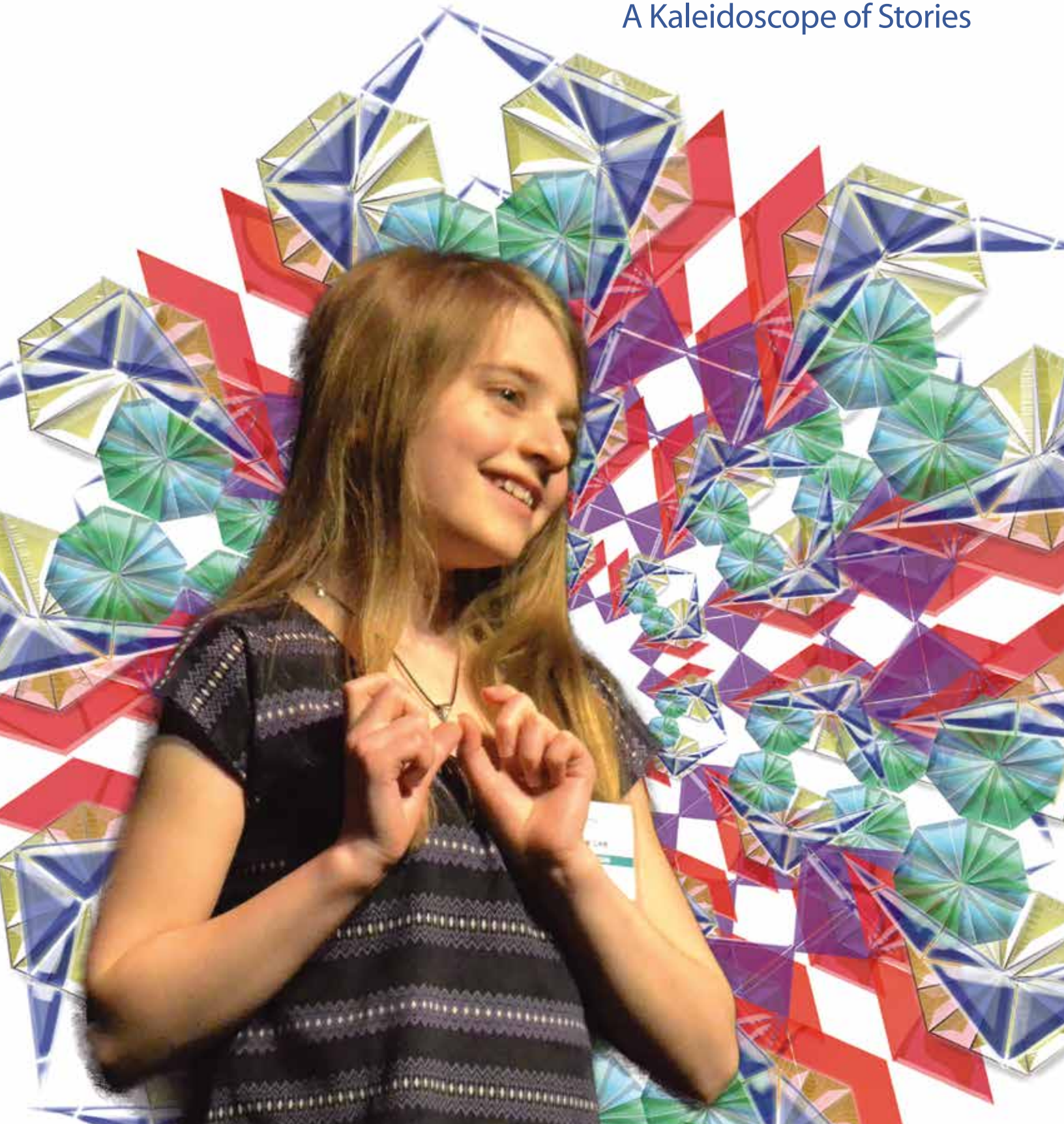
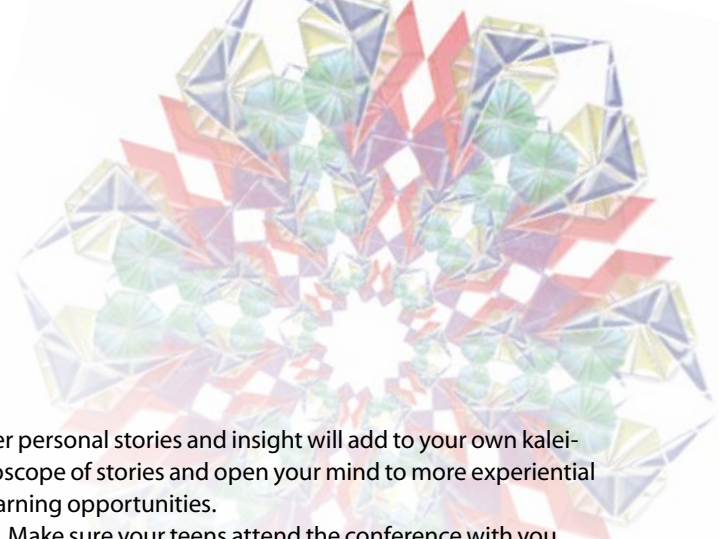


# VaHomeschoolers Conference and Resource Fair

## A Kaleidoscope of Stories





## A Kaleidoscope of Stories

For many, some of the greatest benefits of homeschooling are the opportunities to guide, mentor, and facilitate adventures beyond what can be found between the covers of a book. Everyone’s background, goals, and definitions of success color the way they interpret life. It is the kaleidoscope of stories provided by our combined experiences that allows us to embrace a richer, more robust, and comprehensive understanding of how we learn.

Join us as we share our stories at the 2018 VaHomeschoolers Conference and Resource Fair on March 23 and 24. Come listen to Melissa Wiley as she presents her keynote address about “Tidal Homeschooling: The Ebb and Flow of Joyful Learning.” Melissa is a homeschooling mom of six, wife, author, blogger, speaker, artist, and inventor of the term “tidal homeschooling.”

Her personal stories and insight will add to your own kaleidoscope of stories and open your mind to more experiential learning opportunities.

Make sure your teens attend the conference with you, because Justin Young will regale them with encouraging and motivating stories. Justin is a nationally recognized speaker, self-proclaimed nerd, writer, actor, and singer/songwriter. According to Justin, “There is no magic pill for building resilient teens . . . but there is a magic process!” Encourage your teens to attend his sessions, including his well-known “Embrace the Inner Nerd!”

Enrich your homeschooling experience by joining us in March!

## Conference Overview

All events are held at The Cultural Arts Center at Glen Allen (2880 Mountain Rd., Glen Allen, VA, 23060)

Friday, March 23		1–9:30 p.m.
<i>Exhibit Hall and Used Resource Sale Hours</i>		
1–7 p.m.	Exhibit Hall open	
2–7 p.m.	Used Resource Sale open	
<i>Conference Schedule</i>		
9–9:30 a.m.	Volunteer Training	
11:30 a.m.–5 p.m.	Snack Bar open	
11:30 a.m.–6 p.m.	Registration open	
1–5:15 p.m.	Family Programming	
1–2 p.m.	<b>SESSION 1</b> , including FREE <i>Beginning Homeschooling</i> session	
2:30–3:30 p.m.	<b>SESSION 2</b>	
3:30–4:15 p.m.	Shopping Break	
3:30–5:30 p.m.	Teen Volunteer Pizza Party	
4:15–5:15 p.m.	<b>SESSION 3</b>	
5:15–7 p.m.	Shopping and Dinner Break	
<i>Friday evening activities—open only to paid registrants.</i>		
7–8:30 p.m.	Talent Show and Project Exhibit	
8:30–9:30 p.m.	Frozen Yogurt Social to immediately follow the end of the Talent Show	

Saturday, March 24		9 a.m.–6 p.m.
<i>Exhibit Hall and Used Resource Sale Hours</i>		
8 a.m.–4:45 p.m.	Used Resource Sale open	
8:30 a.m.–4:45 p.m.	Exhibit Hall open	
<i>Conference Schedule</i>		
8–8:30 a.m.	Volunteer Training	
8 a.m.–4 p.m.	Registration open	
8 a.m.–4:15 p.m.	Snack Bar open	
9 a.m.–5 p.m.	Family Programming	
9–10 a.m.	<b>SESSION 1</b>	
10:30–11:30 a.m.	<b>SESSION 2</b> “Tidal Homeschooling: The Ebb and Flow of Joyful Learning”—Keynote Address by Melissa Wiley	
11:45 a.m.–1:15 p.m.	Lunch and Shopping Break	
1:15–2:15 p.m.	<b>SESSION 3</b>	
2:15–3:15 p.m.	Shopping Break	
3:15–4:15 p.m.	<b>SESSION 4</b>	
4:45–5:45 p.m.	<b>SESSION 5</b>	

## Meet Our Keynote Speaker

**Melissa Wiley** is an author, blogger, and homeschooling mother of six. She's been blogging about their tidal homeschooling adventures at "Here in the Bonny Glen" since 2005. She is @melissawiley on Twitter and @bonnyglen on Instagram. She loves fountain pens, snail mail, traveler's notebooks, booklists, and Monty Python. Most of all, she loves a good read-aloud!

