

July 2023



## The Homeschool Journey Newsletter

Christopherus Homeschool Resources  
Waldorf-inspired Parenting and Education

Dear friends,

Welcome to the July issue of The Homeschool Journey newsletter! This issue is dedicated to feedback from last month's issue. Included is a wonderful college entrance essay by a Christopherus-schooled young man on how he was raised as a media-free child. I always welcome such contributions!

First we start with an excerpt from W.B. Yeats' poem *The Second Coming*...to perhaps set the mood for the content which people are commenting on. [Here is a link to last month's issue](#) so you can read it yourself.

*Turning and turning in the widening gyre  
The falcon cannot hear the falconer;  
Things fall apart; the centre cannot hold;  
Mere anarchy is loosed upon the world,  
The blood-dimmed tide is loosed, and everywhere  
The ceremony of innocence is drowned;  
The best lack all conviction, while the worst  
Are full of passionate intensity.*

I just wanted to thank you for the (as always) excellent and thoughtfully written newsletter this month. My husband and I are so grateful that we have found Christopherus and have such a wonderful resource available to us for homeschooling our son in the coming years. Thank you!! - Abby

Wow! Thank you Donna! This should become a speech and delivered to Waldorf schools as most of them have lost their way. Too busy trying to appeal to political whims of the parents instead of remaining child focused on education! It's terrible what is going on in Waldorf schools. We homeschool now. Good for you for writing this! MC

Thank you, thank you, thank you for this beautifully written and wise article. Tears welled up in my eyes to see my thoughts written by another and shared. I am so grateful today to feel like I am not alone in my perspective. Blessings to you and all you love....M

Once again Donna, I praise you for being a voice of sanity in an increasingly convoluted world, J

I wanted to thank Donna for her honest words and her deep care for children that shines in last few newsletters. Here on the West coast modern gender ideology has reached the youngest age children, even in the Waldorf schools and we have seen many families and children here spiritually and physically broken through it. I am so grateful to have had Christopherus when mine were younger to be raised with all the beautiful and strong male and female archetypes each in their own ways through out the stories. However they chose to play and no matter what they wished to wear they were rooted in their physical bodies and knew that they came into this world in a good and true way. They have not had phones or social media before adulthood and are thriving if often bewildered by the current ideologies. I know it is sometimes hard to speak out as it can attract much ire but thank you for being strong voice for all our children in the the midst of chaos. MA,

Thank you, thank you, thank you!!!!!! I am a pediatric nurse practitioner and mother to a precious child who, thanks to learning about Waldorf pedagogy when she was a toddler, has been homeschooled and will continue to be. We have worked hard to shelter her from so much toxicity in our culture and as I work in a pediatric ER I can attest to the true gravity of that culture on our children. Yvette

Absolutely stellar. You have knocked it out of the park, Donna. Thank you for this. I will be sharing far and wide. AL

My eldest son loved a fairy costume with a purple dress and rainbow wings when he was a preschooler (often worn while playing with trucks). He isn't a girl as a result, just a boy who loved rainbow wings for about two years. This hyperfocus on whether or not children's behavior fits adult ideas of gender norms is so bizarre. They will be who they will be and we don't need to label it or bring in our adult neuroses. And the desire to include children in the very adult entertainment world of drag shows makes me very suspicious. Why do you want a child in that environment? People who can understand why you wouldn't bring your toddler to a strip club seem to have trouble understanding why drag shows are inappropriate. Half-naked adults strutting around in a sexual way aren't for children, no matter if they are women or men. Just let the kids play and leave them out of the whole thing! Thank you, Erin

Great read, well done! I cant think why anyone could disagree to all of your points. Australian schools are bringing all this shyte in, another good reason to homeschool!! Thanks Dawn x

I truly appreciate these newsletters, it's a breath of fresh air amongst all the misinformation we see and hear today. C

Oh Donna, you've done it again! You brave wonderful woman! I already talk you up and recommend you to anyone that may have interest! I've got both of my sisters using your program as well, and are all happy customers. Not because we align with what your point of view is (which we do) but because your incredible experience and insights are so freely given at our benefit and I greatly appreciate it. so I just wanted to drop you a line to show support! Respectfully, TE

PS my daughter 10 now is the most innocent girl, yet so fully conscious of the world around her, she hasn't been sheltered, just protected. In my youth I thought innocence was a weakness and now I know what an incredible strength it is. It should be protected and I appreciate you speaking out!

