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Ashley: Thank you so much for joining me. This is Ashley with Homeschool Super Heroes. We are so excited to have you on our call tonight. Tonight I have Wendy Hilton with me. Wendy lives in the south with her wonderful hubby and three great kids. She is a Christian and work at home mom. She and Scott, her high school sweetheart have been married for more than 20 years. Her oldest child is Austin; Wendy began home schooling him at age 2. Her son, a typical boy, would rather do anything but school and her youngest child is a little social butterfly and people lover. Wendy loves to read and quilt, and hopefully we'll start scrapbooking sometime soon. You could visit her personal blog at: www.HomeschoolBlessing.BlogSpot.com as well as www.HipHopHomeschoolMoms.com. Thank you so much for joining us Wendy.

Wendy: Thank you, I am glad, I appreciate you having me.

Ashley: Perfect, well, do you think, to start with, would you mind, tell us a little bit about your family, and sort of way your homeschooling [inaudible][00:01:10] that would be just a similar address, let's start with you.

Wendy: Okay, lets see, we have been home schooling for about 15 years, my oldest child Hannah is 17 years old and she's autistic speaking non verbal and my son is 15 and then I have a 9 year old daughter. Our style is really pretty eclectic. We do use lots of books, we raise it a lot, some of those together and some, the kids will read separately depending on what they are studying and that sort of thing; so we really could not narrow it down with it classical, also tricycle model, we try to do a lot of hands on activities, my kids actually, especially my younger daughter really likes, what the pages and journal pages and things like that, so I let her do a lot of those kind of things. My son does not prefer that so much, he would rather do his work if he could, so we do a lot of that so and a little bit of that.

Ashley: Perfect, is doing such a thing, what would hold like a typical home school day [inaudible] [00:02:32] high school?

Wendy: We try to, we don't get up really early but I try to get the kids up around 7.30 or 8 o'clock and then I let them eat breakfast while I do, we do bible reading together first thing in the morning so a lot of times they are eating breakfast while they, I do my bible reading and then we read what we just call our family stories and even if there are ages with the two teenagers and the 9 year old but still all love to be read to. So we will read a chapter or two of the book together, I will read out loud to them and then we do, mostly my son will go to his computer and he will do as much of his work that he can do on his own, and then when he gets back he usually takes a couple of hours or so for him to work on what he designed and then I will go check that and help him with any problems. My daughter is artistic,

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she has a helper that comes and helps her with some of her school work; so she will do that, Hannah will do her work with her helper for those couple of hours too while I do some one on one work with my youngest child and that's the youngest one, and I get through that about the same the older two made me to come check their work and help them with problems, and that sort of thing, then we usually have lunch and after lunch we will do one on one subjects for example, if I am doing a writing program with my son then we might discuss his refinement and what to do and brainstorm and sort of I'll kind of help him with that. And then with my older daughter, I may spend some time with her, after that working on she's [inaudible] [00:04:35] having to use a communication device, so when a [inaudible] [00:04:38] working with her communication device or even just reading books, she loves foreign languages so we might listen to some Spanish CD's or something like that, just do a few things together; and then my younger daughter, if she still has anything left to do for school, then I will finish up with her. After that they would do maybe if they have independent reading or things like that, they find those later in the afternoon while I clean up around the house or start to get dinner ready and do some of my work from home thing.

Ashley: Perfect, definitely sounds like you guys have a [inaudible] [00:05:22] day

Wendy: Yes we do.

Ashley: To say the least, one think, I know that you talked a little bit about the, this child hanging on to them and being non verbal. How does that play into your home schooling and what is, what are the differences that you have used home schooling her verses home schooling the other two?

Wendy: Really Hannah is the whole reason that we started home schooling. She started doing a very intensive program with her when she was about 2 then they would think that I was trying to get her ready for when she became school age at age five; that she would be ready to go to school but she would be a [inaudible] [00:06:12] and she would take turns, pay attention and those kind of things and then it was going so well that we just decided to ride on. She did go to school half day for two whole years and honestly I just realized that her home school program was going a lot better than her school program was and I brought her back home and it ended up being such a good decision. As far as the differences, really one thing that I try to do is, I try to teach her using the same books and materials that I teach her younger brothers with. There is about a year and a half difference in their age, so that way she is using materials that are a year or two below where she would be if she were working on grade level, and the main difference really is the presentation. Hannah can read but she does not always follow along so well. If she's kind of reading dependently is like she will lose focus. She kind of has

