

NATHHAN / CHASK

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

Fall / Winter 2008-2009

Volume 16 No. 2



“Cowboy Jon”

**Helping Our Children (With Disability)
Become God’s Useful Servant**

By Diane Ryckman

“Before You Were Born, I Knew You” ---God

By Tom and Sherry Bushnell

Adoption Disruption?

By Lori Anderson

Using Sorrow In My Life As a Source of Strength

By Tammy Bellinger

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.



Tom and Sherry Bushnell

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

Jonathan Opalka, age 2 1/2.
See story on page 41.

Pencil Drawings

Suzan Harmer is 19-years-old. She lives with her family in a small town in Kansas, where her dad is a pastor. In her spare time she enjoys drawing children and happy, godly families. She loves children and hopes to someday work with those who have special needs.

Letter From The Editors:

Welcome to the NATHHAN / CHASK News! It may have been a while since you have heard from us. The Lord provided enough funding for us to send out this copy to everyone on the mailing list. If you would like to be getting the NATHHAN / CHASK News more consistently, simply let us know by sending in a membership, or asking for a gift membership.

Family news:

After a whirl-wind summer, we are sitting looking at snow once again outside the office window.

Getting ready for winter was easier this year, thanks to Josh and the boys getting the year's firewood cut, split and stacked downstairs in our firewood room. Winterizing the yard, barn and outside tools and toys is simply a matter of putting things away, raking leaves and burning weeds.

Our garden was a real treasure this year. In early Spring, Sherry had sadly decided to forget the garden, due to the deer population explosion. Last year we were Bushnell's Deer Buffet every night after dark. Josh to the rescue once again. He offered to build a 7 foot high fence complete with 2 gates around the entire garden area. This man loves his veggies!

So, with a new fence to protect our growing produce, a rototiller to help keep the weeds down, and daily help from the kids, we had a nice, productive garden.

The raspberries outdid themselves, along with the squash and tomatoes by the basketful. We'll be eating a LOT of tomatoes this winter.

Our cherry trees and apple trees were very generous this year. Unfortunately our cherries had cherry maggots... and we didn't really see them until the cherries were good and ripe... and we eat our cherries as soon as they start to turn sort of red... well anyway, Mom decided to ignore the baby flies and use those beauti-

ful cherries in jam and pie filling. The kids say they hope mom likes cherry pie and jam, 'cause she's the only one brave enough to eat it! (Honestly, she says, "I can eat around a few worms. I love cherries!") Besides, she reasons with the kids, "You can use the extra protein to build strong bones." Jayben and ShaHannah are the only ones who believe her.)

Tom, after studying with Oakbrook College of Law like crazy all summer, along with managing the NATHHAN / CHASK office phone, took his baby bar exam in October. Unfortunately he doesn't know if he passed yet, as we have to wait until December to find out. He has been taking a welcome break getting all the house projects done that have been staring him in the face.

Sherry took her National Association of Registered Midwives exam in Michigan in October. She passed and is finishing up getting her certified professional midwife status. (They only made her wait 18 days!)

She is also enjoying sinking herself into the home; cooking, canning and of course, schooling the children.

Midwifery is a welcome side activity from the sadder end of CHASK. Sherry carries the bulk of the load in phone counseling, crying and working with birth moms, pleading with them to choose life for their baby with medical concerns. Being a midwife gives her a chance to work with birth moms one-on-one, enjoying prenatal and birth.

Jake has been working on the NATHHAN/CHASK's computer program. Grandma (Sherry's mom) who is a bookkeeper, has been instrumental in helping us understand the nuances of the program's accounting structure. The progress on the system has been slow, because Jake needs to work other jobs in addition to working on the system. Once the accounting part is complete, the rest should go quickly.

Josh worked all summer for a contractor and saved up enough to buy a full size semi-truck at an auction. It needs minor repair and I have a feeling that our barn has just been turned into a shop for the winter. (No goats this year anyway.)

Zack, 17, is working at Far North, a local sporting goods store. Right next door to work for him is the Idaho Community College. He is getting his GED.

Jordan, our 20-year-old son with Down syndrome, is much healthier this year going into winter. He had been battling a systemic yeast infection that manifested itself in skin rashes and fungus on his feet. He is

much more energetic now and is learning his shapes and numbers. (He forgets them very easily though.) He was very helpful in getting our wood in the wood cellar and can split and stack as good as anyone can. Today he is helping shove dirt with the guys as they are installing the new septic tank.

Sheela, our 19-year-old daughter who is blind and learning disabled, is

such a sweet hard worker. She has taken it upon herself to make sure the details-in-the-dishes are done, (the counter cleaned, stove wiped and food all put away). Her helpful, happy, heart is a huge blessing to us. After all that we have been through with her Reactive Attachment Disorder and behavior issues, we can honestly say that the Lord has done a great work in all of our hearts.

Lynny is 16, has moderate cerebral palsy and autism. She has made several trips to the library lately. She loves to read at about the 3rd grade level, although she is advancing steadily with practice. She, Sheela, and Mercy Grace share a room and find all sorts of fun things to do, such as put on little "shows".

Zeph is now 15 and has successfully completed driver's Ed. He will get lots of practice with all of his older brothers before he gets his license.



Jordan, Sheela and Lynny Bushnell '08

He is also plowing through 10th grade and really likes reading. Hmmmm...maybe skiing comes first now.....

Sheraya is now 13. She has taken on more and more of the house duties when mom is in the office. She also is taking her GED and enjoys reading a lot. (We are regulars at the library... in fact they know all of us by name!) She is taking piano lessons again and is finding it challenging with her new teacher, who is both inspiring and asks a little more.

Mercy Grace is 11, and is in the middle of a growth spurt. She is still her kind, merciful self, although quite the "drama queen". We love her very much! She is in a children's choir again this season called Swinging On A Star. They have several concerts and traveled to Spokane, WA to hear the African Children's Choir last week.

Jayben is 7 and has a special job working with our farm animals. He feeds and waters the animals and collects eggs. Easy to do during summer....

Not so easy during the winter. Hauling water is tough!

ShaHannah is now a 4-year-old, big girl. With so many "mommies and daddies" she can be choosy about who she wants to obey first....(we're working on that!) She loves school and is learning her letters pretty fast and can print a few words. She is having a great time with Jayben collecting the eggs. She is in Cubbies at AWANA's and is finding that Wednesdays are pretty much her favorite day right now. She still loves helping in the kitchen and has figured out who is most lenient with allowing bowl licking, or tasting as you go along. She LOVES Grandma and will drop almost any other activity to get a chance to go bye-bye with her to her house.

Our family has been home churching and attending Lakeside Christian Church in Rexford, Montana, once a month or so.

We are very thankful for the Lord's kindness to us and how He has lead our family in serving Him.

We have learned that being together as a family in service to the Lord is more important than all of us attending church in one place. As our children are growing up, the process of letting go is also upon us. We are really pleased with our children's growth in Christ, hammering out their own salvation. Each of us has unique challenges, habits and of course special gifts. They all combine to create "The Bushnell family."

We trust that the Lord is working in your hearts and lives as well. Are you willing to let Him challenge you? Are you willing to let Him show you what needs to change to conform to His image.

This is our challenge each day.



The Bushnell Family

We wish you God's very best as you serve Him. His road may not be easy, but His burden is light. Please pray for us, as we are praying for you.

***Tom , Sherry
Jacob, Josh, Jordan,
Sheela, Lynny, Zack, Zeph,
Sheraya, Mercy Grace,
Jayben and ShaHannah
Bushnell***



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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 TX 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;

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

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 16 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. 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
chaskinfo@aol.com**

Gift Memberships

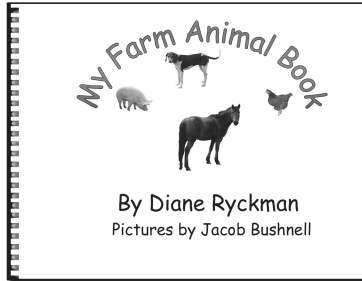
Gift memberships are available for folks facing financial difficulty. A NATHHAN/ CHASK gift membership entitles the family to NATHHAN/ CHASK's internet services. NATHHAN/CHASK's gift program is funded solely by other homes sharing out of their concern and abundance, giving so other Christian brothers 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.



My Farm Animal Book Features


- ⇒ 10 well known farm animals.
- ⇒ Large (8 ½" by 11"), uncluttered pages.
- ⇒ One simple animal photograph per page with large, easy to read print.
- ⇒ Total reading vocabulary of 57 words. 4 new words per page.
- ⇒ Repetition and review of words incorporated into text.

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
E-mail: 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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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

Especially Yours - a support group for families homeschooling children with special needs. All are welcome.

Call Patricia Rendoff.
(303) 937-3428 or at prdiggie@juno.com

Shepherd Boy - Strategies for Autism

4241 Faye Drive
Olive Branch, MS 38654
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

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

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

Support group for special needs homeschoolers in PA
Newsletter: www.groups.yahoo.com/group/handson_westernpa
Online forum: 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

Specially Gifted c/o the Pegrams

7217 South Drive Richmond, VA 23225-1622
(804) 323-1786
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

Parents Instructing Challenged Children (PICC)

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
Please RSVP if you plan to attend a meeting.
"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).

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
www.downhomelearning.net

Arizona - West Valley Autism Support Group

Contact Shelley 623-572-5289. Meets at New Life Comm. Church in Peoria, AZ second Tuesday of every month.

Christian Cottage School

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

Special Needs Support Groups

Carrying To Term Resources

American Association of Pro Life Obstetricians and Gynecologists. www.aaplog.org

AAPLOG National Office Contact Info:

Phone: (616) 546-2639.

Email: info@aaplog.org

Be not Afraid 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.

Waiting with Love site

www.erichad.com/wwl

The Gloria M. Silverio Foundation

“Safe Haven for Newborns”

www.asafehavenfornewborns.com

1-877-767-BABY (2229)

Prenatal partners for life

www.prenatalpartnersforlife.org

Living with Trisomy 13 or 18

www.livingwithtrisomy13.org

www.trisomy18support.org

Now I Lay Me Down To Sleep Infant

Bereavement Photography - Free, volunteer service provides beautiful pictures at birth to celebrate and remember baby.

www.nowilaymedowntosleep.org

Carrying To Term Pages (Very Helpful)

www.geocities.com/tabris02/

Perinatal Hospice

www.perinatalhospice.org

Joanne O'Brien's Story, Brochure and Special Support for families with babies that may not live long after birth.

www.graceannenugent.netfirms.com

Post Abortion Resources

Rachel's Vineyard Retreats

1-877-HOPE-4-ME (1-877-467-3463)

www.RachelsVineyard.org

Healing Hearts Ministries

(on-line counseling)

www.HealingHearts.org

1-888-792-8282

Ramah International

www.RamahInternational.org

Save One, www.SaveOne.org

1-866-329-3571

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 - 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.

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Deuteronomy Dads • Mommy's Musing •
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1st Straight Talk

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

- Charts explain normal sound development
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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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Combination Straight Talk 1 + DVD = **\$55.00**

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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.nathan.org or use the order form on page 30!

CHASK— “Before You Were Born, I Knew You” - God

By Tom and Sherry Bushnell

If you knew that your baby was going to die right after birth, what sort of decisions would you make?

Every day in the US, birth parents are confronted with this very devastating situation. In addition, if you were not sure if your baby might live a few days or even few months and that having a natural birth as you planned would be very stressful for your baby, would you opt for a c-section, knowing that your baby may not live for more than a few hours anyway?

If you knew that your baby’s diagnosis was not “compatible with life” would you offer your baby feeding to prolong life... if he or she seemed to be hanging onto life would you choose IV therapy or assisted breathing?

Would you attempt to breastfeed your baby? Would you pump and have your baby tube fed?

What kind of items would you like to have as keepsakes, after your baby passes away?

These are just a small smattering of the questions birth parents must decide when their unborn baby is diagnosed with a severe anomaly. How can we at CHASK minister effectively to encourage birth parents to let God choose the “going home date” versus “premature birth induction”, or termination? An “early birth” may seem like an easy solution to birth parents.

The answer is in *your* heart. We are thankful that you are there and are willing to share. Please, if you are able to write or counsel about your child’s passing let us know who you are so you can also minister Jesus’ love. We have to know who you are in order to match you with a birth parent facing tragedy.

Here is the story of Effie, a sweet little angel that right at this moment is being used by God. Her little life and her parents sharing their story will touch *you*, to prepare you to pray and minister to others.

