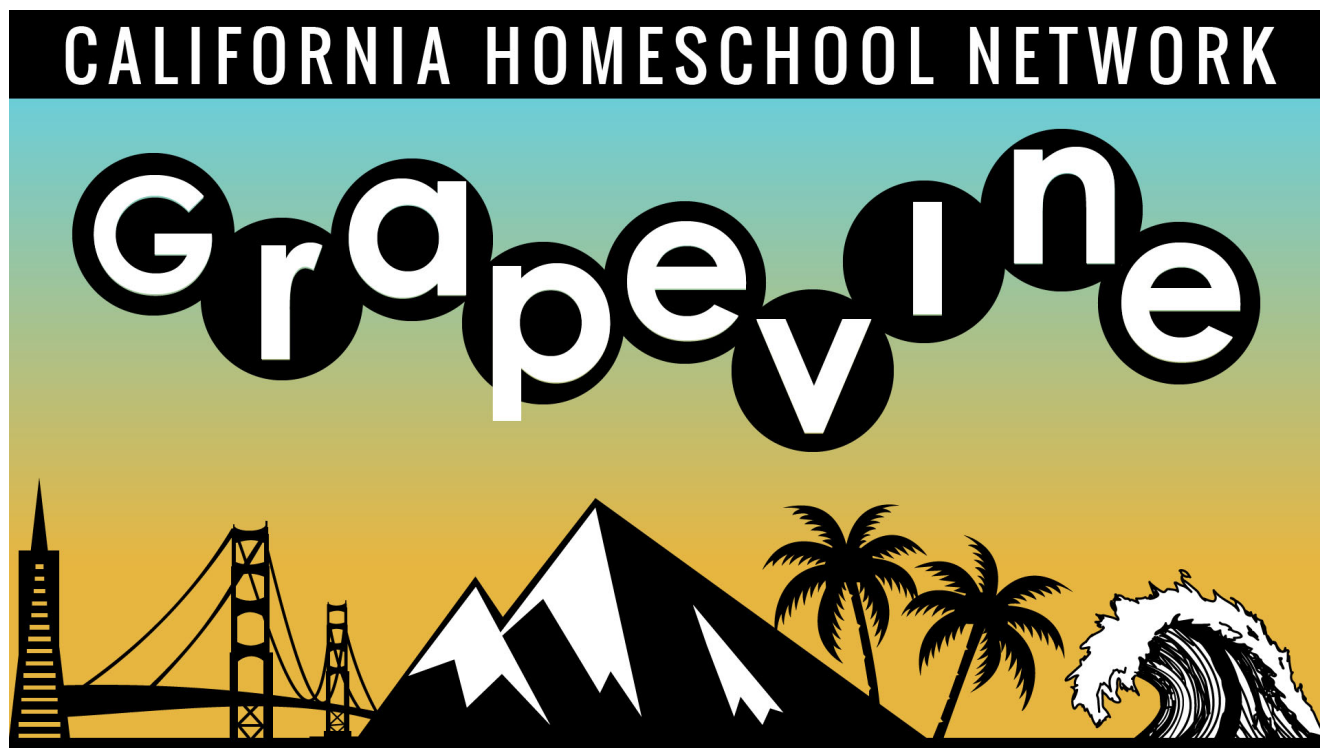


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May 1, 2025



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Welcome to another issue of our newsletter. Today I would like to discuss next summer when EXPO 2027 is in the planning process. CHN has always been a membership conscious organization desiring the input from everyone. Since we are in the early stages of developing a great EXPO, it is only appropriate to entertain your ideas of the “perfect” EXPO.

Please take a moment to share your thoughts in our short, anonymous survey:

**Click here to share your ideas for CHN EXPO
2027!**

These questions are a major part of our decision-making process for EXPO 2027. We would appreciate your response allowing CHN to have a member driven EXPO 2027. Please email us with any questions or concerns to trustees@californiahomeschool.net

Thank you for helping CHN maintain a position of influence.

Our hope is to fulfill the majority’s wishes. Thank you so much for contributing to our success.

— Marty

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AB 84 Threatens Homeschool Freedom for Thousands of Families

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At the California Homeschool Network, we stand united in support of all legal educational paths available to families in our state. This includes homeschooling through the Private School Affidavit (PSA), private school satellite programs (PSPs), and public options such as independent study programs and non-classroom-based (NCB) charter schools.

