

PENNSYLVANIA HOMESCHOOLERS

A Statewide Network for Sharing Information about Homeschooling in PA. Newsletter 21
FALL 1987

BABY HANNAH ARRIVES!!! *from Susan Richman*

We're so happy to announce the birth of our fourth child, Hannah Augusta Richman! She was born on Friday, August 21, 1987, just before noon, welcomed in by her whole family at BirthPlace, a wonderful new out of hospital birthing center located in PGH. She measured in at 8 pounds 2 ounces and 19 inches long, and is just perfect in every way. She is asleep in her sling pouch baby carrier now as I'm typing this, very contented. We've been getting plenty of rest, and are feeling a bit more energetic every day.

Hannah was actually written up extensively in our "Educational Plan" submitted to the school district this summer-- she is an official part of our "Health" curriculum! And the kids have indeed learned anew all about prenatal care, midwives, labor and birth, and newborns. Jacob and Molly and Jesse are all learning how to hold Hannah and carry

her about happily, marveling over her curling long toes and alert eyes, laughing to imagine what she thinks of the changes of this last week. I hope we can continue to view her as more of an inspiration to our work this year than a distraction! We are even considering a new family book for us all to work on, called "The Babies of Richman Farm", sharing about Hannah (and all the other babies we've had-- the kittens, the goat babies, Jesse and Jacob and Molly as babies....)

I pointed out to the kids that Hannah's name is a "palindrome", that it reads the same forwards and backwards, and now we're playing around and noticing more words in our language that follow this pattern-- so we're having baby-inspired language arts and spelling fun!

The kids have really learned to pull together as a family to help each other out since Hannah's birth. Molly is learning to let her older brothers help her find clothes in the morning (and she's becoming more expert at dressing herself, too). Jesse has taken over the laundry completely, and Jacob has been doing all the dishes (albeit with lots of paper plates and cups to make things easier!), and they are all helping with clean-up chores more regularly and more cooperatively-- they can feel really needed. I'd thought it would be necessary to hire someone to help with housework for a bit, but the family has really pulled through and shown me just how responsible they now are. What a good feeling!

Do keep us informed about policies of your local school district. It is especially helpful for us to have on file copies of local policies-- do send these on.

The picture with school districts is the usual mixed bag of good and bad news. A new superintendent can make all the difference in the world-- for good OR bad. Some districts that had formerly been VERY uncooperative are now dealing in a friendly and supportive manner with families (see Peggy Smeltzer's letter about the SPRING COVE district), BUT at least one district, BLACKHAWK, is trying to change from an excellent policy to one of the most coercive in the state-- weekly monitoring of progress, charging for textbooks, strict requirements for tutor qualifications, unannounced home visits, and much more. So do not ever feel you are completely "safe" when a district gives you approval-- since under current law the local superintendent has unlimited power to call the shots, a change in "command" can indeed pull the rug out from under you. A positive change in the PA School Code will be the only way to insure fair treatment of everyone.

SCHOOL DISTRICTS COOPERATING WITH HOMESCHOOLING FAMILIES IN PA

(NOTE: LOCAL POLICIES VARY WIDELY, BUT THESE DISTRICTS HAVE DEALT WITH HOMESCHOOLING-- YOU WON'T BE A FIRST CASE IN THESE DISTRICTS, ALTHOUGH WE ARE NOT SAYING APPROVAL WILL NECESSARILY BE EASY, FAIR, OR ASSURED. GUIDELINES SOME FAMILIES CAN LIVE WITH WILL BE INTOLERABLE TO OTHERS)

ABBINGTON	HAMPTON	PHOENIXVILLE
ALLENTOWN	HIGHLANDS	PINE-RICHLAND
ALTOONA	JEFFERSON-MORGAN	QUAKER VALLEY
APOLLO-RIDGE	HOPEWELL	RED LION AREA
ARMSTRONG	KANE	RINGGOLD
BANGOR AREA	KISKI	SAUCAN VALLEY
BEAVER	LAKEVIEW	SHALER
BETHEL PARK	LATROBE	SOLANCO
BUTLER	MARPLE MEWTOWN	SOUTHERN (YORK CO.)
CANTON AREA	MILLCREEK	SOUTH WEST BUTLER
CENTRAL	MT. LEBANON	SOUTHERN TIOGA
CHESTER UPLAND	MT. PLEASANT	SLIPPERY ROCK
CENTRAL BUCKS	MT. UNION	SPRING COVE
COMMODORE PERRY	NORTHAMPTON AREA	SPRING GROVE
CONEAUT LAKE	NORTHEAST BRADFORD	TAMAQUA
CRAWFORD CENTRAL	NORTHEASTERN	TREDYFFRIN-EASTTOWN
CRESSON	NORTH HILLS	TRINITY
DALLASTOWN	NORTH PENN	TROY
DOWNINGTOWN AREA	NORTH WESTERN	TYRONE AREA
EASTON	NORWIN	UNIONVILLE-CHADDS FORD
EAST PENN	PARKLAND	WEST CHESTER AREA
EASTERN LEBANON	PEN ARGYL AREA	WEST JEFFERSON HILLS
FAIRVIEW	PENN HILLS	WEST MIFFLIN
FLEETWOOD	PENN MANOR	WEST PERRY
FOX CHAPEL	PENNSBURG	WILLIAMSPORT
FRANKLIN REGIONAL	PERKIOMEN VALLEY	WYALUSING
GIRARD	PETERS TOWNSHIP	WYOMING VALLEY WEST
		YOUGH

"PA. Homeschooler's" Masthead
Lettered by Jesse Richman, age 10

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