

## **BRIDGE-BUILDING TOOLS**

*by Carol Moxley*

Setting aside differences among support groups can serve to strengthen the individual groups and, ultimately, benefit the homeschooled kids in your area. Following are a few bridge-building tools that can go a long way toward expanding opportunities for everyone involved. If your state or regional support group isn't already encouraging and facilitating ideas such as these, meet the challenge yourself!

- Invite support groups in your area to attend a celebration of your state's Home Education Week. A simple park day/picnic is great! Toss in a used book sale and watch them pour in.
- If your state has no Home Education Week, find out how groups from across the state can band together to petition the governor for one. If the capitol turns you down, create one that can be enjoyed each year without an official proclamation. Tell the media about it and watch it spread!
- Invite area groups to a campout and include a used book sale/swap.
- Invite homeschool leaders in your area to a tea or luncheon. Use this time to discover ways your groups can benefit by helping each other.
- Swap newsletters with other groups. Gleaning ideas from each other is much more productive than hoarding them.
- Invite representatives from other groups to join you in a Homeschool Info Night in your community.
- A chess club, spelling bee or science fair can be strengthened by participation from multiple groups.
- Check with your local roller rink to see if you can schedule a monthly "Homeschool Skate." Invite ALL local groups to bring guests, gather, skate, and visit. (Bowling alleys also work well for this type of monthly event.)
- Legislators, businesses, museums, community centers, libraries and other local entities can be much more effectively approached if representatives from multiple support groups are unified. Meet to decide how to ask for what you need.
- If no online communication forum exists for your area, start one. Free website hosting and email listservs are available. Tap into larger venues (state, regional, and national) for information to pass along to homeschoolers in your local area.