

APRIL 2, 2020

# Alabama Homeschool Capitol Day

Showing the strength, character, and opportunities of our Alabama homeschool community.

A quality education at no cost to the State.

Encouraging our Homeschool families through information, support groups, and legislative vigilance.

## EVENT COORDINATORS

**ERIN WAINWRIGHT - SOUTH ALABAMA  
HOMESCHOOLING**

**KRISTY TRENT - BIRMINGHAM  
HOMESCHOOL COMMUNITY**

**CONSTANCE GILLON - HOPE CHRISTIAN  
ACADEMY**

**ABBY AYERS - HEART OF WIREGRASS**



Alabama Home Educators (ALHE) is governed by a board of volunteer directors with a variety of homeschool, life and leadership experiences who share a common vision and passion for serving the Alabama homeschool community.

The vision for ALHE was born from the awareness of a critical need for an informed and involved central point of statewide communication and support. ALHE aims to bring homeschool leadership and home educators together in effort to offer support, resources, ideas, and critical legislative updates and information. Our hope is to strengthen our community, empower our leaders, and to develop a sustainable, dynamic and practical community-focused organization structure that can evolve with the needs of the community for generations to come. It is our pledge to preserve the past, address the now, and always look ahead to the future.

-Barbie Whitefield  
President  
ALHE



**Program announcements** *Many of our families have worked hard and traveled far to be here and make this day possible, so we ask you to please be very considerate of your fellow homeschoolers so all can hear the program. Thank You!!*

**Proper Flag and National Anthem Etiquette** *When our National anthem, The Star Spangled Banner, is sung, citizens should stand at attention and salute with their right hand over their heart. Our Anthem is being sung by Alabama homeschooler Madeleine Burnett, from Houston County.*

**WHEN VISITING THE CAPITOL BUILDING** remember:

*Leave bags in car  
Arrive early to clear security  
Bring cameras/phones (no flash)*

**WHEN VISITING THE ALABAMA STATE HOUSE** remember:

*Leave bags in car  
Arrive early to clear security  
Bring cameras/phones (no flash)  
Food and beverages are not allowed into the House and Senate Chambers and/or Galleries.  
Visitors should move about the State House quietly and in an orderly manner.  
Violators are subject to arrest and may be removed from the State House.  
Visit the 6th floor lobby display!  
Senate viewing room  
House viewing room*

## **Visiting Legislators:**

Unless you know your elected officials very well or they have asked you to address them on a first-name basis, they should be addressed with their title followed by their last name.

For Example: “Governor Reynolds,” “Senator ,” or “Representative .”

The current state of politics can lend to some contentiousness.

We want to remember that this is a bipartisan event as homeschooling families represent all political leanings. To that end if you find yourself at odds with a representative's values or opinions, speak the truth in love.

We want to convey kindness and grace to all those we encounter.

Be confident in speaking with your legislators. Remember, they work for you! Let them know how important you see their job, and then convey the importance of homeschooling to your family.

There may be times when your family will step away and pursue activities separate from the group, but when you are attending sessions please be respectful of their time, and respectfully listen. As a whole our community is most often viewed as respectful, eager to learn, and polite. We just don't want the excitement and awe of the day to have us forgetting ourselves.

THANK YOU and we hope you have a fantastic time!

*~The Alabama Homeschool Capitol Day Team*



## **Alyssa Crooks, 11th grade**

4.0 GPA

Limestone County

President Brain Aerobics Club  
Vice President Brain Aerobics Club  
Teacher Drama class  
Sunday school leader  
VBS volunteer  
His Way, Inc volunteer  
Horsemanship awards  
Historical European Martial Arts HEMA  
Saber Legion  
Youth leader

**Hobbies:** Horsemanship, HEMA, Acting, Guitar, Piano, Digital and traditional art

*Alyssa is a blessing to many--through her volunteer work with Downtown Rescue Mission, to Youth leader, to cosplay club organizer, to VBS recreation helper, and simply being a loving, equalling encouraging daughter. She serves her church and fellow homeschoolers whenever she is able. Her joyful spirit is felt by all who come in contact with her. Alyssa's post graduation plans include college and joining the police academy.*



