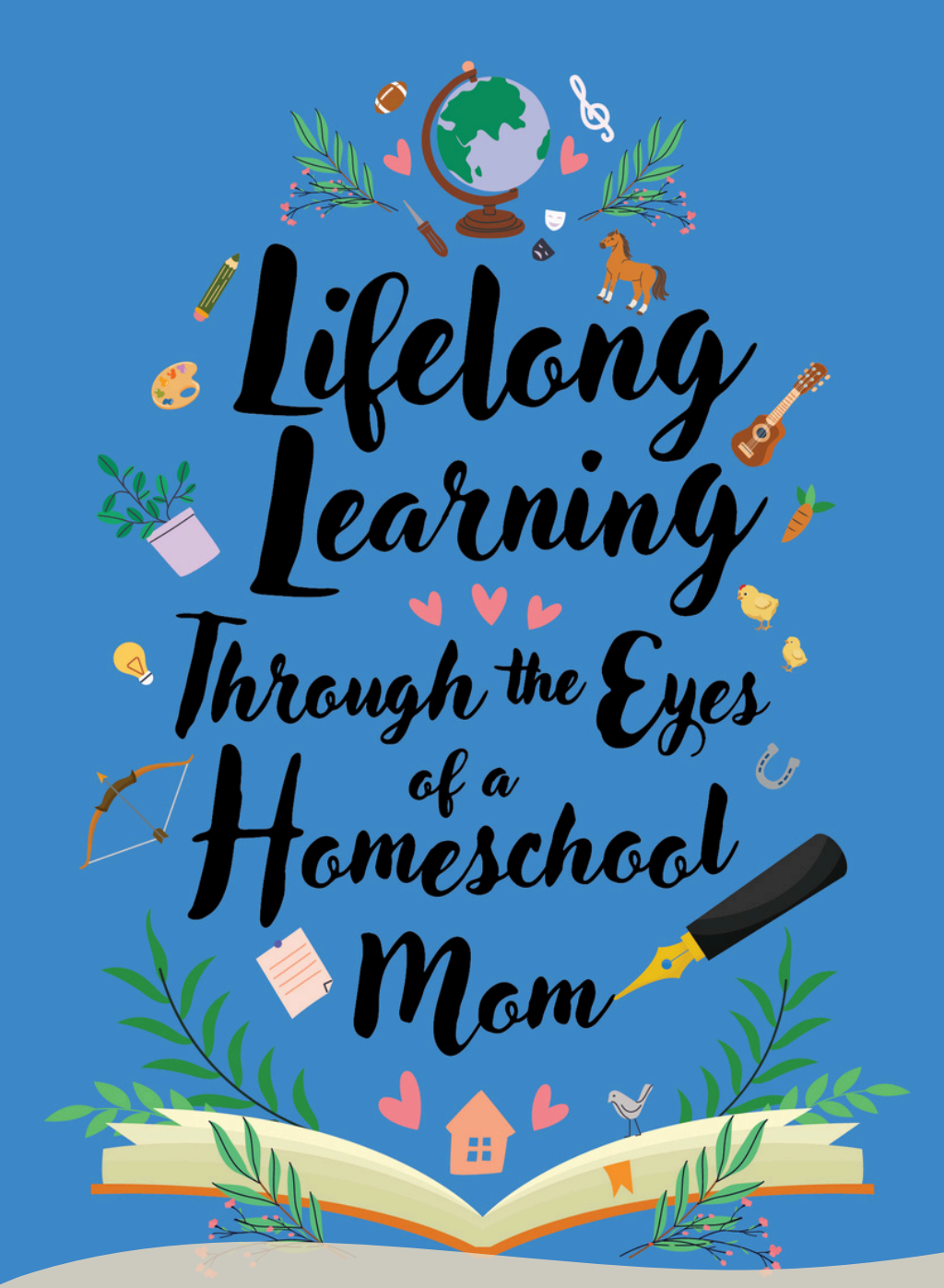

CINDY A. GOLDADE

Free Preview

INTRODUCTION

In our house opportunities for celebration happened all the time!

- The 13-year-old bounded down the stairs yelling, with a smile in his voice. Months ago, he had distributed Pet Sitting fliers and the first email inquiry just arrived. CELEBRATE! And learn: What was the proper business response? Well, for starters, reply using complete sentences, capitalization, and correct spelling. Beyond grammar, what was the appropriate fee to care for four horses? There were additional topics to explore: market feasibility, networking with others, arranging rides to job site, negotiation of fees, etc.
- Watching the oldest sprint up the driveway, I wondered at the impetus that had him moving so fast. Excitedly speaking before he was even in the door, I didn't have to wonder long. The novice trapper had caught his first critter—a mink! Now what? Did trapping class teach him what to do with that animal? Not necessarily. Education came from YouTube videos and reconnecting with instructors, from whom he learned the mink fee had tanked for the season. Was all his work for naught? (Heck, no. This homeschool mama found all sorts of justifications for his trapping experience.)

