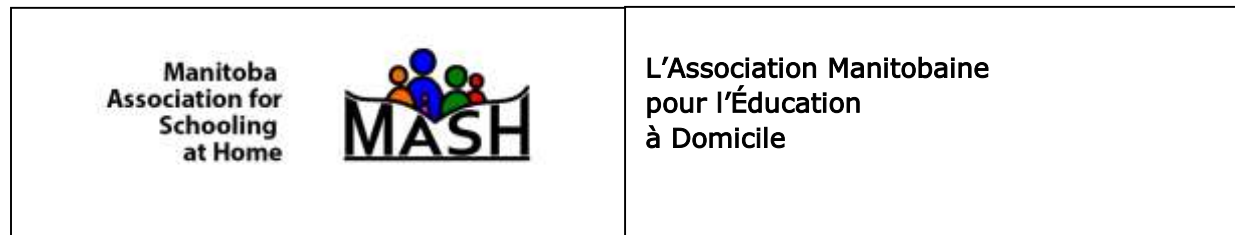


NEWSLETTER



Not Quite the President's Message

Greetings MASH members,

As we move into the last hectic days of summer, trying to pack in all those outdoor activities before it gets too late, I am sure that we all need to take a moment and pause and enjoy the green leaves on the trees and the fresh garden tomatoes and the squirrels playing tag on the fence – even if they are stealing your garden produce. Particularly for those of you who may be beginning your homeschool journey, and for those who take a big long break from any form of traditional schoolwork in the summer – anyone who may be worrying about planning in addition to trying to enjoy swimming/camping/cottaging/canoeing – take some time to relax and still enjoy being able to go outside without all those extra layers. Go outside in your bare feet, with no sweater and take a deep breath! You will have lots of time to think about school once the weather gets nippier and things will always be easier and at the same time more difficult as well as completely different than what you planned or expected.

So, as you may have gathered from the header, this is not the President's message because when I tried to create the newsletter during a 12 hour break between cottaging and camping (the deadline being reminiscent of every paper I ever wrote in university), I realized that I had not asked the President to write a message and didn't feel it was particularly nice to do so on such short notice.

(continued on page 3)

PUBLICATION INFORMATION

Articles and photos pertaining to homeschooling and home life are welcome. Submissions are welcome at any time and will be considered for the upcoming newsletter. Submission of an article does not guarantee publication. Files and photos may be sent to the editor by email via info@manitobahomeschool.com Please indicate "Submission for Newsletter" in the subject line of your email.

ADVERTISEMENTS

Advertising must be submitted to the editor by the following dates:

- November 20, 2015 (winter issue)
- February 20, 2016 (spring issue)
- May 20, 2015 (summer issue)

Rates are as follows:

- Full page \$30 per issue
- Half page \$20 per issue
- Quarter page \$10 per issue

YOUR MASH ADVISORY TEAM

- President: Monique Turner
- Secretary/Treasurer: Jennifer Gehman
- Website: Kirby Gehman
- Phone contact: Lise Malo
- Government Liaison: Marc Malo
- Newsletter Editor: Edwina Shwedyk
- Members-at-large: Chantalle Dubé, Linda Harrison, Tammy Sutherland, Vicki Buechler

Website: manitobahomeschool.com

Email contact:

info@manitobahomeschool.com

facebook.com/groups/manitobahomeschool/

Phone: 204-477-5338

Mailing Address: MASH no longer has a mailing address.

Email address changing?

If your e-mail address changes please make sure you let us know so that you can keep getting the MASH newsletter and MASH e-news.

(Not Quite the President's Message continued from page 1)

That being said, the MASH Advisory Team has been actively planning new things over the summer. You have likely already seen the biweekly e-news that is being emailed to members. There is the one day conference being planned for the fall – stay tuned for details on speakers, workshops, location, cost to attend etc. The “Not-Back-to-School” picnic is planned for September 10th at Kilcona-Harbourview. Introduction to Homeschooling orientation evenings for parents will also be publicized shortly. You can check out our website at manitobahomeschool.com for all the details as they become available.