The web site with the story in its entirety can be found at www.livingwithtrisomy13.org/MemoriesofEffie.htm



Baby Effie and Mommy

By Joanna O’Brien

I wanted to tell you the story of our precious second daughter who was born with a severe disability, so that you can be assured that your child with a disability is a great gift from God and is worth all the effort and love you or anyone else can expend on him or her.

We learned at 21 weeks gestation that our baby girl had Trisomy 13. We did some research on the computer and discovered that babies with Trisomy 13 usually die in the first week of life. This was very sad news for us. But, we decided to love our baby and enjoy her for as long as we should have her in our lives. And, we decided to begin thinking about the best plan of care for her. We wanted to make it our business that she would have the best possible life, under the circumstances. We had no idea, though, how easy she would be to love and treasure.

She was born on October 2, 2007 and lived for four wonderful weeks. Her abnormalities (like her severe cleft palate and lip) looked completely normal after we quickly got used to them. She behaved just like any other baby (she did have some seizures, which are a part of Trisomy 13.) Our families also loved her and we were all drawn closer to each other through our love and care for little Effie. Everyone was encouraging and supportive of us at this difficult time in our lives, but

it was something that we were going to do even if we had to do it alone. Effie was worth it! She was a dear baby who loved to be held close, who hardly ever cried or complained, who was easy to love.

This whole experience also brought me closer to God. I learned in a very real way that I can really trust God and that I can believe His word and trust that He does all things well and for His own purpose. He helped me to be completely at peace through the whole time that Effie was here with us and through her death and afterwards. I have never complained against God. I can't. I see so many good things that have come out of Effie's life that I can't think that God made a mistake in creating her just the way He did.

My gratefulness to God overshadows my grief.

God has told us in the scriptures that He is the one who gives (and takes) life. He is even more specific than that - He tells us, "Who hath made man's mouth? Or who maketh the dumb, or the deaf, or the seeing, or the blind? Have not I the Lord? Exodus 4:11 We can be sure, then, that the Lord is the one who has made our children different from "normal". He has done so for His own purposes, and we may never fully understand His reason until we get to heaven. But we can know from scripture that God is good and compassionate and just. He is watching you to see if you will trust in Him and in His plan for your life and for your baby's life.

Are you thinking about giving your baby up for adoption to a loving family? Please be comforted that there are plenty of families that will fall in love with your baby and treat him or her as their own. Don't let anyone rush you into the decision, though. There is plenty of time, and plenty of resources to help you decide if this is something that you can do.

Whenever I meet disabled people, I am reminded that life is simpler than I make it out to be with all of my hurrying and stressing and wrong priorities. If you have other children, I want you to know that having a disabled brother or sister teaches siblings compassion, patience, and an appreciation of all people, no matter how different. How much better people would be if we all had a disabled person in our lives!

Many people have been in your situation before and have made the right choices. You will

never regret giving life to your child - God has already given a special life to your child, and He has chosen you as parent for this child. So be encouraged and know that you have the strength to bring this baby into the world. You may never know how much this child will be a blessing to you and to others.

The only decision you need to make today is to



Baby Effie with Sister and Mommy

keep carrying this precious baby in your womb as God intends for you to do. He will give you the strength, and He will give you love for this little baby too!

Love, Joanna O'Brien jeffnjo@yahoo.com

A peek into the CHASK Office....

It is 6:50 am. The phone rings and I come running out of my bedroom with wet hair and a towel on my head. (Not sure how long the phone has been ringing?!)

A concerned voice on the other end shares of a situation about a baby who was born at 25 weeks and is without parents. The state has ordered the hospital to pull the plug, as they do not want to bother finding a home. We have 48 hours to locate a family that will be willing to call this wee one their own.

3 other babies have come in over the last day. One with Trisomy 18, one with Down syndrome and the third one with a malformed brain. This newest baby this morning takes first priority,

as his life literally is hanging in limbo.

Downing a quick breakfast of potatoes and eggs, I run back to waken Sheraya, Mercy, Lynny and Sheela our oldest daughters to come out of slumber land to take over the kitchen, starting laundry and meal prep for the day. Sleepily Sheraya wanders into the kitchen a few minutes later, grabs a plate of breakfast, and gets marching orders for the day.

Walking outside the short walk to our garage-turned-office, I settle down in my chair and reach for the phone, bringing up my e-mail at the same time.

The pleasant, happy answering machine voice, at the other end of the line assures me that there has been a home found for the preemie and that the new parents are very excited about flying in today to be with him...Phew....

I start making calls locating specific details on the other babies for prospective CHASK parents and iron out some of the problems regarding the older children on the CHASK site. One needs to be taken off, as they have found a home. Another girl that we were about to put on the CHASK site needs a hold put on her bio. Her family has found some local resources and have decided they are not ready to give up yet.

The birth mom, pregnant with a 30-week-old baby, that has a chromosomal anomaly, has decided she wants an "early birth". We work for a while locating a few moms for her to talk to, that have already walked down the road she is about to travel....who have already given birth to a baby who will die shortly after birth, and have chosen life and God's timing for "going home."

The agency with the baby that has a brain malformation calls and decides to waive all fees. They just want to find a family for this baby!

A mom who has a baby with Down syndrome due in a few weeks needs to have a few families sent to her to help her decide if she wants to keep

her baby or share him with another family.

Tom and the kids are in the house at our huge kitchen table. He is managing the letter folding and envelope stuffing of our late-getting-out, large and medium fundraising letter. He juggles different stations, making sure the Smiths don't get the Johnson's letter, working on getting the NATHHAN bills paid and a pile of other paperwork. That consumes our morning.

Sheraya calls over the intercom, "Lunch time!" We all troop outside to the house from the office, as we put our projects on hold for a break. She has made ham/chicken noodle and fresh to-

mato soup, banana bread and broiled cheese sandwiches. Apples from our root cellar round out the meal.

It has started snowing after lunch and Josh is out on the backhoe trying to get ready for the new septic tank coming tomorrow. With the large number of people and an older system, ours failed a few weeks ago and we are racing with the freeze to get it in.

Afternoon is quieter, and I am able to work on the magazine. The Lord has provided enough funds to get it out to all on the mailing list.

This will be a special treat for all those families who cannot afford membership or are just interested in NATHHAN / CHASK as a ministry.



Picture Drawn by Suzan Harmer

Here is a note from Dusty Copeland. She is interested in starting a project called Born Alive. dustyc@cot.net

I believe the Lord has been preparing me for some time on this issue.

When my daughter was in the NICU there was an infant brought in, preterm, but from his screams apparently healthy and thriving. He was in the isolette opposite of my daughter. His cries drew me to him, as all the other nurses were ignoring him. He was bright red, his skin appeared burned and he was covered with meconium.

Since I was completely gowned, I asked a nurse if I could take him out and clean him up. "That's his mother's job" she snapped at me.

“Can I at least hold him and comfort him?”

The nurse responded with, “No, get away from there.”

These nurses were normally very kind. This had upset them, I could tell. Shortly after his isolette was moved, to where I could not see; but his cries continued to be heard until they got weaker and weaker.

Today, I know that was a saline abortion gone bad. To me, what the nurses were forced to do by letting him suffer until he died, was akin to torture.

How can we help these infants? How can we get word to birth parents?

Editor’s note:

With the donations that you send in, CHASK works hard to get information out to birth parents. But honest truth, what it takes is you, going out and sharing that there is hope. OBGYNs, Women’s Care Centers, Hospital Social Workers, Perinatologists, Geneticists, regular practice physicians.... anyone you think may come in contact with families who are desperate for hope, needs to have a CHASK brochure *in hand* to give a birth mom.

CHASK’s philosophy: Raising a Child vs. Adoption

CHASK’s first goal is to provide the encouragement and support, family-to-family, to any parent with a child with a medical concern, born or unborn. Birth moms *can* parent a child with disability with today’s networking and community resources. No one should feel like they cannot raise a child with special needs for lack of money.

If a family does not want to or cannot raise their child for another reason, we have over 500 CHASK adoptive families willing to share their hearts and lives with a child with permanent disabilities of any kind.

Please contact us to order CHASK brochures to share with your community. 208-267-6246 chaskinfo@aol.com

We can work together. It takes only a small amount of time to save a life. You never know the far reaching effects of your act of kindness. We need your help to find babies, like the one Dusty described, that was killed via a saline abortion, before it is too late.

You can help us quickly on line at

www.chask.org and click on either the credit card or paypal donate button.

Here is a true story that will touch your heart, as it does ours....

Pamela touched her tummy. Her baby’s gentle fluttering brought tears to her eyes. Guilt and then relief washed over her for the umpteenth time this evening. Maybe there was a God out there.

Reliving the last few months in her mind, she instantly saw the excitement in her husband’s eyes when she showed him the positive pregnancy test..... Then her first prenatal appointment at 12 weeks....and the wonder of new life... then one day when she was 15 weeks along...bleeding...way too much bleeding.

She could taste the panic as she laid in bed pleading with her body to stop.... The trip to the emergency room, the kind doctor, the ultrasound... and then the news.... her baby was not normal. Baby was alive. Bleeding was related to subchorionic bleeding from the placenta. **Spina bifida, cleft palate, and a bunch of other terms she could not remember or pronounce....and the suggested immediate abortion.**

Her whole heart screamed NO!!!! This was not the way it was supposed to turn out. She silently turned to her husband for assurance.... His face was drawn with her pain... their baby....deformed. Why our baby? The doctor cleared his throat and waited for an answer. How could she raise a child with special needs? Silently she reached to sign the paper the doctor held out for permission. The abortion was scheduled for tomorrow, mid-morning.

The doctor patted her on the shoulder encouragingly. “You’ll have a chance to try again. This world has so much pain already. I know this is hard....but you are being responsible about this and I am proud of you.” She wordlessly looked up at him and turned to walk out the door, her husband holding her hand.

That evening was fuzzy in her mind... except for the call from Sally, her new neighbor. Pam’s heart was touched by Sally’s compassion as her



raw sorrow poured out. It seemed easy to talk to this almost stranger...

Sally, pleaded with her to wait. “What would it take for God to convince you that your baby is a special person created by Him for a unique purpose?”

Pamela hesitated... she wasn't sure. Thus far, the baby was only a swelling in her tummy, extra weight... a dream.

Just before bed, she sat down at the computer researching spina bifida... she didn't dare search abortion. Sally had mentioned a web site that supported parents who had an adverse prenatal diagnosis. She typed in the letters C H A S K. Looking at the stories written by different families choosing life instead of abortion, she felt overwhelmed... Choosing a future saddled with disability was crazy. She envisioned her baby crying in pain and suffering... yet the stories from birth moms who kept their babies did not reflect that. The more she tried to see herself with a deformed child her the more her stomach knotted. Finally she lay down in bed. As she drifted off into a restless sleep, Sally's voice kept coming to her... God's purpose... A sign?

Early the next morning she awoke exhausted, walking through the motions of getting ready. No breakfast today... Doctor's orders... but why bother... no more baby to nourish... not after today...

Silently she and her husband drove to the hospital. Checking in, the nurse greeted them. “There was a delay, as the doctor had an emergency c-section. Could you wait another ½ hour?” She motioned them to follow her to a more comfortable room. Pamela stood to her feet. Feeling faint, she sat back down... The agony of waiting another minute was awful. This was horrible. Weakly she stood again and walked with her husband...

Sitting in the soft cushioned chair, Pamela rested her hand on her tummy as she looked out the window. That mindless loving act seemed to stimulate an extraordinary miracle, for under her hand... **God caused her baby to give a good little kick... a little flutter of feet.... Pamela paled. Her baby moved....**

All at once the realization of what was about to happen to her baby... alive now... and in an hour would be sucked out of her, sank into her heart. She

felt totally confused, then relieved. She stood up. Looking up from his magazine, her husband questioned with his eyes. “My baby moved!” She said with tears in her eyes... “Our baby!”

“Oh, Daniel, I can't do this....can't we wait?” Wordlessly, they both stood up and walked out the door of the waiting room, down the hall and out to the car. Pamela shook with sobs as she rode home. This nightmare was ending, yet only beginning. Her neighbor's words kept ringing in her ears.... a sign... from God.... A purpose for her baby...

CHASK's challenge to let God be the one to choose life and death.... The cute pictures of babies with spina bifida... the stories and letters from families who have already traveled down this road...

Choosing life takes courage. To stand up and walk out of an abortion appointment, toward an unknown life dealing with permanent disability... these are major hurdles that only God can give birth parents the strength to leap over.

