

# RVHEA Conference 2019 – Seminar Synopses and Speaker Biographies

- **9:00-10:00 Keynote**

Sanctuary: Homeschooling Held Hostage

Heidi St. John

In the past fifteen years, we've seen a lot of changes in the homeschool community. There is much more pressure being put on homeschoolers to excel academically. We've gone from a few brave moms who, without access to mainstream "curriculum", managed to give their children an excellent education—but we've forgotten what made it excellent. It was excellent because these moms had a vision for homeschooling—they weren't trying to re-create school at home. They were simply being obedient to the One who had called them to be different. They knew that if He had called them, He would equip them. And they were right.

If you're struggling to find joy in your calling as a homeschooling parent, if you're looking for more LIFE in your homeschool, this is one workshop you won't want to miss. Join Heidi as she talks about her journey away from curriculum-driven, workbook-based homeschooling and into delight-directed learning. What she learned will bless and inspire you. Bring a notebook.

**Biography:** As a popular author and speaker, Heidi St. John has been speaking on marriage, family and cultural issues for over 15 years. Her passion to encourage moms and set them free to boldly become who God has created them to be will challenge encourage you. Heidi has been married to her college sweetheart since 1989, and their family now includes seven children and two grandsons! Jay and Heidi reside just outside of beautiful Vancouver, Washington, where they have homeschooled some of their kids all the way through high school and are still finishing up with a few at home.

Heidi is the author of seven books. Her most recent book, *Bible Promises for Moms*, released in March of 2019 and is the latest in the MomStrong collection. Join Heidi at [MomStrong International](#), an online ministry where thousands of women come together for weekly Bible Studies, Scripture Writing, online and in real life fellowship.

10:00-10:30

Room 1: Fun and Fellowship: Youth Welcoming Activities (All Youth)

Mikaela Lemke & Geoffrey Datema

- **Session 1: 10:30 – 11:30**

Sanctuary: I Want to QUIT Homeschooling! (But before you do, hear this!)

Heidi St. John

Heidi's hunch is that you don't need to quit... you need to see things new; to have fresh perspective and renewed vision. And maybe you need chocolate. That too. Come join Heidi for an hour of encouragement and chocolate. You'll be glad you did!

**Biography:** see 9:00-10:00, Sanctuary

Room 1: Homeschool to Career (Youth)

Mikaela Lemke & Geoffrey Datema Bill Stevens

Two homeschool graduates share about their journeys through homeschooling in high school, post-secondary at Algonquin College, Carleton University, University of Ottawa, and life and learning beyond school.

**Biography:** Mikaela Lemke is a homeschool graduate and will be graduating this spring with a Bachelor of Science in Nursing degree from the University of Ottawa and Algonquin College. Through a nursing student internship to the Philippines in Summer 2018, Mikaela developed a passion in applying nursing with a mission's perspective.

Geoffrey Datema is a graduate of Carleton University's Bachelor of Information Technology program. While studying software development and multimedia design in university, he developed a strong interest in education. He now works as a Teaching Assistant and is involved in developing post-secondary course material.

Room 2: Homeschool 101: Getting a Good Start

Robin Gilman

"Less is more" - new homeschoolers are often so eager to begin and get a good start, that they gather a heap of subjects/books to teach their little ones. Sometimes the result is an overwhelmed mother and/or overwhelmed children. Robin Gilman, mother of ten, will share about how, with just a little formal homeschooling and a lot of fun and free play, new homeschoolers can get off to a good and enjoyable start on their homeschooling journey.

**Biography:** Robin has been married to Bible teacher, Alan Gilman, for almost 40 years. They have ten children who have all been home-educated. Eight are now adults who love God and others, and who are contributing to society in a variety of ways, such as a missionary, the director of an anti-porn ministry, pastor, a full-time pro-life worker, a business owner, and many other interesting

jobs/ministries. Robin still enjoys teaching their two youngest children. Having seen the fruit of home-educating her children, Robin loves encouraging moms and dads to “not grow weary in well doing,” testifying that this calling is extremely worth it!

### Room 3: Anger – Every Family’s Secret Sin

Paula Maretzki

Anger is an emotion that most families struggle within their homes yet few of us are willing to admit this. A few years ago, Paula’s family dealt with anger in their home and she is going to share their journey, particularly from a parent’s perspective. She will share the reasons for anger, the impact of anger, a Biblical perspective on anger, as well as the “anger experiment” and how to make goals for a happier home.

