

Desert Hills Christian Homeschoolers

In June of 1986, a private church school called the New River Christian Academy closed its doors after about 10 years of operation at the New River Bible Chapel. This created a problem for the parents of children who had been attending and did not want their children exposed to the problems associated with government schools.

A group of about 15 or 20 parents from New River, Desert Hills and Black Canyon City met and decided to form the Desert Hills Christian School. This school was organized as a Christian school; but it was a “paper school” in that it had no buildings. Those who home schooled were protected under the umbrella of Desert Hills Christian School.

Desert Hills Christian School chose to affiliate with Alpha Omega Publications. The discount they got from Alpha Omega was passed on to the parents. They could drive to Tempe and pick up their teaching materials to avoid shipping costs. High school diplomas were granted with proof of twenty academic credits using the Alpha Omega curriculum.

After a year or so they started giving the Metropolitan Achievement Test. At first, the tests were given at the principal’s home. As the school grew, the tests were given at the Desert Valley Baptist Church in New River and at the Baptist church in Black Canyon City. They also had field trips, fairs, social get-togethers, and several graduation ceremonies. Some attended the monthly meetings from as far away as Camp Verde.

Dean Kramer was chosen to be the first principal of Desert Hills Christian School. He turned the job over to Rev. Jimmy Hart for a brief period in 1992-93 and Joni Corby took over in 1993. Steve and Kelly Maynard were the leaders from 1998-2002, followed by Joe and Lisa Albillar from 2002-2005. Rich and Teri Olsen are the current leaders.

Our group members worked hard over the years to make homeschool resources and support readily available in our community. For example, members have access to a homeschool lending library, and a Blessings Fund is available for families in need. In 1999, DHCH brought the first homeschool P.E. classes to our area. These were originally held at the New River Park with Coach Joe Oswald of Athletes in Training.

In the year 2000, the name of Desert Hills Christian School was changed to Desert Hills Christian Homeschoolers. The legal protection provided by calling it a satellite school was no longer necessary, and the name was causing some confusion due to the fact that it is a home school support group and not an actual school.

Did You Know...? Arizona Families for Home Education was organized in 1983. Christian Home Educators of Tucson-NW was founded in 1984. The Pioneers, Eastside Explorers, Bethany Home Educators, Liberty Home Educators, Mesa Home Schoolers, and Havasu Christian Home Educators were all in existence by 1985, followed by Desert Hills Christian School in 1986. There were only 776 Arizona children taught at home in 1986, compared to over 20,000 today! Currently there are at least 60 support groups in Maricopa County and more than 100 statewide... but we were one of the originals!