## **Alyssa Picard, 12th**

4.3 GPA

Marshall County

Judge at ALYIG Judicial 2019  
Supreme Court Justice ALYIG Legislative 2020  
Witness at ALYIG Judicial 2018  
Delegate at ALYIG Legislative 2019  
Girls' State Representative for HOPE Christian Academy 2019  
Participated in UConn's Summer Law Academy 2019 and was recognized as Top Lawyer for her session  
Keyboard player in the church worship team

**Hobbies:** Mock Trial, Photography, Journalism, Reading

*Alyssa has grown into a passionate young woman who fights for what she believes in, works hard to make a difference, and dreams of changing the world in big ways. She has never lost her childlike faith or her drive. She plans to double major in both human rights and law, with dreams of being a human rights attorney.*



## Dagny Holt, 11th

4.3 GPA

Madison County

Won Junior Achievement BizTown

Won 4H Grand Championship in Western and English horse back riding.

Placed 3rd prize at the Science Olympiad in the Tower Building category

Youth America Grand Prix;

Received the Silver Award in Girl Scouts

Senior member of Alabama Youth Ballet Theatre ballet.

Has volunteered close to 100 hours in her community at organizations.

**Hobbies:** Ballet, horse-back riding, avid book reader and has attended the Book Con in NYC, drawing and working jig saw puzzles.

*Dagny Holt is a lovely young lady with grace, poise, and most importantly spunk. Dagny has taken the adventure of homeschool and used it to fill her days with exciting opportunities that most students her age don't even know exist. Dagny plans to attend college and major in a STEM field. She is interested in the ROTC programs offered at many colleges which may lead to service in the military after she finishes her college education.*



## Emily Butler, 12th

4.0

Lauderdale County

Class of 2020 Distinguished Young Woman of Lauderdale

County Talent (dance) winner at Distinguished Young Women of Lauderdale County

Alabama Girls State Delegate

Commissioner of Agriculture and Industries at Alabama Girls State

Devotional Chairman of the city of Lurleen at Alabama Girls State

Member/Graduate of Youth Leadership Shoals

Next Generation Dance, Unleash Dance Company,

Solo Lyrical Dance - Invited and Competed at Nationals with Show Stoppers

Shoals Republican Club

Volunteered as a page for Alabama Senator Larry Stutts

United States Senate Campaign Intern for U.S. Congressman Bradley Byrne

**Hobbies:** Dance, politics, and jewelry making

*Emily has accomplished many things in her short life, but one thing she is most proud of is that all of this has been accomplished as a "homeschooler." The night she won the title of "Distinguished Young Woman," one of the first things she said was that she couldn't wait to compete as a homeschooler at the Alabama program and be a representative of how great homeschooling can be. Emily's after graduation plans include a Bachelor's in Political Science and Communication. College choice depends on scholarship opportunities.*



## Jalynn Whitfield, 11th

4.0

Madison County

Robotics team 2019 World Competition for FIRST Tech.  
Robotics team community STEM outreach  
City of Madison Volleyball League  
Co-captain of Mock Trial team; Alabama Youth in Government 2019  
Star Student Spotlight for N2College Scholarship Jumpstart program  
Student leadership for youth group at Crosspointe Church 2017  
Crosspointe Church- youth camps, Disciple Now weekends  
Vacation Bible School, children's ministry,  
weekend food packs for lower income families

**Hobbies:** Writing in her stories she has created, Reading books, Planning activities with friends, Writing letters to friends far away, Every Tuesday checks in with friends to see how she can pray for them that week, and Volleyball.