The spring of 1995 was a landmark time for Melissa: first baby, first book contract, and first modem. By the time that baby was crawling, she had discovered the AOL homeschooling boards and *Growing Without Schooling* magazine. She knew right away that homeschooling was for her family. They were gung ho from the start.

Twenty-two years later, that baby is studying linguistics at Cal Poly and there are five more kids behind her—ages 19, 16, 13, 11, and 8 (four girls and two boys altogether). They recently moved to Portland, Oregon, after nearly 11 years in Southern California. Her husband Scott writes comic books and she writes children's books—mostly historical fiction and early readers, including *The Prairie Thief*, *Fox and Crow Are Not Friends*, and the Inch and Roly series. Their freelance lifestyle allows a lot of flexibility for family homeschooling adventures.

Melissa calls their educational style "Tidal Homeschooling," a term she coined to describe her family's ebb-and-flow homeschooling rhythms. They alternate periods of concen-

trated, literature-based studies with periods of unschoolish, interest-driven meanderings. These rhythms have worked well for their family for many years and allow a lot of free time for their various passions, including gaming (especially Minecraft and Stardew Valley), sketching, and butterfly gardening.

In her keynote address, "Tidal Homeschooling: The Ebb and Flow of Joyful Learning," Melissa will speak about what "high tide" and "low tide" look like and why her primary goal is to maintain an atmosphere of curious inquiry, joy, and fun.

Melissa is also sharing her stories in four other sessions. "Comics Make You Smart" will examine the ways that comics can quietly improve reading comprehension, vocabulary, and storytelling skills. In "Makers Gotta Mess," Melissa shares a variety of tips, resources, and practical advice for building spaces and schedules that foster creativity and inventiveness. "Books for Breakfast, Literature for Lunch" shares Melissa's best strategies for bringing any subject to life with captivating literature and includes tips for finding great booklists, doing character voices, and engaging energetic little ones.

Finally, in "Habits in the Homeschool," Melissa demonstrates how families can work together with playful spirits to build positive habits that support a lifestyle of learning and family harmony.



Photo by Larry Deal

## Meet Our Featured Speaker

**Justin Young**—a professional performer in the entertainment industry since the age of 10—has lent his voice as an announcer/actor to companies such as ESPN, Liberty Tax, Blue Cross/Blue Shield, Monster Energy Drink, and Busch Gardens Howl-O-Scream, as well as to video games, documentaries, and more. Justin is also an acting and vocal coach for teens and a published singer/songwriter; in addition, he served as the musical director for Broadway Disney's national pre-release production of *The Little Mermaid* in Norfolk, Virginia.

Justin started his adventure in public speaking after friends asked him to speak to their youth groups about his experiences growing up in the entertainment world. His storytelling captures the attention of his audience and has them on the edges of their seats in suspense, waiting for more.

Have your teens join Justin in a session on how to "Embrace the Inner Nerd," which includes topics such as self-esteem, bullying, self-acceptance,

dealing with differences, what it means to be a hero, choices and their consequences, and the secret to happiness. "Creatively Writing Creative Creations" helps teens capture the story ideas running through their heads with a combination of Justin's amazing stories and some fun individual exercises. Through personal anecdotes and individual and group exercises, "Excuse Me . . . Who Am I?" will teach teens how to remove all the labels put on them and will give them the inspiration to discover, accept, and love their true selves.

Through decades of experience and years of study, Justin's message of self-acceptance and being true to one's self has resonated with teens and adults in every community. His deeply personal stories and unique and entertaining delivery style reach even the most distracted student. Justin resides in Virginia Beach with his wife and three children. Each session is sure to inspire and motivate your teens, even those who are the most reluctant to learn!



Photo by Olite Photography

## Conference Sessions Descriptions

**Our Teen Track** sessions are specifically geared to teens who are 13 years old or older. Check out the great topics designed for teens to come together and relate to one another! This is a safe environment for teens to explore issues relevant to them; parents are respectfully asked to attend their own sessions.

**TT** Look for this symbol designating teen track sessions next to the session number.

Homeschoolers are as diverse as the designs found in our kaleidoscope; yet no matter your needs, your homeschooling style, or your children's ages, the 2018 VaHomeschoolers Conference and Resource Fair has a session planned just for you. From the unschooling experience to the more structured schedule, our sessions will help you appreciate the differences within your homeschool and provide new techniques and ideas for each type of learner.

All sessions are held at The Cultural Arts Center at Glen Allen. The conference begins on Friday, March 23, at 1:00 p.m., with Family Programming options and a full afternoon of exciting sessions from which to choose. Our **free Beginning Homeschooling** presentation will once again be available for those seeking more information or just starting their homeschooling adventure. Sessions and Family Programming options continue on Saturday, March 24, beginning at 9:00 a.m.

There is plenty of time for shopping built into each day's schedule.

Participants will not be required to commit to particular sessions while registering for the conference.

*Full* registrants may attend an unlimited number of sessions.

*Limited* registrants may attend one session on Friday and one session on Saturday.

*Shop-for-Free* attendees may only attend the free session offered on Friday afternoon.

For more information about registration options, see p. xviii.

**Please note:** Unauthorized recording of speakers' sessions is not permitted.

**Children ages 12 and under must be accompanied by someone aged 13 or older at all times during the conference.**

### Friday, March 23

#### FRIDAY, SESSION 1, 1–2 p.m.

##### F1.1 Makers Gotta Mess

*Melissa Wiley*

"How can I encourage my kids to be more creative?" This is one of the questions Melissa is asked most often. In this session, Melissa will share a variety of tips, resources, and practical advice for building spaces and schedules that foster creativity and inventiveness. This is a nuts and bolts and glue and paints talk!

##### F1.2 Finding Your Way Through the FAFSA

*Mark Scherger*

Does the thought of filling out financial aid forms fill you with dread? Are you convinced you won't qualify for financial aid, so don't know why you should bother with the hassle? Despite our inclination to avoid government paperwork or our reluctance to disclose personal information, almost everyone with a college-bound student should fill out the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA). Even wealthy students may be required to file to receive their merit scholarships or to be enrolled in a workstudy program at their college or university. Filling out the FAFSA is actually very easy if you're prepared, and the potential benefits are almost certainly greater than the inconvenience. In this

session, Mark can answer your questions and help you navigate the process and avoid common mistakes. Spending 15 minutes on the FAFSA could save you thousands of dollars!

##### F1.3 Write Your Family History: Six Easy Ways to Start and Seven Great Ways to Share

*Kari Brimhall*

You know you should put your history together, but how do you begin? Kari will show you six surefire ways to put your life's stories down on paper and involve your kids. Then, she will demonstrate how to share your stories with others via books, blogs, videos, family lessons, and much more. Your stories are too important *not* to share with your family, so help your family start *today*!

##### F1.4 Designing High School Science Curricula—Hodgepodge at Its Best

*Karen Shumway*

High school science seems daunting. But there are so many great options for homeschoolers—we have more flexibility than brick-and-mortar schools—if only we know where to look! The answers are not always obvious, but you do not have to design science curricula from scratch, nor do you *have* to spend a fortune procuring quality materials. In this session, we will discuss the online,

text, and laboratory options for high school physical, life, and computer sciences.

##### F1.5 Beginning Homeschooling (Free)

*Stephanie Elms*

Thinking about homeschooling but feeling overwhelmed? New to homeschooling and wondering what you have gotten yourself into? Join us for this free session by former VaHomeschoolers board member Stephanie Elms. Stephanie gives an overview of the law in Virginia and answers your questions and concerns about how homeschooling can work for your family. Gain the knowledge and confidence you need to get started on your homeschooling journey. This session does not count against the number of sessions allowed in limited registrations.

##### F1.6 **TT** Why You Like That Tune

*Catina Sweedy*

In this interactive session for teens, music instructor Catina Franklin Sweedy discusses why some songs are catchier than others. Participants will learn about song structure, historical influence, the power of lyrics, and music theory that is focused on what they like to listen to. Participants may get a chance to play one of their favorite songs from their

smartphone, iPod, or iPad and share what they like about it.

### **F1.7 The Introvert's Survival Guide to Homeschooling**

*Erin Scherger*

Generally speaking, introverts require a great deal of alone time to recharge their batteries and maintain a sense of well-being. However, the interpersonal demands of homeschooling can sometimes make this and our ability to sustain personal relationships challenging. Learn how one highly introverted homeschooling parent has survived 16 years of homeschooling (and one very extroverted spouse), and perhaps come away with ideas you can use as well.

## **FRIDAY, SESSION 2, 2:30–3:30 p.m.**

### **F2.1 Social Benefits, Social Challenges**

*Jeanne Faulconer*

Parents often hear homeschooled kids are at risk for not being “well socialized,” but what do critics even mean when they say this? Do homeschooled kids have optimal social opportunities, and do they learn necessary social skills? What are the social benefits of homeschooling? What about social challenges in some places, with some kids, for some ages and stages? What about sports, the prom, holiday parties, and homecoming? Most importantly, how can we help our children have more satisfying social lives? Come explore these questions and more as Jeanne looks at the social side of homeschooling.

