



November 2008

Dear WPA Members,

Because you live in Wisconsin, you have more choice about how you homeschool than families in most other states do. This is because homeschoolers have worked together through WPA for over 25 years to prevent unreasonable state regulation.

Now we need to work together to maintain our freedoms by keeping WPA strong. WPA needs more members and more money. You are the key to both. It's easy. This letter tells why and how.

What homeschooling freedoms mean for your family

- **You choose a curriculum** that works for your family, that has your principles and beliefs, not the content and values required by the state.
- Your children learn **without pressure from state-mandated tests**. You decide which tests they will take, when, and to whom you will reveal their scores. Or you decide not to have them tested.
- Because you don't have to report to school officials, **you plan your day** without having to include activities that impress them.
- You homeschool your way, **with confidence**. You avoid state regulations that keep dragging you back to the conventional school mindset and that make you doubt whether you're educating your children the right way.

Increased regulation would change your daily life. For example, Minnesota requires annual standardized tests with consequences for low scores. All parents must submit annual reports. Those without a college degree must also submit quarterly reports. School officials are authorized to make home visits; parent must have ready proof that they are complying with the law.

What we need to maintain our homeschooling freedoms

- **All homeschoolers need to be informed and act responsibly**. We need to resist the temptations of tax credits, playing on public school sports teams, and other so-called favors. All these lead to increased regulation. We also need to resist alerts and misinformation that promote such favors that can come from other homeschooling organizations, including national organizations. Because very few states have laws as reasonable as Wisconsin has, other organizations are often willing to accept regulations that are unacceptable to Wisconsin homeschoolers.
- **We need to be prepared to act quickly**. A single event can cause sudden problems.

One 2008 misguided court decision in California caused great turmoil and may lead to new homeschooling legislation. In 1997, a Wisconsin judge had legislation introduced to allow the state to decide who could homeschool. WPA prevented it from passing.

A recent child abuse case in Washington, D.C. led to increased homeschooling regulation. By contrast, when similar cases occurred in Wisconsin in 1988 and 1997, homeschoolers were prepared to act through WPA and successfully prevented increased regulation.

- Homeschoolers (and the general public) need **answers to questions** about ways to homeschool, interpret Wisconsin law, and deal with numerous issues. Without accurate information from WPA, based on 25 years of experience, parents would not get the help they need, and the law would be interpreted in ways that harm you and other homeschoolers.

How we will meet these needs

Step #1: Recruit WPA members

Why WPA needs more members

- WPA is strong because it is a grassroots organization. Its members represent **the full range of reasons why families homeschool**. WPA can talk effectively with legislators from all political parties. To maintain our strength as a grassroots organization, we need more members.
- Just by existing, WPA prevents problems. A large membership is needed to maintain our **strong reputation** in the Wisconsin Legislature and in communities throughout the state.
- WPA has a wonderful base of committed members, including you. Many have been members for many years. This is an incredible asset. However, **fewer families are homeschooling**. Many new homeschoolers don't understand that homeschooling freedoms must be constantly defended. So membership is gradually declining. Working together, we can reverse this.
- Many homeschoolers **have not heard of WPA**. Only 1 homeschooling family in 12 is a member. Some assume WPA will continue without their support. They need to hear from you.

You are the key. Your enthusiastic endorsement of WPA is the most effective way to increase membership. Recruit three families, using one or more of the following points.

- Explain that when you need **information or help**, WPA is there with answers to questions like: Where do I get the books? How does my teen get a diploma? How can they get into college, technical school, or the military? How do I respond to a phone call or letter from my school district?
- Describe **benefits of membership**: information you need through newsletters and special bulletins, discounts on conferences and handbooks, increased security from knowing you're helping WPA continue.
- Point out that WPA works to **maintain your rights** and the rights of every other family regardless of their approach to homeschooling or their religious or philosophical beliefs. This makes WPA more effective than organizations that emphasize primarily one part of the homeschooling community, especially since we need to convince both Democrats and Republicans.
- Explain that WPA provides the **security you need**. Assure people that you can count on WPA if you are challenged. WPA has 25 years of experience in leading, interpreting Wisconsin law, and protecting your rights. WPA works much more effectively than organizations from outside the state. Its experience and resources are what you need.
- Mention that being a member of WPA **increases your confidence and your peace of mind**. You know you are getting information you can count on, so you are better prepared to homeschool.
- Suggest reading *Kitchen Tables and Marble Halls: WPA and Homeschooling In Wisconsin*. This 36-page booklet makes clear how homeschoolers working together through WPA have **reclaimed and maintained homeschooling freedoms**. It can be downloaded from WPA's website or requested free from WPA.

