

# Keynote Speakers



**Israel Wayne** is an author and conference speaker who has a passion for defending the Christian faith and promoting a Biblical worldview. He is the author of the books *Questions God Asks*, *Questions Jesus Asks*, *Pitchin' a Fit: Overcoming Angry and Stressed-Out Parenting*, *Education: Does God Have an Opinion?*, *Answers for Homeschooling: Top 25 Questions Critics Ask*, *Raising Them Up: Parenting for Christians*, *Foundations in Faith*, and *Foundational Truths*. He is also the site editor for ChristianWorldview.net and the founder of Family Renewal. Since 1995, Israel has traveled the nation speaking on family, homeschooling, apologetics, spiritual awakening, discipleship, and cultural issues. Israel has written articles (or been interviewed) for the following magazines and websites: *Answers* (Answers In Genesis), *Revive* (Life Action Ministries), *UnChained* (Pure Life Ministries), *The Old Schoolhouse*, *Samaritan Ministries*, *CrossWalk.com*, *ChristianPost.com*, *ChristianBook.com*, *Christianity.com*, *GotQuestions.org*, *HonorBound.com*, *ReviveOurHearts.org*, *WorldviewWeekend.com*, and many others. Israel has spoken at events, chapel services for ministries like American Family Association, Culture Proof, American Decency Association, Life Action Ministries, Pure Life Ministries, ARK Encounter, Creation Museum, Answers in Genesis, Teach Them Diligently, and many others. He is a frequent guest on national radio and television programs. Israel has been featured or interviewed in national and international media including *TIME Magazine*, *The Wall Street Journal*, *The Washington Post*, *Epoch Times*, *Buzzfeed*, *Daily Mail* (UK), *Detroit Free Press*, *The New American*, *WORLD Magazine*, *CBN News*, *LifeSiteNews*, *HSLDA Court Report* and affiliate stations for ABC, NBC, CBS, FOX, NPR and PBS. Israel has been featured as the keynote speaker at various conferences with over 5,000 in attendance. Israel and his wife, Brook, (both homeschooled graduates) were joined in marriage in 1999 and have 11 homeschooled children.

**Brook Wayne** is an author and conference speaker. She is, with her husband, Israel, a co-founder of Family Renewal. Brook is a homeschooled graduate and homeschooling mother of 11.

# Featured Speaker



**Renee Ellison** has more than 30 years of experience in the field of education—in Christian, private, secular, and homeschool settings. She home educated for nearly 20 years. Renee taught nearly all grade levels, was an elementary principal and head of a high school English department, was awarded Teacher of the Year, developed and ran gifted and talented programs, has conducted numerous teacher training workshops, and offers one-on-one mentoring of younger moms. Check out her Homeschool How-Tos YouTube channel.

# Workshop Speakers



**Sandy Cannon** has been home educating her children and helping other parents to educate their children in Albuquerque since 2003. Three of her four children are employed adults! The fourth will graduate in 2026. Sandy has led co-ops, mentored mothers, mentored R4 Robotics students, and taught independent classes throughout her home educating journey. She has been the director of the ABQ Regency Ball since 2016 and currently offers a variety of classes each semester through PLANT, Inc., including Exploring Classics, US Constitution, Math Quest, and How the World Works. In addition to being a Constitution Coach for Patriot Academy, she is also part of the team for STUFF, “Standing Tall United for Freedom,” which is a week-long civics program for home educated students in New Mexico.



**Kathleen Cotter Clayton** is the daughter of Dr. Joan A. Cotter, author and developer of the RightStart™ Mathematics program. Kathleen is involved with curriculum development and has written or co-authored 18 manuals. She has a degree in Home Economics and a minor in Business from the University of Minnesota and has two masters degrees from the University of Mary in Bismarck, ND. Kathleen and her husband, Steve, have six adult children and six delightful grandchildren. She teaches online middle school classes, designs and creates mathematical quilts, loves to travel, and speaks across the US and Canada, and has presented at Cambridge University in England in 2022 and in Bologna, Italy, in 2024, sharing the mission to help children understand, apply, and enjoy mathematics.