### **F2.2 TT Excuse Me ... Who Am I?**

*Justin Young*

Do you believe you are on this earth for a reason? If so ... what is it? Are you who others say you are? Who are you anyway? If you're ready for an unexpected journey of self-discovery, then this session is where you need to be. Through personal stories and individual/group exercises, you will learn how to remove all the labels applied to you, and you will be inspired to discover, accept, and love the real you. Attendees will need to bring two different color pens or pencils and an empty notebook, journal, or sketch pad that can be 100 percent dedicated to this class. You will truly experience the power of this course if you come with an open and mature attitude, a respect for others, a sincere desire to know who you are, and a willingness to participate and to be honest with yourself. *This session can change your life ... if you allow it!*

### **F2.3 Got Drama?**

*Susannah Conrad*

Do you have a budding thespian in your home and it's all Greek to you? Do you dream of well-written and lengthy English papers but your class clown just can't hold still to push a pencil? This hands-on class is here to help. Drama is a great tool for learning how to direct those extra energies toward creating something tangible! Join us as we explore a brief history of the theatre and techniques to help you guide your active ones in different ways of learning.

### **F2.4 Teach Math to a Child with Learning Challenges**

*Kathleen Lawler*

Teaching is not for the faint of heart. Mix in a child with learning challenges and you may end up becoming very discouraged, and possibly ready to throw in the towel. Rest assured, you are *not* alone. Whether your child has been diagnosed with a learning challenge or simply doesn't “get” math, come to this workshop to learn useful teaching strategies and techniques. Help your child overcome those challenges and succeed in math.

### **F2.5 Homeschooling High School: Part-Time Enrollment**

*Erin Scherger*

Half of the school districts in Virginia allow homeschooled students to take classes on a part-time basis, but many homeschoolers are unfamiliar with, or even wary of, this option for inexpensively outsourcing high school classes. Each school division is permitted to set their own rules and requirements, but come learn about common practices for registration, discover the benefits and potential challenges of being a part-time student, and explore how to mitigate potential pitfalls so you can successfully partner with your local high school.

### **F2.6 Field Trips 101: How To Plan the Best Field Trips for Your Homeschool and Co-op**

*Mary Sandkam*

It's no secret that field trips are the best and easiest way to incorporate hands-on learning across the curriculum. Virginia is a homeschooler's dream for field trips! This session will provide: recommendations for planning the best trips for your family and your co-op, ideas for using field trip information effectively within your curriculum, tips for the challenges that come with planning for groups and for mixed ages, and suggestions for saving money. You will have the opportunity to share ideas with fellow



## **Snack Bar**

If you need something to munch on during the conference, stop by the lobby and check out the VaHomeschoolers-run snack bar. You'll find hot coffee, cool drinks, classic candy bars, energy-boosting bars, fresh fruit, gluten-free snacks, and much more. All profits directly benefit VaHomeschoolers.

Snack bar hours are Friday, 11:30 a.m. to 5 p.m., and Saturday, 8:00 a.m. to 4:15 p.m. Lunches are not sold at the snack bar, so please pre-order a lunch (p. xviii) if you would like a full meal on site on Saturday.

attendees, as well. A great session for new or veteran homeschoolers with children of all ages.

### **F2.7 Paint Me a Poem**

*Nathan Richardson*

Ekphrasis, from the Greek, is a vivid, often dramatic written piece inspired by art. This workshop is designed for children and adults to create Ekphrastic poems and prose inspired by classical and contemporary works of art and photography. Through discussion and practical exercise, students will learn how to approach writing about art from various perspectives such as writing about the scene, writing in the voice of the artist, personification of subjects in the work of art, etc. Mr. Richardson will also help students improve the oral presentation of the poems they compose and understand the oral tradition of poetry and spoken word that dates back to Cicero and Homer.

## **FRIDAY, SESSION 3, 4:15–5:15 P.M.**

### **F3.1 Books for Breakfast, Literature for Lunch (Cultivating a Literature-Rich Lifestyle)**

*Melissa Wiley*

How do you fit read-alouds into your day, especially for kids of varying ages? And with so many books to choose from, how do you pick the winners? Children's book author and read-aloud addict

## Friday, March 23, continued

Melissa Wiley shares her best strategies for bringing any subject to life with captivating literature, including tips on finding great booklists, doing character voices, and keeping your energetic small fry engaged.

### **F3.2 Hands-On Activities in Your Homeschool**

*Liesl Main*

In this session we will explore how hands-on activities can enhance the homeschool learning experience in everything from math and spelling to science, history, and geography. Find out more about making your own learning games; incorporating hands-on activities and experiments into your science units; and adding fun while learning about geography, engineering activities, and more. This session focuses on activities for grades three to seven. Come away with more than two dozen different types of learning experiences that will keep kids engaged during school time!

### **F3.3 Virginia Homeschooling: The How and Why**

*Will Shaw*

Join Will Shaw, one of the founders of The Organization of Virginia Homeschoolers, as he shares a brief history of

homeschooling in Virginia, some “war stories” of conflicts and major battles that were fought, the beginnings of VaHomeschoolers, and why VaHomeschoolers has been an effective homeschooling advocate in Virginia.

### **F3.4 Enhancing Children’s Lives Through Vision Therapy**

*Dr. Tod Davis*

Vision is arguably our most important sense. It directly affects problem solving, movement, emotional well-being, personal relationships, and other aspects of daily living. In spite of neuroscientific advances in our understanding of vision, especially in the areas of identifying and treating vision problems, it continues to be poorly understood by educators, clinicians, and the general public. In fact most schools and clinicians continue to assess vision only with the 20/20 chart. Come learn in a lively and fun format the effect of vision on attention and learning, and how vision problems can be addressed.

### **F3.5 Mapping Out Your Foreign Language Journey From Elementary Through the High School Years**

*Karim Morato*

Create a roadmap for success and learn how to plan your child’s foreign

language studies wisely. Learn the why, when, what, and how!

### **F3.6 Homeschooling High School: Dual Enrollment**

*Leslie Nathaniel*

Dual enrollment offers the chance to earn both high school and college credit for classes taken at your local community college. Earning some college credit in your high school years can help jumpstart a college degree, validate your homeschool transcript, satisfy prerequisites, and reduce the overall cost of college. Come learn about the benefits offered by dual enrollment, how to determine when a student is ready, the enrollment process, the responsibilities of a dual-enrolled student, some of the ins and outs of using these units as part of a college degree, and things to consider when selecting community college classes.

### **F3.7 Waldorf Homeschooling**

*Britta Wolfe*

Join Britta for a discussion and overview of the Waldorf approach to homeschooling. She will share various resources that can support you.

## Saturday, March 24

### **SATURDAY, SESSION 1, 9–10 a.m.**

#### **S1.1 Achieving Your Dreams**

*Dr. Hakeem Oluseyi*

Your dreams are singularly yours; big or small, they are *your* passions and *your* goals. Join Dr. Oluseyi as he talks about growing up with big dreams and how developing character and commitment, not just education, helped him reach his goals. He will inspire you to achieve your dreams as well.

#### **S1.2 Creatively Writing Creative Creations**

*Justin Young*

Have you ever wanted to create creative creations? Do you have a story idea bouncing around in your brain or in your heart but just can’t seem to get it on paper? Let critically acclaimed author and storyteller Justin Young show you how. Learn the hero’s journey that will keep your readers glued to the page, along with other writing techniques and

exercises that will take your idea from your mind’s stage to the printed page.

#### **S1.3 Working and Homeschooling: It Can Be Done**

*Jean Byrd*

When you work and homeschool, life can get pretty crazy. Join Jean as she shares ways that she manages both without feeling like the proverbial chicken without a head. Learn tips and techniques for maintaining balance and thriving in your homeschool.

#### **S1.4 Math and Logic in Wonderland**

*Susannah Conrad*

Who’s ready for a mad time? Since its publication, *Alice in Wonderland* has been one of the most beloved children’s books. Few realize it is also a Victorian satire and its author was a professor of mathematics and logic. Fall down the rabbit hole and visit with Wonderland’s familiar characters as we explore the math in this timeless children’s classic.

Crack cleverly hidden logic puzzles and finally learn why “we’re all mad here.”

#### **S1.5 Less Intimidating History: Passion, Justice, and Fun in History!**

*Sarah Blunkosky, M.A.*

This session is for middle to high school learners and interested homeschool educators. We will use primary sources, maps, and a discussion of bias to explore the strategies that have invoked fear and intimidation in the past. This session will make it fun and easy to nurture a passion for social justice while tackling the social sciences, particularly the study of history.

#### **S1.6 Beginning Homeschooling, Part 1: Navigating Paperwork and Legalities**

*Stephanie Elms*

Thinking about homeschooling but feeling a bit overwhelmed? New to homeschooling and wondering what

you have gotten yourself into? Stephanie gives an overview of the law and answers your questions and concerns about how homeschooling can work for your family. Gain the knowledge and confidence you need to get started on your homeschooling journey. This session is similar in content to the “Beginning Homeschooling” session on Friday (F1.5).