In this issue, you will find a couple of profiles of local homeschool families – something we hope to have as a regular feature in upcoming newsletters. You are welcome to submit your own “A Day in the Life” article for consideration for future issues! There is also an overview of filling out the Notification Forms, and some information on what types of services are available from the Government of Manitoba for homeschool families.

Enjoy the rest of the summer and I, along with the rest of the Advisory Team, look forward to meeting many MASH members at upcoming events!

Cheers,

Edwina Shwedyk
Newsletter Editor

**Call to all veteran homeschool
parents**

Would you be interested in mentoring a new homeschool family? Would you like to speak at an orientation evening? Would you like to write an article for the next newsletter? We would love to hear from you!

I'm Homeschooling! Now to Notify the Government...

When you make the momentous decision to homeschool, it can seem overwhelming, especially when you start to consider all the forms and paperwork involved. In reality, it is a simple quick matter to notify the government and very little paperwork is involved. Here is a quick overview of what is necessary in the fall.

First things first - do I need to notify the government?

The government defines compulsory school age as someone who is "at the beginning of the fall term in a year, seven years of age or older, or six years of age, but will turn seven on or before December 31 of that year; and is younger than 18 years of age."

Essentially this means that if your child turns 7 before the end of December 31, 2015, provincial legislation indicates that you are to notify the government of your intention to homeschool by September 1st, 2015.

Notification is a simple process. It involves filling out a one page form (one per child) and submitting it to the homeschool office. This can be done by email, to homeschooling@gov.mb.ca, by mail to the address on the form, or by fax to 204-948-3470. Notification forms can be filled out in English or French. An example of a completed form is at the end of this article.

To find the forms, you can go to

<http://www.edu.gov.mb.ca/k12/schools/ind/homeschool/notification.html>

or contact the Homeschooling Office at 204-945-8138 or homeschooling@gov.mb.ca

Some common concerns are - what if I am late sending in the forms? What if I am unschooling? What if I don't know what we are doing? Should I fill out the forms even if my child is not of compulsory school age? Do I need to follow the Manitoba education curriculum?

First, if you are late notifying the government, take a deep breath, take 10 minutes to fill out the forms, and send them in anyway. They would rather receive them late than not at all, and neither you nor your child will be penalized for sending them in late. (continued on page 5)

(continued from page 4)

If you are unschooling, you are still home schooling, and are required to notify the government. On your forms, you can indicate that you are unschooling: you are following your child's interests and note a few things that you think they might be investigating and some resources they might use.

If you aren't sure what you are going to use for curricula or resources, you can indicate some things you hope or plan to use but know that it is fine to change things. What you write down on the notification form is not set in stone. You can change things up as you go. You need to show progress when you fill out the progress reports, but you may want to indicate that things didn't go as you originally planned and progress has taken off in a different direction, hence you have used different resources or curricula!

If your child is not of compulsory school age but would typically be entering Kindergarten or Grade 1, you can notify the government. You are not required to do so, but you can do so. Some of the benefits to notifying are 1. peace of mind that you have something written down on paper, to perhaps show doubting relatives/hold yourself accountable/feel like you have done your duty, 2. access to the Computers for Schools program which enables you to get computers, laptops and other items free (these are typically older items near the end of their life cycle but can still be useful - see <http://www.cfsl.mb.ca/cim/1500.dhtm> for details), 3. discounts at some local stores. Some benefits to deciding not to notify the government until your child is of compulsory school age are 1. having less paperwork to fill out! 2. allowing yourself to relax and focus on your child and figuring out what works for that child and for you - it can take a few years to sort all this out, and it's more fun if you don't feel pressured to maintain a certain 'standard' that you may have set up by being much more optimistic about what formal learning you were going to get done as compared to what formal learning you are actually doing.

