

Welcome to *Venture Upward's* Virtual Home Education Conference 2025



Join us to be inspired by great speakers,
connect with the home education community, and leave
energized for your home-educating journey.

Venture ward™

Monday, Aug 11 – Wednesday, Aug 13, 2025

*Welcome to Venture Upward's
third annual Home Education
Conference! We're thrilled to gather
once again with families who believe in
the power of personalized education.*

*This year, we celebrate not only
how far we've come but also where
we're headed together.*

*At Venture Upward, we know that
every student learns differently,
and every family brings something
remarkable to the table. As we explore
new tools, strategies, and stories,
may this conference spark ideas,
deepen connections, and empower you
to create an even richer learning
journey at home. Thank you for being
part of a community that champions
curiosity, courage, and lifelong learning.
Let's make this our best year yet.*

Jessica Breuer

President
Venture Upward

Conference LINKS

Google Meet joining info

1—Video call link: <https://meet.google.com/tqc-vrem-tmb>

• *This is a LIVE Link* •

2—SCAN this QR code



3—Dial: (US) +1-352-453-0865 • PIN:734 896 913#



Monday, Aug 11 – Wednesday, Aug 13, 2025

Conference Session Times

Session One

5 am HST • 8 am PDT • 9 am MDT • 10 am CDT

BONUS Session

6:30 am HST • 9:30 am PDT • 10:30 am MDT • 11:30 am CDT

Session Two

8 am HST • 11 am PDT • 12 pm MDT • 1 pm CDT

Session Three

11 am HST • 2 pm PDT • 3 pm MDT • 4 pm CDT

Conference Session Format: 45-50 minute talks
Prize Drawing • 10-15 minute Q&A



Conference Schedule

Monday, Aug 11

Session One

- Nancy Bjorkman—*Exploring Learning Styles for More Effective Instruction*

BONUS Session

- Alica Wood—*Speak Up, Stand Out: Speech and Debate Skills for Lifelong Success*

Session Two

- Courtney Schloss—*Finding Balance in Your Homeschool Life*

Session Three

- Joey Mascio—*Villain to Mentor: Becoming the Person Your Kids Turn to Instead of Fights Against*

Tuesday, Aug 12

Session One

- Whitney Schiffler—*Practical Joy: Adding Fun and Creativity to Your Homeschool (Even If It's Not Your Style)*

BONUS Session

- Debi Hall—*EZ+1: The IEW Method of Teaching*

Session Two

- Maria Hendershot—*Joyful Reinvention: A 3-Step Reset for Moms Who Feel Stuck, Tired, or Disconnected*

Session Three

- Rachel Crupi—*Co-Regulation and Preventative Strategies: Helpful tips and strategies to support families in the home*

Wednesday, Aug 13

Session One

- Jessica Breuer—*When You Homeschool and Work: Real Talk for Real Moms*

BONUS Session

- Courtney Schloss—*Curriculum Mapping for Adventure Learning Labs*

Session Two

- Jamie Sneed—*Marathons Don't Run Themselves—Hard is Where the Magic Happens*

Session Three

- Mom's Panel—*Courtney, Whitney, Jessica, Jamie, Maria*

Meet Our Speakers

Monday, August 11 • Session One

Keynote Speaker



Nancy Bjorkman

**Topic: *Exploring Learning Styles
for More Effective Instruction***

Session Summary

Gain a fresh perspective on how your children's actions and attitudes help you discover their natural bent, so you can plan strategies that will help them grow into the person they were created to be. We'll peel back the layers to reveal pieces of the puzzle that go beyond the usual "auditory, kinesthetic, and visual" discussions. This workshop will provide you with insight into a variety of ways you can effectively teach to various learning styles in your children.

Speaker Bio

After years of being a homeschool skeptic, Nancy began homeschooling her four children in 1992. Now, after over 30 years, she has become known as the Homeschool Mom Whisperer for many and a champion of the cause. She has spoken at homeschool conferences in over 10 states, where she is known for her enthusiasm, energy, and encouragement. She finds joy in empowering parents to join the journey of homeschooling. Though she stays busy as a bookstore owner, mentor, and speaker, her favorite times are spent with her growing family (grandkids - yeah!). She and her husband recently sold HEPPNER'S LEGACY, a homeschool store in Elk River, MN, where they delight in ministering to the unique needs of families year-round, and where parents say, "Come for the books. Stay for the Therapy.™"



Alicia Wood

Title: *Speak Up, Stand Out: Speech and Debate Skills for Lifelong Success*

Session Summary

Speak Up, Stand Out is an encouraging introduction for moms who want to equip their children with strong communication, critical thinking, and leadership skills through speech and debate. Focusing on the American Speech and Debate Association (ASDA), this workshop will show you how to get your family involved in values-based, family-friendly tournaments. Whether your child is shy or outspoken, you'll learn how speech and debate can help them grow in confidence, think clearly, and speak with impact—both in competition and in life.