### **S1.7 Homeschooling the Exceptional Athlete**

*Deborah Abbott*

Join Deborah for an intimate discussion about her experiences homeschooling future Olympians and how to balance the education and training/practicing schedule for your exceptional student.

## **SATURDAY, SESSION 2, 10:30–11:30 a.m.**

### **Keynote Address— Tidal Homeschooling: The Ebb and Flow of Joyful Learning**

*Melissa Wiley*

When she first started homeschooling, Melissa Wiley spent a lot of time trying to determine what kind of label fit her family best—Charlotte Mason? Unschooling? Eclectic? Gradually she realized there was a pattern to how her family learned and lived: an organic rhythm of “high tides” and “low tides,” each with its own character and activities. In Melissa’s keynote address, we’ll explore the tidal homeschooling lifestyle and discover how the metaphor can be useful in shaping joyful learning adventures for your family.

## **SATURDAY, SESSION 3, 1:15–2:15 p.m.**

### **S3.1 Embrace the Inner Nerd**

*Justin Young*

Do you ever feel trapped between being who you really are and who you want people to think you are? Do you think that it’s easier to “go with the flow” than to be singled out, made fun of, laughed at, or mocked for being “different?” Do you just go on pretending, instead of living? Join Justin as he takes you on an emotional roller coaster ride of crazy stories from his childhood and thought-provoking experiences that will help you understand that true beauty lies in what makes us different. He will inspire you to discover, create, and embrace who you really are and empower you to be true to that “inner you” ... and release your “inner hero.”

### **S3.2 Teaching Classical Literature with Cinema**

*Michael Justin Lee*

Join Michael Justin Lee as he demonstrates how cinema can be used to enliven the teaching of frequently unappreciated classics of literature. By viewing selected snippets of new and classic movies, learn how to employ movies to supplement your teaching of classical literature and to enlighten your students on the precise meanings and contexts of these great works.

### **S3.3 Better Late Than Early: Effective Whole Child Learning for Ages 3–7**

*Jeanne Faulconer*

We’re so excited about starting our preschoolers, kindergarteners, and primary-age kids with homeschooling! Shouldn’t we do what schools are doing? Most schools and preschools have pushed workbooks, reading lessons, and pencil-to-paper math lessons to younger and younger ages, even though the latest research and child development experts say early formal academic lessons hurt kids academically in the long run. What to do instead? You’re a homeschooler! You can help your children learn holistically, integrating learning into daily life and meeting your child’s stage of development with exquisite timing, rather than risking burnout. This session will explore both why and how to help our youngest children learn in ways that are right for them and their stage of development.

### **S3.4 Beginning Homeschooling, Part 2: But What Do I Do Monday?**

*Stephanie Elms*

This second talk in the Beginning Homeschooling series covers options for the day-to-day aspects of homeschooling: finding resources, knowing what to teach, exploring different homeschooling approaches, structuring your day, and finding local groups. While no one can tell you what will work best for your family, Stephanie provides you with resources for figuring it all out. Gain the knowledge and the confidence you need to get started.

### **S3.5 Adapting Your Curriculum for Your Child**

*Laura Sowdon, OTR*

Get advice from an occupational therapist on ways to adapt curricula for your child with ADHD, dyslexia, dysgraphia, and other learning challenges. We will look at various curricula in a range of subjects and discuss both how to make them work and what you can change to



### **Don’t Forget to Pre-Order Lunch!**

Groovin’ Gourmets will once again cater our conference with a variety of delicious box lunches. These complete lunches are available at the conference only if you pre-order by **Thursday, March 8, 2018**. You won’t want to miss out on these tasty sandwiches and wraps; we even have vegetarian and gluten-free options! Each lunch costs \$10.50; bottled water is included.

better suit them to your child’s needs. Additionally, we will discuss what shouldn’t be changed and what aspects should not be skipped. When you are feeling overwhelmed because your child can’t do everything a curriculum has—or when your child is capable in one area, but not another—this session will help you gain ideas and resources to explore that can make homeschooling work better for you.

### **S3.6 Deconstructing the College Application Process, Part 1: Preparing for the Paperwork**

*Erin Scherger*

Is your homeschooled teen planning to attend a four-year college after high school? Functioning as your child’s guidance counselor can be an intimidating prospect, but there are several steps you can take along the way to bring a little sanity to the process and to feel comfortable that you will have the information you need when the time comes to assemble college applications. Is your child already a junior or senior? Don’t panic! It’s not too late to create an orderly, low-stress plan.

### **S3.7 Dads Who Homeschool**

*Darren Jones*

Although in many homeschooling families, Mom is the day-to-day teacher with input and support from Dad, it

doesn't have to be that way—and often isn't. What happens when Dad is the primary educator—and not just for the seriously cool science experiments? Navigating play dates, setting schedules, maintaining the routine—all bring their own special challenges. Darren gives advice and encouragement to all dads who homeschool.

**SATURDAY, SESSION 4, 3:15–4:15 p.m.**

**S4.1 Comics Make You Smart**

*Melissa Wiley*

Many adults think of comic books and comic strips as literary junk food. But the truth is, sequential art is a sophisticated art form that can be a powerful learning tool for our kids. In this talk, we'll look at the ways comics can quietly improve reading comprehension, vocabulary, storytelling, and other skills—all while being total kid magnets!

**S4.2 Tackling Intimidating Academics**

*Rachel Spigarelli*

How do you teach subjects you don't know much about? How do you motivate a child to study a topic you regard as valuable but that they have little interest in? What about concepts you remember studying, but that now feel a little rusty? Then there are the things your child wants to learn of which you know nothing about. What do you want your students to gain? What do you love most about learning together? We'll consider these questions in the context of your overarching goals in homeschooling. Through our encouraging discussion, you will gain greater confidence and recognize that tackling these kinds of subjects isn't about whether you are smart enough. You are not offering your student your own intelligence; you are offering them your love and determination.

**S4.3 Memorizing Math Facts Without Tears**

*Kathleen Lawler*

Many people, especially children, are visual learners. Approaching math from a visual perspective, using an abacus, is a sure-fire path to success! Learn how an abacus fosters quantity recognition and develops addition strategies. Investigate place value in a crystal-clear format. Explain "borrowing and carrying" when adding and subtracting numbers. Discover the simplicity of multiplication.

Come to this workshop and find the easy way to learn math facts.

**S4.4 Helping Children With Dyslexia Thrive**

*Britta Wolfe*

Join homeschool educator Britta Wolfe as she shares her experiences from suspecting her child might be dyslexic, to obtaining a diagnosis, to finding evidence-based resources to support her child's learning, and finally to helping her child embrace the unique gifts that come along with dyslexia. This is the perfect opportunity to engage in an intimate discussion with someone who has been there. Britta offers support while helping you untangle some of the steps you may need to take on your path to understanding.

**S4.5  Workshop: How To Run a Summer Camp and Make Money**

*Kari Brimhall*

Turn your passion into a summer camp and earn money! Brimhall teens have held summer camps for the last eight years! Everything from photography, art, cooking, sewing, "Math Whiz Kids," LEGO animation, etc. Learn the ins and outs of finding your passion and turning it into a class or weeklong camp for kids.

**S4.6 Deconstructing the College Application Process, Part 2: Assembling the Application**

*Erin Scherger*

Many parents who homeschool the high school years will need to create some sort of transcript to represent their child's high school experiences. However, there is more to applying to a four-year college than that! In this second part of the College Application Process series, learn about other documentation you may have to prepare as your student's guidance counselor, including the school profile and the counselor recommendation letter, possible considerations for the homeschool supplement of the Common App, and, oh yes, information about putting together a transcript.

**S4.7 Homeschooling Through Hard Times**

*Vanessa Wright*

Join Vanessa as she shares her experience of life taking several unexpected turns: two new jobs, two moves, and two out of three kids being diagnosed with challenging health issues. Hear how she managed to homeschool by grab-

bing on and using it as the touchstone and common thread to their hectic and already stressful days, weeks, and months.

**SATURDAY, SESSION 5, 4:45–5:45 p.m.**

**S5.1 Habits in the Homeschool**

*Melissa Wiley*

In this lighthearted workshop we'll explore steps for building useful habits in a spirit of fun. Good habits—both in ourselves and our kids—free parents from having to be negative and critical. Instead, we can work together in a playful spirit to build positive habits that support a lifestyle of learning and family harmony.

**S5.2 Homeschooling High School: Keeping Enchantment Alive**

*Stephanie Elms*

Homeschooling high school can make even the most experienced homeschool parent feel like they are in completely new territory. The clock feels like it is ticking. The stakes feel much higher. Our homeschool ideals and what we know about how our kids learn best often feel as if they are in direct conflict with traditional high school expectations. Stephanie will share ideas for keeping enchantment alive in the high school years—how we can see it as a time of exploration and growth for our teens rather than as a test they are going to pass or fail. This session will be less about the educational how-to's and more about shifting our own perspective to one of curiosity and excitement as our teen comes into their own.