**Biography:** Paula has been a wife to Gord for 24 years and a mom to 8 children, all still at home. God has used everything from homeschooling to puppies to marriage and kids to continue the work of sanctification, in not just her life, but her whole family’s. Her favourite thing is to meet with younger moms and encourage them in their spiritual journey. She’s often joked she has her degree in “Having Coffee”.

### Room 4: Employee, Husband, Father...Exhausted? (Men only)

Calvin Smith

Men, is it possible to do all things well and not run on empty? Join Calvin as he explores being husband, father, homeschool parent, and employee all while trying to stay connected to God and growing in the Christian faith. What is God’s plan for men in these roles and how can we combine it all with healthy balance in real day-to-day life? With candor and humour, Calvin – husband to one, homeschooling father to three and Canadian Director for Answers in Genesis - will share and encourage men in this challenging undertaking.

**Biography:** Calvin has spoken at hundreds of churches and has been seen on TV in Canada and internationally (CA, UK, US, AUS) teaching and preaching on creation apologetics and biblical authority since 2001. He is well known for his ability to engage audiences of all ages and being able to communicate theological concepts and scientific information in an easy-to-understand manner. Calvin was formerly on the pastoral staff of a church in Guelph, Ontario, overseeing the youth and small group ministries. Through working with young people, both inside the church and with a small group at the University of Guelph, Calvin personally witnessed the devastation brought to our youth by the teaching of evolutionary rationalism. But he also saw the life-transforming effect of biblical answers that encourage people to know that God’s Word can be trusted from the very first verse. He is now the Executive Director and Speaker for Answers in Genesis Canada and is excited about bringing the ministry of Answers in Genesis to Canada. Calvin lives with his wife in Ingersoll, Ontario. His hobbies include music and wrestling.

### Room 5: Ottawa as Your Homeschool Classroom

Christine Pollex

Ottawa is an amazing city in which to homeschool. With its multiple universities and colleges, plus the National Arts Centre as well as Gatineau Park, the Canal, the Parliament Buildings and so much more, every academic and extracurricular subject can be covered without even stepping into your own home. Although staying home every now and then is probably a good thing. In this seminar, Christine will provide a sampling of what Ottawa has to offer the homeschooling family - including university courses, sports, music, French language opportunities, politics, etc.

**Biography:** For the past 15 years, Christine has been homeschooling her three children in Ottawa. The two oldest are now in university, and the youngest is still at home, in grade 10. Instead of the usual "reading, 'riting, 'rithmetic", Christine's homeschool centers around "music, math and motion" - with plenty of fresh air and good nutrition thrown in. She enjoys traveling, sunshine and taking long walks with friends.

### Room 7: How to Guide Your Children Through Their Homeschool Journey

Diana Rolston

What is your role as a parent of a student who learns at home? Schoolteacher? Guidance counselor? Professor? Mentor? Or all of these, and more? It may seem overwhelming at times! During this encouraging and engaging session, Diana will help you clarify your role, and your vision for homeschooling your children.

**Biography:** Diana has homeschooled her three sons through to graduation. She describes her home education environment as relaxed, though purposeful, while exploring her children’s passions and delving deeply in these areas. Diana is a recent Teacher’s College graduate who now has more time to do the things she loves: teach, learn and wonder in God’s blessings.

- **Session 2: 1:00-2:00**

**Sanctuary: R.E.A.L. L.I.F.E. Homeschooling**

Heidi St. John

Seminar Synopsis (less than 100 words): Let's face it. Homeschooling is challenging. Sometimes it can feel like a major accomplishment just to take a shower and get the breakfast dishes cleaned up before dinner! Most homeschool moms feel the pressure of providing their children with a solid academic foundation ~ but there's so much more to homeschooling than academics, isn't there? The truth is that the greatest accomplishment of your homeschooling is to nurture your children in the ways of the One who made them.

REAL LIFE Homeschooling is about getting real when it comes to the issues that are unique to homeschooling families ~ but more important than that, it's about being reminded why we are homeschooling in the first place. It's about keeping our eyes on the goal of discipling our children.