Unfortunately, Assembly Bill 84 (AB 84) poses an unprecedented threat to one of these essential paths, the public charter schools that serve thousands of homeschooling families.

A Vital Lifeline for Many Homeschool Families

For many California families, independent study through a charter school is what makes homeschooling possible. These programs provide access to credentialed teachers for those who want professional guidance, as well as educational funds for curriculum, classes, therapies, and enrichment resources that are often out of reach for many families on their own.

Many students served by charter homeschool programs have unique learning needs, including special education services that traditional district schools are unable or unwilling to accommodate. Charter schools often allow families to craft truly individualized learning plans that honor their child's pace, strengths, and challenges.

AB 84 Would Devastate This Support System

As currently written, AB 84 would:

- Ban parent choice in curriculum and instruction, requiring all learning to be delivered by credentialed staff employed by the school effectively eliminating community vendor classes, enrichment centers, PE providers, co-ops, and specialized therapists.
- Slash funding by up to 30% for non-classroom-based charter schools.
- Prohibit partnerships with local experts, even as school districts continue to utilize community partners with ELOP (Expanded Learning Opportunities)

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programs work, especially for students with disabilities, mental health needs, and trauma histories.

This bill doesn't just hurt charter schools. It hurts children. It hurts families who need flexibility. And it sends the message that the state doesn't trust parents to be partners in their child's education.

CHN's Commitment to Educational Freedom

CHN is deeply concerned about the direction this bill is taking. While we recognize that AB 84's authors claim it addresses accountability, the reality is that California already has laws in place to investigate and prosecute fraud, as demonstrated in past enforcement actions. This bill is not about fixing problems. It's about dismantling a model that works for families.

We will continue to stand up for the rights of all homeschoolers in California, regardless of the path they choose. At CHN, we believe that parents know their children best and should be empowered to make educational decisions that meet their child's unique needs. Any law that limits parents is a step backward for educational freedom.

CHN's Commitment to Educational Freedom

We urge our members and allies to:

- [Learn more about AB 84.](#)
- Contact your Assemblymember and Senator and urge them to vote NO or abstain on AB 84. Let them know this bill harms thousands of families who rely on public independent study programs and charter schools to homeschool their children. [Click here to find your representatives.](#)
- Share your family's story, your voice matters more than ever.

California has long been a leader in educational innovation. Let's not let AB 84

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Join the New CHN Ambassador

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By Trina Rueber, CHN Secretary

Are you passionate about homeschooling and building strong, vibrant communities? California Homeschool Network (CHN) is excited to announce the launch of our newly revamped Ambassador Program, and we're looking for enthusiastic volunteers from every county to join us!

Formerly known as "Local Contacts," this refreshed program offers more support, more connection, and more fun than ever before. As a CHN Ambassador, you'll have the opportunity to lead homeschool park days, organize field trips, and host local events that bring families together, all while making a meaningful impact in your area. We're here to support you every step of the way! Ambassadors will receive training and ongoing guidance through monthly Zoom meetings, where we'll share ideas, inspire each other, and help you create successful events. With a unified vision across California, you'll be part of a growing team dedicated to enriching the homeschool experience for families statewide.

If you love bringing people together, sharing resources, and making homeschooling even more fun and rewarding, we'd love to have you on our team!

Ready to inspire and connect?

Join us as a CHN Ambassador and help strengthen your local homeschool community!

For more information and to volunteer, please email Trina at chn_secretary@californiahomeschool.net.

Trina's Craft

"Bloom Into Creativity: Make Your Own Flower-Top Pencils!"

Add a little spring to your writing with this fun and easy craft for all ages!

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This month's project is a fun and simple craft just in time for Mother's Day. It is an ideal project for any age and can be modified according to the children's skill levels. The one pictured was made in collaboration by 7 of my children (ranging from preschool to high school) while my husband led the process. I hope this cute spring project inspires you and your family to use arts and crafts as a fun family bonding experience.

Paper Flower-Top Pencils Craft Instructions

Supplies Needed:

- Pencils (any color; optional: paint them green for "stems")
- Flower paper punches (variety of sizes/shapes if available)
- Hole punch (to create a center hole in flowers)
- White school glue
- Small ribbons (green works great for leaf effect)
- Optional: Green paint, glitter, sequins, markers
- Optional: Small vase or coffee mug for display

Instructions:

1. Punch Your Flowers

Use the flower punches to cut out several flower shapes from colorful paper.