Medical advancement has unwittingly created some mental hardships. Knowing that a baby has problems can ruin a pregnancy... America doesn't like

the unknown. Maybe the real problem is knowing too much. A special secret revealed at birth... when God gives a mother grace to see her precious baby, not just a “disability.”

If families could only persevere, walk out the door of abortion clinics and look through the door of heaven. They could see His plans to work all things out for good. He would bring eternity in heaven closer to them, through their baby, now growing inside!

Can you help us get CHASK's message of hope to birth moms facing a huge decision? They need to know that there is an alternative to abortion: that all life is valuable; God has already chosen life for their baby; and they need to, too.

CHASK needs your prayer and financial help. Your involvement, combined with other Christian families, is making a big difference in the lives of families all over the country. All life is precious.

www.chask.org



How does CHASK work?

- Adoptive family fills out a CHASK application (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

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 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 .

A Blessed Beginning

Pregnancy Resources

We have enjoyed a summer of getting to know birth moms.

Just this week we have made the decision to move to a much closer building nearer the high school. We have rented a room from a local chiropractor in a perfect location.

Along with free pregnancy testing and counseling, we offer fertility awareness and childbirth education for moms feeling overwhelmed with the idea of pregnancy, or who just want to learn more about birth.

Now we are working harder than ever to think of avenues in our rural community to find birth moms before they choose termination.

A HUGE thank you to all of you who sent baby clothes and items to be used. What a blessing they have been. If you could have only seen the face of the young mom who had no girl clothes (and she had just found out she is having a girl when they thought for sure it was a boy) as she looked through the box of nice baby clothes and chose a few items.

The gift baskets for moms and babies went very fast. We are looking at putting together some more.

Some of the things we could use for these gifts baskets are:

- Baby Care items
- Thermometer
- New cotton baby blankets for birth
- Newborn baby sleepers



Benjamin Sisson and his parents

- KY Jelly
- Cotton baby hats

Other items new moms find helpful:

- New or like-new maternity clothing
- Cloth shoulder slings for baby,
- Newborn baby front packs
- Nursing supplies
- Newborn— 3 month age baby toys

As we are setting up our new office in town, we are needing some extra help getting it ready. We are looking for donations for furniture, childbirth teaching aids, up-to-date books on pregnancy, labor, babies and birth, nutrition ...coping with teen pregnancy and DVDs on

pregnancy and birth for the girls to borrow. Our plan is to re-carpet, and furnish the room to be comfortable and usable by the beginning of the year.

We will be keeping things low-cost and easy on the budget.

It is wonderful to have the Lord setting this ministry up. We trust that He will continue to put together A Blessed Beginning and it will always glorify His name.

We welcome your kind donations. With your help, we can create a special place for mothers-to-be in crisis and minister Christ's love and message of salvation at the same time. Please consider being a part of this heart-warming project.



Mom helps boys meet new baby brother

Our UPS Address:
A Blessed Beginning / CHASK
672 Meadow Creek Rd
Bonner's Ferry, ID 83805



Picture Word Books

Check out this new product for beginning reading children. It's not only a quality spiral-bound reading book (5.1" x 8.2"), but it includes a complete set of matching picture and text cards for story reconstruction exercises.

These cards are heavy laminated (both sides) for longevity in a rough environment. They also have self-correcting controls printed on the backs so testing may be optional and sorting is easy.

The spiral bound reading-story book can be used as a beginning activity for younger students (emergent readers), and/or as a "further reading" activity for the more advanced readers.

The books with two lines of text are for increasing difficulty use. The entire set is packaged in a convenient cardboard box with lid for storage and carrying.

Costs vary from \$26.40 to \$37.60 depending on page count. Also, the complete set of all 5 story books with matching cards is available for \$119.60 (\$ 31.40 savings). For complete details, visit the website at:

www.pictureword-books.com

Gretchen Mork, Author of one our NATHHAN/ CHASK favorites... "5-Minute Phonics" brings us her new book, Nurturing a Willing Student

Chapter 6 and 7 excerpt:

Yes, children who are not prepared for school do learn more slowly, sometimes very slowly. But, then don't we all learn slowly at times? You should understand this very well if you started a foreign language after the age of twelve. It probably went very slowly and chances are you gave up. If you didn't give up there would come a point where you could learn faster and retain more. Eventually you would be learning words more or less automatically.

This is even more true with children. A child will actually double his rate of learning on a regular basis.

Suppose that Johnny is a little slow. It takes him two months to learn to read one word. That doesn't look too promising does it? But he will learn at an accelerated rate. Let's see what happens.

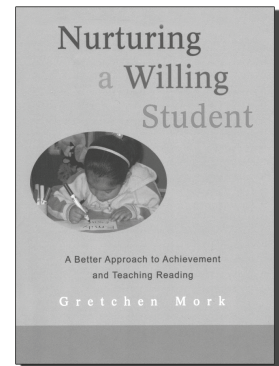
It takes Johnny two months to learn to read one word.
Then it takes one month to learn to read the next word.
Two weeks to learn the third word.
One week to learn the fourth word.
Four days to learn the fifth word
Two days to learn the sixth word
After that a word a day ...and even faster.

Less than four months have passed and Johnny has gone from being slow to learning at a respectable rate.

It is for this reason that we must be very patient with slow learners. If we get impatient then stress could greatly slow down these accelerations. Children who seem to learn so much faster have already accelerated a few times.

Learning begins long before a child is capable of carrying on a conversation. Answering questions is the last achievement in the long chain of development that goes on between birth and the sixth birthday.

Gretchen Mork - e-mail crusaderlady@yahoo.com



Turning Bullies Into Buddies: A Quick, Powerful and Fun Way to Teach Kids How to Stop Being Victims

Why are the popular anti-bullying initiatives so ineffective? Because they violate the Golden Rule, The First Amendment and the teaching of the Bible as well as secular ethical systems. Free on-line manuals that have been helping people throughout the world solve their problems with bullying. A Revolutionary Guide to Reducing Aggression between Children. Israel (Izzy) C. Kalman, MS, is a nationally renowned instructor in teaching people to deal with anger, bullying and relationship problems. (718) 983-1333

(Staten Island, NY) or by e-mail at Izzy@Bullies2Buddies.com

www.Bullies2Buddies.com

Take a peek at a few new resources:

GED online - GED Test Preparation services.

We want to work with you! Please visit our web site at www.gedonline.org

We offer online and CD versions. We are now in our 8th year of helping people prepare for the GED. GED online has Windows and Mac compatibility, online grading of the official GED Practice Test, interactive practice lessons many with videos. Essay grading Individual membership is \$65.00. 262-652-2492

.....



Social Skill Builder

Provides appropriate tools for teaching social skills to children affected by Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD) and other language/learning difficulties.

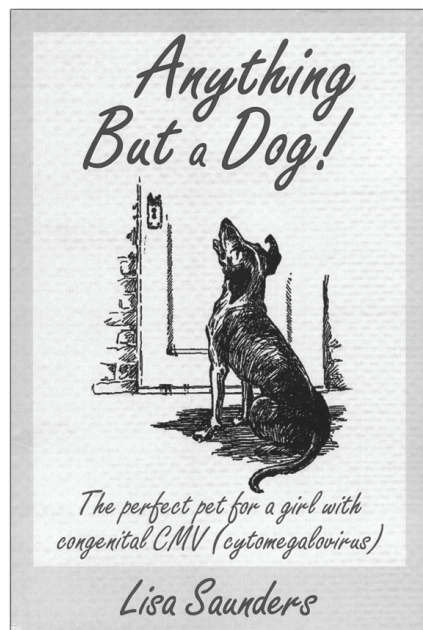
Social Skill Builder's software series, which includes the CD-ROMs Preschool Playtime, My School Day, My Community, and School Rules!, uses interactive video sequences to imitate real life social scenarios where children commonly interact with peers.

The software teaches children the "rules" of social communication, which include everything from appropriate social touch, body space and speech volume to appropriate classroom behavior and lunch-time interaction.

Social Skill Builder products cater to a wide range of functioning and abilities. At Level 1, children learn key social vocabulary. At Level 2, they answer multiple-choice questions, and at Level 3, they identify social cues. Level 4 allows children to create a novel social response based on the situation.

Jennifer Jacobs Social Skill Builder, Inc.
P.O. Box 2430 Leesburg, VA 20177
866-278-1452

www.socialskillbuilder.com



NATHHAN mom, Lisa Saunders is the author of Riding the Train With Elizabeth and other books. Her daughter, Elizabeth had CMV (cytomegalovirus) and has since passed away. This book is a special way to look at what the joy of a pet can bring to a girl who loved being loved!

In this book, Lisa says "No" to her daughter Jackie's plea for a dog, fearing it will be too rambunctious around Jackie's disabled little sister Elizabeth. But she does make her a promise she thinks will never come to pass: "If God brings a dog to our door, then you can have it."

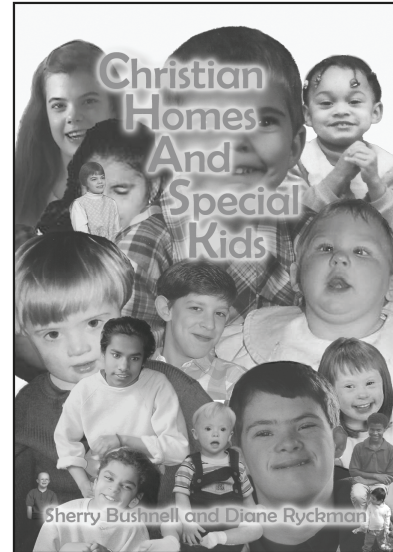
In the meantime, the family wrestles with a series of dysfunctional pets: A flesh-eating hamster, an attack cat, killer ants and a very stinky rabbit. Then one day, the unexpected happens: a shivering, dirty puppy shows up at their door. But is this dog really Heaven-sent?

PLUS - the latest news on how to prevent the far-reaching but under-reported effects of congenital CMV, the #1 viral cause of birth defects - more common a cause of disabilities than Down syndrome. Resources for anyone whose life is touched by CMV. Visit Lisa Saunder's at www.authorlisasaunders.com

A book written by NATHHAN families

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

See order form on page 30

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.

**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

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



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.

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.

www.hslda.org/strugglinglearner

Teaching vs. Assigning

By Betty Statnick

There is not a shred of doubt that you have been called to homeschool. Your child was making minimal academic progress in his previous school setting and you reasoned that surely he can do better than that at home under your instruction.

However, you have been homeschooling for six weeks now and you are not as far along in your

teaching him as you had expected to be by this time. Something else tries to whittle away at your confidence, for you overhear your child's homeschool friend boast that he is already on page 65 of the same math textbook that you and your child are inching your way through. That comment may initially have been ego-deflating, but it has the potential to spur you on. You determine that you will not retreat; you have your assignment from the Lord to teach this child.

You will need to remind yourself that even a robot can "bark out" assignments: "Work page 32 in math book. Do page 25 in your language workbook. Reading textbook: Read the story beginning on page 40 and answer the questions at the end of that story." In that sort of setup, you would simply function as a study hall monitor who would peek in occasionally to see if your child appeared to be on task.

Teaching, however, is in stark contrast to that kind of arrangement. As one homeschool mom quipped, "Teaching is not just checking off pages and clocking in time."

Guidelines are valuable and published curriculum can help steer you toward your goal for your child to achieve his maximum potential. There are some red flags in selecting curriculum. For instance, you may have purchased a highly recommended curriculum that is at the grade level where your child is "supposed" to be. After using this curriculum, you come to realize that your son has scattered skills: He is on grade level in math but below grade level in reading, so you must select other materials for instructing him in reading. (Note: If a child has trouble decoding/pronouncing five words on a page, that text is above his current functioning level.)

There are also published scope and sequence charts. "scope" tells what is taught and "sequence" tells when (at what grade level) it is typically taught. Some parents refer to a scope and sequence chart in their eclectic approach to selecting curriculum materials. That is, they may purchase math materials from one publisher and reading and language arts materials from a different publisher.

You do not always have to be “locked into” exactly when to teach something. A teachable moment may occur at any time. For instance, there may be a need or desire to know something which isn’t “scheduled”—according to the textbook—to be taught until 50 pages later. Free yourself to seize that teachable moment when your child has high motivation to learn. Other circumstances may also require that you deviate a bit from “routine.” I was helping to homeschool a teen whose mom forewarned me that he was in a foul mood on that autumn day. I told her not to worry—that her son and I would take a parts of speech walk for that particular day’s session. In our trek along the bike trail, we “retrieved” (not picked up) “crimson” (not red) and “gold-colored” (not yellow) leaves, etc. That lesson about vivid verbs and more precise adjectives didn’t involve use of pencil and paper. However, that teen became actively engaged in the learning process, and he left my home in a cheerful frame of mind. Remember: Curriculum is to be a tool to assist you and not a tyrant to enslave you.