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trouble staying on track so a lot of times, Hannah [Solberg?] [00:07:30] and I depending on others working with Hannah right at that moment; will read the material out loud to her, and let her follow along with her finger, so that she can hear it out loud and see it and then follow along with it too; and she really thinks to repaint the information a lot better do bring it that way. If we have her read something on her own, then sometimes she will remember it, sometimes she won't, depending on how concentration is that day and that sort of thing. Another thing that is a little bit different is, since Hannah is non verbal, we have to have a different way of, do you want to call it testing, just basically what she remembers and what she understands. So we will, for example if I ask her specific questions, then I will tear three little sheets of paper, bring those pieces of paper and write down an answer on each piece of paper; I will ask her the questions and then she just touches the piece of paper with the correct answer on it, because her handwriting, her motor skills are very poor and if she tries to write the answers, sometimes I can understand what she has written and sometimes I can't. So really, it's not that the material itself is so different, just the presentation and then the testing part. That's a good bit different from what I do with her brother and her younger sister.

Ashley: That makes perfect sense, because there, it has to be a little bit different because she can respond to you at the same time, you said a little bit about her having a helper. For other home school moms, family's that do have total tutoring is that that's something that you recommend for two or; is that always the case, do you always have people to help you out through that process?

Wendy: No, for years I did not have any help, when, probably about the time that Mary Grace was born, Mary Grace was nine, and probably about that time that I just realized that there was really no way with her maids being as great as they are, there was really no way for me to continue to do all of her school work plus her younger brothers school work and then take care of a new born at the same time; because I was, working with Hannah, try to about 30-35 hours a week, so I just knew, there was no way any longer that I could put that up.

Ashley: Yes.

Wendy: But yes, I would absolutely say if its possible, even if it is somebody who comes once a week or can come an hour or two everyday, even if the person just keeps the other children, if it's a teenager maybe, he'd think, watch out for the other children and give the mom an hour or two to just focus on the child who really is a special needs child. That is so hopeful; it made a huge difference on our home school.

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Ashley: Perfect, something I know, home scholars sometimes get asked a lot but I think it could be even more with a special needs child but I think the whole idea of socialization. I know being a college sports teacher might in itself be something like it all the time, and I just [inaudible] [00:11:06] going up in home school and I just school my kids, that [inaudible] [00:11:09] now, but just something I hear a lot is that the reason we have all those costumes is that socialization has [inaudible] [00:11:18] thing, how do you sort of bond a lot through home schooling.

Wendy: Well, [after?] [00:11:27] ask that question all the time, and really the answer truth is, there are so many opportunities for our kids to be around other kids. Our problem is narrowing it down, were not on the road five six days a week and we are never home to do our schooling work. So we have a really good home school support way and that area, and then I have a twin sister who lives nearby and home school's, she home school's her children, they come home once a week and she home school's them and then one of us keeps the other kids while the other takes the younger girls to LA. They also do piano together once a week, my son takes tennis with some other boys that are maybe a couple years younger and a couple years older, sort of mixed ages, then off course we have church activities a couple of times a week and our home school support group does field trips once a month. They have a couple of days and get together once a week. We can't do that once a week just because, if my kids get older we don't have as much free time. My son does speech in debate class, and that's once a week, so really, there are lots and lots of social activities and then there is [Tatiana?] [00:12:51] with her special needs. That is a great thing about having her at home, not only does she feel like part of the family, she is very comfortable with that, she is so happy with that, but she also goes with us when we go on field trips, if we go to see a play, if we go to, or just a play day or visiting time with another family, she comes with us. And I have found that the other kids in the home school group are very accepting, they are very kind, they go out of their way to speak to her and to sit with her and to talk to her for a few minutes and that sort of thing, and off course the other moms are often really nice to talk to and so really, she is, as far as that goes I feel like she really got it, she's just got a really good thing going on because home school groups, all the kids and the adults, just so great to Hannah.

Ashley: Perfect, and then you mentioned a little bit about support groups and how lean you are on home school groups. [Inaudible] [00:14:04] for home school moms not only to get a direction; but also for their kids to get the social [direction?] [00:14:08] The thing you suggest though is if someone gets a support group in an area, for all types of home schooling, not just special needs but all types their

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ways that moms can get involved on the [inaudible] [00:14:22] if they have their support.

Wendy: Yes, I definitely think that it's an advantage if you actually have home school support group somewhere in the [year?] [00:14:33] that you can get together with in person and have the kids get together and that sort of thing; obviously that is, that will be the best option. Yes, that is not an option, and there is so many now groups, maybe through churches, even if it's just a few families and not a large number of families to make the support group, but even if it's just two or three other families at home school, you can get together and trade baby sitting, get together for play days or field trips, or activities, and if non of those options are available, there are online options and I have made friends with women all over the country and even in other countries, through home school forums, and home school websites, and even though that's an online relationship, it still just helps to have another mom to bounce ideas off of to talk just about your day and what's going on, maybe to talk about curriculum ideas and those sorts of things, so I would definitely say, get involved somewhere, if you can't do it locally, then at least reach out to somebody over the internet and make connections, I think that is really important.

