

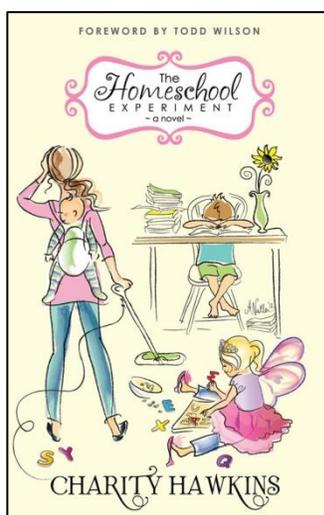
PRESS RELEASE
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For Immediate Release
Contact: Charity Hawkins
Charity@TheHomeschoolExperiment.com
918-671-5391

Humorous Fiction Taps Into Growing Homeschool Market

*One Mom's Year of Juggling
Dinner, Diapers, Meltdowns, and Math Lessons*

TULSA – The Homeschool Experiment (Paperback, Familyman Ministries, March 2012, ISBN: 978-1-937639-06-8, \$12.99), by Charity Hawkins, introduces readers to the hilarious, hard, and beautiful world of a homeschooling mom.



Julianne Miller feels God nudging her to homeschool her three children. The only problem is, she has no idea what she's doing. Julianne was her high school valedictorian, graduated from college with honors, and had a successful career in the business world. How hard could first grade possibly be?

Her plans and schedules all look so good on paper. But when it comes to avoiding her preschooler's public meltdowns, keeping her toddler alive and in a clean diaper, and getting through the morning without everyone dissolving in tears, Julianne is thinking she might not be quite up to the task.

Can her co-op friends help her before she loses her mind or ruins her children for good? Or should she give up this crazy idea and prove her mother-in-law right?

With refreshing humor and honesty, Charity Hawkins offers moms encouragement in their noble work at home, a chance to laugh at the moments only a mom would understand, and a reminder to cherish those gifts right under their roofs— those wild, irrational, precious people—their own children. Though the book deals with homeschooling, it also addresses the larger question, “What happens when you feel called to do something that seems entirely too big for you?”

With her first novel, *The Homeschool Experiment*, Hawkins taps into the growing homeschool market. The National Home Education Research Institute (NHERI) estimates there were over 2 million children being homeschooled in the United States in 2010. “The growth of the modern homeschool movement has been remarkable,” said Michael Smith, president of the Home School Legal Defense Association (HSLDA). “Just 30 years ago there were only an estimated 20,000 homeschooled children.”

Hawkins says one reason she wrote the book is that it was the book she wanted to read. “I didn't want to read an Amish romance; I wanted to read a book about the world I live in,” Hawkins says. “There was none.”

What People are Saying



This resource has been reviewed by Focus on the Family and found to be consistent with its philosophy and standards.

The Pioneer Woman

“This book will fully resonate with moms who have already walked this path, but also serve as encouragement and comic relief for those who are considering homeschooling their children. Julianne’s character moves from a very frantic, unsettled mother to a more relaxed and introspective one, all the while realistically addressing so many of the lingering questions and self-doubts of first-time homeschooling moms.” (Heather Sanders, homeschool columnist)

San Francisco Book Review (5 stars)

“Homeschooling parents around the world, rejoice! Charity Hawkins’ *The Homeschool Experiment* is the mainstream, hilarious, and refreshingly accurate homeschooling book you’ve been waiting for...Whether you homeschool or not, you’ll be able to relate to Julianne’s struggles, fears, joys, and accomplishments as a parent.”

Southern Literary Review

“. . . parents staying home with young children will appreciate Julianne’s struggle to find a little bit of peace each day. More than that, Julianne’s story is a wonderful reflection on savoring the journey parents and children take together.”

Oregon Christian Home Educator’s Association Network (OCEAN)

“Charity Hawkins succeeds beautifully with this book for so many reasons. Her heroine, Julianne, is real. She reminds me so much of myself. She hates that she yells at her kids sometimes. So do I. She doesn’t always have all the answers. Neither do I. This book is also hilarious. I read most of it while flying across the country, and I struggled multiple times not to snort as I laughed out loud. Don’t mind her. She’s reading a book about homeschooling.”

