

# HEART MATTERS

NON SCHOLÆ SED VITÆ

*Libraries of Hope Newsletter*

PLAY IS  
THE WORK OF  
CHILDHOOD

--It's September and time to take another tour around the world! Some of you may have gotten an early start and that's perfectly fine. September has more places to travel than other months, so taking a week or two longer to explore is great.

Let me do some connecting for you. We always start the year with Exploration and Discovery because that's the kind of learners we are—we explore and discover for ourselves. So this is a great time to learn about some of the great explorers. The Vikings landed in North America long before Columbus, but we don't give them credit for 'discovering' the New World because they only stayed around a bit, and then went home to SCANDINAVIA, which is our first connecting study. And while Columbus never actually landed in what became United States soil, after he came here, hundred and thousands followed and the rest is...well...history. So we give him credit for discovering America. But he actually thought he had found a way to the lands Marco Polo had described in such detail. Columbus was looking for CHINA and INDIA—so there is our next study link. What was it about those countries that was so appealing, he was willing to risk his life to get there? We'll find out. The other explorers that were looking for the same lands happened upon isles in the SOUTH SEAS—like Australia and New Zealand. So we'll add the South Seas to this month's tour.

Remember—we're only gathering puzzle pieces. No worries if you can only pick up a few. You'll be back around next year. And the next. And the year after. And so on and so forth as long as there is something you still want to learn.

For Nature, we start with the Stars. And our Mother's University topic is A Mother's Influence.

Where will your explorations take you?

## ANNOUNCEMENTS

--Belle Ame at Home is now open! All are welcome to join at any time. You'll start with Orientation Week and then dive in to wherever we are! To learn more, go to [belleameathome.com](http://belleameathome.com).

Let me share some experiences that members of the community have shared:

"I wanted to share my experience so far with Belle Ame. Having followed Marlene and WEH since 2012, I have slowly added things into our homeschool, have many of the books, etc... but never totally caught the vision. (Though I have been through the CTV course 3 times now). We are entering our 23rd year of homeschooling and have graduated 4 of our 6. I knew this year, that we needed to embrace the rotation and I have been preparing as such.

"When Belle Ame was announced, I joined more out of FOMO than anything else. I trusted it would be amazing as anything WEH is. But, truthfully, I didn't really get it. Because, simply, I hadn't taken the time to understand. My dear friend Kerri is the Belle Ame Music Together mentor, and this was just another reason to know it would be amazing. I decided I needed to get in there and see what it was all about, or I needed to cancel it. While worth EVERY penny and more.... I didn't want to pay for something I wouldn't take the time to use. BTDT.

"I realized one of my big hold ups in exploring Belle Ame was that I was on my phone. I don't like to read on my phone, and so I found out how to get it on my big screen iMac, (very easy to do) so I could delve in that way. THIS CHANGED EVERYTHING.

"I entered the BA world and it was magical. I took the time to navigate what was there. I listened and learned. This was later at night and everyone was asleep. I got so excited about what I was discovering, I wanted to wake them up! Instead, I prepared. I printed some things in preparation and ordered some supplies. I CAUGHT THE VISION of what Belle Ame is. It is wonderful and truly stands up to its name of beautiful soul. I have never seen anything like this in all our years of homeschooling. I wanted to make sure I didn't overwhelm myself and then my kids, so I really looked at the buffet of offerings, and kind of picked a few things to introduce them to. Our 14-year-old is taking 2 WEH Academy classes, and our 9-year-old loves learning everything. We are also a part of a wonderful commonwealth school that meets once a week.

"Today, I presented Belle Ame to them. We listened to Marlene guide us through so that they could also catch the vision. Our 14-year-old grumbled, but that is the norm. Our 9-year-old promptly got her notebook and began the copywork while Marlene spoke. She is ecstatic about it all and is learning to navigate it with a little help. Interest-

Art credit: The Reading Lesson by Knut Ekvall





“Remember this: The strongest sign of the decay of a nation is the feminization of men and the masculinization of women... The decay and the ruin of a nation has always lain in the hands of its women. So does its life and strength, its reverence for beauty, its mercy and kindness and, above all, its men.”

