



Supporting Our Community

Erin Scherger, Herndon

When we decided to homeschool, I was asked a few typical questions.

“What about socialization?”

“What about prom?”

And the most asked, by far: “But, how will they get into college?”

As we (quickly) approach the next stage of college breaks and the impending empty nest, I find that, again, there are standard questions.

“What will you do with all your free time?”

“Are you ready to retire?”

And the most asked, by far: “Will you continue to volunteer with homeschoolers now that you’re all done homeschooling?”

All *done*. Am I really *all done*?

I get the sense, talking with other parents, that many (most?) of us volunteer in activities related to our kids out of a sense of obligation. And I get it; I really do. As soon as my daughter was done with girl scouting, for example, I was relieved to pass along the mantles of troop leader and cookie mom. I strongly believe that when we are involved in an activity or group that we should do our part to help: “Many hands...” and all that. But when we’re done? We’re done. There will be, after all, others who can easily step into our roles.

But, unlike scouting, music lessons, and other activities of that ilk, homeschooling (at least for us) has not just been an activity; it’s become part of who we are as a family. Trying to parse the differences, I think the essence is that while scouts form troops and athletes form teams, as homeschoolers, we form *communities*.

And communities need continued, renewed support—from *all* members, whether they are actively reaping the benefits or are more rightfully considered mentors—to develop, to thrive, and to grow.

VaHomeschoolers volunteers, with homeschoolers of all ages—including graduates—support homeschooling families through *VaHomeschoolers Voice*, social media, online discussion groups, our toll-free Helpline, the Helpdesk, our annual conference, and local meetups and coffee chats.

Homeschoolers, past and present, keep an eye on legislation that affects our whole community each year. For example, Karen Skelton, VaHomeschoolers Director of Government Affairs, who presents the summary of the homeschool-related bills from this year’s General Assembly, graduated her youngest five years ago.

The annual VaHomeschoolers Conference and Resource Fair was held this past March. I hope you enjoy the photos taken by the talented Keely Noffsinger Massie and her team of photographers, as well as the articles written by other current homeschoolers Tabitha Stacy and DeeDee Sauter. Our conference needs many volunteers in order to run smoothly; and yes, some of our most popular conference speakers and some of our most dedicated volunteers now have only homeschool graduates in the family.

Long-time member Cathy Meyers has submitted a lovely article for this issue on her long relationships with different homeschooling communities and how she continues to find value in supporting families and VaHomeschoolers, even though her kids are adults with children of their own.

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For up-to-date information about legislative issues, the logistics of homeschooling, and opportunities for networking with homeschoolers in your area, visit the website of The Organization of Virginia Homeschoolers.

VaHomeschoolers.org



ON THE COVER

Melissa Wiley, our delightful and inspiring Keynote Speaker, signs her books at the 2018 VaHomeschoolers Conference and Resource Fair.
Photo by Keely Noffsinger Massie



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