As for the curriculum and resources you decide to use, you can use anything that you feel will be beneficial for your child. You can see what the Manitoba curriculum is for certain grades here: <http://www.edu.gov.mb.ca/k12/cur/index.html> but you are not obliged to follow this for any subject. You can use faith based curricula, secular curricula, or try to follow the provincial curricula. You can mix and match different curricula and resources for different subjects.

(continued on page 6)

(continued from page 5)

Finally - what happens once the form is submitted? If you submit it by email, typically you will get a reply in a day or two from the homeschool office acknowledging its receipt. This usually takes the form of a quick "Thank you." Depending on when you submitted it, and how busy the office is, you will receive your official confirmation of enrollment of your student in homeschooling by mail in 3-6 weeks. This takes the form of a one page letter that notes the name and grade of your child. At the bottom is a card that can be used when borrowing materials at the Manitoba Education Library and for discounts at various local stores.

At that point, no more forms are necessary until January, so sit back and relax and enjoy watching your child figure things out!

A sample notification form is on the following page – yours will look different as you may be using different curricula, an all-in-one curriculum, using child-led learning and no formal curricula (in which case, you can indicate “child-led learning – possible interests to explore might be x, y, or z). The page after that has an example of the type of notifications sent in by another homeschooling parent.

Homeschool Discounts

Remember to ask for a discount at stores and services! Here are some places that give discounts. (Show the paper card the government gives you when your notification process is complete.)

McNally Robinson Bookstore 20% off

Toad Hall Toys 10% off

Michael's 15% off

Please note that the discount may only be for select items and is subject to change.

How I Fill Out my September Notification Forms for the Department of Education – Jennifer Gehman

My daughter turned 10 in the spring. I wrote on her form that she was in grade four, because that is the grade she would be in if she were in public school, but it is not necessarily the grade level she is working on in any particular subject at home.

Language Arts: *Modified Ambleside Online English; narration; All About Spelling; Italic copywork; Read and Feed book club*

Mathematics: *Singapore Level 3B and 4A*

Science: *Self-directed experiments from 365 Daily Experiments; Madam How and Lady Why; nature study*

Social Studies: *Continuing to pursue Modern History through Film 1945-Present Day*

Other: *Rosetta Stone French; upcoming production of Romeo and Juliet; piano; Foundations in Well-Being; Karate; swimming*

My youngest son is 13 and would be in grade 8, if he was in the system.

Language Arts: *Modified Ambleside Online English; Brave Writer; narration; All About Spelling; a teen created video series; Young Adult book club*

Mathematics: *Teaching Textbooks Pre-Algebra*

Science: *The Great Courses: the Joy of Science*

Social Studies: *Continuing to pursue Modern History through Film 1945-Present Day*

Other: *Rosetta Stone French; upcoming production of Romeo and Juliet; piano; Foundations in Well-Being; Karate; swimming*

I have two other older teens and their forms look identical to my son's, with a few differences such as my other son plays drums instead of piano, and my oldest daughter took a free online course in Jazz basics.

A few things to note: I sometimes don't write the level of the subject that my children are working on. We didn't start math until my children were much older and so they were working on books that were below their indicated grade level. I didn't write the book level, just the name of the book. (This is actually the first year that I wrote any levels, because most of them are now working close to their traditional grade expectation.) Also, we often abandoned these plans, even before the end of September. My youngest daughter gave up French within a few days, and my son switched to Spanish. I might (or might not) indicate that on their next progress report.

The most important thing about the notification forms is to indicate that you have some sort of plan, and then to let them know that you see growth in your child throughout the school year!

A DAY IN THE LIFE...
OF THE SUTHERLAND-DYCK FAMILY

Tell us about yourself..

I'm Tammy. My partner, Dave, and I are parents to two boys, Addie (9 years) and Bennie (almost 8). I'm basically quarterbacking the "homeschooling" game, but since I work half-time, I've got some awesome "second-stringers" in the line-up: it's Mondays with Papa, Tuesday afternoons with Grandma and Grandpa, and Friday afternoons with Lisa (our paid friend!). Fun times!