--Taylor Caldwell

Art credit: God Speed by Edmund Leighton



ingly, as we listened to Marlene, our dog, two cats and even a dog we are just dog-sitting, all crowded around the computer. They must love her voice!

“So, I wanted to share in case anyone was feeling like me. I was treating it like one more thing to figure out and honestly not giving it the time it needed. Once I took that time, I realized it was not one more thing...it was THE thing we needed. I know this is an answer to my prayers as a mother, for this year. I know the investment is minimal compared to the richness that is being offered, and I love the community that has been created, and am thankful for all who have had a part.”

Or this one:

“I just have to say... BAAH has been a huge blessing for me. I know this is only week 1, but I feel so happy about this year of the rotation. I usually feel a little overwhelmed...even just by the first week. If you have been debating it—get on the 7-day free trial and see if it will be a good fit for your family. I was so on the fence but felt strongly we should give it a chance. I am so grateful we did. I feel more empowered to learn in the WEH way and way more peace in my heart about lessening some of the other aspects of schooling.

“I have 6 kids 12 and younger. One girl and six boys. I am pregnant, due February. I chose to try it out this year because I know having a baby in the middle of a school season is difficult. I got some rugs for the kids to sit on (and have their own space) for orientation and other lessons. It is very child-led in our house. Everyday I let them choose what we will do. Sometimes we have all day, sometimes we have to choose something shorter. While I absolutely love the crafts and sewing and drawing and cooking and everything—the most joy I feel is watching Marlene’s daily videos. I have all the books. We bought them last year. The kids have more desire to use them. THEY look for the stories. My daughter is actually using [Biblioguides](#), which I thought she may never have an interest in. I had no idea my oldest son wanted to try sewing and he is doing great with just the practice pieces already! The opportunities for connecting with my kids—all of them—are more vast in our home than they have ever been.

“Thank you to all the people who have brought this to reality in our homes virtually! I know that every season of life is different and it may not be the best time for some families to try it out. But it is a huge blessing for our family.”

From Shannon W.:

“This morning, I was thinking about an event tonight where I will meet a bunch of new people and there’s always the awkwardness of explaining what I do (you all know the looks you get when you tell someone you homeschool). But I was thinking about if I were to tell them that I’ve been helping to build BAAH and explain what Libraries of

Hope/Well-Educated Heart has to offer, I am just in utter amazement. Check this out:

“It’s a journey around the world every year: On the LOH website and Biblioguides, learn about People (includes history, Language Arts) and Nature (science, math) through Art, Music, Poetry, and Stories with a huge supply of resources, including thousands of books and audios. There are also crafts, food, movies, and plays.

“BAAH offers a daily inspiration station and professional storytellers with stories to share; there are weekly music, art, storytelling, cooking, sewing, crafts, and folk dancing classes; a place to connect with friends and even conversation tips, starters, and activities; several clubs such as Be A Man, Pinehurst for Young Ladies, Shakespeare, Great Lives Book Club, Spanish Conversation, World Events, Create Peace Inside, Art of Conversation, Teen Chat, and Painting.

“Add in the WEH Academy with classes in Algebra, Anatomy & Physiology, Biology, Digital Art Design, Discovering True Identity, English Basics and Composition, Entrepreneurship, Geometry, Innovators/Inventors/Heroes, Leadership, Physics, Spanish, 5000 Year Leap, Story of Liberty, and Geography.

“And there is the Mothers of Influence Community, which is a place for support and connection for mothers as they learn together.

“Like I said at the beginning, I’m just in awe at what a beautiful thing has become...and we’re not done yet....”

From Marlene:

I keep seeing more and more people worrying about a repeat pandemic shutdown this fall and winter. I’ve read of school districts that have already closed temporarily because of illness and talks of mask mandates, etc.

None of us want to go there again. Not one bit.

But this morning I was thinking, if it happened, how would I navigate through that with kids?

And the answer is the same answer that people have used in all kinds of the worst of circumstances. They draw. They paint. They sing and dance and tell stories. They connect with others however they can.

To the extent that is possible, you nourish your bodies and your souls.

Belle Ame at Home is equipped to do that. If your library shuts down, we have books. We are facilitating connections and friendships and support.

