and feeling isolated and alone in their decision, they had been considering enrolling their 8-year old daughter in school in Jan., 84. After preparing for the homeschooling session and rereading related books and articles, they both renewed their enthusiasm and sense of commitment. Ah! How we all need support.

Several new homeschooling families have moved into Western PA this past fall, and they have been very pleased to find our network, giving them ready links to homeschoolers nearby. This is, of course, our real aim-- helping families meet and share and gain support from each other. I look forward to hearing from many more of you this winter and spring. I'd be especially interested to hear about any small local get-togethers and sharing times. - Susan Richman

WESTERN PA SCHOOL DISTRICTS THAT HAVE COOPERATED WITH HOMESCHOOLERS

- ARMSTRONG
- FOX CHAPEL
- KANE
- KISKI
- JEFFERSON-MORGAN
- MT. UNION
- NORTH HILLS
- PITTSBURGH
- SHALER
- SOUTH-WEST BUTLER
- TITUSVILLE
- TRINITY
- WEST JEFFERSON HILLS
- WOODLAND HILLS
- YOUGH

Glad to see several more districts have made agreements with families for home-teaching. The South-West Butler District is even now included in the "Growing Without Schooling" list of cooperating School District and is currently working with 2 families. Indeed, we're now seeing several districts that are cooperating with more than one family, and a number of families are now in their 2nd and 3rd years of official homeschooling with district approval. Many of these families have mentioned to me that securing continuing approval has been a very easy matter, often completed through a simple written request. One thing that has struck me in hearing from many families-- negotiating during the summer months, if you are taking a child out of school, seems to bring the happiest results. School people often seem to feel VERY threatened and very possessive of your child if you try to remove him or her mid-term. They probably feel you haven't "given school a fair try", or that you just have a personal vendetta against a particular teacher. Most families have found that the atmosphere is a LOT less tense if you can deal with a district during the summer, if not before your child is ever enrolled in any school.

Western PA. Homeschoolers
Masthead lettered by Jesse Richman (6)