Some schoolwork is just plain hard work. However, schoolwork can also be delight-driven, interesting, and relevant—not just workbook-based. For instance, when you are presenting lessons on fractions, “take to the kitchen.” Bake pizzas, and cut them into halves, fourths, eighths, etc. and everyone will enjoy eating his fractional portion of those pizzas. Connecting learning to everyday life and showing your child practical applications will help to cement learning. You will know that your child has really grasped a concept or skill you have taught when he can apply it in other settings.

It’s not just the what and the when you are to teach but also the why and the how. You address the “why” because you are considering not just your child’s present but also his future. You are thinking long range—about his possible post-high school education, about his employment, and about his becoming a marriage partner. All of these things must be on your prayer list as well as on your heart when you are teaching.

Carol Barnier, author-speaker and veteran homeschool mom, sums up the “how”: “Don’t call anything ‘teaching’ unless it results in ‘learning’... Find out what sparks her (your child’s) enthusiasm,

secures her attention, and pulls her in. Set aside traditional assumptions about how your child should learn and begin the journey of finding out how your child does learn.”

There are many published resources available about learning styles and how to use that information to guide your teaching and increase your child’s learning. Among those resources is Howard Gardner’s “Theory of Multiple Intelligences.” He lists these nine intelligences: Verbal-Linguistic, Logical-Mathematical, Spatial, Musical, Bodily-Kinesthetic, Interpersonal, Intrapersonal, Naturalistic, and Existential. Existential is the intelligence that Gardner refers to as “half-intelligence” because he could not find a physiological location for it in the brain. Some have referred to existential intelligence as spiritual intelligence because those who scored high in this intelligence are concerned with life’s big questions like “What is the meaning of life? Why do we die?” Remember that no teaching is really complete unless it also addresses those big questions as defined by the Word of God.

Points to Ponder

Am I modeling enthusiasm about learning before my child?

Do I say “I don’t know” and just move on when we come to a question we can’t answer? Or do I stop and model the look-it-up habit? (In other words, do I guide my child in learning how to find the answers?)

Do I allow myself to take detours from the workbook, to embrace our child’s teachable moments?

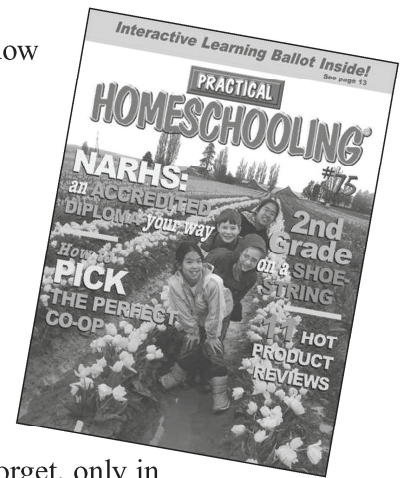
Isaiah 48:17 - “I am the Lord your God, who teaches you to profit, who leads you by the way you should go.”

Luke 2:47- “And all who heard Him (Jesus) were astonished at His understanding and answers.”

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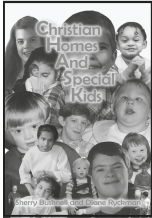
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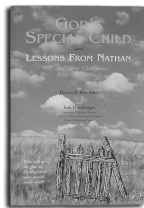
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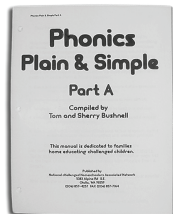
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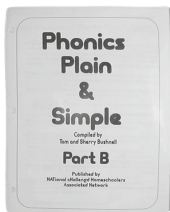


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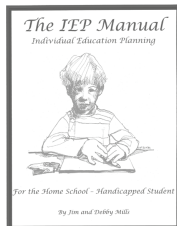
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New men's shirts, still in the package. Brand name is BIG MAC. These are similar to Dickies brand. Shirts are chambray or light blue. The ones with buttons have white top stitching, basic yoke and white buttons. They are 50% cotton 50% polyester. Sizes XL, XLT, XXL, XLXT, 3X, 4X. These are Long Sleeve. Short sleeve is only available in Large and 3X.

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Feel free to call or email with your questions or order requests. I also have pictures of the other shirts that can be emailed upon request. Happy Day to All!

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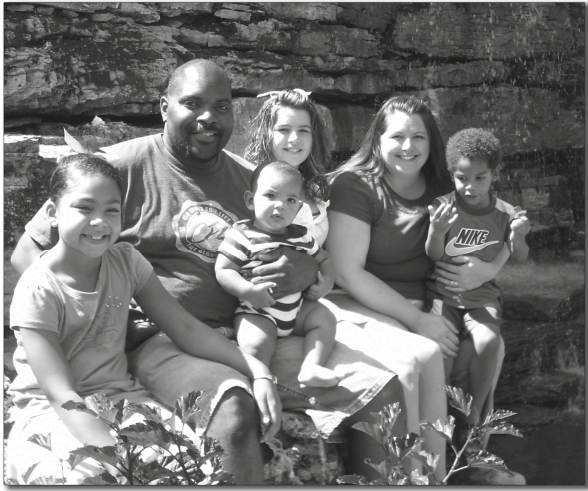
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Using Sorrow In My Life As a Source of Strength



By Tammy Bellinger

I just received your NATHHAN / CHASK magazine in the mail. I just wanted to write you to say thank you for what you do. It was really wonderful to put a face with your name. As I read the articles, I laughed, and I cried. I am truly feeling God's pull telling me that we are heading in the right direction. What a wonderful ministry to be involved in!

I have always known that I would adopt and just wanted to tell you about my journey, I feel like my story could help someone someday.

“Why would you want to do that right now...?”

I hear that a lot, as my son is only five months old and we want to adopt, and had also offered to adopt a young lady's baby when I was eight months pregnant with my son! Everyone told me I was insane, but I knew that God had a plan for this baby. The baby's mother was almost 18, her name is Crystal.

She lived with her father and was taken advantage of by a so-called family friend. The baby is biracial and Crystal's dad said that she could not stay with him and keep the baby. I heard about Crystal through a teenage mom/neighbor that I babysat for. Crystal, my husband and I talked on many occasions and Crystal was sure that this is what she wanted. I guess her dad just planned to make her leave the baby at the hospital for DHS to take. We offered a place for Crystal to stay so she could keep her baby, but she refused to leave her dad, somehow feeling like she owed it to him. She had a deep need for his approval because she grew up without him and had recently been re-

united. Crystal seemed distant and I wasn't sure how she really felt, just that God kept telling me to be there for her.

I received the call that Crystal was at the hospital and possibly in labor on the eve of Christmas Eve. With much excitement I rushed to the hospital, my husband did not go because Crystal was very private and made me leave the room during the procedures. She had my neighbor's mom there for support and did quite well being so young and alone.

After the Doctor broke her water, he discovered meconium staining and rushed her back for a c-section. A few minutes later a beautiful baby boy was carried through the door of the operating room and to the nursery.

As soon as he was checked out I got to go in and be with him. I welcomed him into this world and prayed over him and I rubbed his sweet cheek, hands and feet. Still unsure of his mother's decision, I whole-heartedly loved this little guy.

My phone rang and it was Lori, Crystal's support friend saying that Crystal had decided to name the baby. This was good news! His name would be Nicholas Allen, so appropriate for being born on Christmas Eve!! I started thinking that she may change her mind. I spoke with her several times and had brought in baby outfits for her to pick out one for the newborn photo.

She still planned for us to take the baby home. The time came for Crystal and the baby to be released from the hospital. I came with car seat in tow, thinking at any moment she would change her mind. I loaded up baby Nicholas and his things and his mom wept.

We went to our cars, her dad taking her, and me taking Nicholas. My heart tore in two as rivers of tears streamed down Crystal's sweet young face. I hugged her as I wept, told her I loved her, and watched her drive away. I knew in my heart that this is not what she really wanted.

I took Nicholas home, held him, loved him, got up every two hours with him. For three days and three nights I prayed. Crystal

came, she held little Nicholas in her arms and wept, she cried and cried. I was at a loss for words. But God is good and he was working in her life.

On that third day her dad had a change of heart. He could not continue to see his daughter cry. I believe that God touched him.

Crystal came to take baby Nicholas home!!! I truly thought I would be sad, but I was so filled with joy that baby Nicholas was going home to be with his mommy. We had collected everything that she needed for the baby: diapers, diaper bag, bed, car seat, swing, and anything else that she needed. She seemed overwhelmed with our generosity.

I know she did not understand why someone would do this for her. All I could tell her is that this was all from the Lord and we were just doing what He had asked of us.

Crystal's dad's heart melted and he became quickly attached to his new grandbaby. Crystal proved to be the most wonderful mother I have ever seen, reading books on babies and learning as much as she could, calling for advice and most of all, holding, hugging, kissing and loving her little boy. I am so proud of her!!

As for us, we feel great knowing we did the right thing and expected nothing out of it. What we gained was more love in our hearts than we could imagine and also a new godson, Nicholas Allen!!

HOW COULD WE ENDURE THIS???

Now.... if you don't mind, I would like to take you back a few years, back to before I knew Jesus. I am telling you this because I feel like it is the sole reason for wanting to help. Eleven years ago, I was not a Christian and I made a horrible decision that would haunt me for the rest of my life. My oldest daughter was two years old and I got involved in an abusive relationship with a man who had two little girls.

I soon found out that he was not the kind man I thought he was and I was trapped in a situation where I felt like I had to stay to protect his little

girls from him. At one point, he beat my little girl and I was scared. I didn't know what to do. Everyone was telling me that if I called the police, they would take her from me for leaving her with him (this was before I knew he was abusive). I also felt I had to protect the other girls. Soon after, I found out I was pregnant.

I finally left after being half-choked to death, a choice in itself that was horrible, as I left those other two girls there, as there was nothing I could do. He said he would find me and take the baby. He had taken the other girls from their mother.

I was scared. I told a cousin to tell him that I had had an abortion, I didn't mean it, but I feel like a seed was planted and Satan was lurking around every corner. Soon, some friends offered money for an abortion, and I started considering it. I was alone and afraid. I had the same dream night after terrible night...I dreamed of a tiny baby boy in a tiny blue casket. I felt if the father got him, that he would kill him.

Before long the idea of an abortion started sounding like a good way out. I knew it was wrong and I knew it was murder, but it seemed like I stepped out of the person I was and became someone uncaring and unfeeling of the truth. Family members who loved me tried to talk me out of it, but I don't think I heard or cared what they said.

The girl who was supposed to give me the money was delayed, time went by, but my decision did not change. She was waiting for money from somewhere. By the time she got the money to me, I was very far along. My baby was 27 weeks, he could have lived if he would have been born.

I'll never forget any detail of that horrific day. The friend showed up, drove me to a clinic in St. Louis where I was put in a group of seven women. I was not the only one! These women were not monsters, just scared, and thinking this was the way out. We had to wait for so many



Crystal and Nicholas

hours in the waiting room. This is so the clinic can document this as "counseling time". I was brought back for an ultrasound. I can't stop thinking that if she would have just showed me the screen I would have walked out. But she didn't and I didn't.

Feeling as if I were in a dream, my baby's life was taken, in too many horrible details to describe at this time. I do know he fought for his life. Why didn't they tell me the truth. Why didn't someone stop me? Even though I was not a Christian, I know this is not who I was.

Soon I came to the realization that the father of the baby did not take his little life. I did.

Two years later, my daughter was born. I realize now that she was my replacement child, but the last thing she did was replace my son. The pain and agony of what I had done became a harsh horrible reality. I had hit rock bottom.

This is when I was lifted up and I met my Lord and Savior, Jesus. I felt a love in my heart where a black hole was. I wept with joy, pain, sorrow, and every emotion that had been bottled up for two agonizing years. Did the memory of my son go away? No, it actually got worse. I heard my baby boy scream, saw him walk into my room and ask me "Why didn't you want me, Mommy?" and many more painful realizations.

But now I had Jesus, my healing walk is not over, but God has brought me through the pain to a place where I know He wants me to use my son, I have named him Jimmy Exavior, to save others like him.

To tell the truth, to let people know what Satan does not. That abortion is a death sentence, not only for your baby, but for your life as well. The only hope is the truth that Jesus offers and try to offer it to others before it is too late.