We have drawing and singing and storytelling and activities to keep hands busy. We even have cooking to nourish the body. And we have friendship circles and Inspiration Stations to keep your minds occupied on good thoughts, not on scary ones.

You may not be ready for it now. But do tuck away the possibility. We are here when you need us.

--**A few days ago, I announced** that some awesome moms in our group created some YouTube and Spotify playlists for the music. You can now find links to them in the Music sections in Enrichment.

Today another announcement! Another awesome mom—Brittany Christensen—transferred the art from Simple Joy Art to a Google Drive which means you can now play it on your TV screens or digital photos and have a steady stream of art from the rotation on display!

You’ll find the link to this new Google Drive in the Art section of Enrichment. If there is art you want to download and print out, just go to the Simple Joy art option and it will take you to Wikimedia Commons where you can do that.



--Do yourself a huge favor. Go download this free book ([Rich Learning](#)) right now.

I've been telling you about it for years—the science behind why the Arts matter. Practically my whole copy is underlined. This is the first time I noticed that the book is being offered as a free PDF.

You can get it in English, Arabic, or Mandarin, by the way.

When Dr. Melheim heard me speak at the World Congress of Families, he sought me out to tell me about his amazing work. He even invited me to Dubai! I wish I had been brave enough.... I introduced him to Pestalozzi and told him that Pestalozzi said even if it takes 300 years to get this change, his work will not have been in vain. Dr. Melheim said, "Let's do it! Let's get the job done!"

If you've been dragging your feet thinking the Academics are being left behind by engaging in the Arts, this may be the book that will finally let you let go and do different.



Art credit: The Alchemist by Joseph Wright of Derby

--Well-Educated Heart Academic: We have created a new Facebook group (called Well-Educated Heart Academic) for all you homeschoolers who are trying to implement more WEH principles in your homes, but you want to talk about Academic concerns, like what math programs and handwriting programs people are using and suggestions for teaching children to read, etc. You are invited to join!

--From *Seven Ages of Childhood* by Ella Lyman Cabot: "This second period from about three years to seven, is the Dramatic Age [I call it Imaginative]. Almost before he has mastered the initial resources of the modern world [Familiar], a child of three or four turns to things of the spirit. What magnificent wisdom he shows!

"If our generation would but take the path of this imaginative age, civilization would lose its dulness. Eyes we have, but we see not; ears have we, but we hear not the sounds of the spirit. The more worldly-wise we become the less we use our eyes, our ears, our feet.

"The wisdom of children is that, as soon as they acquire the tools of language and of skill in handling their bodies and the surrounding world, they turn to create art and speak poetic prose....

"Children escape from all prisons, are free from all poverty, because wherever they are confined, they create."

...and a little child shall lead them.... Play IS the work of childhood.





Art credit: The Little Jubilee in the Children's Theatre by Charles Bertrand d'Entraigues

--Marlene once spoke about a safety net of families spreading over the world. One morning I woke up with the thought that the safety net begins as the mothers knit their hearts together in unity. That is the image I keep with me whenever I think about Mothers of Influence Circles and why we need you!

The CTV Introductory Course is an important foundation because it gives us a unified vision. We're women who want to continue learning more about artful living through the Mother's University, and the best way to do that is together! In our own "friendship circles," we'll put the focus on the mother's heart and storing up a personal reservoir of goodness, truth, and beauty that we can draw from as we nurture and lift the hearts of those we love.

When you're ready, we're waiting for you in the community! If you already have a MOI Circle, or hope to begin one, the community can serve as your home base. You'll have a private discussion feed to share what's been on your heart and mind, and place to post your group's Zoom links or in-person event details.

Many of you have felt lonely and long for the connection we're talking about. Look for an open MOI circle to join—with Zoom and other resources you don't even need to live near each other. There are also Belle Ame pages organized by state so that you can share inspiring things happening where you live and reach out to find MOIers who DO live near you.

Our theme this year is unity and connection, so we've added a simplified version of the Mother's University and ideas for things you can do with your MOI circle each month. We'll also host a once-a-month Wednesday event where we can knit our hearts together as a broader community.

Learn more here: <https://youtu.be/PBTuCG7L0t8?si=4WdrKxXIIIXNsuxgV>

See you soon! —Marley