What method of homeschooling do you practice?

I like to think of us as a grade A free range family: we're free to peck away at whatever we feel drawn to and move about freely, as long as we stay out of traffic. Yes, it's basically unschooling with a splash of guided learning here and there so the adults feel useful.

Why do we "homeschool?"

Well, "we're too cool for school," or at least that's what I advise my boys to tell people! I could give a long list of reasons we homeschool, but in the end, I'm really doing what comes natural to me as a parent, and my partner is on board. Our boys are deeply attached to us, and vice versa. Spending the best part of every weekday apart? Sorry, can't be done. We have the resources to make a beautiful life together – an awesome library down the street, lots of friends and family, access to nature, enough Lego and Playmobil to choke a horse, a solid wifi connection – what more does one need?

Do you use a curriculum? If so, which one?

When it comes to curriculum, we're dabblers, mostly, and use it as a jumping off point for other explorations and as an overarching structure to help us connect the dots. [Story of the World](#) has been my personal favourite as an intelligent guide and touch stone into so many interesting branches of world history. And, as a basic right of passage as homeschoolers, we've tried a couple of the most popular, expensive and extremely thick math curricula. Ugh! We've settled on the cheap and quick [Mammoth Math](#) series of downloadable workbooks, again, pecking our way through as we find time or need and getting help from Sal at [Khan Academy](#) when we're stuck.



Describe a typical homeschool day for your family. Or, as you may have been asked – What do you do all day?

Our life together seems to flow at an ambling pace. Each day is different. Usually it goes something like: wake up naturally, cuddle, have an extended breakfast of crepes. Tidy the kitchen while kids play. Do some math workbook. Read aloud to each other. Chart football and hockey scores, both pro and “little league.” Build with Lego. Play hallway hockey. Eat. Hang out with friends. Make complicated plays involving lots of plot twists and sword fights. Snack on popcorn and apples while watching an episode of _____. (Right now we’re into [Wartime Farm](#), part of a wonderful BBC series on daily life in England during a variety of historical periods.) Have a quick supper then off to one of the boy’s double header flag football games across town. Before bed, enjoy a late-night bowl of cereal while doing a post-game analysis. Finally, we snuggle into bed together, joining Frodo’s journey in Lord of the Rings. ZZZZZZzzzzzz...

What is your favourite homeschooling resource – book, website, etc.?

My current favourite would have to be the [Crash Courses by John and Hank Green](#). While a lot of the humour flies over my boys' heads, they enjoy the silliness and visuals, and the history courses get at the same info we're reading in Story of the World, but in a different voice.

***Greatest joy in homeschooling (can be broad or a specific moment)?***

I asked my boys why they like homeschooling: Boy 2: "Because I like to be near Mama all day." A+ in sweet-talking his mom. Boy 1: "I like playing with my friends during the day." My greatest joy is really in the vast quantities of time I get to spend with my boys. I love waking up to their sweet, eager faces and spending time snuggling in bed before we face the day. I love extended breakfasts debriefing news items over the background of CBC radio, a gentle rhythm of

life, freedom to continually ask questions and follow the rabbit trails of our own curiosities. I enjoy reading in bed at night and the intimacy of conversations whispered in the half-darkness between wakefulness and sleep.



With the help of her "village," Tammy Sutherland creatively juggles homeschooling, part-time employment and life as an artist. Thanks to The Tiny Peasant blog for permission to reprint this article which originally appeared there <http://tinypeasant.com/category/blog/>

UPCOMING MASH EVENTS

MASH Advisory Team Meeting

Wednesday, August 26, 7:00 pm gathering, 7:30 pm meeting

We are open to new people joining the team. If you'd like to check it out, please email info@manitobahomeschool.com for location details.

MASH Fall "Not Back to School" Picnic

Thursday, September 10 at Harbourview, 10:00 am to 2:00 pm.

Bring your own nut-free lunch, blanket (there are picnic tables there), water, mittens or sun hats depending the weather in September. An email will be sent on the day of confirming the event - in case of a downpour, the event will be moved to September 17.