Another story: A few months ago, my cousin called in desperation, she was weeping uncontrollably. Her step-daughter was going to abort her grand baby. She thought I could help. I called Dana, I begged, I pleaded, I offered to adopt the baby, I told her the truth, I told her what would happen, how she would feel. I brought pamphlets, photos, and a video. And most of all I prayed. I received a phone call weeks later. She did not change her mind. All my pain flooded back. I could not sleep. I got up and felt God leading me to write this:

I am awake, I cannot sleep,
for this tiny one I do weep.
As these tears stream down my face,
I wonder how we could deserve His Grace.
When society decides that life is a choice,
Who will stand and give them a voice.
I begged and pleaded all in vain,
Now I'm not sure I can handle the pain.
Didn't they know how he would suffer,
He should have been safe inside of his mother.
My heart is pounding my stomach is sick,
Why did she think this would be over real quick?
His pain was terrible, it was real,
and his life they did steal.
It makes me so mad, its just not fair,
We already loved him as part of our family.
A cousin, sibling, and grandbaby,
I thought she would listen to me, just maybe.
Where were you God, did you hear our cries?
Why did she listen to all of those lies?
They say all things happen for a reason,
And these things only hurt for a season.
This is false I'll have to say,
It's been nine years since that day.
I was also hard to convince,
I've felt the pain ever since.
I feel like a failure, she ignored me.
I tried to tell her how her life would be.
After you've taken an innocent life,
Your soul feels severed with a very sharp knife.
You will not get over it you will not forget,
I cannot forgive myself, not now, not yet.
We wanted to hold him and kiss his sweet cheek,
but an easy escape his mom did seek.
For him now it is over and he is safe,
Sent to heaven through innocent Grace.
Jesus is crying for what they have done,
They had no right to murder His son.
The only comfort I have felt,
Is knowing heaven where he is held.
Fully restored he smiles again,
I imagine a giggle,
I imagine a grin,
How easily he forgives such a sin.
I will see them when Heaven I reach.
But for now I will try to teach.
Again and again I need to speak,
and try to protect those who are weak.
What do I do, what do I say?
In Jesus name I will I will pray.
Lord lift me up and make me strong,
Help me tell them why it is wrong.
Help them to hear the silent cry,
before another one has to die.

It's three am, I cannot sleep,
For this tiny one I do weep.

Tammy Bellinger

I do not know why she didn't change her mind, but I do know that God uses all things for good and for His Glory.

Letters From Families

I'm not even quite sure I know where to start, but I know I am supposed to help, and that I have a heart for adoption, no matter what little angel God places with us. I am not trying to make up for what I have done because I know God has forgiven me, but I am trying to turn what has happened into good for the Lord. I know that abortion changed my life forever. It taught me to have empathy, love and forgiveness for all who make mistakes...it taught me to never say never. I want Jimmy's life to make a difference here on earth. And all the unborn angels whose lives ended way too soon, they matter to Jesus and they should matter to all who claim to be Christians.

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Straight Talk Speech Therapy Manual Works!

I wanted to let you know our good results from the "Straight Talk" program.

I was very pleased with the program, the instructional book, and DVD. It was all very helpful. I was a bit uncertain about my ability as a homeschool mother to act as therapist for my daughter's speech problem, but after 4 weeks of speech therapy, she is doing remarkably well! In fact, she has come to the place where she can say all the "problem words" correctly, if she'll just remember to think about it.

It was so thrilling to hear her pronounce words correctly for the first time in her life. I almost cried with joy!

She is doing well now on her own, although she'll occasionally slip up and forget. I thank the Lord for His help and strength through this, and I thank you for making this program available.

May the Lord bless you bountifully for this important ministry,

Lori Bohman elbohman@earthlink.net
Tanzania, Africa

(See pages 11 and 12 of this magazine!)

Be A Choosy Homeschooler.... like me..!

My name is Jennifer and I am the editor of a new homeschool product review website. I know, I know, there are many product review websites out there, right? However, as a homeschooler I found that when I read reviews of homeschool products on other sites, I didn't know anything about the people who wrote the reviews. Are their values similar to mine? Do their children have the same needs as mine?

We developed our site so that it is easy for parents to find product reviews written by parents who have children with specific special needs. We accomplish this through the use of review "tagging". For instance, if I was a parent of a child with dyslexia, I would post reviews of products I have used and provide information on how well these products worked for my dyslexic child. I would add the tag "Dyslexia" to each of my reviews. So, when another parent of a child with dyslexia is looking for feedback on how well a product might work for their child, they could click on the tag "Dyslexia" and read all of the product reviews written by parents of children with dyslexia. (Please note that this is only one example of tag use. When parents write product reviews, they can assign their reviews with any tags they would like. We hope that our list of tags will grow indefinitely to include a wide range of special needs terminology, learning styles, and religious beliefs).

Our goal is to make our site a valuable resource for parents with special needs children to share their experiences with specific curriculum products (or other tools and services) with other parents who have children with similar needs. We believe that our website can become a very valuable resource to parents of special needs children; therefore we are eager to share this resource.

I invite you to take a look at our website at:

www.ChoosyHomeschooler.com



Joanna's birth mom called us when she was 20 weeks along. She had just been given a diagnosis of Down syndrome for her baby. We readily found 5 CHASK bios to send to her. After a few months of not hearing from her, she called one afternoon and said that she had chosen a family and wanted more information. The McCarty family in Kansas has done an outstanding job ministering to this birth family and thank you birth mom for giving the McCarty's such a wonderful gift!

Jaeci Joanna McCarty

Born October 25th, 2008

10 lbs 6 oz, 21 3/4 inches long

Homecoming was on November 6th.



Pam shares a devotional written by a man who is disabled, sharing from his heart about disability....

Dear NATHHAN families,

My name is Pam. Ziggler98@aol.com

I know a severely physically and slightly mentally handicapped young man who intensely loves Jesus and is great at encouraging people who are ill.

I would like for him to blog his devotions and ideas and hook it up with a Christian group. Is this something anyone would be interested in? I don't want to raise his hopes.

I am sharing a short devotional that he completed. It really touches my heart because I know the road their family has walked and how much they love Jesus.

Michael and Annie were adopted from just after birth with little to no chance of survival. Their

adopted father has since passed away from cancer. Michael and Annie are in their 30's. Their mother has MS and works 1 - 2 days a week at a Christian preschool teaching their Bible class.

Michael and Annie have a rare disease. I don't know the name of it. He just had an operation a year or two ago that saved his life or his legs, as you will read about in his devotional. I did not edit his work.

Psalms 23 - "The Lord is my shepherd; I shall not want. He makes me to lie down in green pastures: he leadeth me beside the still waters..."

In the early part of the year 2006, I started to have problems with my legs. It only got worse and worse. I went from doctor to doctor trying to figure out what was wrong with me. The last doctor said, "There was nothing I could do for you." You have no idea what it feels like when you don't know if you are going to die or ever walk again. Things went from bad to worse as the weeks went on. It got to the point I could hardly walk. At that moment in time, I thought I was going to die. My mother called a doctor that I knew in my childhood. God in his mighty power had a plan the doctor was in his office the very day that my mother called.

This doctor was in his office only one day of the week. What are the odds in that? About 20% I would say! The doctor said to go to the ER I put up a fight I really didn't want to go at all. My mother forced me to go. I was 31 at the time. I went to the ER. I spent a night as I never had spent before. I was scared to death. I never cursed God's name at all that night. The next morning I found myself in a room with a doctor who would save my legs. I said yes to the operation. I love Jesus very much. He is my Lord and Savior.

I really thought that I might see Jesus the next day. The surgery was life and death. I had no choice in the matter. I went through the surgery. I woke in the immediate care center. It was days until I felt my legs again and what a wonderful feeling is that. During the night I heard God's voice telling me that I will never be alone. That brought comfort to my heart! I started walking again and with much help at the

hospital. The best thing being in that hospital was that I was in my own room. So was not that bad. One week went by and I went to the rehab place. This time I was not by myself, I had a room mate.

This is the place where I got a taste what life could have been for me. My roommate was a good man I say for sure. He got me thinking about something. A life of an instant change. He was a healthy man when he was younger. He got into a serious car accident that left him without movement in his legs. I saw kids that will have problems worse than mine. I saw people stuck in wheelchairs and would for the rest of their lives. I did not feel sorry for myself anymore. I did lose a lot. I will not be playing baseball or basketball again. However, after what I saw, I really do not care. I remember the time when I couldn't feel. At least I walk now and that is all I ask. Thank God for the things he brought into my life.

Proverbs 3:3-6

Let love and faithfulness never leave you bind them around your neck. Write them on your tablet of your heart. Then you will win favor and a good name in the sight of God and man. Trust in the Lord with all your heart and lean not on your own understanding in all your ways acknowledge him, and he will make your path straight.

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Author of new children's book on Down syndrome shares her heart and vision.....

Heather heathermomof3@hotmail.com

I want to let everyone know of a book called **"Meet Annie"!**

But first, let me tell you a little about myself and my daughter Annie...

Annie was born in September of 2005. I had no idea of the complications she had until after the birth. Even then, it took about 2 weeks until I knew of the severity of her heart condition. Annie has had 10 surgeries, 2 of which have been on her heart. She will have another heart surgery soon and hopefully that will be all, for a while anyway!

Anyway, after her 2nd surgery, I was very depressed. Any of you that experienced that feeling of helplessness know exactly what I mean. Well, when people want to get away from it all, they do all kinds of things. Some drink, hide away, the list goes on and on... well, I don't do any of those things. I de-

ecided to write a book!

This book was meant as therapy for myself, but with my husband's persistence, I sent it out. After going through a massive publishing website, I picked 5 and sent my manuscript out to them. I didn't believe in my wildest dreams that my manuscript would be picked out of the tens of thousands that they receive!

I signed my contract in March of 07. the process took a long year and it is now available all over the internet, worldwide. My book is called "Meet Annie" and is based after my daughter. I am hoping that this will be the first in a series (I have 2 more already done) and will be the first special needs series book with the main character having DS. My goal is to see my book in hospitals and clinics around the U.S. My book teaches acceptance through a simple children's book. I have sold out at book signings, been to schools, "Meet Annie" has also been featured in newspapers and a radio station. I am trying to spread the word. That is why I am writing you all.

I am trying to get my book in the hands of people that can make a difference. I am passionate about this book and hope you will be too.

www.tatepublishing.com



This is Annie...of "Meet Annie!"



Lizzy

Granddaughter with Spinal Muscular Atrophy, (SMA) brings great joy to family....

I am a 49-year-old Grandmother and until Lizzy came into my life, I was quite content being a sporting goods manager and a weekend biker with my husband, since my kids had all grown up. My whole life changed very quickly after the arrival of a special little life that stole my heart.

Now I have a lot of grey hair, don't get out much, gained weight and have a bad back! But the wonderful thing about it all, is that I have the most beautiful, bravest granddaughter in this world and she is doing well!

My daughter Christen was only 20 when she gave birth to Lizzy. Her boyfriend wasn't supportive and didn't have the means or responsibility needed to help Christen care for Elizabeth. My husband and I took our daughter and her newborn in with open arms.

I knew something wasn't right with Lizzy a month after birth. She was very "floppy" and could not handle her own secretions. I used a bulb syringe to keep her mouth clear constantly. Her hands turned inward and she grew weaker after birth. Christen was brushed off by a doctor and told that "all kids are different" but eventually we had her seen by a neurologist and she was diagnosed with SMA, type 1. Children with

SMA, type 1 are not expected to survive past their second birthday without extensive respiratory support.

I dropped to my knees as if someone pierced my heart with a hot knife. I knew that I could not take this news lying down. I HAD to do something.. Anything! I wasn't willing to let her go and I was not going to sit around waiting for her to die.

I learned of a clinical drug study at Stanford University in CA geared for SMA type children. I left a message with a Dr. Wang. He immediately called me back and was extremely informative, kind and understanding. He also gave us hope.

With the aid of Mercy Medical Airlift we were on our way to Stanford on June 10th. Hydroxyurea, in short, is a drug used to treat specific kinds of cancers in the head, neck, ovaries and Sickle cell anemia. It has also been found to halt Spinal Muscular Atrophy.

We found that other interventions were needed to assist Lizzy and through FSMA and SMA Support, we were able to secure the equipment needed. We received a bi-pap, cough asst. machine, a suction machine, pulse oximeter and Tolorex, so we could begin an amino acid diet.