Dear Donna, your email rolled in during a quiet day of thinking about next year's lessons and making lists. Thank you for your wisdom. It is why I choose to stay with Christopherus. I do not have to worry about things slipping into the curriculum that poison the development of my children. Even when I leave much undone in a syllabus (as I have 3 kids), I know the completed work is true. I am thankful for this confidence. You are a wise woman and I am learning. I do not pretend to know it all, but I have a strong sense that I honor. And, this craze is alarming to witness. . . . When my children are ready to enter the world, I can know we gave them the strongest foundations and tools available to us and your curriculum is a big part of that. PS: Thank you for always reiterating the dangers of tech. The more I see what is happening, the more convicted I am to hold fast. We have an old VCR they can operate for family movie nights with quite the classic collection - LOL, otherwise our children are caring for animals, farming, playing, swimming, reading, cooking and living life. The extreme life, ha. Stay wise as always, Lindsay

I've enjoyed your emails through the years but this one tops all! Thank you for the beautiful and thoughtful way you express yourself and all the more so for having the courage to speak on hard topics! Rachel

I'm not sure if this will reach Donna, but I had to write that I appreciate this email so much. Thank you for being so honest and brave, and for standing up for our children! This is why I continue to use Christopherus for my homeschool and will continue to do so! I am confident that I am providing them with an enriching childhood and education; preparing them to go out into this crazy world with confidence and knowledge that far surpasses basic academic learning! It is also very healing for my inner child. I did not have such a great childhood, but through your curriculums, even I learn and heal each day more and more and become a much healthier adult, poised to raise emotionally competent future adults. Thank you so much,Jaimi

You are amazing and this is a beautiful description of childhood and humanness. Thank you for standing up for the truth to protect out children. VC

Thank you for your newsletter, once again. I am not a Waldorf homeschooler anymore (we unschool now) but I still love Steiner's teachings and philosophy and your newsletters! I love reading your calm and thoughtful perspective and I always look forward to your letters. So thank you. I am sure you have lost customers and I am also sure you are a great beacon for loads of us and I really appreciate your love and honesty that shines through. Thank you very much. Joanna

*And here is RK, long-time Christopherus friend and customer and mother of the boy whose essay follows:*

Truly, I cannot say enough about the way you shaped our family life. I was just talking on a podcast about our family rhythm last week, how I came from an authoritarian family and sort of "rebelled" against that by being a creative who lived in constant mess, offering a million choices to my kids, and the lack of peace that ensued. I was attachment parenting with no boundaries, totally child led. I shared how the Waldorf way spoke to me so deeply as well as the studies I have read about how too many choices actually bring a lot of stress to people, adults included.

I still remember you sharing that when adults found structure oppressive (reflecting on their childhoods) it was probably because it was enforced for too long.

We really also embraced a lifestyle of minimalism which helped so much. I loved what you shared about screens and technology. My kids have such a deep and rooted perspective because they have read so widely and haven't been subjected to the madness of cultural swings. They have had a lot of time in nature, but also rhythms of more rigorous coursework and work around the house.

**And here is her son's essay....**

In 1987, Wendell Berry shocked readers when his essay, "Why I Am Not Going to Buy a Computer" was published in Harper's magazine. My parents, as Wendell Berry enthusiasts, gave me a mostly screen-free childhood, but I couldn't be entirely screen-free in high school. We studied the research on phone usage and mental health outcomes as well as how phones are designed to be addictive. Arnie Dillard wrote, "How we spend our days is, of course, how we spend our lives." I thought, "What if instead of spending time on my phone and social media, I allocate that time to the creation of the life I want?" I would use my phone to serve me, but not rule me. I decided to use social media minimally, and I didn't use an internet browser on my phone until I was 17.