*Jalynn is a powerful force for the homeschool community! She is the epitome of an OUTSTANDING homeschooled student. But, her successes and accomplishments are not just in the fields of work/volunteer and academia. She is one of the sweetest, most respectful, insightful, mature, and precious students I have ever had the joy of teaching! Jalynn is planning on going to college to become a veterinarian, with a feline-based specialty. Upon graduation, Jalynn's innovative idea is to promote what she refers to as "Stewardship Vet Clinics": a large-scale clinic staffed with specialists from multiple animal categories, which will be devoted to applying Christian principles to the care in addition to dedicated, excellent animal care.*



## Sarah Demeski,

Morgan County

12th

Outstanding academic achievement award 2018, 2019, 2020  
Most improved dancer 2020  
1st place highschool overall art award. 2018, 2019  
National Society of Highschool Scholars  
Writing and illustrating her first book

**Hobbies:** Art. Dance, reading and writing stories and creating and drawing her own characters for her story.

*Sarah was diagnosed with ASD at age five and has overcome so many obstacles. Sarah will graduate in May 2020 from Liberty Christian Academy with academic honors. She is an amazing artist, and attends dance class every week at Art in Motion in Huntsville Alabama. She plans on studying Art and Psychology She is also in the process of writing and illustrating her own book. Sarah plans on studying Art and Psychology. She is also in the process of writing and illustrating her own book.*



## Jasemyn Jelks, 11th

4.0

Cherokee County

Advanced Academic Diploma, Currently.  
Advanced reading list including classic literature.  
Member of the National Beta Club.  
Member of the Key Club.  
Serves as the Social Media Manager for Key Club.  
Etowah County Student Leadership Program participant.  
Participant in the Gadsden Museum of Art's 2019 Student Exhibit. Won an "Honorable Mention" award for her graphite portrait of her father entitled, "Pops."

**Hobbies:** sewing, knitting, crocheting, creating artwork including graphite drawings, colored pencil illustrations and watercolors. In addition creative writing and is currently working on a debut fantasy novel.

*Throughout her high school career, Jazzie has successfully balanced volunteerism, schoolwork, and family time. She is involved in several extracurricular activities excelling in dancing and creative writing. Jazzie has also started her own business, "Jazzie Handbags". I am touched that Jazzie cares deeply about leaving a healthy planet for future generations and plans to donate a portion of her profits to organizations that support that mission. Jasemyn plans to attend college after high school. She wants to study either creative writing or film and television.*



## Arden Markin, 11th

5.0

Tuscaloosa County

Only Alabama national chess master while still in high-school in the past twenty years.  
Tied for second in the 8th grade national chess championship.  
Achieved a composite score of 36 on the ACT sophomore year.  
Scored a NMSQT of 223  
overall score of 1470 on the PSAT  
Two-year member of the Eta Sigma Alpha Homeschool Honor Society.  
Represented the Alabama chess community at the Barber Tournament of Middle School champions.  
Opifex homeschool team; won BEST Robotic competition.

**Hobbies:** Chess, 3d-printing, 3d-modeling, tennis, logic puzzles, DIY projects and experiments.

*Not only is Arden one of the brightest teens I have ever met, but he is also one of the most respectful and humble individuals I have ever worked alongside. He questions everything, not as a challenge, but to understand and grow as much as he can, all while helping the team around him succeed. His intended major is the field of aerospace engineering .MIT, Georgia Tech, Air Force Academy, Virginia Tech, or the University of Alabama are all potential schools that he is considering. After college and possibly grad school, He plans to work for NASA, SpaceX, or even the newly created Space Force.*





## Isabella Trent, 12th

Shelby County

4.0

National Society of High School Scholars

3rd Place State Beta Club Language Arts Competition

Has received over \$160,000 in merit scholarships  
from colleges in 6 states

Legacy Lions Volleyball 2016-2019

BHC Beta Club President 2018-2020

Artwork featured in yearly art show Teen Book Club

Jr. Historical Interpreter at American Village in Montevallo

**Hobbies:** Pencil Drawing, Writing, Traveling, Philosophy, Reading, Watching Sci-Fi movies, Coffee.

*Bella is one of a kind. She is one of if not the most conscientious student that I have ever had the privilege of getting to know. Not only are her academic achievements stellar but the manner in which she influences her peers so positively both academically and socially is outstanding. She challenges those around her to be better. After graduation Isabella plans to attend university and pursue a major in International Relations. Bella would like to serve as a US Diplomat.*