Elizabeth turned 4 years old on 9-29-07. The drug trial ended October 4th. Lizzy is currently on an amino acid diet supplemented with donor breast milk. We stretch her daily and continue her physical therapy. Most importantly, Lizzy is extremely happy and bright. She is much loved and is able to color and paint. Like any other 4-year-old girl she loves her makeup, jewelry and dresses.

Her favorite book is "Fancy Nancy" by Jane O'Connor.

We had to decide to homeschool her because of an illness last October that lasted over three weeks. A lot of parents, whose kids go to public school, do not keep their kids home when they are sick. RSV could kill Lizzy. One parent sent their child to school with 102 fever and said she had given him Tylenol. After an hour his fever shot up to 103 and he was sent home. Not even the teacher had known he was sick. The teacher had a new baby and had just come back to school. So all

the kids and the two teachers in the class were exposed to that virus. That was the last straw.

Lizzy lives a normal life by any standard and her pediatrician has learned much about SMA through her. He's very proud of her progress and she continues to amaze him at each visit. He has been very supportive and so has all his office personnel.

Elizabeth has a power wheel chair that she does very well in. It's purple and decorated with the Disney Princess window clings. Christen put pink beaded trim around the arms of her chair and her aunt Jessie made a fuchsia colored tu-tu skirt to go around the chair. My daughters and their families are very supportive of Elizabeth and treat her as a normal child with special needs.

SMA is horrifying and heartbreaking, but it can be treated. Elizabeth is doing well now and that's all that counts. We don't know if it's just the Hydroxyurea or the fact that we've not given up. Maybe it's the combination of all we do. I thank God we have Elizabeth and I wish doctors would become more knowledgeable in the treatment/management of this disease. I send the specialist who told us to "take her home and love her until she dies" an update every year when her birthday comes. I want him to know how well she is doing and that she has beaten "the odds". I'll never give up and will continue to do all I can to ensure Lizzy remains happy and healthy with many more birthdays and milestones to look forward to.

Elizabeth's mission in this life is to help other SMA children through sharing her story. Her strength, perseverance and will to survive, with God's divine intervention, is what keeps us fighting each and everyday.

Lizzy will have the best possible life she can lead; the smile on her face and twinkle in her eyes says it all. We'll continue this fight and pray for a cure while hopefully helping other families along the way.

Jeanna Huetter

For Further Information please visit:

www.our-sma-angels.com/elizabeth

www2.caringbridge.org/il/elizabeth/

<https://www.cafepress.com/b4sma/2107700>



Jonathan Opalka

Letter from Deb Opalka, Jonathan's mom.

I had to laugh when I read the little article in your last newsletter about our Jonathan. I had written it around Christmas time, '07

when he was still scooting around on his bottom. I said he was just taking a few steps on his own but that it must be "so scary for him" because of his visual impairment. (He has no center vision).

Now here it was only 6 months later and I had just gone to our mailbox with Jonathan and received your newsletter. This daily trip consists of a walk down our very long, steep driveway with Jonathan leading the way. I would like to hold his hand but he always says "I do" or "myself" or "Ah Wah Do" (I want to do it alone, thank-you!) Often as we reach the mailbox he says "more walk" then I follow as he hikes down another steep road, sometimes walking another 1 1/2 miles, always leading the way and always very steady on his feet.

The Early Intervention Therapists consider him a "miracle child" (which has been a great opportunity for witnessing). There has been no task, so far, that Jonathan hasn't aced. He can identify colors, shapes, characters, numbers and some letters (even in small print) in his books. He seems to be able to accomplish just about anything that any normal 2 1/2 year old can (and then some).

And to think that we almost said "no" when you asked if we would consider taking Jonathan. He was 9 months old when we received CHASK's call and we're in our mid fifties. We were a little fearful that when we reached our seventies that because of his vision problems, Jonathan would still be dependent on us. Ha! Ha! I wish at the age of 2 he was a little more dependent. Although when it's convenient or when he gets in trouble he reminds me..."I mommy's baby." I know God has great plans for our little super boy.

I would encourage other parents not to fear the "special needs" label. These children are such blessings and God always puts in many extras when they are lacking in some ability.

God Bless You all for your service in Christ.
Deb Opalka.

What a wonderful blessing God has given us - Simon Gabriel Scheck!

Patrice and I flew to San Francisco on Sunday, Aug 10, met Simon's birthparents at our hotel, and were given all the information necessary to take care of him. Simon, diagnosed with Prader-Willi Syndrome, is entirely nourished through a feeding tube in his stomach called a mic-key tube. The birthparents left Simon with us that first night so we could practice. The next morning we all went to the adoption agency together - his birthparents signed the relinquishment papers and we accepted Simon as our own.

Not six hours later however we had to hit the emergency room because his mic-key came out! Neither we, his birthparents, nor the doctors on duty could get it back in. We ended up getting a temporary smaller-diameter tube in order to feed him. In the meantime, we had wonderful interaction with his birthparents. We scheduled an appointment with the surgeons in the morning to place a new tube, but that didn't work out either. Unfortunately, the next step would be to put Simon under general anesthesia to open up the hole. Due to the considerable complications of Prader-Willi with general anesthesia we opted out of having it done in San Francisco and set up for the procedure when we returned to Colorado the next week. (Back home, they got us in quickly and inserted the tube without needing anesthesia, another gift from God.)

The next hurdle was interstate adoption clearance. We couldn't be away from our two other special-needs children at home in Colorado for too long, and we were warned that it could take up to two weeks for the OK to transport Simon across state lines. But God took care of that one too. While we were driving south from San Francisco to Los Angeles that same day, we were called with our clearance. Both adoption agencies in Colorado and San Francisco worked so hard for us to make things go smoothly. Colorado completed our expedited home study within 6 weeks and San Francisco got us clearance and all the necessary medical records and permissions within less than 2 weeks from our initial contact.

Next was the immediate care our pediatric



Simon cuddling with older brother

physician gave us in Colorado. She got us in the same day we had the mic-key tube replaced and set up for all the specialists Simon would require. Adoption is so wonderful, but everyone teamed up to make this "special needs" adoption something to remember. God was all over this, intervening from beginning to end!

Simon is doing great! We're almost getting enough sleep every night and he just had his 4-month checkup and vaccinations...and he cried. (This too is a miracle. When our son Christopher, also with Prader-Willi, was that age, he wasn't strong enough to cry.)

It was with pride and joy Patrice and I watched Sarah Palin give her vice presidential nomination speech to the world, and she said that people just like us...families with special needs children, may have an advocate in the White House. Actually, an Advocate in Heaven is infinitely better and more practical, but in our simple human understanding it sounded nice.

CHASK, thank you for being a part of God's plan for our family, May God bless you as he has blessed us!

**Samuel and Patrice Scheck,
Highlands Ranch, Colorado**

Mom feels like homeschooling all of her children, including a son with Pervasive DD, might be too much

Please reply to chaskinfo@aol.com
Homeschooling with PDD

I have been homeschooling for 7 years. I am happy to serve the Lord (and my children) in this way.

I am concerned about the siblings of my special needs child, specifically the oldest brother. It can be very aggravating to spend all day with a sibling whose behavior is oftentimes disruptive, disrespectful (as it seems through the eyes of a nine year old brother), loud, out-of-control and so on.

Not every day is bad. Some days are great, but some days can seem so dark, and long, and challenging, that I wonder if my older child is living with too much stress on a day-to-day basis. I'd hate to give up homeschooling, but I want to do what is best for *all* of my children, for each of my children.

Academically they are excelling (both boys are two years ahead). Their fledgling faith is growing, and they do love each other. I guess the biggest stress is that my nine-year-old boy, who is very rigid in his thinking cannot understand that his eight-year-old brother's behavior acting out, verbal outbursts, impulsive reactions etc.) are not personal. They are symptoms of his brothers "invisible disability"; Pervasive Developmental Disorder-Not Otherwise Specified. This is an umbrella term for a little bit of everything, but not enough of one thing to have anything!

I have been longing to talk to some families that are equally yoked in faith and lifestyle to share ideas with and hopefully tell me that I am not ruining my children. I want to please the Lord and serve Him in all things and want to be sure that I haven't fallen more in love with the "idea" of homeschooling than I have with obeying my Lord. Is he telling me to send my oldest child out of the house to public school? Or am I so wrapped up in insecurity (and Satan has had me here before) that.....oh, you can see where I am going with this.....around in circles. Thanks Erin

Help for new homeschoolers of children who have Angelman Syndrome.

I would like to avail myself to any parent of a child with Angelman Syndrome who is considering homeschooling. I homeschooled my son for twelve years plus, (graduated in 2001), and it would be my pleasure to be able to be an encouragement to parents just beginning the journey. Beth Wiechman
P.O. Box 301 Sedgwick, KS 67135
(316) 772-5464

.....



Jimmy Jiahua Van den Berg

Miranda (Born with Achondroplasia and featured in the NATHHAN /CHASK News a while back), has been blessed with a brother (that also has Achondroplasia) through adoption. She's tickled, and doing good with him.

Miranda has more emotional needs. He has more physical needs. He had a foramen magnum decompression done in April. He has 100% kyphosis as well as scoliosis between T11 and L4 and he wears a brace for this. He has a gastrostomy, currently not used, hearing problems and is non-verbal. He also suffers from (OSAS) sleep apnea because of the shape of his face (mid-face protrusion).



Does anyone know anything about the operation he's got coming up, using a "red device" to bring it forward? Crouzon patients get this done.
Thanks,

Corrie Van den Berg
Box 428 Picture Butte, Alberta,
CANADA T0K 1V0 403-732-5689
(e-mail out of order right now)

Adoption Disruption?

By Lori Anderson

Adoption in the minds of potential families is a “forever deal.” Unfortunately when the reality of a troubled adoption hits, families are faced with tough decisions. Where do we go for treatment? What type of treatment does this behavior require? How do we preserve the loving feelings we have for our struggling child?

To disrupt or not to disrupt, that is the question. Families have spent months or even years preparing to bring their forever child home, only to realize that their dreams and desires do not exist in this child. In most cases families begin seeing therapists, psychologists, and psychiatrists in an attempt to diagnose the issues that the child is having and fortify the family as they struggle to “hang on.” Hanging on may come at a high price for some families. There are instances where mothers, fathers and siblings end up in counseling. Children, who were already in the family, may in fact be abused emotionally, physically or even sexually by their newly adopted sibling.

Recently, I spoke with a mother who was diagnosed with Post Traumatic Stress Disorder. The trauma that she endured from her adoptive daughter is unimaginable. For her, it was more than just dealing with the loss of a dream for her child; it was living a hellish nightmare with her daughter. The heartache this mother shared was raw. She told of the loss of family and friends due to people not understanding the ways of children with attachment issues. She told of insurmountable debt the family has incurred as a result of hospitaliza-

tions and treatments for the adopted daughter and the other members of her family, and the seemingly endless missed time from work while she desperately searched to find help for her daughter.

My heart reaches out to her. I, too, am a mother of a severely disturbed child who has been in and out of residential treatment facilities with very little progress being made. The thought of disrupting our son Justin’s adoption is gut wrenching. My fear is that we may have to accept that our love and desire to parent our son while he lives in our home may not be the reality that God has chosen for us. Unfortunately, for some, being the hands-on parents we so desire, is not an option. Some parents will simply become the loving care provider that helps their child along in their journey to their forever family.

Safety

As we work to meet our son’s needs and seek ongoing services for him we are often reminded of the beautiful child he is. When asked about our son, I can easily name several things about him I truly love about him. Remembering to separate the “behavior” from the child, is always in the forefront of my mind. When Justin is raging, I see a pitiful boy who does not have the skills to control his emotions. When Justin is out-of-control, I have to think in terms of his ability to cope and my ability to provide safety for him and our other children. It is no longer about embarrassment, guilt or shame when he acts out in public. It is about safety.

Conversely, I am blessed to be the mother of a son adopted from a disrupted adoption. DJ’s initial adoptive family was unprepared for the behaviors and severe emotional needs DJ struggled with.

What they did know was that this little guy was an orphan due to tragic events and needed a forever family. What they did not know is how deeply these losses had affected him, nor how to help him process his tumultuous early childhood. Seemingly no



amount of therapy or interventions could repair DJ's heart. He lacked trust and desire to be a part of a forever family. Moving DJ from an environment where he was the only child to an environment where he was one of many helped him. He was able to blend in and not be the focus. In our home positive peer pressure has been a huge help for DJ. No, it is not easy, and I wouldn't recommend it for most families. But, DJ is doing well in our home and has become a lovable part of our family.