**Quiet Room**

The great thing about a conference like ours is all the energy and excitement—running into friends in the hall, striking up a conversation with a complete stranger—but sometimes you need a little quiet and privacy. Nursing mothers and others who need a space away from the hustle and bustle will find it in our combination nursing room and prayer/meditation space. Check your on-site program for location.



### S5.3 Unschooling 101

Jean Byrd

Do you find the idea of unschooling both exciting and anxiety-inducing at the same time? Is there a “right” way to unschool? What if you feel as though unschooling doesn’t really speak to your style but neither does anything else? Come hear about this mom’s experience unschooling and how she came to feel okay with her decisions.

### S5.4 A Safe and Supportive Place: Troubleshooting Common Home-schooling Challenges

Sarah Blunkosky, M.A.

Homeschool mom and learning consultant Sarah Blunkosky explores some common challenges her clients tackle in their homeschools. She also takes anonymous or direct questions from the audience, in a safe and welcoming place.

### S5.5 Writing is a Blast

Kari Brimhall

Refresh your spirit; recharge your writing! Explore ideas for great writing experiences designed to spark creativity—your kids will be excited to put pencil to paper with these easy-to-adapt suggestions. The focus is on the power of words, finding your personal voice, and on supporting the creative process. With a landslide of ideas, you will learn how to help kids write biographies, historical fiction, fractured fairy tales, inquisitive letters, and so much more! This session is best suited to homeschooling parents of 4th through 8th graders.

### S5.6 Tips on Taking the SAT & ACT

Bud Mayo

Join Mr. Mayo as he discusses the content of both the SAT and ACT. The pros and cons of taking each test will be clarified and strategies for successful preparation and completion of these tests will be covered. Score improvement activities will be outlined with an emphasis on free alternatives which can be completed at home. A Q&A period will follow.

### S5.7 Determining Your Child’s Gift: The Connection Between Neuroscience Research and Education

Deborah Abbott

Join Deborah as she discusses Howard Gardner’s research in multiple intelligences and how to determine your child’s gift of intelligence (i.e., musical-rhythmic, visual-spatial, verbal-linguistic, logical-mathematical, bodily-kinesthetic, interpersonal, intrapersonal, and naturalistic) and how best to utilize this knowledge by teaching your child in the most effective way.



## Friday Night Festivities

The talent show, project exhibit, and frozen yogurt social are open to kids of all ages. Please indicate on your registration if you would like to perform in the show or display a project, and list any participants. Only paid registrants are able to join in these festivities.

### Talent Show *Friday, 7–8:30 p.m.*

Our annual Friday evening talent show is the perfect opportunity for homeschoolers to shine like stars. Enjoy the talent of homeschoolers as they perform everything from music to poetry recitation and gymnastics to comedy.

*\*Please note, due to popularity and time constraints, there will be a cap on the number of talent show acts and each one will be limited to three minutes. No one may participate as a lead performer in more than one performance. Acts are accepted on a first-come, first-served basis.*

### Project Exhibit *Friday, 7–8:30 p.m.*

Not comfortable jumping on stage to share your passion, but you still have a collection, a piece of art, or a science project you want to show? Have you been bitten by the photography bug? Do your talents lie in quilting or sewing? Is writing poetry your favorite way of expressing yourself? Is coloring a creative outlet for you? Our project exhibit is the perfect venue for you and your accomplishments. Please indicate on your registration if you would like to display in the project exhibit. We will post all exhibits on our conference website so you can easily share your project with friends and family!

### Frozen Yogurt Social

*Friday, 8:30–9:30 p.m.*

Meet up with old and new friends at the frozen yogurt social immediately following the talent show, as we close out the first day of the conference.



# Family Programming: Education & Fun for All Ages

We have entertaining and enlightening programs scheduled throughout the conference for family members of all ages. *Please remember that children 12 and under must always be accompanied by someone aged 13 or older.* Family programming activities can only be attended by **paid** registrants. Stay tuned for more programs! Please be sure to check the conference website for updates and the on-site program for the final details and schedule.



## Visit, Learn, and Earn

*Friday, 1–2:30 p.m.*

Kids 12 and under: Explore marine and coastal science at the Chincoteague Bay Field Station booth, preview the newest Usborne books, and examine the opportunities and beauty our Virginia parks have to offer—all while earning a free paperback book! It's as easy as 1-2-3! One, pick up a *Youth Vendor Visits* map at registration. Two, collect stickers from our vendors. You need five stickers from each Exhibit Hall and two from the lobby, but you only have from 1–2:30 p.m. on Friday to collect them. Three, turn in your map at the Used Resource Sale on Friday, 3–7 p.m., for a free paperback of your choice. Children ages 12 and under must be accompanied by someone aged 13 or older at all times during the conference.



## Open Acoustic Jam Session

*Saturday, 9–11 a.m.*

Teens who play any kind of acoustic instrument won't want to miss our fifth annual conference jam session. Bring your guitar, bass, fiddle, banjo, or whatever for a free-for-all jam with other musical homeschoolers. Homeschooled teen Parker Gondella will be on hand to give tips for jumping in on songs you don't know. Amplifiers and criticism of others not allowed. Participants should be mature, at least 11 years old, and responsible for their own instruments. Musicians younger than 13 years old must be accompanied by someone 13 years old or older. A keyboard will be provided.



Photo by Michael Wade

## Historical Reenactment: Meet Frederick Douglass

*Saturday, 1:15–2:15 p.m.*

Go back in time with Frederick Douglass as he comes to life to speak about his experiences as a slave; his escape to freedom; and his rise as a great writer, orator, and abolitionist. Mr. Douglass will discuss the importance of reading and writing, learning history, and developing a strong sense of civic responsibility. He will also recite an excerpt from his most famous speech, "What to the Slave is the 4th of July" and conclude with a 15-minute Q&A session with students. Mr. Douglass hopes to provide a vivid demonstration of how living history ignites and engages the student in a way that traditional teaching techniques may not.

## Walkerton Tavern: Game Time and Tours

*Saturday, 10 a.m. to 2 p.m.*

Come by historic Walkerton Tavern to play some outdoor games including badminton, bocce, quoits, and ninepins. You can also take a tour of our historic facility and learn how this 1824 structure served as a tavern, hotel, post office, and voting precinct. Several hands-on activities are included in this tour: postmarking, delivering mail, and voting in an election. Drop in and have some fun with the family! Walkerton Tavern is the three-story brick building located across The Cultural Arts Center parking lot (look for signs).



## 2018 Resource Fair: Shop & Save with Conference Vendors

The Exhibit Hall and Used Resource Sale are free and open to the public. Attendees interested in only the Resource Fair should select the *Shop-for-Free* registration option in order to receive a name badge. A name badge is required during the conference, even in the free vendor areas. For more information about registration options, see p. xviii.



### Exhibit Hall

Friday, 1–7 p.m.

Saturday, 8:30 a.m. to 4:45 p.m.

Make sure to visit the vendors in both exhibit halls on Friday and Saturday. VaHomeschoolers knows you want to see products and services which reflect a

broad spectrum of educational philosophies. You'll find curricula, books, field trip offerings, educational services, and so much more. There's plenty of time to shop between sessions, over lunch, and during the shopping break each day, so feel free to browse first and purchase



at your leisure. Make sure you ask our vendors if they have any conference-only discounts!

For the latest list of vendors exhibiting at the conference, please visit [conference.VaHomeschoolers.org](http://conference.VaHomeschoolers.org) and click on the link for our exhibitors.



### Used Resource Sale

Friday, 2–7 p.m.

Saturday, 8 a.m. to 4:45 p.m.

Don't miss our celebrated Used Resource Sale, stocked with thousands of treasures at unbeatable prices. Thanks to the generous support of other homeschoolers, you will find curricula, manipulatives, literature for all ages, CDs, games, science kits, and more. Since all items have been donated, each purchase directly supports VaHomeschoolers. Don't leave the conference without some new resources of your own!

Do you have educational resources you're ready to pass on to others? See p. xiii for information about donating to the Used Resource Sale.

# Volunteers Needed!

The 2018 VaHomeschoolers Conference and Resource Fair has been organized and shaped by dedicated homeschooling parents like you. We continue to need volunteers to help in the weeks leading up to the conference and energetic teens and adults to help on site during the conference weekend.

Please check our volunteer tab at **conference.VaHomeschoolers.org** to see an up-to-date listing of needs.



## Conference Weekend Volunteers: Teens and Adults

Being an on-site volunteer is a great opportunity for you to get to know other homeschoolers and participate in the conference. Add access to the Volunteer Lounge, stocked with snacks and drinks, and you couldn't have more fun volunteering! Teen and adult volunteers are needed on Friday and Saturday to help with conference setup and tear-down and at the registration desk. Additional help is needed manning the Used Resource Sale, assisting our wonderful vendors, escorting our speakers, and performing numerous other jobs.

It is important to VaHomeschoolers that you have time to enjoy the sessions and resources of the conference. Each day is divided into two-hour shifts, which makes it easy to work around your schedule. No volunteers will be scheduled for more than two shifts without previous permission from the conference Volunteer Keyleader.