Speaker Bio

Alicia Wood is a dedicated homeschooling mom of four, entering her 15th year of home education. She has been married for 20 years to her high school sweetheart, Josh. A passionate traveler, Alicia has Italy at the top of her bucket list. She holds a Bachelor of Science in Secondary Education with an emphasis in Biology. Alicia volunteers as the West Region Director for the American Speech and Debate Association, where she enjoys mentoring new families and club leaders as they get started in the league. In her local community, she leads the Inspire Gilbert Speech and Debate Club and is excited to launch an online speech club this fall.



Courtney Schloss

Topic: *Finding Balance in Your Homeschool Life*

Session Summary

Homeschooling is a rewarding journey—but without intentional balance, it can also lead to burnout. In this encouraging and practical course, parents will explore simple but powerful habits that support both effective homeschooling and personal well-being. You'll learn how to recognize the signs of burnout, define what success looks like for you, and identify life-giving routines that help you thrive. Through guided reflection and hands-on exercises, you'll create your own list of six weekly actions that leave you feeling accomplished and filled up. Whether you're a seasoned homeschooler or just getting started, this class offers inspiration and tools to bring joy and sustainability to your homeschool life.

Speaker Bio

Courtney is a dedicated educator, leader, and homeschooling mom of 18 years who has graduated three students and is still homeschooling her last four children. With an Associate's degree in Early Childhood Education and a Bachelor's in Elementary Education, she spent five years teaching at Headstart preschool and three years in elementary classrooms before transitioning to virtual teaching. As a training manager, program director, and now Vice President of Program Development at Venture Upward, Courtney excels in curriculum development and enhancing student-teacher relationships in online settings. A sought-after speaker at home education conferences, she continues to inspire educators with her insights on homeschooling, virtual teaching, and effective curriculum design.



Joey Mascio

Topic: *Villain to Mentor: Becoming the Person Your Kids Turn to Instead of Fights Against*

Session Summary

Before we became parents of teens, we imagined how it would be. We would be our child's best friend and they would come to, confide in, and listen to us. But, in reality they often view us as the bad guy. We try to walk that line between friend and parent but it comes across as either fake or passive aggressive. We start to notice our communication with them weakening and our influence fading, so we double down on parenting strategies that, unfortunately, make us look like the villain in their eyes. In this presentation, we'll talk about how to change into a mentor mindset that will allow you to ask the right questions, set firm boundaries, and increase connection with a child of any age so you stop feeling like the villain and become their trusted advisor.

Speaker Bio

Joey Mascio is on a mission to help teens develop the habits of high achievers, boosting their confidence, emotional resilience, social skills, and motivation along the way. A former Disneyland performer and current professional improv comedian, Joey spent six years as a middle school teacher and counselor, where he perfected the "mentor mindset" and became a classroom management expert. He is the creator of Sidekick to Hero, a gamified confidence & resilience training app that helps tweens and teens develop powerful life habits through short, funny video lessons, real-world challenges, and interactive features designed to make self-improvement actually fun. He is also the host of the Secrets for an Awesome Life podcast, where he blends humor and psychology to help teens take control of their own stories. Joey and his amazing wife live in Utah where they raise their four incredible kids who keep him sharp, humble, and laughing. When he's not coaching or speaking, he loves spending time outdoors with his family, writing, BBQing, and getting lost in epic movies and stories.



Whitney Schiffler

Topic: *Practical Joy: Adding Fun and Creativity to Your Homeschool (Even If It's Not Your Style)*

Session Summary

If you aren't naturally inclined to creativity or spontaneity, it's easy to lose the delight you envisioned when you started your home education journey. Join me as I give you practical, easy-to-implement ways to add fun and creativity to your day!