If you have been or are on the edge of homeschool burnout, if you are wondering why God has called you on this homeschooling journey, or if you just need some honest, real encouragement, this is the one homeschool workshop you can't afford to miss out on!

**Biography:** see 9:00-10:00, Sanctuary

**Room 1: Gen Z Impact (Youth)**

Calvin Smith

What in the world is going on? Why is it that the Christian church is seeing such a massive decline throughout the Western world in just a few short generations? How is it that the church seems almost helpless in speaking with influence about vital issues such as the sanctity of life, the institution of marriage, sexual ethics and even the freedom to share the Gospel? And why have so many churches conformed to the social norms of the day versus standing firm on the Word of God? What can Gen Z do to not just stand strong in the culture but actually cause an impact in the culture?

**Biography:** see Session 1 Room 4

**Room 2: Why God Wants Your Children to Know History**

Thomas Verduyn

Is history important? Is it relevant? Who cares about all those dates and names and wars anyway? Long ago, God told his people through the prophet Isaiah to "remember the former things" (Isa 46:9). God wants us to know history, and that for very specific reasons. Come and hear why it is so important to teach your children what happened on this planet.

**Biography:** After graduating from the University of Toronto with a degree in Aerospace Engineering, Thomas was forced to conclude that his education was incomplete. He has been home-schooling himself ever since. An avid student and scholar, his research has covered history, theology, medicine, biology, languages, and physics. But it is walking with God and studying the Holy Bible that has given him the greatest joy. Thomas has an intense love for teaching others, finds joy in passing on to others the fruits of his research, and is known for his ability to explain difficult topics to youth.

**Room 3: Five Lessons My Husband is Glad I Learned (Wives only)**

Paula Marezki

We are not just homeschool teachers and mothers, but wives, first and foremost, and this aspect of our lives as women needs just as much attention as what curriculum we choose. In order to be the best homeschooling moms, we need to have the strongest marriages. Through Paula's own experience in her marriage, she will discuss the importance of understanding what true submission looks like, discovering our husband's leadership style and spiritual gifts, understanding the impact of prayer and fasting for our marriages, as well as the importance of a sizzling bedroom, not just for him, but you, too! This is a "wives only" seminar!

**Biography:** see Session 1, Room 3

**Room 4: You CAN Teach Your Preschooler at Home**

Samantha Cameron

You CAN Teach Your Preschooler at Home! You've taught your toddler how to walk and talk, so why not teach them even more?! Homeschooling your preschooler will not only give you more quality time with them at home but will build a solid educational foundation. Learn how to navigate through the early years with confidence and fun. Discover why you really are the best teacher for your little learner.

**Biography:** Samantha attended Trent University for a Bachelor of Science (Biology - Psychology) and was in the Trent-Queens Concurrent Education Program. She was an elementary school teacher for 7 years before she educated her two daughters from kindergarten to high school. Both her daughters are dyslexic, and Samantha approached their learning with as many different approaches as possible. She always made sure that learning was active, meaningful and fun. Samantha is a passionate advocate for home education and has spent many years supporting and encouraging home educators, both in one on one relationships and as a

conference speaker. She believes that homeschooling is both possible and beneficial through all grades and ages. Samantha is excited to have this opportunity to help families with exceptional needs navigate the challenges of home education, so that they can continue to homeschool with confidence and purpose.

### Room 5: Teaching Your Kids to Think Biblically

Alan Gilman

Exposing our children to the Bible is essential, but are we giving them adequate tools to engage Scripture on its own terms? In this seminar, veteran homeschooling dad and Bible teacher, Alan Gilman, will help parents create an environment in which their children can learn to think biblically.

**Biography:** Alan Gilman and his wife Robin are veteran homeschooling parents of ten children, most of whom are now grown. Alan is a Bible teacher and writer. He is also the interim Pastor of All Saints Lutheran church in Nepean. In his teaching (and parenting), Alan is always keen to help others “get real” about God and life. More info: [www.alangilman.ca](http://www.alangilman.ca).