5 Minutes for Books

“. . . and just like a conversation with a *good* friend, I came away with tips and ideas, or at least encouragement — feeling like I’m not alone on this journey of motherhood.”

The Heart of the Matter Review

“The characters are well-defined and honest. Very honest. From the three kids to a supportive husband to the not-so-supportive in-laws, the characters in this book just will probably seem very real to fellow homeschooling moms.”

Julie, Reader Review

“Stinkin’ hilarious.”

Author Bio

Charity Hawkins is a pen name. The author wrote candidly about her children and has a public blog, so she wanted to protect her family's privacy. This is, of course, her real bio.

Charity attended the University of Oklahoma where her transcript shows least five majors over the course of four and a half years, including English and International Business. Finally she had to pick something, and ended up graduating summa cum laude with two degrees: Management Information Systems and Environmental Design.

Following college graduation, she joined an oil and gas company in a software support role, where she quickly learned she hated supporting software. She worked with natural gas trading for a year, and then moved into website design and development, which was much more fun. Over the next four years, she dabbled in project management, branding initiatives, and application support, all of which, surprisingly, have been very helpful skills in her latest venture—writing and promoting a novel.



Charity and her husband were married in 2001. In 2004, one month before the birth of her first child, she came home. She has been a stay-at-home mom ever since, enjoying the creativity and freedom of life at home with her three children. She briefly did some freelance web design from home but decided if her baby was sleeping, many other items were higher on her priority list than designing someone else's web site.

In 2008, Charity embarked on the adventure of homeschooling her then-four-year-old son. It was such an adventure, in fact, that she kept looking for fiction books about homeschooling. Surely someone must have written them, right? But they hadn't.

Charity had been wanting to share this story of the wild, hilarious, hard, beautiful world of homeschooling, and God gave her the idea to write it in the form of a novel. Very quickly (and with her husband watching the children every spare minute), the first draft was complete. The revisions and editing took another eight months. She was thrilled when Todd and Debbie Wilson of Familyman Ministries offered to publish the book and promote it at homeschool conventions across the country.

Charity is currently in her fifth year of homeschooling. It is getting easier. Some days no one even cries.

Suggested Interview Questions

General

- What prompted you to write this book?
- Charity Hawkins is a pen name. Why did you choose to use a pen name?

Homeschool / Parenting

- Homeschooling is growing at a rate of 3-7% per year. What do you think is behind the increase?
- In the book, the main character has a mentor and group of co-op friends. Why is having a mentor and support system so important?
- What do you wish you had known about homeschooling before you started? What advice would you give parents who are considering it but haven't made up their minds?
- In the book, the son has some attention issues. The mom even mentions that if he were in school he might have been labeled as having ADHD. What are some techniques you have used to address attention difficulties with your son? How has homeschooling helped in this?
- In the book you mention how homeschooling allows Julianne to simplify childhood. There is a big emphasis on that right now, as far as dealing with overscheduling, including time in nature, and allowing time for free, unstructured play. How do you think homeschooling has simplified your life and your children's?
- Throughout the course of the book, Julianne has to find her own style as a homeschooling mom, and find materials, curriculum, and schedule that are a good fit for her children. Why is this so important?
- How much of the book is real and how much is fictional?
- In the book *Last Child in the Woods*, Richard Louv discusses the importance of time in nature, and labels the combined effects of a lack of it as Nature Deficit Disorder. How has homeschooling helped your family have more time in nature? Is this something that couldn't be done if the kids were in school? What are some practical, easy ideas for getting kids to interact more with nature?
- What do you think are some of the lies homeschooling moms believe? How does the main character deal with those?

Process of Writing

- How did you find time to write a novel while homeschooling three children?
- How is *The Homeschool Experiment* different from other women's fiction? Why did you choose fiction instead of a memoir?
- Is this book just for homeschool moms? Or just for Christians?

Charity Hawkins is available for interviews. To request a review copy of the book, schedule an interview, or for more information, please contact the author at Charity@TheHomeschoolExperiment.com .

About the Publisher

FM Publishing (Familyman Publishing) exists to remind parents about what's most important. Several months out of the year, Todd and Debbie Wilson (founders of Familyman Ministries) and their eight children travel around the country, encouraging families at homeschool conventions. For more information, visit www.familymanweb.com.

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