As one of fewer than 500 individuals in the world who obtained the highest level of certification in educational counseling, **Glenda Durano** has worked with private, public, and homeschooled students in every aspect of the college planning process. An award-winning author and speaker, Glenda speaks frequently to students, families, and church groups about spiritual growth, prayer, disability, and education. She has published articles and devotions with *The Old Schoolhouse*, *Today's Christian Living*, *The Upper Room*, CBN.com, Inspiration.org, christiandevotions.us, and is author of several books including *Sacred Sight: Finding Hope Through Heartache*, *Desperate for God*, *College Admissions Made Easy: A Step-by-Step Guide*, and *College Planning For Christians: Finding Your Fit Without Losing Your Faith*.

# Workshop Speakers



**Anneliese Grafe** is a pastor's wife and a mother of four currently homeschooled kids. She taught in public/private high schools both in the United States and overseas for five years before getting married. During this time, she helped develop the scope and sequence for all of Conroe ISD Algebra (Conroe, TX) and worked as an assistant principal of a small private school. She also has run a homeschool co-op near downtown since September 2020 which currently has 85 students. These experiences have equipped her with the tools needed to build a yearly calendar that gives both the structure to finish the school year strong and the flexibility to enjoy life as a homeschool family as opportunities arise.



**Gerald and Lynda Grafe** homeschooled their six children in New Mexico for a total of 27 years. They now have 17 grandchildren, all homeschooled. Twelve are in the Albuquerque area, active in several extracurricular activities. Both Lynda and Gerald are active in a large Barelbas-based homeschool co-op, as well as various sports camps and outreach activities through their local church. Their goal in home education is to keep in mind the long-term vision of the adult you want your child to become. Wisdom beyond knowledge, understanding beyond skill, discernment beyond obedience.



**Cathy Heckendorn** is a Homeschool Survivor. She loves that term because she went into homeschooling kicking and screaming, but after graduating all four of their children, she says it was the best decision ever made for her. Cathy has lived the challenges, comedies, struggles, joys, tears, and victories that home education has to offer, and now, she desires to encourage and empower other parents to embrace all those things as they set out on their own calling to “train up their children” and to share that not only can they survive, they can also watch their children thrive! Cathy has been married to her high school sweetheart, John, for almost 39 years. They have raised and graduated all four of their children and now enjoy watching them take the reins of their own lives as they marry and have children to train up themselves. Besides volunteering and supporting CAPE-NM in several areas, Cathy enjoys all the amenities that living on a ranch provides, reading books, playing games with friends and family, and curling up on the couch with a hot cup of tea and a friend.

# Workshop Speakers



**Ryan Holets** is a second-generation homeschooler, husband, and father of six who knows firsthand that raising kids takes courage—especially in today’s culture. Ryan brings a practical, faith-filled, and refreshingly honest perspective to parenting and discipleship. Drawing from his own struggles and experiences, he challenges parents to engage in the battle for their children’s minds with wisdom, grace, and Christ-centered hope.



**Lanny and Marilyn Johnson** are former evolutionists trained in the sciences. Creation teaching was instrumental in bringing them to a settled assurance that all of God’s Word can be trusted. In 1993, God led them to join Alpha Omega Institute and establish the Children’s Ministry to fortify children and families with the truth of the Bible and to help them avoid the pitfalls of evolution.



**Joanna Miszkiel** was raised in Los Lunas, NM, in a family of 12 children. She was homeschooled through high school and was a runner at the CAPE homeschool conventions in her younger years. After graduation from high school, she obtained a BSN at the University of New Mexico and has worked as a floor nurse at UNMH Pediatrics for the last 16 years. She worked full-time at the hospital for 7 years, but chose to go down to two days a month as soon as God blessed her and her husband with children. She has been married to Brad Miszkiel for over 10 years and together they have four beautiful children, ages 2 to 9 years old. Brad and Joanna own a small farm where they raise animals, have a large garden, and homestead. Joanna currently homeschools her oldest two children and plans to homeschool all her children through high school.



**Luther Watts** is a senior in high school, homeschooled since first grade with Classical Conversations. He’s grown up in Albuquerque since 2010. He has been acting for nine years with various homeschool drama groups throughout Abq and has already portrayed J.R.R. Tolkien in 10 separate one-hour presentations. Luther believes that stories have a way of drawing us in and that Tolkien was a master of using stories to share the gospel with others. Luther plans on attending Biola University in the fall to continue his classical education through the Torrey Honors College.

# Exhibitor Speakers

**Crystal Boyack** is passionate about helping families grow together through music. A leader in violin pedagogy, she specializes in joyful, play-based learning that builds both skill and beautiful humans. In 2025, she established Roots & Wings Community Music School—a home for families nurturing musicians from birth through 9 years old.