## Just for Teen Volunteers

Volunteering at the conference is especially rewarding for our teen attendees! Meet other homeschooled teens, have fun, earn service hours, and acquire letters of recommendation. Teen volunteers register for the conference for free, can attend a Friday afternoon (3:30–5:30 p.m.) pizza party just for teen volunteers, and also get weekend access to the Volunteer Lounge.

Teen volunteers must be 13 or older. No volunteers, including teens, will be scheduled for more than two shifts without previous permission from the conference Volunteer Keyleader. So, while teens should come prepared to work, they should also be prepared for unscheduled time. Teen volunteers are also encouraged to attend the special teen-only sessions that will energize, motivate, and promote camaraderie.



## Don't Miss Out—Volunteer!

Email [ConfVolunteers@VaHomeschoolers.org](mailto:ConfVolunteers@VaHomeschoolers.org) for more information and an application; please put *Conference* in the subject line. Current needs can be found at [conference.VaHomeschoolers.org](http://conference.VaHomeschoolers.org) under the Volunteer tab.

## Are You the 2019 Conference Chair?

Every year, The Organization of Virginia Homeschoolers excitedly prepares for our conference. From speakers to vendors, from the talent show to the family programming, the behind-the-scenes work needs someone to orchestrate all the details. *This could be you!*

Next year will be even more challenging and exciting, but promises to be even more fun! We will be moving the conference to Fort Magruder Hotel and Conference Center in Williamsburg, Virginia. This will be a roomier venue in a historical setting with a number of educational activities in the surrounding area. It will be an amazing experience!

Need some great reasons to volunteer? It's a fantastic opportunity to

- practice and fine tune your leadership skills
- update your resume
- make new friends
- learn more about the history and the behind-the-scenes workings of VaHomeschoolers
- meet wonderful, talented, and inspiring people
- become more involved
- connect with an extremely diverse and knowledgeable community
- make a difference

With the help of previous chairs, volunteers, and the VaHomeschoolers board of directors, you would have the opportunity to influence the direction of the conference! You can be a part of a team that has a positive impact on homeschooling.

Strong communication skills, a passion for homeschooling, respect for VaHomeschooler's inclusive mission, and an ability to multitask are what make a good conference chair. Think you (or you and a friend) have what it takes? Email me at [Conference@VaHomeschoolers.org](mailto:Conference@VaHomeschoolers.org) for details. You can start the process early by shadowing me this March.

Is the thought of co-chairing the conference a little too daunting but you still want to be a part of the team? We have plenty of Keyleader positions to fill as we move locations!

Thank you for all your support,  
DeeDee Sauter

2018 VaHomeschoolers Conference  
and Resource Fair Chair  
[Conference@VaHomeschoolers.org](mailto:Conference@VaHomeschoolers.org)

*"No one is more cherished in this world than someone who lightens the burden of another."*

—Author unknown



One of the many hats that DeeDee wears for VaHomeschoolers.

## Other Ways To Support the Conference and VaHomeschoolers

Even if you can't volunteer at the conference, there are other great ways to support VaHomeschoolers.

### Be a Sponsor or Make an In-Kind Donation

Sponsors make a donation to support a specific area of the conference. You can choose from Family Programming, volunteer appreciation, the talent show and frozen yogurt social, or the personalized totes. We also have a need for specific types of in-kind gifts. Please contact [Conference@VaHomeschoolers.org](mailto:Conference@VaHomeschoolers.org) for more details on either kind of donation.

### Support the Used Resource Sale

Our Used Resource Sale is dependent on donations, so take this opportunity to declutter your house! We're looking for curricula, books, videos, games, manipulatives, CDs, and anything else you've found useful in your home-school but are now ready to rehome. Please contact [Usedresourcesale@VaHomeschoolers.org](mailto:Usedresourcesale@VaHomeschoolers.org).



## Other Ways to Support the Conference and VaHomeschoolers, continued

### Donate Your Box Tops and Ink Cartridges

VaHomeschoolers collects box tops and used printer ink cartridges. Bring these to the conference and drop them off at the VaHomeschoolers table. (Please do not mail them.)

### Buy Your Books (and Other Stuff) on Amazon

VaHomeschoolers is a registered charity with the Amazon Smile program. Simply go to [Smile.Amazon.com](https://www.amazon.com/smile) and choose The Organization of Virginia Homeschoolers as your charity. When you make purchases through the Smile pages, Amazon will donate a portion of those purchases to VaHomeschoolers.

### Make a Recurring or One-Time Donation

VaHomeschoolers programming is dependent upon donations. It is easy to make your tax-deductible contribution online at [VaHomeschoolers.org/donate](https://www.vahomeschoolers.org/donate) or by adding it to your conference registration payment.



### Become Part of the VaHomeschoolers Team

VaHomeschoolers is Virginia's only volunteer-driven statewide homeschool organization, and we have both short-term projects and long-term positions that need you. Visit [VaHomeschoolers.org/volunteer](https://www.vahomeschoolers.org/volunteer) or send a list of your interests to our volunteer coordinator at [Volunteer@VaHomeschoolers.org](mailto:Volunteer@VaHomeschoolers.org). We have a volunteer job that's a good fit for you, whatever your interests and availability.



### Raffle Basket

Every year we raffle curricula, gift cards, books, games, and many other items which can be used by homeschoolers. Do you have any new, unused items, gift cards or other donations you think would be a great addition to the basket raffle? Email [Conference@VaHomeschoolers.org](mailto:Conference@VaHomeschoolers.org) with your donation ideas!

## Meet Our Conference Speakers

**Deborah Abbott** is a graduate student studying neuroscience in education. She homeschools future Olympians in the Virginia Beach area.

**Sarah Blunkosky, M.A.**, is a homeschool momma of three kids, one of whom has Down syndrome, autism, and several learning challenges. She works part time as an education consultant, homeschool portfolio evaluator, researcher, yoga teacher, and writer at Learning Heroine LLC. She enjoys life's many adventures and has too many interests to reasonably keep up with (but she tries). When she is not with her family or working, you can find her teaching therapeutic yoga or curled up in her favorite corner of the public library.

**Kari Brimhall** is the mom of five fabulous kids. Four of the five are in college. She graduated from Brigham Young University in education with an emphasis in teaching the gifted and talented. She loves to create in the kitchen, teach classes, write, paint,

and tell stories. She and her husband homeschooled for 14 years. She shares her favorite ideas on her blog: [instantsunshinebooks.wordpress.com](https://www.instantsunshinebooks.wordpress.com). Kari has spoken, taught classes, and told stories all over the U.S. and keeps her audiences in stitches with her personal and family experiences. She has served in a number of church, community, and homeschooling callings and leadership responsibilities. Married to her best friend, VonLogan, they can be found any night of the week writing, creating art, and laughing around the dinner table!

**Jean Byrd** joined VaHomeschoolers after finding it via an Internet search and appreciating the wealth of information provided. When she and her family attended their first conference, she knew she wanted to be further involved in helping the organization. A year later, she ran for the board of directors and began her first term in January 2015. She has applied her extensive technical background to meeting the organization's online needs,

which include the conference website and registration system, membership database system, and new website hosting. She feels VaHomeschoolers provides essential information and resources for those who are homeschooling and also for those just thinking about it and filled with questions. She was recently hired as the Executive Director of VaHomeschoolers and resides in Alexandria with her husband and two children, ages 5 and 7.

**Susannah Conrad** grew up in California and has lived in and traveled through many states before calling Virginia home. She is the wife to David and the mother to seven children from toddler to adult. Susannah was drawn to homeschooling in the early 2000's when it became clear that learning together as a family was more effective than sending the children off one by one to be educated by others. She is the head of the successful Virginia Latter-day Saint homeschool community, where she joyfully puts her degree in theatre and

dance to good use. Her home overflows with good books, yarn, fabric, and beads. She can often be found curled up with a book or sewing a dress at the last minute.

**Dr. Tod R. Davis** earned his Doctor of Optometry at Southern California College of Optometry and a post-doctoral fellowship with the Gesell Institute of Child Development, Yale University. He has lectured on visual processing disorders with a number of organizations, including the Society of European Optometry in Brussels, Belgium; the master's program, Special Education at the National University in Irvine, California; and the master's program, Department of Physical Therapy at the Loma Linda University in California. He regularly provides in-services to parent groups, educators, and other professionals. His dynamic personality commands the attention of his patients, both young and old!

**Stephanie Elms** never intended to homeschool, but can see now that she fell into it naturally as an extension of the relationship-based parenting approach to which she was drawn. She particularly enjoys encouraging homeschoolers as they learn to trust the process with their children, as well as themselves, recognizing that in homeschooling there are no "right" approaches, just options to try. Stephanie has been a homeschooling advocate for 16 years and was a longtime member of the VaHomeschoolers board of directors and regular contributor to *VaHomeschoolers Voice* magazine. She recently started working as a homeschool coach for The Homeschool Alliance. Stephanie has two always-been-homeschooled boys, ages 20 and 17, and is seriously enjoying the young adult years. You can read her musings on her personal blog, [throwingmarshmallows.com](http://throwingmarshmallows.com).