Introduction to Homeschooling

An orientation event is in the works for early this fall. Watch the website and next e-news for details.

One-Day MASH Conference

Saturday, October 3, 2015

MASH is planning a one-day conference and needs your input. Suggestions of **workshop speakers, host locations** and **sponsors** welcome. Please submit any of your ideas to info@manitobahomeschool.com

MASH Mission Statement

MASH is a not-for-profit group dedicated to creating a sense of association among homeschoolers throughout the province of Manitoba. MASH actively promotes and advocates homeschooling by providing information to the homeschooling community.

MASH also works as a liaison between homeschoolers and the Government of Manitoba.

Do you need help homeschooling? Email MASH and we will do our best to help you. If you need information or need someone to talk to you are welcome to contact us at our email address: info@manitobahomeschool.com. You could also post your question on our Facebook page: facebook.com/groups/manitobahomeschool/

Government Resources Available to Homeschooled Students

This list of resources and whether or not they are available to homeschooled students was compiled by Alan Schroeder, the Department of Education Homeschool Liaison. Please note that these resources are subject to change and that some of them are limited (additionally, some information is included to indicate that no resources are available through the government).

Psychological Assessment Services are available to homeschooling families through the University of Manitoba on a limited basis. The intake period begins in late August and runs till a point in February each year. Parents are able to call 474-9222 directly to initiate the intake process.

Occupational Therapy and Physio Therapy Services that only go as far as assessment and recommendation are available to homeschooled students through their paediatrician using a referral process to the Children's Therapy Initiative. Paediatricians should know this and be able to provide you with a referral.

Speech and Hearing Services are not available through the government. Parents who require this service would need to purchase the service privately. The Manitoba Speech and Hearing Association has a Private Practitioner Listing available at http://www.msha.ca/private_services.php

Parents can make arrangements with their local catchment area public school principal to write the standards assessments. Please contact your catchment area school well in advance of assessment dates to ensure the inclusion of your student(s).

Grades 3 and 4 Assessment:

- The Grade 3 Assessment in Reading, *Lecture*, and Numeracy and Grade 4 Assessment in French Immersion *Lecture*

Middle Years Assessment:

- The Middle Years Assessment of Key Competencies in Mathematics, Reading Comprehension, Expository Writing, and Student Engagement

Grade 12 Tests:

- Provincial tests will be administered system-wide in the following subjects:
 - English Language Arts
 - *Français langue première 4oS : Langue et communication*
 - *Français langue seconde — immersion 4oS : Langue et communication*
 - Applied Mathematics/*Mathématiques appliquées*
 - Essential Mathematics/*Mathématiques au quotidien*
 - Pre-Calculus Mathematics/*Mathématiques pré-calcul*
-

A DAY IN THE LIFE... OF THE SHWEBELS

Welcome to our family! I am "The Mom", homeschooling "The Kids", wife to "The Dad". We are a pretty stereotypical family in that we have two kids, one girl, one boy, a house, two cats and one car. We deviate a bit in that we have been homeschooling the kids since the beginning; they will be, according to their calendar age, entering grades 3 and 4 this fall.

I had always wanted to homeschool for a variety of reasons that I won't get into in detail in this article but the primary reason was that I enjoyed spending time with my kids and I wanted to continue to spend time with them as they got to school age. I had returned to work part time after my first child was born and continued in that vein until two years ago, albeit with some stretches of full time to ridiculous amounts of overtime on top of full time. However, as the kids got older and child care got more challenging, we made the decision that I would leave my job and stay at home with them - homeschooling became my full time job.