**Mindy Brouse** has been homeschooling longer than she wants to realize and has graduated six kiddos now. Her caboose is only 10, so there are still plenty of years ahead, with a twist this time, as Jubilee has Down syndrome. Mindy loves to read more than is typically admired, so please ask her what she is reading. Many plot twists have occurred in her life, but she holds steadfastly to the Lord.

**Daniela Byers**, a long-time NM homeschool mom, has enjoyed the accountability, support, and equipping of a weekly Classical Conversations community for 15 years. She has seen how the Grammar, Dialectic, and Rhetoric Skills have equipped her children to Know what is True, Do what is Good, and Love what is Beautiful. She loves to encourage parents that they, too, can homeschool through high school!

**John Kinzer** and his wife, Marcie, homeschooled all four of their children through high school. John converted to Christ from humanism in 1972. He taught and administered in Christian schools beginning in 1981. In 1994, he and Marcie began Rio Grande Enrichment Studies, LLC, to assist families who homeschool. He currently teaches classes in history, literature, and science in high school and mid high. For the past several years, he has taught history and geology classes for Noah Webster College. He currently serves on the Board for Noah Webster College. John also teaches history, America's Christian History, and Christian Worldview seminars to interested adults.

**Kristin Overman** is married with six children. After her first CAPE Convention 14 years ago, she was inspired to homeschool and now equips and encourages others. She is the author of *Proverbs for Parenting* and founder of Abundant Days Education, creating Christ-centered resources. She now lives in Raleigh, NC and leads speech and debate, volunteers with 4-H, and is passionate about making disciples and leaders.

# Exhibitor Speakers

**Nicole Radigan** is a wife to William and mom to six kids. They have homeschooled all six all the way through high school, and their oldest four children have graduated. She and her family own more than 5,000 books and have checked out about 9,000 from the library. They have spent ~ 10,000 hours reading stories and collecting the best ones. She has always loved sharing great books with other children! She believes stories are the way God speaks to our hearts - drawing us to Him! She loves His story best!

**Denise Raykovics** is the Citywide Program Director for LifeWise Academy. She is a native of Albuquerque with over 40 yrs experience in the field of ministry and education. She works in APS and has built schools in Latin America and produced Christian children's programming in Europe. Her heart is to share the Gospel in public schools and see lives changed for eternity.

**Laurie Ross-Brennan, M.S. CCC/SLP**, is a Speech & Language Pathologist and owner of Laurie Ross-Brennan & Associates, open since 1984. Her current staff of 25 includes 22 Speech & Language Pathologists who focus on treating all ages of clients with any type of speech and language disorder. Laurie received advanced training by Dr. Guy Berard in July 1993 in Auditory Integration Training (AIT). Every year she treats over 200 AIT clients in her Albuquerque and Santa Fe clinics. Laurie was the 2012 Employer of the Year, awarded by the New Mexico Professional Business Women's Association. In keeping with her excellence in business, Laurie was a finalist for the Entrepreneur of the Year award and the New Mexico Ethics in Business award. Laurie routinely speaks at conventions for business owners, healthcare professionals, educators, and parents. Laurie and her staff's primary focus is to change the lives of every patient who walks or rolls through her door. She graduated from UNM and raised her three children in Albuquerque. Laurie is a fifth-generation New Mexican.

**Cynthia Star** has self-published 14 books across multiple genres, including children's stories and a #1 Amazon self-help title. Writing formerly as Cynthia Star, she now creates young adult fantasy adventures and shares practical insight to help new writers bring their own stories to life.

# Exhibitor Speakers

**Steve Thornberg's** passions include studying the Bible, enjoying his family, volunteering with the Alpha Omega Institute, and numerous outdoor hobbies, including ranching. He came to salvation in Christ during high school and became aware of Creation ministries years later at graduate school. A speaker came to the university and presented biblical Creation and many supporting scientific evidences. Since then, Steve has shared his faith and love for biblical Creation to many, including to fellow scientists during his nearly 30-year career as a research chemist.

**Byron Zahm** is a father of seven with 30 years of homeschooling experience. His life was transformed by Christ while hiking the Pacific Crest Trail, leading him to a degree in Cross-Cultural Studies. He now merges his passion for missions with the outdoors through wilderness ministry, father-son courses, and the 2013 Shadow of Everest Expedition, dedicated to sharing the Gospel on every trail.