## Jacob Jordan, 12th

St. Clair County

3.7

Dual enrollment at Jefferson State Community College

Gold Presidential Volunteer Service Award; 600 total service hours

Life Scout in Boy Scouts and working on his Eagle rank

Media team at church since he was approximately 13 years old

Served with The Red Barn, Ronald McDonald House,

Backback Buddies, and Bridge Builders

**Hobbies:** Piano, guitar, woodworking

*Jacob is intelligent, but he is also creative and persistent. He is a masterful chef and baker, a carpenter, pen maker, musician, and a Life Scout on his way to Eagle. He understands how to be a part of any group and I feel that sets him apart as a remarkable lifelong student. Along with his many student successes, I have also witnessed Jacob as a kind, dedicated, and motivational piano teacher. Jacob plans to pursue a four-year accounting degree and then have a career in IT auditing.*



## Paul Glenn, 12th

Jefferson County

4.0

Member of Trussville FUMC children's and youth programs and mission projects.

Life scout currently pursuing the rank of Eagle Scout.

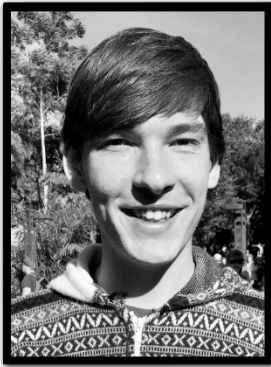
Member of the Order of the Arrow; Boy Scout honor society Vigil Honor, the highest honor of the OA.

Vice-chief of service for the Coosa Lodge of the Greater Alabama Council.

Sound board technicians during worship service.

**Hobbies:** Avid reader. Riding his motorcycle. Enjoys disassembling and upgrading computers

*Paul has shown his understanding of events and concepts that were well beyond his years. He has a great personality and is very responsible. In scouts, Paul was great with explaining concepts to the younger scouts and if there was an area where we needed a scout to fill in, he was willing to do it even if he wasn't excited about it. He would step in to fill the need while having a good attitude. Paul has been accepted to the University of Alabama at Huntsville for fall 2020. He received a full-tuition scholarship and was accepted to the honors college. He will be studying aerospace engineering and hopes to one day work for NASA.*



## John David Merithew, 11th

Montgomery County

4.0

Student body president in classical homeschool co-op

Regional Qualifier in NCFCA debate tournament

GEARS Inc. Robotics team ; won 1st place robot & overall 1st place BEST at regional tournament

NCFCA Speech -3rd place finalist in biblical presentation

6th place finalist in duo interpretive speech

Catalyst speech and debate club

Gears Inc. robotics team

Keeping it classical student body president

Chick-fil-A team member

Morning View Baptist youth praise team leader

VBS crew leader

Good news club volunteer

**Hobbies:** Playing basketball, football, speech and debate club, babysitting five younger siblings & Foster children in our family, robotics, helping tutor younger siblings

*What truly stands out about John David as his love for his Lord, Jesus Christ. It shines and everything that he does and in the character of who he is. He is humble, gentle, teachable and a strong leader in every Area of his life. He is a servant hearted, a gentleman, and loving, helpful & kind to the young children that our family serves in foster care. Plans to attend a UM and study engineering then advance on to Auburn University and complete his engineering degree.*



## Ellen Lanford

Mobile County

12th

3.5

Presidents List at Coastal Alabama Community College  
 Dual Enrollment University of Mobile  
 Enrollment Coastal Alabama Community College  
 1st Place in Web Design at ACTE  
 (Alabama Consortium for Technology in Education)  
 Mobile Area Homeschool Coalition (MACH)  
 Served on Visionary team and as Display Captain on award  
 Mobile Bay Dance Academy Dancer and Instructor  
 Generate Tech participated and lead in website design  
 and coding classes  
 Student Ambassador for Generate Tech  
 Phi Theta Kappa Honor Society