**Jeanne Faulconer** is a popular speaker at homeschooling conferences, business groups, and parents' groups, and she homeschooled her three sons in North Carolina, Mississippi, and Virginia for 20 years. Jeanne is a homeschool coach for Brave Writer and writes for *TheHomeSchoolMom.com*, where her column "Ask Jeanne" addresses homeschooling questions from readers. Jeanne conducts portfolio evaluations for Virginia homeschoolers for evidence of progress, and she coaches parents and teens in Virginia on interest-led learning as prep for life, work, and college. She is a former college faculty member, former editor of *Home Education Magazine* and *VaHomeschoolers Voice*, and a former member of the VaHomeschoolers board of directors. Her website is [EngagedHomeschooling.com](http://EngagedHomeschooling.com).

**Darren Jones** and his wife Sara have four children, whom they homeschool together: Addi, Stuart, Daphne, and Phillip. During the day, Darren works as a litigation attorney representing homeschool families experiencing legal difficulties. He also works with homeschool support groups all across the country, assisting them with legal issues. In the evening, he takes on teaching history, literature, and other assorted fun subjects. His article "A Case for Homeschooling" was recently published in *The Wiley Handbook of School Choice*. Darren is an active member of Winchester Anglican Church, where he is a Sunday School teacher. Darren is excited to share his passion for homeschooling with other parents!

**Kathleen Cotter Lawler** is the daughter of Dr. Joan A. Cotter, author and creator of the RightStart Mathematics program. She was one of the first children to grow up under the Activities for Learning principles. Kathleen has a degree in Home Economics from the University of Minnesota and two master's degrees from the University of Mary in Bismarck, North Dakota. Kathleen is the mother of four children ages 20 to 25. Three of the Lawler children have graduated from North Dakota State University and the youngest is attending college at the University of Minnesota. Kathleen travels all across the U.S. and Canada to share the RightStart mission of helping children understand, apply, and enjoy mathematics. In her spare time, Kathleen designs and sews quilts and is relearning how to unicycle.

**Michael Justin Lee** taught for many years at the University of Maryland and three times won its business school's Distinguished Teaching Award. He has also taught at the graduate level at Georgetown University and Johns Hopkins University. A professional filmmaker, Michael Justin Lee is the President of Capital Stewardship Productions which specializes in creating movies from great classics for educational purposes. He is a member of the Writers Guild of America as well as the Dramatists Guild of America and can be contacted via his website [michaeljustinlee.com](http://michaeljustinlee.com).

**Liesl Main** is a curriculum developer, educator, and homeschooling mom to three. She will be presenting about hands-on activities in your homeschool, a topic near and dear to her heart. She has blogged about her family's adventures and creative activities at the "Homeschool Den" since 2009 and also spent several years blogging under the *Parents.com* umbrella. Liesl

incorporates approaches that inspire and motivate her own kids, who love engaging, hands-on activities. She hopes you can join her as she shares some of the games, experiments, and activities that have been a hit with her family!

**Bud Mayo** retired after 40 years of service with Fairfax County Public Schools. His career positions included middle and high school social studies teacher, football and lacrosse coach, as well as counselor and administrator on both the middle and high school levels. He founded the Hunt Test Preparation Program in 1976. Bud has tutored over 500 students privately for the SAT and ACT and taught numerous small group classes throughout the state. He is married and has two children and three grandchildren.

**Karim Morato** is a Certified Spanish instructor, M.A.Ed. in curriculum and instruction and online learning. As a former Fairfax County Public Schools Spanish teacher and a homeschooling mother of three, she has more than 20 years of classroom experience teaching all levels of Spanish, including advanced, to a diverse group of learners (elementary, homeschooling, secondary, college students, and adult professionals). She is passionate about teaching students how to gain the necessary skills to become confident, bilingual Spanish speakers.

**Leslie Nathaniel** began homeschooling in 2002 in a vain attempt to keep up with the learning adventures of her two offspring. She's taught co-op classes, learned to knit, presented homeschooling talks at conferences, driven more miles than she cares to track, spent six years as a board member for VaHomeschoolers, organized field trips, written articles for *VaHomeschoolers Voice* magazine, developed high school transcripts, answered the VaHomeschoolers Helpline, edited essays, proofread college applications, learned to use a variety of power tools, and been a La Leche League leader for 19+ years. Her always-homeschooled kids are 17 and 21 (the latter child now attends Virginia Tech). Leslie provides math tutoring, supports homeschool families, and develops workshops to share her homeschooling skills and stay out of trouble.

**Dr. Hakeem Oluseyi** is a Distinguished Research Professor of Physics & Space Sciences at the Florida Institute of Technology. He is currently on assignment at NASA Headquarters in Washington, D.C. where he serves as an Astrophysicist and the Space Science Education Lead for NASA's Space Missions Directorate. Dr. Oluseyi is an

internationally recognized astrophysicist, educator, inventor, author, humanitarian, and TV personality. He is a renowned science communicator who currently hosts several shows on the Science Channel including *Outrageous Acts of Science* and *How the Universe Works*. He's worked tirelessly over two decades to improve lives through extending educational and scientific opportunities and fostering understanding between people. To achieve these goals he's partnered with the U.S. government and its agencies, foreign governments, national laboratories, philanthropic organizations, non-governmental organizations, private companies, and foundations. He has received several honors including selections as an MIT Faculty Fellow, TED Fellow, NASA faculty fellow, and induction into the National Black College Alumni Hall of Fame.

**Nathan Richardson** is an accomplished performance poet and published author. Nathan teaches a variety of workshops for emerging writers and is the head coach of the Hampton Roads Youth Poets, a division of Teens With a Purpose, a youth empowerment organization. Demonstrating his ability to switch hats from poetry and storytelling to history and theater, Nathan is preparing for his fourth year of The Frederick Douglass Speaking Tour, in which he delivers a remarkable portrayal of the former slave, writer, orator, and abolitionist. A short list of Nathan's other affiliations include the Suffolk Arts League, the Poetry Society of Virginia, Young Audiences of Virginia, and the Association for the Study of African American Life & History (ASALH).

**Mary Sandkam** has a son in middle school who has always been homeschooled. She can often be found outdoors with her family and exploring the many amazing places Virginia has to offer, which helps combine her love of field trips and her love of writing as she edits the Road Scholars field trip column of *VaHomeschoolers Voice* magazine. She's also a first-year board member with VaHomeschoolers.

**Erin Scherger** is in her 16th (and final) year of a six-month homeschooling experiment. She and her children have chosen an eclectic mix of homeschooling methods: all-in-one boxed curricula, literature-based learning, self-directed courses, co-op classes, massive open online courses (MOOCs), part-time enrollment in traditional high school courses, and dual-enrollment community college classes, all of which have been synthesized into transcripts for college applications. Her eldest is enjoying much success at his four-

year university; her daughter is delighting in being wooed by multiple universities for next fall. When not homeschooling, Erin is a yoga teacher, a responder on the VaHomeschoolers Helpline and Helpdesk, and managing editor of *VaHomeschoolers Voice*.

**Mark Scherger** has thoroughly enjoyed the homeschooling experience with the kids and is pleasantly surprised by how many of his college brain cells have been revived in the process. By day, he's the Director of Data Voice & Video (DV2) for the Lockheed Martin Corporation and by night, a calculus and Business 101 instructor to his daughter. When not focused on the daily routine, he enjoys getting out to fly his '63 Mooney in search of the \$100 hamburger.

**Will Shaw** is 67 and has been married to Margaret Yates Shaw for 49 years. (A teenage marriage, it'll never last.) They have four grown homeschooled children. (And finally some grandchildren!) At one time Will was a public school teacher, but he went back to banging nails to preserve his sanity. Most of his professional life has been in facilities management. Will retired in 2017. He spends more time now on hobbies: vegetable gardening, propagating native plants, reading, staying abreast of current affairs, and generally going nuts. He volunteers at a private school in Fluvanna County (nature and career education). For many years Will has worked in various capacities and venues with homeschool organizations in promoting and defending home education. He is co-founder of The Organization of Virginia Homeschoolers.

**Karen Shumway** has a master's degree in biochemistry, but she minored in Latin during college just to periodically escape the science building. After grad school, she began teaching for a science magnet high school in Texas. Then her family moved to West Virginia and she found herself an accidental homeschool parent to her 4-year-old. The following school year, they tried school for a semester before becoming intentional homeschoolers. Nine years later, she is still educating her three children (ages 14, 11, and 5 ½) at home, loving the fact that she gets to use both her humanities and science backgrounds every day.

**Laura Sowdon, OTR**, is an experienced occupational therapist who has worked with children in schools and clinics to help them reach their full potential. She is also an experienced homeschool mother who has homeschooled her own three children

for over 10 years. Laura believes in making education fun and developmentally appropriate and in adapting to the needs of both the homeschooled student and teacher. Laura lives in Woodbridge with her husband, three kids, and their dog.

