



A Burst of Sonlight

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SUMMER/FALL 2008

“Reading is to the mind
what exercise is
to the body.”

—Joseph Addison,
English essayist and poet

“The pleasure of reading
is doubled when one lives
with another who shares
the same books.”

—Katherine Mansfield

“To learn to read is to
light a fire; every syllable
that is spelled out
is a spark.”

—Victor Hugo (author, *The
Hunchback of Notre Dame*)

Our Mission

*Reach families worldwide
with remarkable,
internationally-focused,
literature-based
homeschool curriculum.*



Why Sarita's "bursting" with pride—and Sonlight news for you...

Sarita Holzmann,
President, Sonlight Curriculum, Ltd.

I hope your family is enjoying summer break—the new school year is not far away! What's new this year at Sonlight?

I've packed this "Burst of Sonlight" newsletter full of fun insight from customers, Sonlight's latest insider news, and new services to help you. In this issue, I'd like you to get a picture of the people behind the products you enjoy.

I, and my team, truly want to help you have a great home-school experience. When my son-in-law Dave created 300 new color illustrations for the *I Can Read It!* series, he had you in mind. When the MathTacular team ad-libbed new antics for their latest DVD, helping your kids love math was at the top

of their priority list. I hope the heart of Sonlight comes through as you take a look at what's new!

I also want you to hear about the new happenings in my own family. By the time you read this both of my daughters, Jonelle and Amy, will have new babies. So I will be a grandmother five times over!

I want my grandchildren to love to learn. These new additions to the family simply strengthen my commitment to provide the best of the best for you as well, through Sonlight Curriculum.

If you're about to begin a new school year, I pray you'll treasure every moment—children grow up so fast! I wish you happy memories as you learn

as a family and bond with your children this year.

All the best,



Future "Sonlighters"

Amy Lykosh and Jonelle Lilly, Sarita Holzmann's daughters, compare bellies as they await new additions to their families. Amy publishes Sonlight's BEAM newsletter and homeschools her three boys. Jonelle leads Product Development at Sonlight and can't wait to homeschool her first child.

You Know You're a Homeschooler When ...

“During your home remodel, studding a new wall becomes their math for the day.”

—Trisha W

“Your kids are making their own play money and you overhear them discussing what they will buy with it—food for the hungry children in Ethiopia!”

—Joanna



Eldina enjoys raising her two children in the U.S., and visiting family in Bosnia.

Meet Eldina: Bosnian expatriate celebrates ten years at Sonlight!

Eldina Sahbaz lived in a small town three hours from Sarajevo, Bosnia’s capital. Suddenly, she and her family were caught in the Yugoslav Wars.

“We lost friends *and* family,” Eldina said. “Fighting was very close, every day. Food was scarce. Then I met my husband when we evacuated to the city!”

With Bosnia’s economy in ruin, Eldina’s husband applied to relocate to the U.S. That program accepted the newlyweds, and assigned their destination: Denver, Colorado.

For months they relied on help—for housing, transportation, even food stamps. Eldina

focused on school, learning English. Then a case manager found seasonal jobs for them: picking books to fulfill orders in Sonlight’s warehouse.

As her English improved, Eldina moved from picking books to processing orders. One day, Eldina’s supervisor encouraged her to learn to answer the phones ...

“Sonlight customers are great,” she added. “When I first took calls, everyone was patient and understanding. I really learned to *listen*.”

Today, Eldina is Sonlight’s Customer Service Lead. We’re still amazed at how, with her

limited English, she was able to succeed on the “front lines.” She still answers phones, but often she’s busy helping her team find new ways to better serve you.

Eldina and her husband now have two boys (8 and 2). Both were born in the U.S., but they enjoy Bosnian culture, too...

“At home,” Eldina said, “we speak only Bosnian. I cook mostly Bosnian food. We even have Bosnian TV channels!”