Years ago while working on attachment issues with our two-year-old son Jacob, I remember reading an article about a child with RAD and a family's struggle to keep him in their home. At the time I did not "get it." Jacob was responding well to the therapy interventions we were using and I could not imagine not being able to "reach" a child.

Our story of Jacob's healing is truly amazing. He came to us at ten months old along with his birth mother who was in foster care as well. Four months later she left foster care asking us to adopt Jacob. In the short ten months of his life he had been in six different placements. One of them was a home for unwed mothers. There he had a different caregiver every eight hours. His mother's struggles affected him deeply. She had not bonded with him and thus he could not bond with us.

The "dance" of structured love

began the day he arrived. When I attempted to hold him while he drank his bottle he would refuse to drink it, pinching and scratching to get away from me. Once out of my arms he would settle into feed himself. Lovingly, I would pick him up, snuggle him, and attempt to feed him again. He would refuse, and the scenario would begin again. When I attempted to play simple games like peek-a-boo with him he showed little interest. Yet, peek-a-boo with the store clerk was a game he enjoyed immensely. Bath time was a test I began to dread. He would scream and pinch me the entire time he was in the tub. I tried bathing him in the sink; he cried and screamed louder and flung himself violently. Nap-time and bedtime were exhausting; he would crawl out of bed and lie in the laundry room on the dirty clothes pile. Believe me, there was never a shortage of dirty laundry with twelve children at home! I became his total caregiver and over time he gradually responded to my nurturing. It was difficult for everyone. He was my focus and the others missed out

on mom because of it. But in the end it paid off. He went through four years of therapy and is doing much better. He still has his struggles with attachment issues and his lack of respect for the females in his life but, overall he is well adjusted. In Jacob's case I never thought of giving in or giving up. He always managed to give me some hope even on the worst days.

Husband's point of view

Often times when people share stories on attachment issues of children you hear the mothers' point of view. Curious, I asked my husband how those years with Jacob and now DJ and Justin have made him feel. He answered quickly. "Sad that we have to watch a child struggle through the process, grateful we are here to hold them up in prayer during that time and give them the love they so desperately need."

Because of our experiences with attachment and emotional issues we have taken in other children who struggle with similar issues. It is amazing to see the progress most of them make as they begin to heal in our environment.

It is funny how life has a way of bringing you full circle. Now, several years later I do "get it," having Justin in our lives has given me empathy and understanding for families struggling with severely emotionally disturbed children.

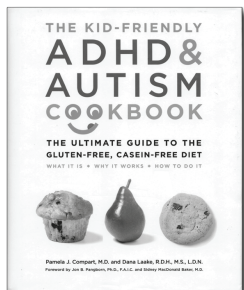
Love is not enough

For children who have been terribly abused and neglected, love is simply not enough. For our family it is the balance of structure, nurturing environment, community resources, support of family friends and church. It is my prayer that the Lord bestows knowledge on my husband and I as we make these difficult decisions regarding Justin and our family. If you would like to contact me please e-mail me at glanderson479@sbcglobal.net

Lori Anderson
5 Hickory Court
Newton, Kansas 67114



Resource Reviews



The Kid-Friendly ADHD & Autism Cookbook - The Ultimate Guide to the Gluten-Free, Casein-Free Diet, What It Is, Why It Works, How To Do It

By Pamela J. Compart, M.D. and Dana Laake, R.D.H., M.S., L.D.N.

Gluten- and Casein-Free Foods That are Simple, Delicious, and Fun!

The phrases "gluten-free diet" and "casein-free diet" are enough to strike fear into the hearts of most parents.

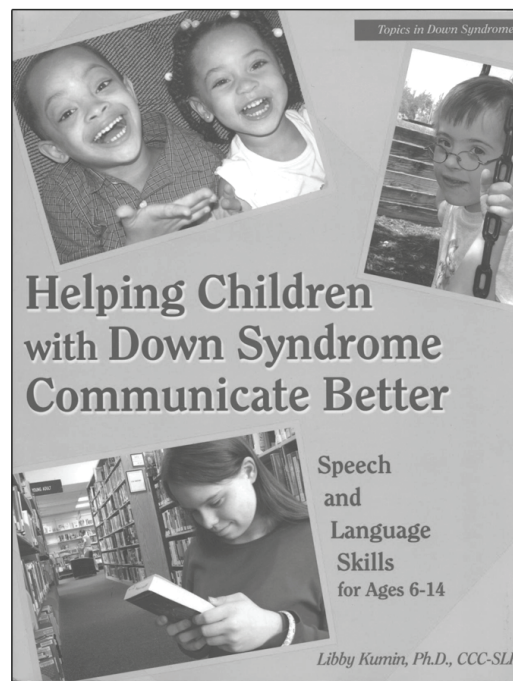
The Kid-Friendly ADHD and Autism Cookbook tackles all of your concerns and serves as a how-to guide for beginning and maintaining a healthy diet that can improve your child's brain function.

You will learn:

How food sensitivities differ from food allergies; How to avoid unsuspected sources of gluten, casein, soy, corn, and nuts; Ways to "disguise" healthy foods and get rid of junk food; What to do about the very picky eater; Tips for dealing with "withdrawal" symptoms. Lists of substitutes, substitutes and more substitutes!

Your kids will love all of these gluten- and casein-free versions of their favorite meals, desserts, and snacks!

Pancakes * Happy Hummus * Chicken Nuggets * French Fries and Sweet Fries * Sweet Potato Enchiladas * Pizza Sauce and Crust * Turkey Noodle Soup * Peanut Butter Truffle Cookies * Chocolatey Pumpkin Bars



As children with Down syndrome reach age 6, they encounter more complex speech and language demands in their learning and relationships with others.

This is when gaps in communication abilities between children with Down syndrome and their typically developing peers begin to widen. **Helping Children with Down Syndrome Communicate Better** provides parents and professionals with the information and resources they need to improve their child's communication at school, at home, and in the wider community.

Written by Dr. Libby Kumin, an expert in Down syndrome and communication, this is the only book about speech and language issues for children with Down syndrome ages 6-14, and is the sequel to Early Communication Skills for Children with Down Syndrome.

Chapters include case studies, research, home and school activities for practice, and present:

The distinctions between language and speech; Factors that make speech and language difficult (articulation, grammar, fluency)

The evaluation process (school or private evaluation) Continued next page....

Assessment of language and speech skills

Language treatment (grammar, vocabulary, reading)

Speech treatment (articulation, fluency, apraxia)

Communication skills at school

Communication skills at home & in the community

Conversational skills (how to start & end conversations, take turns, stay on topic)

Assistive technology for communication (assessing need, types of augmentative or alternative communication, the right match for your child)

A suggested reading list, resource guide, and appendices (sample evaluations and blank forms) complement the wealth of practical suggestions and strategies in **Helping Children with Down Syndrome Communicate Better.**

Parents, therapists, and teachers will want to refer to it often to help children make communication progress and participate fully in their lives.

Pictures to Teach a Thousand Words

Stages® 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.

Stages® Learning Materials provides quality teaching tools for every stage of development.



STAGES[®]
learning materials

Homeschooling Downloads - Part 2

By Joan Roberts

I hate to admit it, but I am finding the computer annoyingly fascinating for teaching resources. When looking for something in particular I find myself surfing the net a little; well, ok, a lot!

I came across this cool site called technology, go to www.teach-nology.com and you will see why I am so excited about it. I love worksheets that are not cluttered with tons of background images that confuse Laura and this site offers a big choice of useful and free printouts on an array of topics. They also have phonics worksheets if you need extra work in that area. There is a member option and after I have exhausted all that they offer (and that is a lot) for free, I may sign up! The fee is nominal, by the way.

Another discovery has been the Starfall Store, go to www.starfall.com. Here you can find some fun stuff to use, especially if your kids like puzzles. You can either download the puzzles or for kinesthetic learners, you can order them on line which would also limit the computer time and be easier on the eyes. The puzzles are brightly colored and each one concentrates on an individual vowel sound. This company also has a variety of free downloads for other word practices, like word searches, which are so helpful for repetition work. The ones I looked at were on a beginner level.

Starfall has great deals on bulk orders; maybe those in your homeschool group would like to know about this and order more than one set of readers and save a bundle. The readers have photographs of “real” people, instead of cartoon characters. In addition, this company offers a phonics course.

The absolute best site that I found while writing this article was

www.internet4classrooms.com. But watch out, you could get hooked on this one. I was online until midnight just scanning through the choices! This is not just for beginning learners. The site is broken down into subject territory and also offers a teachers’ resource section. Each subject area has a minimum of 30 links to look into and many of those have real neat games to play; one site has a visual perception game that was pretty challenging. I did get a little carried away playing it myself. For the visual discrimination games go to: www.pitara.com. There may be similar games on other sites, you will just have to check them out or turn that project over to the kids.



If you need a resource for getting started in homeschooling and you don’t want to buy a curriculum, then I would suggest you look into **Zoom School**. Just type in those words on the search bar and you will be equipped to teach your elementary aged student thoroughly with a creative twist. This site can definitely help you to avoid the

temptation to create a “public-school-at-home by enabling you to pick and choose what interests your kids the most, which in turn plants the seed of extended learning.

In a situation of needing a more structured curriculum you will also find the **Zoom School** very helpful. It offers activities in geography, biology, and language arts, and also includes classroom helps, illustrated dictionaries, and printouts, to boot. You will be amazed at the information that you can use. I’d almost sell all of my books and just use the site! I’m just kidding; nothing can replace having a book in your hand to read. But when you want worksheets quick and have a printer, you can definitely enjoy the speed of the computer sources.



Happy 1st Birthday Julia! By Jerri Unruh

Julia (found through CHASK and adopted shortly after birth) has added so much to our lives. She is officially diagnosed with Ohtahara Syndrome or Infantile Epileptic Encephalopathy. (A seizure disorder).

After living and caring for Julia for a year, everyone seems to be used to her now... sometimes to the point of complacency. A common occurrence around here is to be responding to Julia's choking emergency with the suction machine, while at the same time being asked, "Mom, where is my math?" or "Hey Mom, can I have a cookie?" To which one of two things happen, #1 I respond with, "You left it on the washing machine." or "No, you can't have a cookie, wait for dinner." OR #2, I hysterically say, "Please, can't you see this is life or death?!"

When we first considered adopting Julia, I was convinced that we needed her as much (or more) than she needed us. I reasoned that having Julia would help everyone, including me, with selfishness. We could serve the Lord while serving Julia! Such godly intentions! I was focusing on our potential character development... and what we got instead was a house full of characters!

Our family also has a renewed respect for the sanctity of life; the reality of our true needs; the frailty of our human condition; our dependence on God for daily strength; and, yes, the blatant realization of our deeply rooted selfishness.

Through Julia's life we are indeed developing character aimed at Godliness...but, that is what we all should do for each other, is it not? "Faithful are the wounds of a friend" "Iron sharpens iron." God intends for us to grow and change. He uses many opportunities to do just that, but how do we respond? I find that growth is hard.

Was I prepared for all that I personally would find myself dealing with when I was thinking of character development? I am just scratching the surface. Ouch! Would I adopt Julia again, knowing all that we would go through? Absolutely!

Here are some sweet examples of our little guys gaining some character growth right before my eyes!

"...Momma, Juya having seezers; mom, come quick she coughed, how can I help? I'll turn on the suction and get some water to clean it when your done; she's so beautiful, can I kiss her?"

"Me mix it (formula); she's smiling at me; I can do her meds."

"Me sleep with Juya; do you need a vent, here is her bear, and... hey, mom what about my cookie now?"

Here is a picture of the Unruh characters!



....He who has begun a good work in you will complete it until the day of Jesus Christ. Phil 1:6

(Editor's note: Jim and Jerri Unruh are NATHHAN/CHASK Board Members and have been involved for many years. It is such a joy to see them enjoying one of the Lord's special little treasures!)

Helping Our Children (with disability) Become God's Useful Servant

By Diane Ryckman

As a mother of eight, including a son with Down syndrome, it is not difficult to look back and see how each of our children arrived in our family as their own little person. Every aspect of their being, every trait of their character was pre-designed by their Creator. The psalmist David put it this way, "You created my inmost being; you knit me together in my mother's womb," Psalm 139:13.

God's unique design. God has uniquely designed each one of us. Our children with "disabilities" are actually created by his planning. Carefully He has laid out every aspect of our character. Every distinctive quality that makes us who we are, was put in place before we took our first breath. It is impossible to understand the bigness of God, but in some way His creating each of us involved risk, because within the fabric of our being he interwove choice. Not only that, but the materials He had to work with were flawed by sin, and that which He so carefully designed with the capacity to reflect His glory also has the capacity, when ruled by SELF, to do great damage.