Ashley: Perfect, and I know that you have been home schooling for quite a while now, is there any advice you would give to new home scholars if they were to focus on one or two things in the first couple of years. What would be your advice to them?

Wendy: Well, honestly, this is not something that you would typically hear, but I remember that when I first started home schooling 15 years ago and a mom at my church who had been home schooling for quite a few years already, told me the most important thing you can do is for a brand new home school family is to make sure your kids know and follow first time obedience. If your children are not used to obeying and obeying immediately, then you start to try to teach them, then that atmosphere is just not going to work very well, the kids have to respect you and have to obey what you say and mark you, do not [perfect?] [00:17:05] by any name but the more obedient the kids are, just that its going to be that much easier and that much more pleasant, and another thing that I feel is important, so many moms when they start out, they think everything has to be perfect, they've got to have the perfect curriculum, it will be just right, we will all love it, it took me several years at home schooling trying out different curriculum and getting ideas from different people, it's sort of twinkling the things that we were using so that they could work well for us, so I just say particularly enough in the early years, don't feel bound to one particular curriculum, just because that's the one you started with, that's just work for you, don't worry about it, reach for

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something else and sooner or later you will find something that works really well for you and for your children and so important, if you hate what you are doing, and all your kids do, then it's not going to be very successful, or very much fun for anybody so don't be afraid of reaching around and trying out new things if you need to.

Ashley: Perfect, switching track just a little bit, I know that you have your own business alongside home schooling your children and being ready and all that, how do you balance it all, I know its [inaudible] [00:18:34]

Wendy: I know I should have a balanced life,

Ashley: But its just me, home schooling and business and marriage, is there any advice you can give to home schooling moms at all, trying to help support their husbands or start up a business and things like that as well.

Wendy: Well, I will tell you, I am very blessed to have a husband who supports me in home schooling and in the business, he helps a lot with the kids, in fact, one thing that I love home school moms, they help with, they get the kids out of bed in the morning and that is a hard thing to do so much and that kind of gets them up and going and yes, its difficult, I try, that is one good reason that I try and get up in the morning, and get started with the kids. I like to try and have their school work one, maybe at least the part that I have to try and do with them, by lunch time or as close after that that I can, and when they are doing some of their independent work, I may work at my computer and try to do some of my work that I have to, sometimes we will set up the table together, and the kids will be working on things that they can do but m still there to answer questions or that sort of thing. Then one of the biggest problems that I have is cutting off the work, at about 3.30, 4, 4.30, depending on how long it's going to take me to fix dinner, I try to step away from the computer, get our dinner ready, and that way when my husband is home, we are all ready to sit down and eat dinner together, I think that's so important and I don't want to lose that in the business of home schooling and working from home, so we all sit down and eat together, and then after dinner, my wonderful husband does the dishes and lets me catch up a little bit more on some work or maybe pray again with the kids, or something like that. We try to spend a little time together in the evenings like that, coming from time, if we still have some work that I need to catch up on, I will just wait to finish those until after the kids go to bed and hopefully at that time I don't have a lot of work left to do, so we just try to balance it all as best as we can and I just try to remember in the late afternoon, early evening, to have that time with my family, that's so important, so we really try to put all the work stuff down and spend some time together and maybe if I have to do a little bit of work later that evening, its not that bad, I have

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to spend time with my family and my husband just really is support, I just wish every home schooling's mom husband was that supportive and hopeful, really makes a real difference.

Ashley: Perfect, if there was anything that you could do over again throughout your years of home schooling, what would that be to help encourage or guide people that are home schooling now?

Wendy: Really, one of the main things that I would do over, is, I would just not take everything so seriously. When we first started home schooling, I had this idea that we would all sit at the table together, we would all do our work so nicely, it would be so great, I would spend a few minutes with this child and just spend a few minutes with that one and we'd just all work together and everything would go well, so I had this idea of how I thought things would go but that was fairytale land and we don't live there. So it's just a reality of this was not just this beautiful, little, quiet, lovely picture that I thought it would be. I love to be home with my kids, I love home schooling, I love working from home, but I really didn't know in reality how all that would look, so I was just way too rigid about how I wanted things to work, how I wanted our schedule to be and that or the main thing I've learnt over the years, is just try to enjoy what you are doing, enjoy being with your kids and realize that it is not going to be perfect and then don't get upset when it's not perfect. That it's okay, it's not going to be perfect at school, if your children were in school, its not going to be perfect at home, we just, we try to enjoy each others company and just not be so serious all the time.