As much as I wanted to give you a play by play of a specific day in our life, summer does not lend itself well to that, in that I am too busy doing stuff to remember to record stuff, and we do a lot less typical schooly stuff, although I feel that what they learn is every bit as valuable and enduring as when we are spending more time following a more traditional school schedule. This, then, will be the story of a theoretical day from September to May. As an aside, we tend to pursue formal schoolwork 4 to 5 days a week, but not necessarily Monday through Friday - whatever days work for us that week. We also typically do that for 5 weeks, then take a week off where we can work on projects, do lots of baking, sewing, crafting, Lego, cleaning, visiting, hiking. Finally, we also do very light school throughout the summer (which I have declared June 1st through mid-September) and often take a 2-4 week break in the doldrums of winter (i.e. February).

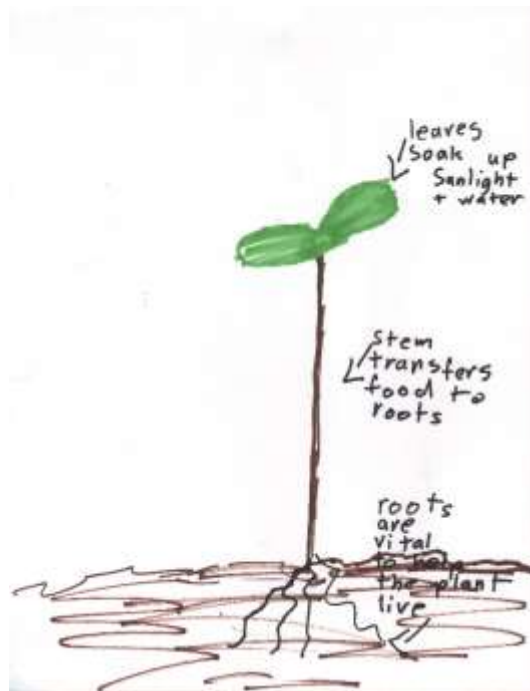
6:30 a.m. - Mom's alarm goes off. Mom presses snooze.

6:40 a.m. - Mom's alarm goes off again. Mom reluctantly rolls out of bed to do some exercise: go for a run, go for a bike ride, yoga/weights, elliptical etc. - depends on the weather/her mood/what happened yesterday morning.

7:50 a.m. - Goodbye to Dad, who is leaving for work for the day. Mom has a shower and makes a breakfast involving a ridiculous amount of eggs and vegetables.

8:30 a.m. - Mom has mental debate - should she consider waking up The Kids? Or enjoy getting some stuff done (eg. paperwork/finances/gardening) without interruptions? Usually the latter wins.

9:30 a.m. - Mom feels slightly guilty about fact that The Kids are still sleeping. Granted they don't go to bed til 11 p.m. most nights, but really, they should probably get up now. Marches upstairs to gently wake The Kids. The Kids do not respond favourably to any attempt to wake them. However, wake them she does, and they grumble downstairs, making unintelligible noises about still wanting to sleep and definitely not raring to go.



10:00 a.m. - Mom tries to convince The Kids to eat breakfast. Though they are in a better mood, having had 30 minutes to snuggle in blankets and read in the living room, they are not fond of eating when they wake up. Sometimes they will concede to eat a bowl of oatmeal or some yogurt. Rather than fight the breakfast battle, she convinces The Kids to get dressed and brush their hair and teeth (most days; sometimes this struggle waits until we have 'somewhere to go' which might not be until later that afternoon).

10:30 a.m. - After repeated questions about exactly how long it takes to get dressed and brush one's

hair and teeth (answer: significantly longer when you are distracted by the books in your room/the cat/the books/the cat), The Kids report to the dining room table. We decide how to split up - this is often preceded by heavy debate. Some days Kid 1 will be an eager volunteer to do school work first, some days Kid 2, some days we draw straws, some days Mom makes an executive decision.

Today, Kid 1 is doing school work first, whilst Kid 2 is doing chores/playing. Kid 1 will sit with Mom and go over some new math and then complete some work on those math concepts on her own, with assistance if needed. Kid 1 will then do some language arts work - grammar, poetry, writing, spelling - whatever strikes our fancy. Kid 1 usually also does one other thing at this point - maybe some Logic puzzles, maybe a game involving math or strategy, maybe some cursive practice, maybe some keyboarding practice. When we are really with it, Kid 1 will also work on French and practice the piano.