Selfishness or Self expression?

The challenge in character development is distinguishing between selfishness (I want to do what I want) and self expression (this is who God made me to be). One is a ruler (a tyrant!), the other that which is to be ruled. The challenge in life is learning to yield that which makes me "me" into the hands of the LORD so that He can be glorified.

Somehow it is freeing to realize that I am who I am because God designed me this way, inside and out. He calls me to love Him with all my being – every aspect of the person He made me to be. Every day presents me with the choice of whom I will serve with the abilities and characteristics He's

given. Will I serve self? Will I serve God?

Choosing to serve God involves learning to walk within the parameters of the Word of God. We are told to "work out your own salvation..." and as we do, we can experience the unfolding of the adventure to which God has called us as He works in us "both to will and to do of His good pleasure" Phil. 2:12-13.

What about our children, even those with special challenges? How do we help them to grow into all that God has planned for them without catering to the selfish nature inherent in each one of us? How do we distinguish between behavior that is just different from who I am, and behavior that is defiant?



Andrew Ryckman

This past spring, our eldest daughter graduated from Bible school as class valedictorian. She was introduced as a young woman who wasn't afraid to ask the tough questions. I thought back to when she was 5, then 6, then 7 as I was trying to teach her to read. At the time she had seemed to resist all attempts and methods with "This doesn't make sense...", until I came across a reading method that explained all the quirks of the English language. Her questions answered, she had no difficulty moving on. As I listened to her professor's introduction, it hit me that this characteristic which had been such a point of frustration for me as she was growing up, was actually a part of her design. How God had made her. For His own purpose. If only I had seen that then, it could have saved us both much grief!

Our responsibility is two-fold

1. To learn to recognize and respect the uniqueness of each of our children – the way God designed them to be, and

2. To teach our children to live, unique-

ness and all, within the parameters of the Word of God.

There is one command in the Bible directed specifically toward children.

Ephesians 6:1 says, “Children, obey your parents in the Lord, for this is right. Honor your father and mother...”

Unfortunately, this is not something children will do automatically! They need our help as parents, first of all learning to obey, then learning to honor us. Proverbs 22:6 says we are to train up a child in the way he should go. To “train” means to “narrow”. As parents we have been entrusted with a life to care for, nurture, and train. Just as a plant can be “trained” to climb a trellis by being pruned and shaped to grow a specific way, so our children are to be trained (narrowed) to live within the confines of “the way he should go”. They need to be taught to say “no” to self and to yield to others, and this begins with their parents. They also need to see us live before them the two greatest commandments – loving God, and loving others.

How does obedience look in your home?

How this will look in your home will differ from how it looks in ours. You will have a way of training and modeling that will be unique to your family. Yet despite our uniqueness we have a common source of help available to each one of us. God offers us wisdom for the asking. He longs to strengthen us with His might in our inner man. He invites us to come to Him for grace to help in time of need, and He promises to be with us always. God is more than big enough to supply all our needs in raising our children, as we choose to submit into His hands the uniqueness of who He made us to be, and then live for His glory day by day.

Excerpt from the CHASK book, by Sherry Bushnell and Diane Ryckman: Training Our Children In Simple Obedience

Training our special needs children to be cheerfully obedient and a pleasure to be around is the kindest thing we can do for them. In most cases, someone will have to live with them for the rest of their lives. A happy child-turned-adult, that loves life, is a pleasure to be around. A willful, stubborn child (turned adult) bent on leading a life of self-gratification, dislikes himself and is a real torture to live with.

The Bible has only one direct command to children. Ephesians 6:1 and 2 says, “Children obey your parents in the Lord: for this is right. Honor thy Father and Mother; which is the first commandment with promise.” As parents we

need to keep this in mind. Our Heavenly Father, in His wisdom, has really made it so simple. Because we love our children so much, we earnestly desire they come to know and serve the Risen Lord, and training our children in simple obedience to parents.

Behavior Modification Techniques?

Unfortunately, the process of training challenged children in godliness has become a

confusing array of worldly behavior modification techniques. There is a real dearth of godly child training materials that give practical how-to’s on teaching children to obey simple commands. Parents are told to be content with cultural examples, not God’s standards. But Colossians 2:8 says, “See to it that no one takes you captive through hollow and deceptive philosophy, which depends on human traditions and the basic principles of this world, rather than on Christ.”

Our adversary, the devil, works hard at blinding parents to their child’s real needs: the fact that all children, even those with special needs, have a sin nature and are in need of loving training by their parents. He does this by creating confusion and a lack of confidence in the area of



Kaitlyn Ryckman

child training. Parents are encouraged to ignore tantrums, self-stimulation of all kinds, screaming, greediness and general misbehavior as “it’s your disabled child’s way of expressing him or herself.”

Ungodly behavior by children with special needs is often excused away with comments such as, “It’s all part of the ‘syndrome’ or ‘common with this type of disability’.” While it is true that our children will never be “normal”, they can be trained to obey simple, reasonable requests with a good attitude, as much as they are physically and mentally capable.

Training is not punishment. It is taking the time to show our children what we want from them. It may require the use of a light rod, a simple tool to get our children’s attention and let them know we are serious. The Bible says in Matthew 18:6, “But whoso shall offend (or hurt) one of these little ones which believe in me, it were better for him that a millstone were hanged about his neck, and that he were drowned in the depth of the sea.” The Bible also encourages parents in Proverbs 23:13 and 14, “Withhold not correction from the child: for if thou beatest him with a rod, he shall not die. Thou shalt beat him with a rod, and shalt deliver his soul from hell.”

It is very obvious from these two verses taken in context together, that the Lord would have us use the rod with careful consideration of a child’s development capabilities and limitations.

Parents that have a working relationship with their child can read their child’s emotions like a book. Proverbs 20:11 says, “Even a child is known by his doings, whether his work be pure, and whether it be right.” Loving parents know (or can learn to know) what their children are capable of.

Proverbs 22:6 says that we should train our children in the way they should go; and when they are old they will not depart from it. The Bible also says that we are not to exasperate them by asking too much of them or something they are not capable of. (Ephesians 6:4.)

Make training a beneficial learning time, for both you and your child’s good. The goal is understanding and then obedience. A child with a teachable heart, is willing to work with their parents.

When working with challenging behavior, be a proactive parent, and not reactive. Do not wait for your child to displease you and push your buttons. Take the time to train them to easily obey before tension builds.

Practical Tips

When training a child who is presenting special challenges, the most important thing we have found for success is prayer. James 1:5 says, “If any of you lack wisdom, let him ask of God, that giveth to all men liberally, and upbraideth not; and it shall be given him.”

Are your child’s needs met? Learn to distinguish between needs and wants.

1. Not hungry or thirsty.
2. Dry and warm, not cold or uncomfortable.
3. Not sick or in pain.
4. Given a normal, sufficient amount of positive love and attention. (Some children direct attention to themselves constantly, even negative... as long as it is all about them.)

Ice Cream Cone Test

For loving, effective training, a bond of trust of sorts should exist between parent and child. Strangers are not as effective, unless the method is total cause and effect.

How do we know our children can hear us or understand our requests? We give the ice-cream test. When our children are lagging in “understanding” or seem not to hear us when we are asking them to do something, we use a verbal (or sign) request that we *know* they should be able to hear or understand. For instance, we might say, “Jordan, would you like some ice cream?” If he looks up and smiles and responds, we know that his hearing is fine. If we are not sure whether our child can understand us, we may use another request the same level of comprehension a few minutes later.

Beware:

It is not the actual teaching and training of simple commands that is hard. It is the enforcing the newly required behavior consistently.



John & Diane Ryckman

Love and Learning presents a new puzzle web page full of more fun learning....www.TotallyWords.com

Children who are older than four years of age, can manipulate a mouse, have not yet learned to read or are emerging readers, will love clicking on puzzles to complete a fun picture. Rolling mouse over word highlights the word and speaks it at the same time.

- Over 830 words used over 12,000 times
- 100 word puzzles and 120 mystery pictures
- 360 Sentence/Definitions/clues
- Allows a child to regulate the amount of assistance needed

This is where you smile and eat.



That is the hard part. But, if we are taking the time to train our children, we will be actually disciplining less.

So, the key to effective and successful training is both consistency and loving objectivity. Stay in control. You can train your child to come with your first request.... Or fourth request! Deliberate defiance from a child (even those with special needs), calls for a calm, loving parent, whose goal is not to produce comfort for themselves, but to help their child learn self control.

Having a special needs child who comprehends instructions more slowly can be a real test of patience. Do not despair, don't give up. If you are in doubt if they understand, it is time for training, not reacting.

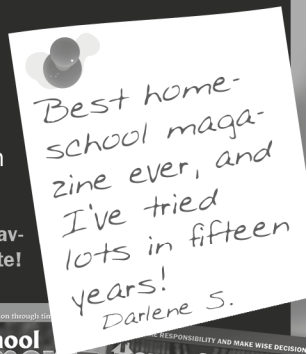
To read this chapter in the CHASK book called *Lovingly Guiding Their Footsteps*, look on page 22 for ordering information.

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“I’ve Changed My Mind!”

By Dennis and
Linda Lamphere

How many times have you heard it said (or have said yourself), “I’ve changed my mind”?

A question we can ask ourselves is this...

Are we willing to change for the better, or are we stuck in a rut?

One exceptionally chilly morning, Grandma got up, warmed up the house, and spent time planning errands for the day... until she opened the window blinds and discovered a foot of new snow on the ground.

“Time for a change of plans. I’m not driving in this white stuff!”

What does it take for God to convince us that we need to change?

Our God “changes not”, but then He is perfect, not imperfect as we are. Romans 12:2 says, “to be transformed, by the renewing of your minds” We need our imperfect minds and hearts changed to His perfect ways, especially when the circumstances don’t line up with the way we think!

Let’s take a look at how we view change in our children. Isn’t this a goal we have, to help them learn to be changed into Christ’s likeness? - 2 Corinthians 3:18. By experience we can see that when their hearts truly change, actions follow.

Over the years, we have found this to be true in our own lives. By God’s mercy and kind-



ness, when we finally get it through our head and down into our hearts, real change in our attitude and actions follow.

As we gain more understanding of the way to live, we must change our minds, fall on Christ’s payment at the cross and examine Jesus’ words carefully.

He promises to enlighten our ways and will answer the big “Why?” questions. Philippians 1:9-11. He will give us wisdom. He will give us the ability to change, even when it looks impossible to us.

In the meantime, how do we teach our children to have a change of heart?

First we can teach the principles of godly living and insist on Christ-like behavior consistently. Sooner or later our child usually catches on and begins to choose the right way without being told. Boy does that take a test of patience! (So many times it is much more comfortable to stay in our chair instead of getting up and training and teaching.)

This is perhaps why we

MUST get the “log out of our own eye” so we can model the very behavior we are expecting in our children or grandchildren. More is caught than taught by little eyes and ears.

For instance... Grandpa saw that he had a bad habit of saying something just to get a reaction out of someone. Pretty harmless.... It was just the way he had been raised... Suddenly it wasn’t “O.K.” when he noticed his grandchildren copying him.

As he studied and looked at the way Jesus communicated, it became obvious to him that it was not the right way to communicate!

He decided to change his way of teasing and sincerely care about every other person. He noticed his grandchildren stopped trying to get a rise out of him too!

Our children must know that it is okay. to admit we were wrong and change to make good choices. Talk with them. We need to be committed to change... especially when we are the ones “caught with our hand in the cookie jar”.

It is all a growing process, this learning to be faithful, repentant and consistent. Make prayer a way of life.

The secret of change in our lives is simple. Leaving our wrong attitudes and actions at the cross, give up everything to Christ. That’s when Jesus can make that longed for permanent change in our hearts.

So ---by God’s grace, today I have changed my mind. Have you?

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Individual Education Planning Manual For the Homeschool Handicapped Student

By Deborah Mary Kathleen Mills



IEPs are now easy! Create your child's professional looking IEP specific to the special needs of your student.

Menu of IEP goals! Chronological Age-Appropriate Activities for students with handicaps offers a nonexhaustive menu of ideas from which to draw.

"Spring board" for ideas. Its purpose is to function as a resource for designing, adapting, and validating skill requirements.

Listing of professional terms that equal ordinary skills (folding socks=fine motor, 3 sequence directions= giving your child three tasks to accomplish in order).

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