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Using a standard hole punch, carefully punch a hole in the center of each flower shape so it can fit over the pencil eraser.

3. Assemble the Flower

Stack your flowers together (largest at the bottom), lining up the center holes. Apply a dab of white glue between each layer to keep them in place.

4. Attach to the Pencil

Slide the stacked flowers onto the eraser end of your pencil. Apply a small amount of white glue underneath the bottom flower where it touches the pencil to secure it. Press gently and allow to dry.



5. Add Ribbon "Leaves"

Tie a piece of green ribbon in a bow or knot just below the flower, around the top of the pencil. This makes a cute leafy accent!



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6. Decorate! (Optional)

- Paint the pencil shaft green to look like a stem.
- Add glitter, sequins, or draw patterns on your flower petals.
- Use markers to add detail or “veins” to your ribbon leaves.



7. Display Your Garden! (Optional)

Place your finished flower pencils in a small vase, jar, or coffee mug. Add decorative rocks, beads, or moss to hold them in place if needed.



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Tip: These also make lovely teacher gifts, table centerpieces, or writing incentives!

Members and Volunteers

By Rhonda Hamilton, CHN Treasurer

Before going into the upcoming events for the Month of May, I wanted to take a moment and talk to you about the importance of our members and volunteers. We are happy to be in a position now that covid is subsiding to get back to our in-person events, which can only happen with the help of volunteers, but our membership has declined along with our wonderful volunteers. The Board had to take over everything. Unfortunately, while trying to run the organization, we have been unable to produce an Expo, or any smaller events, especially without the help of volunteers, which come from our membership. We have a couple members who have stepped up to volunteer and we're looking for more to join them, so we can get things rolling.

We have been adding various workshops or sessions off and on this last year as we are getting CHN back to where it was. In fact, May is going to be a busy month with several online sessions/workshops, including a special celebration for Moms. But we are only a Board of 4 people, and an Expo event alone takes so many people to operate it. Without volunteers to host or lead various activities, they cannot happen.

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event. And with so many areas to work on or in, 4 Board Members cannot be in all places at the same time. So, we need help getting the word out that we need volunteers, and to get volunteers, we also need members.

Our plan for major events so far involve a mini con, 2 small conferences, and our Family Expo. We will be holding a virtual mini con on Saturday, August 9, 2025. Plans include a few sessions, ranging from Homeschooling 101 and learning styles to interactive sessions like our Q & As and a special one on Gameschooling, which will be like a virtual game night for the whole family!

Keep an eye out for more details to come soon. We are working on the details of the sessions we want to include and the number of sessions we would like to offer.

In 2026, we plan to hold 2 smaller in person conferences, one in Northern California, hoping for sometime around August and one in Southern California, probably aiming for the beginning of summer. These will be like our large Expo, just on a smaller scale. We haven't figured out how long they will be yet, as you read at the beginning of this newsletter. Here is where you, our members, can get involved. Please send us your ideas and responses to Marty's questions as soon as you can. And this brings us to the Family Expo in 2027. This event takes a full year to plan and put into action, which means we will start in January 2026. So please help us grow.



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Upcoming Events

The month of May is a busy month with online Zoom workshops for all, ranging from a couple member-only events, such as the CHN Book Club to workshops on how to get started open to everyone. Our online Zoom workshops/sessions are small group meetings, which will not be recorded, but video and microphone are required for participation. If you aren't a member or know of someone who would love to become a member, join here at [CHN Membership](#). If you can think of a workshop, session, or just a meet-up, etc. that you believe may be fun, useful or even would like to host a workshop, please let us know, and we will work to get it included in the future.

May 5 @ 7pm – CHN Book Club – **Member only book club**. Join Trina and Rhonda as they read and discuss a book a month. This month's book, back by popular demand, is **The Brave Learner** by Julie Bogart available on Amazon on either Kindle \$8.99 or Paperback \$10.20

The schedule for the first book will run weekly on Monday evenings from May 5 – May 26, 2025. The next book is announced during the last meeting of the current book, May 26, 2025.

May 6 @ 5pm – Homeschooling Quick Start: The what, when, where, why and how to begin. – Are you curious about homeschooling? Ever wonder if it's something for you? Need help on where to begin? Then come join this interactive workshop where we will share the basics and talk about how it can best fit your family. Plus, leave with a Quick Start plan on what steps to take next.