Kid 2 has meanwhile done various chores - perhaps tidying a room, cleaning a bathroom, laundry, dealing with dishes, tidying the stairs - and has then been able to play or read when they are done.

11:30 a.m. - Theoretically we switch kids at this point, but it turns out that, having refused breakfast The Kids are starving! So instead we have lunch. Or, as Mom calls it "First Lunch".

12:30 p.m. - After a break for running around, jumping on the rebounder or trampoline, and other activities, we try to resume our studies. Kid 2 sits with Mom at the dining room table while Kid 1 goes through the chores/play routine. Kid 2 will work on math, handwriting, some sort of language arts (phonics, spelling, grammar, reading out loud), and sometimes logic. Kid 2 is allergic to French as far as we can tell, and has no interest in the piano, so is exempted from these activities, although one day...

1:15 p.m. - Attempts to get The Kids together prove difficult as they both feel they have been released to play with each other. They are given leave to do so.

2:00 p.m. - The Kids are rounded up, thanks to the tempting smells of Second Lunch, with intention to do some Science or History or Geography together. Not Art. We suck at doing Art in a formal sense. Although Kid 1 does Art/Crafts all day long without prompting. 'Doing Science' might consist of any number of things - gardening, nature walks, experiments, discussion, reading some books. 'Doing History' usually means reading books and sometimes

watching videos. 'Doing Geography' can mean discussion, working through a workbook, handing Kid 1 a map of the city and telling her to direct Mom to an area we have never been to before (with varying results) - shh, don't tell Kid 1 about the GPS app on my phone.

3:00 p.m. - This time is a wild guess, as we may have taken 20 minute to 'do stuff together', or we may have taken 90 minutes. We might continue to do stuff together ("Mom, can we make a dress for my stuffed bear/doll/the real cat?", "Mom will you jump on the trampoline with us?", "Mom, can we play a game?", "Mom, will you read that book to us?") or we might all scatter to our separate corners or The Kids might unite in some wild and crazy adventure that involves most of the furniture being rearranged and barricades being erected.

This is shortly followed by work, to much glee on the dinner, then assorted (Brownies, piano, dance class, knitting class shows little interest in involve other people as we evenings). Then the wind down, involving snack, reading out loud, often to Requests for "just one more usually Mom wants to much as everyone else, so everyone reads in bed, be sleeping. Lights go out theoretically everyone although in reality there is an awful lot of getting up and telling Mom and Dad one more thing, followed by bed-hopping and swapping.



the arrival of Dad from part of The Kids. Then evening activities volleyball, more volleyball, etc. - thank goodness Kid 2 formal activities that are already almost out of down - the long, long wind possibly a game, and Mom both Dad and The Kids. chapter" are common, and know what happens just as they are granted. Then wherever they happen to around 11 p.m. and closes their eyes to sleep,

Some days we might have to compress things if we have afternoon activities. Then The Kids are typically woken up by 9:00 a.m. and sitting down at the table to do some work by 9:45 a.m. Some days we might have made the mistake of signing up for morning activities. Then The Kids are

dragged out of bed to make it to x, y or z by 9:30 a.m. (and Mom makes a mental note not to ever sign up for morning activities again, but occasionally the opportunity is too good to pass up). Some days things are just not working well and we ditch everything that Mom had planned and do something else. Some days we go for a hike or a bike ride or spend time playing all the games we own. Some days we say "Adios Winnipeg!" in the middle of February and return a month later, having done nary a speck of formal schoolwork for a month, and none the worse for it.



Overall, as we enter our 5th year of formal homeschooling, we have found that having a rhythm to our days is helpful, but only if we allow it to be flexible. Can't wait to see what crazy adventures we have this coming year!

Edwina Shwedyk loves hanging with her kids at the park or beach when there is no one else there!

MASH Membership is Free!

Sign Up [Here](#)

Tell Your Homeschooling Friends!