Ashley: That's perfect, I remember my mom got so excited, and she was also working on home business at the time and things did not go according to plan and some of it we would check it out and laugh and think its funny and other things like wow that was a disaster, normally.

Wendy: Exactly, exactly right. And we can learn from our mistakes and not beat ourselves up over other things that we did that were not the best and just decide, okay instead of just discourage others mistakes or the things I wish I had done differently, am going to learn from those and then as we go forward, I will know how to adjust how we are doing and not make those mistakes again, so, I take it as encouragement and not discouragement.

Ashley: Perfect, one thing that led us, I want to talk a little bit on the file that I was reading is about your son not enjoying school, or playing and things like that,. What are some things that you were able to do that really brought him into school and was, you will have to finish this before you can go out and pray, or you could incorporate and make it a little bit more fun throughout the process.

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Wendy: Though he's still, he's 15 now and the honest truth is, he still would rather be doing, mostly anything else except school work, so what we try to do is, we try, I try to allow him to work on his school work for a little while and then maybe take a break, go outside and take a walk, read a book that he wants to read for fun, for a few minutes, her grandmother lives next door, he might visit with her for a few minutes or those kinds of things, I try to just let him work for a while and then take a little break, even if it's just 10 minutes, the main thing that bothers him is he just doesn't want to sit all day and work on his work and he needs to get time to get up and move around and do other things and I found that I used to think, that will distract him, I will never get him back on track, he will be gone, but I found now, that he stays on track much better when he is allowed to get up, move around. And get out some energy in the subjects, and then in the day that he's just focused and says no, I don't want to take a break right now, I want to go ahead and finish this, am almost done, and then I'll be finished early. And I found that as he gets older, that I just sort of got to let him decide when he needs to take a break and then I just need to take a break and watch the time and make sure that I bring him back when it's been 10 or 15 minutes and that really makes a big difference. That helps a lot, and then he has the satisfaction of knowing too that once he is finished, if he concentrates and pays attention and finishes his work at a decent time, then he's got the rest of the day to kind of do within reason what he needs to do, so that is a motivation too.

Ashley: Perfect, thank you so much for being here, I wanted to open [inaudible] [00:27:03] if there was any other comment or advice that you wanted to give, as well as the way that our listeners could like contact you or just get your websites or anything like that as well.

Wendy: One, the website that a friend and I own is called the hip, home school mom and actually this, our site is for the purpose of giving moms the price to go and have fun. So many home school related websites are furious and it's all about curriculum or that discipline, or those sorts of things, we do answer curriculum questions, not just those of us who work for the site but also other moms who read the site and that sort of thing. We just got to support each other and just have fun community for other home schooling moms, to get involved in; you can find our site at [www. Hiphomeschoolmoms.com](http://www.Hiphomeschoolmoms.com) and then we have a face book page as well and that's really the best place for people to post curriculum questions or even just bits of advice, or just funny stories about things that happened in their home school days, those sorts of things and we encourage people to visit us at our site and on our face book page. I also have my own personal blog, and my blog is not strictly home school related, sometimes we tell about activities, sometimes we tell about gardening or discipline or home schooling, its all sort of [ecliptic?]

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[00:28:53] and that is called Home Schooling Blessings. And you can find it on wendy_homeschoolingblessings.blogspot.com and I can also be reached by email at wendy@hiphomeschoolmoms.com.

Ashley: Perfect, thank you so much Wendy for joining us tonight, I really appreciate all the tips and advice that you've given to all our listeners and I really also like the idea about this, reminding home school moms to just have fun through out the process. And that it does not always have to be serious, that you can enjoy it at the same time as well.

Wendy: Right, and that's really what we want to do on our site and as such a serious person, I have to remind myself of that kind of thing, just take it easy and have a good time and enjoy this years that we have our kids at home. As the mom of a 17 year old and a 15 year old am beginning to see that the years do really pass by quickly and so we really need to just really enjoy our time with our kids and then I try to enjoy helping ourselves and our home schooling years, getting to know other moms and that sort of thing, its just, its really something that I absolutely enjoy and love and I really appreciate this chance to be on and talk to you and to hopefully help some other home schooling mom that will be blest by this. Thank you so much.

Ashley: It's not a problem, well thank you again and I look forward to speaking with you in the future.

Wendy: Thank you so much.

Ashley: Have a good evening.

Wendy: You too. Bye bye.