Removing my phone from my hands freed them to pick up and study six different instruments. I began composing original music and creatively arranging other pieces. Last December, I sat on the front porch of a 200-year-old cabin nestled in the woods of Virginia, recording an arrangement of "In the Bleak Midwinter" with my younger sister. Camera rolling and snow flurries blowing across our ice-cold fingers dancing across frigid guitar strings, we recorded the song for our great-grandmother who was dying. Because we were unable to visit her in the hospital due to Covid restrictions, our aunt played the video we created for her. With tears streaming down her face she asked, "How did they know?" Unbeknownst to us, decades earlier she had arranged the same song for her church bell choir. The sorrow of not seeing her one last time before she died was assuaged knowing that the music that flowed from my hands helped bridge the memories of her past to the promise of her eternal future.

Losing my great-grandmother was painful, but I learned that through struggle comes strength. Several years ago I volunteered with a team to build a fire tower at a non-profit farm. With only three days to complete the task, we dragged supplies up muddy hills. Pelting rain and whipping winds were our constant companions as we constructed a two-story flight of stairs, and finished the roof and interior. Difficulty grows resilience, and overcoming hardship with others reveals the importance and power of working as a team. Now families and children have a safe place to play and sleep overlooking beautiful mountains in a structure I helped create with my hands.

Taking the lesson I learned from the mountain to my garage, I picked up a manual for our 50-year-old Series Ila 109 Land Rover Defender. Every part was original, but few were functional. My dad and I spent the next two years figuring out how to make this piece of history operational again, saving it from the junkyard. At times one of us held a blow torch, the other a sledgehammer, as we heated and bent the old frame back into place. Other times we delicately rewired dashboard components. Through these experiences and others, I used my hands to accomplish a restoration that was challenging and satisfying. Mary Oliver asked, "Tell me, what is it you plan to do with your one wild and precious life?" I don't have all the answers to that question yet, but I'm beginning to piece things together. I've learned that being intentional about how I use my time and hands enriches my life, and the lives of those around me. I can assert agency in my life to learn new things even when they intimidate me, to persevere through difficulty, to simply be present with the harmonies that resound from my guitar, and to minimize potential future regrets. I reflect on how all of this stems from a single decision: to put down my phone and pick up my life.



Recently we got ourselves a wonderful now 3-month old German Shepherd puppy. As part of his socialization, I regularly take him to our local mega super market and sit outside with him while my husband does the shopping. It is so amazing to watch people with their grim expressions guarding themselves to navigate the supermarket catch sight of our puppy and break into great smiles. While our pup benefits from becoming nonchalant about cars and crowds and shopping carts and all sorts of people, I am beginning to feel that the real benefit of this exercise is to the people who meet him!

Anyway, just wanted to share this.....a young woman walked toward us, speaking into her phone. She smiled as she saw our puppy and I invited her to pet him, which she happily did. Then she angled her phone and said "Look Jamal, look at the puppy"—I could see on her screen her little one of about 18 months and (presumably) her mother caring for him. I smiled at her and her delight....but the whole thing really struck me as both bizarre and frightening. What effect do *images* of reality—mama, puppy—have on a tiny little one who is just starting to experience—*experience*—the world through his senses? What happens when screens mediate and replace living experience? What does this do to the next generation of children? We are in uncharted territory here but can already see the deleterious effects on children in terms of social skills, learning and....being human.

Any thoughts on this? Please share!

**Next months topic will be 10 Top Homeschooling Tips. If any of you would like to submit your own 'top tips', I'd be thrilled to print them here!**

Til August,  
Blessings on your homeschool journey,  
Donna