### Room 7: Special Needs

Helen Hoffman

To be updated

**Biography:** to be updated

- **Session 3: 2:30-3:30**

### Sanctuary: Becoming MomStrong

Heidi St. John

Today's mothers are living in challenging times. We're facing things that our mothers could never have imagined. From Internet predators to the rise of domestic terrorism to the discovery GMO's BPA's and STD's... our lives are vastly different than the generation before us. Many moms are struggling with fear of the future and worry about raising children in today's culture—but God says loud and clear, "Do not be afraid! Be strong and courageous!" Mom, you have a mission. Your mission (should you choose to accept it) is to raise the next generation of teachers, doctors, judges, police officers, grocery store clerks, attorneys, nurses—and parents. Yes! You are raising the next generation of parents. Look around. It doesn't take very long for one generation to hand the baton to the next, and as mothers, we've got to be ready to prepare our children for whatever they may face as followers of Jesus Christ. Heidi will challenge as she talks about what it will take to "Become MomStrong" —drawing on truths from God's Word to answer the tough questions this generation of kids is asking and prepare moms to meet the challenges head-on.

**Biography:** see 9:00-10:00, Sanctuary

### Room 1: If Studying is Boring, Then You're Doing Something Wrong! (Youth)

Kelly Maley

Is studying the most boring thing you can think of? Do you sit down to write a test and feel like everything you learned just fell out of your head? Come add to your tool box of study skills and learn how to identify the study tools that will work best for you.

**Biography:** A teacher by profession who believes learning should be fun.

### Room 2: Home Educating Your Child Through High School

Diana Rolston

Why does it seem so daunting to home educate our children through high school? During this encouraging session, Diana will help you clarify your vision for preparing your teens for what awaits after high school.

**Biography:** see Session 1, Room 7

### Room 3: HSLDA Canada Updates

Lorne Robinson

To be updated

**Biography:** HSLDA Board of Directors member, Lorne Robinson, is a great supporter of, and contributor to, the homeschooling movement. An experience of feeling let down by the public school board with regards to his son led Lorne and his wife, Cathy, to homeschool their three children. As a speaker, Lorne communicates the inspirational story of how his son went from being labelled a 'slow learner' to becoming a PhD candidate!

By trade, Lorne is a Certified Financial Planner and Chartered Life Underwriter. His knowledge of Biblical stewardship is invaluable to both the Board of HSLDA, and also to the members who are privileged to hear Lorne speak at homeschooling conferences. He is, indeed, an expert on the theology of finances, and is able to support homeschooling families by answering their questions with wisdom.

Lorne also has served in pastoral ministry for nearly 30 years, and so he has the compassion and servant heart that serves to strengthen the homeschooling community.

#### Room 4: Keeping Your Child's Heart While Keeping Your Sanity

Lisa Moore-Ede

Do you have days where you are ready to pull your hair out? In your heart, you know you do not want to put them back in school, but what do you do? Are you scared you are going to ruin your child? Come and be encouraged and glean ideas that will help you get through the hard times.

**Biography:** Lisa is married to her wonderful husband, Andrew. Together, they have ten children: five daughters and five sons. They have been homeschooling for the past 7 years. Their eldest child is 21 and their youngest is four. They had seven children in the public system before they took them out to homeschool them. Currently they are homeschooling six of their children. One child is attending Algonquin, one is applying to Algonquin, one is working to raise funds for post-secondary school and the youngest goes around being distractingly cute!

#### Room 5: Helping My Child Through Anxiety/Depression

Jacqui Antonio & Alan Gilman

The best academics in the world aren't worth much if our children are struggling with mental health issues such as anxiety and depression. Veteran homeschooling parents Jacqui Antonio and Alan Gilman will provide biblical, personal, and professional insight to equip you to effectively help your children when facing such challenges.

**Biography:** A mother of two children, Dr. Jacqui Antonio has been a homeschooling mom for 18 years. Her 19-year practice as a psychologist has included working with teens and adults struggling with anxiety and depression. Jacqui is involved in her church community and enjoys reading, gardening, and exploring the outdoors with her husband of 30 years.

*Biography: see Session 2, Room 5*

#### Room 7: Genesis: The Missing Piece of the Puzzle

Calvin Smith

What in the world is going on? Why is it that the Christian church is seeing such a massive decline throughout the Western world in just a few short generations? How is it that the church seems almost helpless in speaking with influence about vital issues such as the sanctity of life, the institution of marriage, sexual ethics and even the freedom to share the Gospel? And why have so many churches conformed to the social norms of the day versus standing firm on the Word of God? Discover the root cause of the issue as we examine the foundations of our faith beginning in Genesis.

**Biography:** see Session 1, Room 4