Speaker Bio

Whitney Schiffler is a homeschooling mom of two curious and creative daughters, ages 10 and 12. A former high school English teacher with five years in the classroom, Whitney brings a deep love of literature and language to her homeschool. She's passionate about cultivating delight in learning and believes wonder and joy are essential. In her spare time you can usually find her lost in a book or a quilting project. Whitney's session is designed to encourage and equip fellow homeschoolers with both practical tools and a renewed sense of joy in the journey.



Debi Hall

Title: *EZ+1: The IEW Method of Teaching*

Session Summary

Learning to write is foundational to a child's education, but for many students it is confusing and frustrating. Likewise, for some teachers, training students in composition can seem overly complex and burdensome. However, teaching students to write well is not only possible, but it can be enjoyable! Learn how to get started using IEW's effective and enjoyable approach for teaching composition to reluctant writers, gifted students, and everyone in between. Using models, checklists, and a clear pathway for incremental skill progression—an approach we call EZ+1—IEW's Structure and Style® writing method instills confidence and builds competence in writing for students of all ages and abilities. You can teach your students to write. We can help.

Speaker Bio

Debbi's experience homeschooling two daughters, from elementary through high school using IEW writing curriculum, and her deep commitment to IEW's mission, uniquely qualifies Debbi to be an Educational Consultant for Independent Charter Schools. Debbi is also an IEW Registered Instructor. Having been the Manager of Family Relations and Campus Operations at Biola University's STAR Academics program for twenty-one years, she has vast experience working with homeschooling families as well as educational institutions. Debbi has a heart to help teachers and teaching parents to succeed in implementing IEW curriculum as they educate their students.



Maria Hendershot

Topic: *Joyful Reinvention: A 3-Step Reset for Moms who feel Stuck, Tired, or Disconnected*

Session Summary

Many homeschool moms pour so much into their families that they wake up one day wondering where they went in the process. This class is for the mom who feels stuck, exhausted, or disconnected—emotionally, mentally, and physically—and is ready to take the first steps toward joyful reinvention. In this powerful and practical session, I walk you through a “Joy Audit” to uncover the most common blocks to joy—what I call Joy Zappers—and how to shift out of survival mode and into intentional, joy-filled living. You’ll learn a simple 3-step process to reconnect with yourself, shift old thought patterns, and start creating small, sustainable changes that lead to lasting fulfillment—even in the middle of busy, messy, beautiful motherhood.

Speaker Bio

Maria Hendershot is a joy revivalist for burned-out moms who are tired of just surviving and ready to create a life they’re truly obsessed with. A Master Certified Life Coach with over a decade of experience, Maria holds certifications in life coaching, health coaching, and habit change, including The Masterful Coach Collective, The Life Coach School, Tiny Habits, and Faster Way to Fat Loss. Through her signature 90-Day Joyful Reinvention program, Maria helps moms identify their energy gaps and make sustainable shifts in mindset, habits, and nervous system health. Her clients go from drowning in to-do lists to living intentionally, feeling like themselves again, and building a life they genuinely love. A former homeschooling mom of six (now a grandma!), Maria leads by example. After healing from her own burnout, she made a bold move, selling her home to travel the world and reclaim her sense of freedom and joy. She’s passionate about helping women feel good enough to dream again, and bold enough to live it out. She also loves dancing, adventures, and crossing items off her wildly imaginative bucket list.



Rachel Crupi

Title: *Co-Regulation and Preventative Strategies: Helpful tips and strategies to support families in the home*

Session Summary

Navigating challenging behavior using co-regulation and preventative strategies involves proactive and responsive approaches to support emotional and behavioral regulation, particularly in children or individuals with developmental, emotional, or behavioral difficulties.

In this lesson, we will discuss: • Behavior • ABC Model • Understanding Trauma Responses and Learn to Identify Signs of Dysregulation • Home and Community Applications of Preventative Strategies • Functions of Behavior • Importance of Co-Regulation and Co-Regulation Strategies • Home and Community Applications of Preventative Strategies

Speaker Bio

Rachel was born in Highland, Indiana and graduated from Highland High School. She has a Bachelor's degree in Business Administration and a Master's in Psychology from Kaplan University. Rachel moved to Arizona 6 years ago with her husband and three boys after her husband retired from the US Navy following 25 years of service. As a parent of a young adult that was diagnosed with autism almost 20 years ago, giving back to the autism community has been her mission since day one. She started as a behavior technician, but quickly became an RBT, and thereafter BCBA. Most recently she has had the opportunity of providing support to families as a Clinical Director of an early intervention clinic and providing Telehealth services to families all over the Valley. Most of Rachel's expertise has been with early learners (ages 2-6), but she has provided ABA services to children ages 2-18 over the years in the home, community, clinic, and school settings and has been working in the ABA field for 11 years. As the Director of Behavior Services, Rachel has the unique opportunity to not only provide individualized behavioral plans that support each student in the classroom, but also provides a level of support for teachers, RBTs, and Caregivers that target best treatment outcomes. On campus, you can expect Ms. Crupi regularly in the classrooms!