Step #2: Increase WPA's income

WPA needs money to:

- **Handle challenges** to your homeschooling freedoms, often on short notice. Two full-time staff track developments; do research; develop strategy; and write newsletters, bulletins, fact sheets, emails, the handbook, and booklets. (For example, each newsletter requires approximately 200 hours—that's 5 full work weeks—to plan, research, write, edit, lay out, and mail.) The staff also works with the WPA Board and volunteers.
- **Answer the 70 questions** WPA receives EACH WEEK from homeschoolers, families considering homeschooling, legislators, the media, critical relatives, support groups, commercial interests, researchers, education associations, etc.
- Plan, organize, and run the **annual conference**. This requires year round effort by WPA's staff and a host of volunteers.
- Maintain the **WPA website**, which requires both money and staff time.
- **Run an organization** of 900 member families. The countless administrative tasks include filling orders, processing renewals, and maintaining records.
- **Provide office space, equipment, and supplies;** printing and postage; phone; insurance; data processing services.

WPA needs to raise **\$6,000** between now and the beginning of 2009 to meet basic expenses shown below. This may sound like a large amount. But we can raise it if each of us does our part. For example, 65 new members and \$4,000 in donations of varying sizes would provide what WPA needs.

For 2009, WPA's goal is 150 more members and an increase of \$5,000 in donations. The additional money would be used as follows:

1. \$4,000 to **expand WPA's website** so we can better serve members, recruit new families, and increase handbook sales and conference attendance.
2. \$2,000 above current expenditures to **meet rising costs** for printing, postage, and data services.
3. \$2,000 each to **increase the salaries** of our highly qualified Executive Director and Senior Program Specialist, thereby ensuring strong leadership, effective management, accurate information, conferences, publications, etc.

Here is WPA's budget:

	2007	2008
Income	Actual	Projected
• Memberships	\$22,004	\$20,000
• Handbook sales	\$8,837	\$6,000
• Conference fees and meals	\$32,223	\$27,621
• Donations	\$5,851	\$7,800
Total	\$68,915	\$61,421
Expenses		
• Staff—Executive Director	\$25,000	\$25,000
• Staff—Senior Program Specialist	\$20,000	\$20,000
• Website, data entry, order fulfillment, etc.	\$1,895	\$2,800
• Office, printing, computers, phone, postage, etc.	\$10,400	\$11,500
• Conference expenses	\$9,600	\$8,500
Total	\$66,895	\$67,800
Balance needed to meet 2008 expenses		\$6,379

Three easy ways you can donate

WPA could not exist without donations from members. (WPA receives no government funds.) Any amount from you will make a difference. If you have donated in the past, thank you very much. Remember, donations are tax-deductible.

- 1) Click on the new "Donate" button on the **WPA website**.
- 2) Call the **WPA voice mail** 608-283-3131 and use your credit card.
- 3) Mail the **enclosed card** with a check, money order, or credit card information to the WPA post office box.

Support WPA without digging into your own pockets

- Ask if your employer will **match your donation** or donate to organizations for which you volunteer.
- **Ask friends, relatives, and businesses** to donate. Use materials available on WPA's website.
- **Encourage others to join WPA**. Memberships and handbook sales generate income.

Wisconsin homeschoolers have created a strong, vibrant WPA. For 25 years, we have benefited. Don't allow this precious resource to weaken. Recruit three new members. Donate today using the enclosed card or online at www.homeschooling-wpa.org. On behalf of all past, present, and future homeschoolers, thank you!

Sincerely,

The WPA Board

P. S. Remember that **WPA fights for the right of every family**, whether they are homeschooling or not, to make the best decisions for their own family regarding raising and educating their children. Our voice needs to continue to be heard.