**Rachel Spigarelli** enjoys teaching math and science topics, and she believes anyone can learn them. She homeschools her six children from preschool to high school with a focus on small, consistent habits that foster steady progress. She especially likes projects that allow freedom and field trips that deepen learning. Rachel is also a first-year member of the VaHomeschoolers board of directors.

**Catina Sweedy** has over 20 years of experience as a professional musician and teacher and is in demand as a private teacher, clinician, and adjudicator. She is the founder and director of the George Mason University Summer Clarinet Academy, The Clarinet Project channel on YouTube, and the Sweedy Studio of Music. In addition, Catina has been actively involved in the homeschool community: setting up classes, organizing field trips, and teaching at co-ops, as well as working with her own children. Her past speaking engagements include the VaHomeschoolers conference, MineFaire, and George Mason University. She is a Mojang-certified Minecraft educator and a volunteer with the Alliance for Self-Directed Education. Catina lives in Woodbridge with her husband, two children, and a menagerie of rescued animals.

**Britta Wolfe** lives with her husband and two of her four children on a bluff above the James River in the city of Richmond. Having experienced public and private K-12 education with her older children, Britta now joyfully home educates her younger children using both a Waldorf pedagogy and an Orton-Gillingham-based reading curriculum.

**Vanessa Wright** is a homeschooling mama to three inquisitive, creative and often loud kids ages 12, 10, and 10. She is married to Jason and they live in the Raleigh, North Carolina, area. She and her family lived in Loudoun County, Virginia, for 15 years and still miss the Gum Spring library (but not the traffic). Vanessa is a self-professed eco-beauty junkie, avid reader, yogi-wannabe, tea drinker, and chocolate snob. You can find her on Instagram at @Wrightathomeschool and on Facebook at Wright at Homeschool where she's keeping the *real* in homeschool reality.



## If You're Not a Member, Now's the Time to Join

We hope you're excited about the conference, but this great annual event is just one way we support homeschoolers in Virginia. If you're not already a member, now is a great time to join.

### By adding that \$29 annual membership fee to your registration payment, you'll save on conference registration for your whole family.

You'll also ensure you don't miss a single issue of our magazine, *VaHomeschoolers Voice*, and you'll receive complimentary access to the member content of The Happy Scientist's website (a \$29.95 value).

#### What's So Special About VaHomeschoolers?

We'll admit it: we do think we're special. VaHomeschoolers is based on principles of inclusion, congeniality, direction from members, and volunteer officers.

**We're focused.** Our sole intent is to help homeschoolers. We have no religious or partisan political agenda, and we do not take a position on non-homeschooling issues.

**We're inclusive.** From membership to election of our board of directors, we are a fully inclusive organization.

**We're member-directed.** Our board of directors takes direction from our members on issues ranging from magazine policy to positions on legislative matters.

**Our board members are volunteers.** Dues cover material expenses, allowing us to keep membership at a low \$29 per year.

**We build relationships.** We work with legislators, school boards, and administrations to build bridges and create understanding.

#### We're a Non-profit, 501(c)(3) Charity

Donations are used to provide a broad range of services for all our members and are vital to our organization. Your donations:

Fund our efforts to promote and protect the interests of Virginia's diverse homeschooling community through education and advocacy.

Underwrite the cost of our toll-free helpline and email help desk, through which our volunteers answer thousands of homeschooling questions every year.

Support our website, email updates, and our inspiring magazine *VaHomeschoolers Voice*.

Enable us to continue our effective lobbying to support homeschooling freedoms by financing our paid professional lobbyist who attends each General Assembly session.

VaHomeschoolers is a non-profit public charity with 501(c)(3) status; your donation is tax-deductible to the extent provided by law. A financial statement is available from the Virginia Division of Consumer Affairs upon request.

Donations are easy to make: just add a donation when you register or visit [VaHomeschoolers.org/donate](http://VaHomeschoolers.org/donate).

## Hotel Accommodations: Act Now for Special Block Rate

### Comfort Suites at Virginia Center Commons

10601 Telegraph Rd., Glen Allen, VA 23059  
(804) 262-2000

VaHomeschoolers has blocked all suites at Comfort Suites during March 22–25, 2018. Be sure to mention our conference for the discounted rate, and call the local hotel desk (not the nationwide toll-free reservation number). Reserve your room by **5 p.m. on March 9, 2018** in order to get the discount. However, the hotel may fill before then, so act now!

Comfort Suites is just four miles from The Cultural Arts Center at Glen Allen. The suites in this beautiful hotel have either two queen beds or one king in the bedroom, plus a full-size sofa bed in the living room. Each suite has two wall-mounted 42-inch plasma televisions, free high-speed Internet access (wired and wireless), plus refrigerator, microwave, coffeemaker, hair dryer, iron, and ironing board. King suites include a "rainforest shower." The hotel is smoke-free and has an indoor heated pool, hot tub, fitness center, public computer with Internet access, copy/fax services, free parking, and free local calls. The complimentary Savory Starts hot breakfast is served 6–9 a.m. A wide variety of entertainment and shopping opportunities are nearby.

#### Reservations and Front Desk:

(804) 262-2000

#### Discount Suite Rate:

\$90.00 plus tax (currently 13%)

#### Check-in/Check-out:

3 p.m./11 a.m.

#### Cancellation Policy:

Cancel 48 hours before your scheduled arrival to avoid being charged for one night.

Block cut-off date is **Friday, March 9, 2018** at **5 p.m.** Because all the suites are reserved for VaHomeschoolers, you must mention our conference or you will be told the hotel is filled.

If the host hotel fills up before March 9, an overflow hotel will be listed on the lodging page of the VaHomeschoolers conference website.

# Registration

Registration for the conference is easy; just visit [conference.VaHomeschoolers.org](http://conference.VaHomeschoolers.org) and click through the online form on the registration tab. You can pay immediately online using PayPal or register online and mail in a check. See the table below for a comparison of registration options.

## Two Easy Ways to Save

Register by **Thursday, February 15, 2018** to save \$10 on each *full* registration. You save even more by being a VaHomeschoolers member. If you're not already a member, or if you've let your

membership lapse, join or renew to save on each paid registration.

*All registrations* include admission to the free Friday session, the Exhibit Hall, and the Used Resource Sale.

**Please note:** In order to choose the "Limited Registration" option, one person in your party **must** be a full registration.

All registrations include admission to the free Friday session, the Exhibit Hall, and the Used Resource Sale.

	Friday and Saturday Sessions	Family Programming	Talent Show, Project Exhibit, and Frozen Yogurt Social	Price: Members/ Non-members
<b>Full</b> <i>One required, unless all in your household are Shop-for-Free.</i>	Unlimited	YES	YES	\$53/\$93 through 2/15/18 \$63/\$103 after 2/15/18
<b>Limited</b> <i>Can only be chosen after at least one member in your household is a full registration.</i>	One per day, plus the FREE Beginning Homeschooling session (F1.5) on Friday	YES	YES	\$20/\$25
<b>Youth</b> <i>Ages 3–18 (Under 3 and teen volunteers attend free!)</i>	Unlimited	YES	YES	\$10/\$15
<b>Shop-for-Free</b> <i>Shopping only and attendance at free session is permitted. Neither Family Programming nor regular sessions may be attended.</i>	FREE Beginning Homeschooling session (F1.5) on Friday	No	No	Free

Registration for specific sessions will not be required.

## Don't Forget to Order a Catered Box Lunch When You Register

Groovin' Gourmets will once again cater our conference with a variety of delicious box lunches. These complete lunches are available at the conference only if you pre-order by **Thursday, March 8, 2018**. You won't want to miss out on these tasty sandwiches and wraps; we even have vegetarian and gluten-free options. Each lunch costs \$10.50; bottled water is included.

### **Rodanthe Wrap** (vegetarian)

Roasted vegetables with herbed cheese spread in a wheat tortilla wrap. Lettuce and tomato on the side. Served with a side dish, cookie, and an Andes mint.

### **Hatteras Roast Beef**

Roast beef and cheddar cheese on a Kaiser roll. Lettuce and tomato on the side. Served with a side dish, cookie, and an Andes mint.

### **Hatteras Turkey**

Turkey and cheddar cheese on a Kaiser roll. Lettuce and tomato on the side. Served with a side dish, cookie, and an Andes mint.

### **Santa Fe Salad**

(vegetarian and gluten-free\*)

House salad blend topped with tomatoes, corn, black beans, roasted red

peppers, red onions, black olives, and shredded cheddar and Monterey jack cheeses (cheeses on the side). Served with lime cilantro vinaigrette, a gluten-free cookie, and an Andes mint.

(\*Please note: *this item does not contain any food that naturally contains gluten. However, Groovin' Gourmets does not have a dedicated kitchen for gluten-free items and cannot guarantee it is free of cross contaminants.*)

### **Kitty Hawk**

Groovin's signature red grape and ginger chicken salad with green leaf lettuce wrapped in a wheat tortilla. Served with a side dish, a cookie, and an Andes mint.



**Remember:** All volunteers can enjoy snacks in the Volunteer Lounge on Friday afternoon in addition to lunch and snacks on Saturday. Lunch will not be available on Friday. Please consider volunteering! For more information on volunteer opportunities, see p. xii.