**Hobbies:** Photography, Beach time with Enos and friends

*Ellen's newest addition to her community service is joining the Children of the American Revolution Society of Mobile Bay and the Daughters of the American Revolution. She is looking forward to a lifetime of volunteer service with them promoting historic preservation, education and patriotism. Ellen is projected to graduate in May 2020 with both her high school diploma and a certificate in Graphic Design from Coastal Alabama Community College. Ellen plans to attend Troy University in the Fall of 2020.*



## Kaitlyn Hale, 12th

Baldwin County

4.0

Student Government: President, Heartwood Christian Academy  
 Peer Helpers: Student Program Lead  
 Girls' Club: Student Program Lead  
 Youth Leadership Program: Easter Shore Chamber of Commerce  
 Summer Scrubs: Mobile Chamber of Commerce  
 Student Government: Class Representative, Heartwood Christian Academy  
 Yearbook: Secretary, Heartwood Christian Academy, Editor  
 Girls' Club: Volunteer  
 High School Book Club: Daphne Public Library  
 Baldwin County Society for Human Resources Management Event  
 Business Boutique Unique Women's Conference: City Hope  
 Global Leadership Conference (  
 Damon John Entrepreneurship Training  
 Safe Sitter: Daphne Public Library & SafeSitter.org

**Hobbies:** Reading, Piano Playing, Acting/Theater, Singing, Sewing

*Kaitlyn's exemplary character has been demonstrated over and over. She is a well-rounded student with interests in a wide range of subjects. Kaitlyn represents the homeschool community well and highlights the many school, community, and church activities available for a homeschool student. Kaitlyn plans to attend Coastal Community College for her Freshman & Sophomore years. She plans to move one of the larger Alabama universities for her Junior & Senior years. She plans to get a bachelor's degree but has not determined which degree she will pursue.*



## Catie Simpson , 11th

Mobile County

3.9

Honor Student

National Society of High School Scholars

2020-2021 Azalea Trail Court as a goodwill ambassador for the City of Mobile

Scouts BSA (formerly Boy Scouts of America)-rank of Star Den Chief for Pack 29 at Corpus Christi Catholic Church.

Order of The Arrow, Scouting's National Honor Society  
Woa Cholena Lodge Vice Chief of Finance 2020-2021

**Hobbies:** Traveling, camping, arts and crafts, and playing ukulele

*Catie is a very self driven student that works diligently on her studies each day. She has a passion for learning and makes certain to involve herself in volunteer work that benefits her community that she loves. She is a loyal Boy Scout of America member and she has recently had the honor to join the Mobile Azalea Trail Maids. During our time together she desires to be an active participant in her education and she values her time that is spent learning. She has a heart for others and is willing to take her time and spend it helping someone else.*



## Sophia Robinson, 11th

Mobile County

3.75

President of the Cottage Hill Junior Civitan Club

Member of the Sunnyside Theater

Competition Team, the Community Theater Team, and the Homeschool Team

Soccer team player for United Soccer League

Dual credit student at the University of Mobile

Member of the Worship Team, Children's Church Team, and Outreach Team for Sunrise Baptist Church

Member of Hope of the Nations Ministry to High School and College Students

**Hobbies:** reading, art, writing a blog for Christian teens and writing and performing inspirational spoken word poetry. She also enjoys singing, clogging, theater, soccer, working with animals and children, and riding horses. Her favorite things to do is spend quality and quantity time with family, church family, and friends.

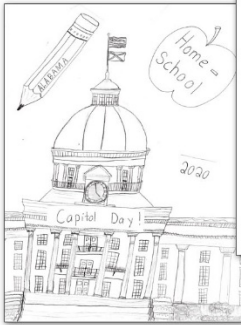
Sophia is a talented reader and thinker. She was able to hold her own, even surpass, many of the college students in this class. She was always prepared. A contemplative person by nature, she really absorbed some fairly deep concepts and was a contributing member to the class. She speaks knowledgeably and writes persuasively. She has opinions but is open to others and possesses a true spirit of humility. Sophia wants to pursue a college education that will enhance her dream and calling to work with children, youth, and families by using animal and art therapy.