- As a 5th grader, the youngest tagged along to Horse Bowl practices with her older brother. She later wrote, "During a study session, none of the senior team knew the answer to a question. I sat in the corner, hardly able to contain myself! One of the girls exclaimed, "Leah, can I please have your brain!?" Those uplifting words gave me the courage to consistently buzz in and answer at the regional competition. It was such a thrill! Afterwards, I confidently shared the equine knowledge I learned with my county horse project members." This girl convinced me to coach two events annually for years.

It's worth asking, how did someone who isn't even especially fond of animals become a collaborator in a pet sitting business, assistant to an outdoorsy hunter/trapper/fisherman, and coach for the county 4-H Horse Bowl and Hippology teams? I wholeheartedly believe every single event in life serves a purpose. For instance, maybe my kids' focus on animals was to help Mama Cindy get over her childhood fear of animals, which had been deemed irrational by some because there was no memorable trigger for the fear.

By the way, I have found judgmental evaluation of occurrences as good or bad is not helpful. Instead, I prefer to recognize life as multiple learning opportunities and search for the gold nugget embedded in various incidents. Granted, sometimes the nugget is buried deep. What good can come out of gut dysbiosis or Lyme Disease? In my humble opinion, those nuggets take some searching. Others are obvious. For example, one day, I surprised myself relaxing astride a horse wholly enjoying a gorgeous sunny afternoon—a shiny gold nugget indeed!

Searching for the nugget requires conscious effort. I regularly model direct and indirect self-reflection. Sometimes I share my thought processes out loud. Other times introspection is the ticket. Regardless, I believe it's ok to change direction when something isn't working. For example, we've been known to drop homeschool classes at local cooperatives mid-semester. At other times, we've made our kids finish a class or sport so they can learn the life lessons of cycle completion, consequences, financial investment, endurance, and perseverance. Life is not black or white!

As a family we lived life on the gray spectrum that lies between black and white. Before becoming a parent, I established a Montessori school for 3–6-year-olds. I kept it open while venturing into parenthood myself, fully intending to send my own kids off to public school when the time arose. It quickly became clear to me that my boys would not learn best in a traditional school environment. I ended up closing my Montessori school to dive into homeschooling AND simultaneously became an educator of adults for the University of Wisconsin-River Falls (UWRF) and the Minnesota Center for Professional Development (MNCPD).

Whew! Learning the ins and outs of homeschooling while also teaching adults at night was a lot and I fervently prayed for an alternative school within ten miles. Prayers were answered when another family told me about Hand In Hand Christian Montessori, which was at that time a 3-day homeschool program located a mere six miles from our home. We stayed with them for five years, even when they changed locations and expanded their offerings to a 5-day private school. I ended up working there to offset tuition and justify the commute. However, when junior high rolled around, we returned home for our education. Through all the years, we purchased

multiple curriculums and threw just as many out. Frequently we were asked, "Will you homeschool all the way until graduation?" Answered, "One year at a time." Honestly, sometimes it felt like one moment at a time! Our educational decisions weren't written in stone; struggles were a sure sign to stop and reflect.

Opposite of struggles were celebrations. In our rush-rush immediate gratification society, celebrating can be overlooked.

I was once observing a middle school boy with learning challenges. He was rushed from place to place all morning long executing seemingly isolated and separated tasks. His special education team requested a meeting with me and inquired about my goals for this boy. Countering, I asked about their goals. It turns out we had the same goal! We wanted this boy to be present! Hmmm, how will he ever learn presence/ mindfulness when he never spends more than 12 minutes in one place? That same day I watched a paraprofessional work him over with flashcards: days of the week, months of the year, number words. Not once did she commend his focus or celebrate his efforts.

If I was him, I'd misbehave too!

Throughout life, make celebration a priority. It can take many forms from a simple high five to a treat at the local coffee shop. Verbal recognition for a job well done might be appropriate; other times financial compensation might serve a purpose.

What would you do when the:

- Middle child independently finished his first chapter book taking the

leap into total reading at twelve years old?

- Youngest mastered the times tables using a Waldorf inspired multiplication wheel?
- Oldest passed his written driver's test the first time?

Celebrate in whatever way, shape or form suits the moment!

Life's journey, especially the homeschooling path, is often fraught with a combination of dead ends, forks in the road, low-maintenance roads as well as high speed freeways. As a lifelong learner myself, I have delved into many arenas. Read on for how we studied the choices available and used the tools at our disposal. This book shares snippets of my journey into movement-based learning approaches, including auditory and visual programs. It contains personal reflection regarding educational theories and some of the elements that support or inhibit learning (e.g. food, sleep, curriculum, technology, drill and kill, testing, and more). It even peeks into alternative medicine!

Ready to Keep Reading?

This preview is just the beginning of *Lifelong Learning: Through the Eyes of a Homeschool Mom.*

Inside the full book, you'll discover:

🌱 The unexpected path that led our family to homeschooling

🏡 Real stories from our years of learning at home

🧩 How we adapted learning to different children, interests, and needs

💡 Lessons from Montessori, movement, and life beyond the textbook

❤️ Reflections on motherhood, learning, and trusting the journey

☞ Explore the full book