

Orangeburg Christian Home Educators Association

“Encourage one another and build each other up...” 1 Thess 5:11

www.ochea.net

OCHEA Mission Statement

We purpose to nurture, educate, and lovingly discipline our children according to the Word of God. We intend to do this by teaching them spiritual and moral values and to lead them by consistent lifestyle example. We believe that God ordained marriage as the unity of one man and one woman in covenant commitment for a lifetime. Children are a blessing and gift to that union and are to honor and obey their parents. **We recognize home schooling as the privilege of educating our children at home, using the curriculum of our choice, free from public, private or governmental control of any kind.** Each member family has the responsibility of portraying Christian values in their homes and to one another by displaying respect, courtesy, honesty, fairness, understanding, guidance, patience and brotherly love towards one another at all times.

(References: Genesis 2:24, Exodus 20:12, Proverbs 22:6, Mark 10:6-9, Galatians 5:22-25, Ephesians 6:1-3, Philippians 4:8, 1 Thessalonians 5:11 and 2 Timothy 2:15)

Group Information and Policies

OCHEA is a support group for home schooling families in the Orangeburg area. **We are not an accountability group!** (You must be part of an accountability group to be compliant with SC homeschool laws.) Our members vary in experience from new to veteran and teach children of all grade levels using their own choice of curricula and scheduling. While many different Christian denominations are within this group, our focus remains the same--working together to do what is best for our children.

OCHEA can be joined at any time during the school year for families to join in on OCHEA hosted activities, field trips planned by OCHEA members, holiday parties, school pictures (when available) and access to communication with all OCHEA members through Heylo. (Co-op, however, can only be joined before the deadline specified in the Co-op Handbook and on the Co-op application.)

Our group has one mandatory planning meeting at the start of the school year at which we schedule opportunities for our children to learn and grow together. Members are required to attend this meeting. We communicate initially via email and then via Heylo to make announcements concerning this meeting and other planned gatherings.

Without member involvement, our group cannot remain productive. Our group is only as good as we make it. With the exception of first year members, you are required to host or co-host at least one activity and/or serve on a committee. First year members are not *required* to host any events, but are encouraged to help and participate whenever possible. Activities and committees are listed below. Please prayerfully consider how you can contribute this year.

Communication

Since we only have one meeting at the start of the year, it is vital to be an active participant in our Heylo communication app. Heylo can be accessed via web browser on any computer or via mobile app. Members are encouraged to download the mobile app and turn on all notifications to stay informed about OCHEA topics and events. Heylo does give users the ability to join (or not join) relevant discussions, so that you are not overloaded with notifications of posts that do not interest you. Only major announcements will be sent out via email, so keeping up to date through Heylo is essential to

your OCHEA experience. It will be expected that all members have any knowledge that is posted through Heylo.

Activities offered by OCHEA

Social Studies/History Night- Students may present what they have learned in the areas of Social Studies, Geography, International or American History. Students may bring display boards, recite essays, perform, bring native foods, etc.

Spelling Bee- Students compete on their grade/age level in a low-stress environment to show off their spelling skills.

Science Night- Students may present a science project or report of his/her choice.

Family Talent Night- An evening of fun for the entire family. Students and parents are encouraged to come out and show off their talent. (combined with graduation)

Mom's Night Out- A couple of nights a year set aside for the mothers of our group to get together for down time, fun time, or just to eat and chat. These are voluntarily hosted by members.

Holiday Parties- Our children and teens celebrate holidays with a party hosted by a volunteering member(s). It can be held at the member's home, church, or wherever the host decides. The host is asked to plan a craft or activity, games, and/or serve light refreshments. Usually these are a Back to School Party, Thanksgiving, Christmas, Valentine's Day, Easter, and End of the Year party.

Graduation- A commencement ceremony for graduating seniors and to recognize our 8th graders and kindergarteners.