May 8 @ 5pm – Homeschooling Q&As – Join us for this session/meet-up. Bring your homeschooling questions, challenges, and curiosities to this open Q&A session.

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May 10 @ 11am – Virtual Poetry and Tea Party – Member only event. Pour a cup of joy and join us for a delightful gathering of words and wonder! Families are invited to cozy up with their favorite tea, cocoa, or lemonade and enjoy an hour of shared poetry, creativity, and connection. We'll read aloud from beloved poems (and maybe a few original ones!), play a few fun and easy word games, and even try our hand at crafting simple verses together. All ages are welcome, whether you're a tiny rhymers or a seasoned stanza-spinner. Pajamas and fancy hats are equally encouraged! Bring your favorite snack, a notebook (for doodles and writing), and your imagination—because magic happens when poetry and tea come together.

Prerequisite• A joyful spirit and a listening ear!

Optional - Your favorite lighthearted poem to share. (personally created or from another poet)

May 12 @7pm – CHN Book Club – Member only book club. Continuing with [The Brave Learner](#)

May 19 @7pm – CHN Book Club – Member only book club. Continuing with [The Brave Learner](#)

May 20 @ 5pm – Homeschooling vs School-at-Home – Homeschooling is not the same as School-at-Home. And there are plenty of parents that think homeschooling is school-at-home, but it is NOT. Homeschooling is Not sitting at home in front of computers and receiving their lessons from teachers from the public schools, as many schools choose now, sometimes called e-learning. Join us as we share the difference and help parents gain a true understanding of what homeschooling is and how it can benefit their family.

May 22 @ 5pm – Homeschooling PreK & K – Those with little ones... Join California Homeschool Network (CHN) for an enlightening online workshop on homeschooling preschool through kindergarten. Discover your invaluable role as the first and best teacher for your children. Embrace a learning lifestyle that prioritizes natural learning opportunities over rushing into formal education. Let's savor the journey of learning together with our littles.

Due to the high volume of people interested in this session, we are offering it again. This is a small group meeting. If you didn't get into the last one, here's your chance. Sign ups are first come, first served. Please sign up quickly to reserve your spot.

May 24 @ 11am – What's this Ambassador thing all about? – Member/Ambassador

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Homeschool Network Ambassador Program! We're looking for passionate volunteers to help organize park days, field trips, and community-building events in their counties. This session will explain what ambassadors do, how the program works, and how you can get involved to make a difference in your local homeschool community.

May 26 @7pm – CHN Book Club – **Member only book club.** Finishing **The Brave Learner** and choosing the next book.

**To view full details and register for any of these events, visit
our**

Upcoming Events Calendar



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Why Games are Better Than Worksheets

By Carolyn Forte of [Excellence in Education](#)

Do your kids run for cover when the “school books” come out? If so, please stop to consider why you are homeschooling. If “develop a love for learning” is on your list of why’s, you may want to take a second look at your “curriculum.” In many cases, a game or activity can accomplish the same scholastic goals with a minimum of stress and with the added benefit of promoting a love of learning rather than an aversion to “school.”

In deciding whether more can be accomplished with a game than with the “formal lesson,” you need to look carefully at the goal or “learning objective” of the lesson.

For instance, if the lesson is about adding numerals to 10, it may include a number of practice problems and more than likely, they will run to several pages. It takes quite a lot of practice to become proficient in recognizing number combinations and their corresponding sums. Sometimes the books will include clever tricks to speed up the process, but more commonly, the lesson just includes a page or more of problems, day after day until the book “concludes” it’s time to learn something new.

It occurred to me one day that Abraham Lincoln never did a single workbook. How did he learn his arithmetic? He had almost no schooling, yet he became a very educated man. So I began to wonder, are all these worksheets necessary?

Obviously, not! I surmise that much of Lincoln’s early learning had to do with necessity. Helping to build a farm, tending animals and handling other daily chores involved numbers. He was curious and once he learned to read, he managed to find books from which he could continue learning. Kids are naturally insatiable learners if we do not squash their learning with too much “school.”

How many addition problems might you find in the average drill page? Twenty? Thirty? Now, how many times will your child have to add the dice while playing a half hour game of Parchisi or Sorry! or Shut the Box or any other board game that uses dice? My guess is it would be a lot more than 30 and no whining! Plus, you get the

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sided dice and play with them. The games will move faster and the kids get more advanced addition practice.