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While there are times she needs to be at her desk analyzing data, experiencing the learning opportunities directly with students provides a level of understanding like no other. By providing continued supervision, training, and collaboration to our amazing Polaris team, Rachel will help to ensure best practices and treatment fidelity to each child's individual treatment plan. Additional Caregiver training and support will help generalize skills from classroom to the home and community settings. Rachel believes the possibilities for our students are endless, and she is excited to support and be part of that journey! Outside of school, she loves baseball, camping, jeep'n, and exploring Arizona!

Wednesday, August 13 • Session One



Jessica Breuer

Title: *When You Homeschool and Work: Real Talk for Real Moms*

Session Summary

If you're a homeschool mom who also works, chances are you've felt the pull of never giving enough to anyone. Maybe you've even wondered if you're falling short at both. In this honest and encouraging session, Jessica Breuer, working homeschool mom of eight, shares what it really looks like to balance two callings without losing yourself. You'll learn how to drop the guilt, stop chasing perfection, and create a homeschool life that fits your real world instead of fighting against it. We'll talk about: • What actually matters when your time is limited. • How to let go of guilt and find peace in your dual role. • Why outsourcing with intention is a strength, not a shortcut. • How to create a daily rhythm that works, even if it's not perfect. • What to do when everything falls apart (because sometimes it will). Whether you are new to working and homeschooling or just need a reminder that you are not alone, this session will leave you refreshed, grounded, and confident that you can do both with grace.

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Speaker Bio

Jessica Breuer is the mother of eight amazing children ranging from eight to twenty. Her family's mission statement embraces various values, including faith, family, leadership, education, charity, empathy, joy, and living on purpose. It was upon embracing that family mission statement twelve years ago that Jessica put her own doctoral pursuits, distinguished academic awards, publications, and nationally presented research on hold to dive into homeschooling! Several years into her homeschooling journey, an opportunity presented itself to pursue a career in the home education world that she had fallen in love with; again, she dove in. Along the way, Jessica realized her passion for helping other women grow professionally while continuing to homeschool. She has helped many women grow into their roles as both professionals and homeschooling moms. With a deeply rooted belief in the power of encouragement and community, Jessica hopes to inspire others to live on purpose, thus allowing productivity, light, and joy to flood their lives and the lives of others.

Wednesday, August 13 • BONUS Session



Courtney Schloss

**Title: *Curriculum Mapping
for Adventure Learning Labs***

Session Summary

Discover practical tips for aligning your at-home resources with our Adventure Learning Labs to create a seamless and enriching learning experience.



Jamie Sneed

Title: *Marathons Don't Run Themselves* –*Hard is Where the Magic Happens*

Session Summary

We ask our kids to take risks and do hard things, but what does that look like for us as families? The magic happens when we all lean into the hard together.

Speaker Bio

Jamie Sneed is a proud fourth generation educator with a rich family history in many avenues of education. Jamie is a native Oklahoman, loves to read, occasionally runs and is a cowboy boot aficionado. After graduating from Southern Nazarene University with degrees in Early Childhood Education and Elementary Education she spent 6 years in the classroom before taking time to stay home with her two daughters. Last year she returned to teaching with Venture Upward and serves as the teacher of record for Hagerman Joint School District. Jamie is passionate about home education and strengthening families through quality time together, and is excited to share the ways that leaning into challenges benefits our children.

Mom's Panel { *Jessica, Jamie, Maria Courtney, Whitney*

Session Summary

Hear from inspiring moms as they share their wisdom, experiences, and tips for successful home education. Whether you're just starting out or a seasoned pro, their insights will be invaluable!

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for their support!



Listen. Speak. Read. Write. Think!



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*We want to extend a huge thank you to our speakers, sponsors,
and all those who had a hand in organizing this event!*

*“At Venture Upward,
we are here because of our families.
We are here to serve them,
not in just any way,
but in the best possible way.”*

Jon Funes

CEO & Founder
of Venture Upward

Venture Upward[™]



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