The students are L-R: (3 girls up front) Jadiina Whitfield, Kiley Ray, Susan Tran, back row: Doug Davenport, Kaleb Ray, Jalynn Whitfield, Kyra Smith, Skyler Williams, Jason Blakely, Chad Tran, Matthew Ray and me ( Kristin Smith).

On Monday, Dec 16, 2019 an ALABAMA Bicentennial Celebration was held. The theme was "A Taste of Alabama" and The learning Exchange kids discovered that Alabama does not have an official state vegetable. They verified this with the State Archives in Montgomery. The students proposed various vegetables which he/she thought would make a good vegetable for our state. After much research and even some interviews with local farmers, the class unanimously decided the SWEET POTATO would best represent our state as the official vegetable!

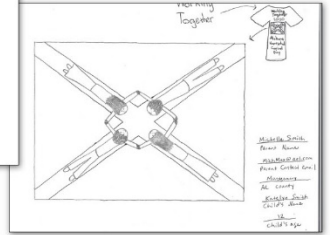
They were then taught about our state's legislative process and about how an idea - even one about a sweet potato - from anyone - even a dozen homeschoolers from north Alabama - can turn into a law. Each student found the name and address of his/her state representative and senator and each student wrote a formal letter sharing our research. They received responses from State Senator Arthur Orr and Tom Butler For State Senate. The two gentlemen have already drafted - according to Senator Butler - a Joint Resolution for a state vegetable for presentation when they convene in February 2020.



Reagan Diamond, 13  
Montgomery County



Brooklyn Layne, 6  
Mobile County



Katelyn Smith, 12  
Montgomery County

We enjoyed all of the submissions to the Capitol Day T-shirt Contest! CONGRATULATIONS!! Our T-shirt design winner, voted on BY YOU, was Brooklyn Layne! What a fantastic representation of our whole state! Today we want to share the top three designs. We were so proud of all the kids who participated.



Last year only 200 schools statewide received the distinction of Alabama Bicentennial Schools in recognition of their commitment to community and civic engagement! These schools were given a grant to complete these projects over the year. Several of the 200 chosen were HOMESCHOOL groups! Bicentennial Schools in recognition of their commitment to community and civic engagement! These schools were given a grant to complete these projects over the year.

---

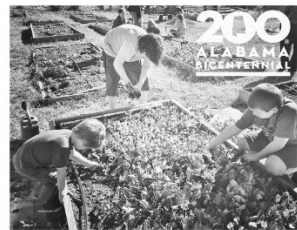
Thistle & Clover Academy An eclectic secular homeschool family from North Alabama received a grant through the Alabama 200 bicentennial school grant program to fund First LEGO League and First LEGO league junior teams for the Cullman County Community. I'm so proud of our teams, our coaches, and our amazing sponsors especially the AL200 grant for making that experience happen for our community students who otherwise would not have access to a robotics program at all. We are continuing our outreach with classes and hope to expand into more forms of robotics teams in the future.'



Faith Community Christian School's Bicentennial project was a student authored book, *Everyone Has a Story*. Our students learned the stories of prominent and not so prominent Alabama citizens who are making or have made a difference in the community. The stories were published in the local newspaper during the year. The stories were compiled into a book that is now available in local libraries.

---

Erin's Gulf Coast Homeschool Adventures created their bicentennial project with Feeding the Gulf Coast. The project would be centered around working to build their community garden, as well as add educational resources for kids to learn about growing their own foods. Food would be harvested and donated to the food bank.



We want to THANK all of those that have SPONSORED this event. We were excited to be able to provide this event to you for free but this event would not have been nearly as great without the support of these groups, businesses, and organizations.



Everest Academy | Hope Christian Academy |  
IEW: Institute for Excellence in Writing

CLASSICAL CONVERSATIONS  
A  
CLASSICAL  
*education*

• means LEARNING to THINK •

TO KNOW GOD AND TO MAKE HIM KNOWN  
*with* **KNOWLEDGE**  
*understanding &*  
**WISDOM**

For more information:  
<https://www.classicalconversations.com/>