Field trips-These are planned at our meetings, but can include any area of interest. Members are encouraged to explore field trip possibilities and reach out to organizations or locations for details on group visits. These details can be communicated to members via Heylo by creating a "Topic", then an "Event" should be created once the trip is planned.

Members are asked to volunteer to host these events and we encourage members to work together for each event. The host(s) are responsible for securing location for the event, making a plan for potential activities and/or food, and set-up/clean-up. Most holiday parties are hosted at Trinity Presbyterian, following Co-op, but can be held at any location suitable for a crowd, on any date/time desired. If food will be served, please provide details so other members know what they should bring or contribute money to a meal. OCHEA provides the paper goods for these events. Once plans are made by hosts, they should create an "Event" on Heylo so all OCHEA members get an invitation and can respond with questions or RSVP.

Committees

Listed below are volunteer committees that need your help. Each position is for one school term. These committees may meet in addition to the regular planning meetings.

Yearbook- on this committee, you will be responsible for helping organize OCHEA's annual yearbook. You may be asked to submit photos, layout pages, help sell ads, etc. High school aged students are encouraged to volunteer for this committee as well.

Graduation-Parents of graduates as well as OCHEA board members make up this committee.

Committee members meet and help plan all of the following for our graduation ceremony- meeting dates, securing a convenient location, printing programs, setup, and serving refreshments, clean up and any other areas which help alleviate some of the responsibilities of the parent of graduates.

Promotional- As a member of this committee you will be responsible for any group advertising and /or

newsworthy correspondence such as writing an article for the newspaper and/or submitting pictures.

Co-op Information

Co-op participation is optional to our members, which provides weekly classes, grouped by age/grade and has a separate application and tuition fees. You must be a member of OCHEA to participate in Co-op classes. More information about Co-op can be found in the OCHEA + Co-op Handbook. The “OCHEA + Co-op application” must be completed and applicable fees paid by the deadline to be eligible to participate in Co-op.

OCHEA Leadership

Our Board is made up of five volunteer members. Board members offer advice and provide information to members and prospective members, lead planning meetings, schedule classes, handle fundraisers and monies, provide an internet support platform, help plan graduation, and lead the various aspects of the group. The board members for the 2023-2024 term are as follows:

Jessica Bolen 843-964-7620

Merrill Helmke 803-682-0554

Catherine Roberts 803-378-4732)

Heather Chavis 803-608-6579

Anna Margaret Weeks 803-707-4402

Parent Responsibility/Discipline Policy

As homeschoolers, anytime we are together as a group in public, we represent the entire home school movement as well as our families, and it is our desire for OCHEA members to always be viewed in a positive light. All members should respect the hard work and effort it takes to organize an event and encourage their children to participate. Please thoroughly consider an event before signing up for it. Cancelling at the last minute may cause a problem for the organizer or event. We respect the right of each family to discipline their children according to their own consciences, providing the children are not disruptive or disrespectful in their language, dress or behavior. We seek to promote the happiness and contentment of each family without offending one another. However, we will not permit the obvious disregard of rules or regulations to affect the activities provided for the group, or cause us to lose privileges at any given facility. Parents are responsible for the actions of their children and will be asked to appropriately handle any disruptive conduct that may prevent members from enjoying group events. There should be no “dropping off” of children at an event unless proper consent of an attending adult is obtained beforehand. OCHEA cannot accept liability for injury or neglect at group functions. Your signature on the application form attests to your notification and agreement to the above policies.

To join OCHEA, please complete the online application found on our website at www.OCHEA.net or fill out paper application below if you are unable to submit the online application. Mail check payment to PO Box 2498 Orangeburg, SC 29116. Plan to attend our mandatory planning meeting to help create an amazing year for our children. The meeting date and time will be communicated via email and Heylo.

When you join OCHEA you will be invited to join OCHEA’s Heylo group. This is how you will receive up to date information regarding events and meetings.

If you do not receive a welcome/invitation email, or if you have trouble joining Heylo, please contact us at info.ochea@yahoo.com.