

From a Grandmother's Point of View...

by Sandi Myers

So, you are the grandparent of one, or more, homeschoolers. Whether you came to this point in complete support of your grown children's decisions regarding their children's education or you feel they have well and truly lost their minds, here you are! Is there room for you in this grand undertaking? How do you ease your own worries about it all? How can you help?

I am one of the lucky ones! Twelve of my fourteen grandchildren are in homeschooling families and I am able to be a part of their weekly, if not daily, lives. No, there is no criticism of the parents of the other two. This is a personal decision that can only be made within each individual family--they will do the very best they are capable of doing for their children just as those homeschooling do for theirs.

I understand the process; we removed two of our children from public school and the other two never went. Our less-than-perfect efforts, which produced such incredible people, help me understand the challenges they face as homeschooling parents and the depth of the commitment required

Is there room for you in your children and grandchildren's grand undertaking? If you are like me, you wouldn't miss it for the world! Aside from the beauty of watching children grow naturally, on an individual time frame entirely their own, there is the safety factor; they live and grow in a world removed from school violence and hatred. They love learning and seek it out in all its ways and forms in life, again, each in his or her own way. Because they learn constantly from all things in life, you can just "be yourself", doing the things you enjoy in life, and sharing those with these precious ones. Or you can stretch out, from your own desire or theirs, and learn new things, gain new abilities. Very soon you will see that they are like a breath of fresh air--their enthusiasm for living and learning is contagious, and the information they gather voluminous. My most common phrases are, "Oh, my! I didn't know that! Where did you learn that?" You might feel a need to check up behind them when you first begin receiving such in-depth information on all varieties of subjects; that's okay. You will soon learn that they are right and that really is how it is! "There are HOW MANY seas in the world? I figured there were seven, like the salad dressing!"

How do you ease your own worries about their homeschooling? Read, read, read! Find message boards and homeschooling lists on the internet. Join and listen! Find books written about successful homeschooling and soak them up! Do what grandparents do best--brag proudly about your children and grandchildren's efforts! Remember positive vibes draw more positivity.

This is your children's decision. Support them unwaveringly. If it is going to work for them, they will thrive and improve. If it is not going to work for their family, they will soon realize and find a better solution. Either way, these are their choices to make and your total support, communicating your belief in their ability to make the very best choices for their family, is the greatest thing you can give. Some chances only come along in life once--don't blow this one!

Okay, so we now have the "support" area covered and you are busy rubbing liniment on those cheerleading muscles! How can you help? Be involved! Be as big a part of things as you are able, considering distance and time and all other variables. Go on field trips with them if you are close enough. (You can observe a larger number of homeschooling parents and their children and reassure yourself that there really are no deficiencies socially for them! And then tell all your friends what a

farce that particular homeschooling worry is!)

Be there for your children and grandchildren. Where schooling families with two parents who work outside the home often have time constraints that limit interaction in the larger family circle, homeschooling families are together all the time, intensively giving to one another, and particularly parents to children, and can use extra doses of TLC and relief. Invite them for lunch, the day, or a sleepover. Cook with them, share projects, yours and theirs, and listen. Listen to your children; you may be the only other adult they talk to that day! This grand adventure they are on which turns out such wonderful children frequently requires all they have to give every minute of every day. Help refill their "bucket" so they can go on. And, enjoy yourself! It truly is an incredible journey!