For a fast-paced game to replace worksheets for multiplication, Goose Egg is one of the best. It includes two games in one box: one for beginners who are just starting to learn the multiplication tables and one for more advanced students who can recite the tables, but still may be slow to recognize multiples of a single factor. The beginner game plays like bingo on steroids, involving lots of activity rolling giant dice and frantically placing chips in 30 second stints. There's a twist too. If a player rolls zero three times before filling his card, he's out! Unlike most multiplication games, this one includes zero; children quickly learn that anything times zero is zero.

The more advanced game included in Goose Egg is for children who are fairly familiar with the multiplication tables, but who do not yet easily recognize the multiples of a single factor (3,6,9,12, etc.). It also plays in 30 second rounds, but the gameplay is entirely different. Players must calculate according to the roll of the dice and strategically select a location for a game chip to create a path to the top of a pyramid of numbers.

The same can be done with many other concepts in math, language arts, science, history, geography and even the arts. Activities like cooking, gardening and carpentry can also do the teaching for you. When children see the practical use for numbers and get to experiment for themselves, they learn much faster and retain the information much longer. There are children who enjoy doing worksheets but even they have a limit. If you reach it, reach for a game instead. But, if you have children who hate worksheets, don't worry about it. Learning with games and real life activities will teach them just as efficiently. Just look in the book you are following, decide which concept or concepts you want to work on next, and then search for a game or activity that covers that concept.

Of course, you will come across some items, especially in higher math, which are too complex for a game. By the time your children get to that point, I hope they have a solid in the basics of that subject from games and hands-on activities.

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You Can Make A Difference

Shared by Marty Forte, CHN President
by Author Unknown

A teacher in New York decided to honor each of her seniors in high school by telling them the difference they each made. Using a process developed by Helice Bridges of Del Mar, California, she called each student to the front of the class, one at a time. First, she told them how the student made a difference to her and the class. Then she presented each of them with a blue ribbon imprinted with gold letters which read, "Who I Am Makes a Difference."

After the teacher decided to do a class project to see what kind of impact recognition would have on a community, she gave each of the students three more ribbons and instructed them to go out and spread this acknowledgment ceremony. Then they were to follow up on the results. see who honored whom and report back to the class in about a week.

One of boys in the class went to a junior executive in a nearby company and honored him for helping him with his career planning. He gave him a blue ribbon and put it on his shirt. Then he gave him two extra ribbons, and said, "We're doing a class project on recognition, and we'd like you to go out, find somebody to honor, give them a blue ribbon, then give them the extra blue ribbon so they can acknowledge a third person to keep this acknowledgment ceremony going. Then please report back to me and tell me what happened."

Later that day, the executive went in to see his boss, who had been noted, by the way, as he sat his boss down and he told him that he deeply admired him for being a creative genius. The boss seemed very surprised. The executive asked him if he would accept the gift of the blue ribbon and would he give him permission to put it on him. His surprised boss said: "We'll sure."

The executive took the blue ribbon and placed it right on his boss's jacket above his heart. As he gave him the last extra ribbon, he said, "Would you do me a favor?"

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keep this recognition ceremony going and find out how it affects people.”

That night the boss came home to his 14-year-old son and sat him down. He said, “The most incredible thing happened to me today. I was in my office and one of the junior executives came in and told me he admired me and gave me a blue ribbon for being a creative genius. Imagine, he thinks I’m a creative genius. Then he puts this blue ribbon that says ‘Who I am makes a difference’ on my jacket just above my heart. He gave me an extra ribbon and asked me to find somebody else to honor. As I was driving home tonight, I started thinking about whom I would honor with this ribbon, and I thought about you. I want to honor you. “My days are hectic and when I come home I don’t pay a lot of attention to you. Sometimes I scream at you for not getting good enough grades in school and for your bedroom being a mess, but somehow tonight, I just wanted to sit here and, well, just let you know that you do make a difference to me. Besides your mother, you are the most important person in my life. You’re a great kid, and I love you!”

The startled boy started to sob and sob, and he couldn’t stop crying. His whole body shook, He looked up at his father and said through his tear, “I was planning on committing suicide tomorrow, Dad, because I didn’t think you loved me, Now I don’t need to.”

Something to think about. How many people do you know that might need just a little bit of recognition or encouragement?

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