



I couldn't have done it without you, my home school group.

Home school parents are an independent bunch. It seems many of us are the alpha dogs, those willing to stand alone, not the sort of folks who generally follow the crowd. If we were followers, we wouldn't be in the 2% pursuing home education for our kids, we'd be going along with the 98% in some school institution.

If we are so independent minded, we must each forge our own way, right? Oh no, not so fast. While it is true that each home school family can customize their school to meet the needs of their children, they do NOT need to be on the journey all alone.

After 3 kids, and 26 years of home schooling, I am so thankful for the home school groups we have participated in. They urged us on when discouragement hit, provided resources when we reached the end of our rope, and the warm friendships we formed are close and meaningful.

Sometimes I hear people say they are too busy to connect with a group, or they can't afford to join, or they seem to think they know better than everyone else.

The truth is, there is a high incidence of quitting among those who go it alone. Some families aspire to home school through high school graduation, but put the kids into school because they are lonely, or bored at home, or even mom is lonely or bored at home. The support and comradery of a home school group might have enabled them to continue toward the goal. You could call these staunchly independent people the loners, but I call them the lone wolves. When a lone wolf discovers the pleasures of a home school group, the whole family is thrilled with the companionship and encouragement they find.

In the metro St. Louis area, there are over 40 groups to choose from. Some are specialized for those teaching in a certain style or curriculum, some are for those attending a specific church or denomination. There are religious groups and secular groups, large ones and small ones. Often, a home school parent will join more than one group, and benefit from the different types of activities organized within each. You might coach soccer for a large group that draws players from across the region and attend a weekly book club with a smaller group in your neighborhood.

Your home school group – don't stay home without them!

What does a home school group do?

A group like SHARE provides Support, Activities, Resources & Encouragement!

Parent meetings – ranging from newcomer sessions, how to choose curriculum, to info for teaching special needs and how to plan high school, there are numerous topics.

Online support - most groups provide a way to contact other member families via e-mail or an online forum. This is perhaps the number one way to obtain used curriculum free or at very affordable prices.

Classes - Core classes for Math, Science, Reading, Social Studies, and Language Arts are all possible. Non-core classes of all types are found in our area, and if there is one you want that you can't find, you ought to consider starting it!

Activities –

Sports – we are organized for casual intramural level sports and for competitive select teams. There are home schoolers playing football, soccer, volleyball, basketball, cheerleading, tennis, golf. There is a shooting sports team preparing for competition. Gymnastics class with other home schoolers during the day avoids the crowd of after school hours. There are home school track activities in MO, but maybe not in St. Louis yet.

Field Trips – academic trips, tours, museums, concerts and demonstrations abound. A field trip co-op, where each family plans one trip for the year and all join in on the line-up is a good way to share the workload. A field trip can be a service project, a sports opportunity, or even a road trip.

Competitions – Locally, you can enter the Geography Bee, Spelling Bee, Math Olympics, Talent Show, Art Fair, National History Day and Science Fairs. Nationally there are writing competitions.

Yearbook and student newspaper

Socials and high school dances—yes, prom!

Scout groups, drama troupes, band and choir

Chess club

Robotics teams

Park Day Playgroups

Graduation ceremony: from Kindergarten, 8th grade and High School graduation

Not all groups provide all of the above, and no sane homeschooler would attempt to do all of these, but there sure are plenty of options.