

The Road Less Traveled

August, 2002



Two roads diverged in a wood, and I—
I took the one less traveled by,
And that has made all the difference.

In the span of one week, two different home schooling friends from two totally different cities have quoted this passage from Robert Frost's poem, *The Road Not Taken*. This isn't surprising; we home schoolers know quite well that we are in the minority, that we are going against the tide of society in the choices we make for our families. I, for one, am so very thankful that I took the road less traveled by, for that surely has made all the difference! But I am also thankful that, while this road is less traveled, it is not untraveled.

My first experience with home schooling was sitting my preschooler down at a Little Tikes table with some Frank Schaeffer workbooks from a local Christian bookstore. I had a handheld dry erase board, a stack of magazines from which to cut pictures, and a hearty supply of construction paper. Some alphabet flashcards rounded out our education department, and we began our wild adventure. I had listened for more than two years to programs discussing home schooling on Christian radio. I had a vague understanding of the law in Texas, enough to know I could teach my child at home. I had no knowledge of required subjects and I was completely oblivious of the war that was still being waged in the Texas courts in the early 1990's.

After about a year of home schooling, I somehow came into possession of an A Beka catalog — probably from the one other person I knew that was actually home schooling. I bought the kindergarten program for my son and felt confident that I was truly home schooling now! Over the next two years, I did become somewhat more connected. I knew there was a home schooling support group in Austin and had actually seen a sample newsletter. I was informed of their bookfair and decided to attend. I was absolutely amazed at what I experienced there! I would love to look back at the figures to see how many people attended the Christian Home Education Association of Austin bookfair that summer... probably two or three hundred people, but to me it seemed like two or three thousand! I looked at books, I listened to speakers, I overheard conversations. I joined CHEA!!

The CHEA newsletter became a lifeline to me. It contained information on activities all

over Central Texas. It announced monthly meetings hosted by CHEA at a church on the other side of town. I eventually ventured out to one of those meetings. That was almost ten years ago, but I can remember so clearly the night I sat in that meeting. I cannot express the feeling of connection that I experienced as I sat in a room with over one hundred home schoolers. I raced home to tell my husband about this group of families – not just home schooling moms, but families – who were joined together to support and encourage each other in their efforts to teach their children at home.

One of the first activities from that newsletter that I explored was a soccer group. While my son learned the basics of soccer from a home schooling father who had a heart for working with kids in a fun, noncompetitive, team-building activity, I joined a group that became known as the Soccer Moms. Not your average group of soccer moms, mind you – this group of moms not only did not stand on the sidelines yelling for their children, we rarely even noticed when the game was over. We had our own game going! It was during these visits that I first heard of Saxon Math and Learning Language Arts through Literature. On these afternoons I listened to other mothers discuss lesson plans, daily schedules, and resistant learners. We shared laughs and more than a few tears. We loved and supported each other and I made some friends that I will cherish for the rest of my life.

After twelve years of home schooling, I actively work to inform new and prospective home schoolers about the law in Texas; including the required subjects. I have been fortunate enough to hear the stories of the war that was waged in our courts from the very people who fought those battles. I am blessed to count among my friends some of the pioneers of home schooling in this state. They have been my mentors and continue to be my support network. They are my fellow travelers on this road less traveled.

Does it matter? Could I go it alone? Would I still be home schooling if I had not found other home schoolers? I cannot answer that question for certain, I am just thankful that I do not have to answer that question. I am so very thankful that when God called me to walk this road, He did not require me to walk it alone.

In working with new home schoolers, I strive to impart to them a great deal of information about how to home school. We cover lesson plans, daily schedules, and resistant learners. I share with them those same stories I heard from the Soccer Moms, in addition to many stories I have heard in the years since from many precious moms who are traveling this same road. But I believe the most important piece of information I can share with these new home schoolers is this - don't walk alone. Find another traveler with whom to share your journey. Learn about those trailblazers who went before you, and reach your hand back to those travelers who follow. When we walk together, we not only help each other with the "how" of home schooling, we build a very solid "why."