During 2007, Eldina Sahbaz celebrated her 10th anniversary at Sonlight (and in the U.S.). We’re thankful to have her. ♦

“Sonlight increased our children’s love of books ... and brought our family closer together as a result of all that reading and cuddle time! Sonlight has brought so much more to our learning than a bunch of workbooks ever could.”

—Sarah J, May 2008

New Time Payment Options

Sonlight’s finance team just improved your payment options—and made the Time Payment service more flexible and affordable.

“We would love for every family to be able to get everything they need,” said Alice

Geyer, Controller. Alice and her team set up new installment plans for 3, 6, and 9 months. They lowered the old \$500 minimum (it’s now \$399), and cut the down payment from one-third to just 25% of your order total. Together with our

web team, they even created an easy online calculator to help you know what you’ll pay *before* you order. Check out Sonlight.com, and search “time payments.” ♦

Great new resources from our Product Development Team:

The MathTacular cast and crew finished a long filming schedule. “We covered so much math—things turned epic,” said Luke Holzmann, who manned the camera (and recently joined Sonlight full-time as our Media Relations Specialist).

After weeks of work, Luke was able to edit the footage into two videos. MathTacular2, now in stock, is about 2½ hours long. MathTacular3 arrives soon (it’s getting a final polish), and will clock in at *over 4 hours!*

Also new to the team is Dave Lilly, a gifted illustrator. In her greeting, Sarita mentioned Dave’s 300 color illustrations for the new edition of our *I Can Read It!* series. She didn’t add that her husband John also crafted a whole new set of fun stories for these books.

In Sonlight’s 2008 *Eastern Hemisphere Explorer*, it’s easy to spot the maps. The team also transformed the program itself; rather than a focus on tests and “right” answers, EHE now asks

students to discover “*why is this important?*”

“We lead kids to the threshold of each feature and topic,” said author Amber Densmer, “and help them jump in and explore on their own.”

By the way—Amber is now engaged to marry her long-time beau. “I’ve been in MathTacular videos with Justin so much,” she explained, “that someone asked if he and I were married!”

Justin, meanwhile, is back in school... and still single. ♦



Amber Densmer is planning her wedding, and Dave Lilly is a new father with his wife, Jonelle (see page 1). They’re both part of the Product Development team.

10 More Great Reasons to Keep Sonlighting through High School!

We found this great conversation on the Sonlight Forums: several moms enjoyed sharing why they love doing Sonlight with their high schoolers ...

1. My kids can do school work when I'm not home.
2. I no longer have to deal with "play-dough!"
3. No rushing out for printer ink at 11pm, because a paper is "suddenly" due at 7:30 the next morning.
4. I do far less "teaching," much more *discussion*.
5. They can follow their dreams, and I get to log the experience under "Life Skills." ☺
6. They fix lunch while I read to the younger ones.
7. I learn so much, myself—right along with *them!*
8. My son is turning into a wonderful young man, right before my eyes.

9. I am going to ROCK through Algebra 2 this time!
10. Finally—*after 11 years*—no one's asking me if I plan to homeschool again next year.

Are you wondering if YOU can teach high school? Listen to our newest podcast, "Staying the Course," and get inspired. At Sonlight.com, search "podcast" to find them all. ♦

"The end of the tunnel is right before you ... then you start to wish the tunnel could be a bit longer!"

—Tonya in VA, on teaching her own high schoolers (from a conversation on the Sonlight Forums)

New on the Web!

The secret art of teaching multiple kids

Practical advice from the trenches for you, if you're a mom who wants to create a great learning experience for all your children—and still keep your sanity. Read the new article online at www.sonlight.com/multiplekids.html.

Luke Holzmann tells all—at least what's helpful to you—in a Sonlight blog

John and Sarita Holzmann's son Luke offers an insider's perspective on Sonlight and homeschool issues that concern you. Check out his blog at www.sonlightblog.com.



Luke and his wife, Brittany—future homeschool parents—live in Colorado and plan to adopt several children internationally over the next year or two. "Grandma" Sarita plans to keep everyone posted.

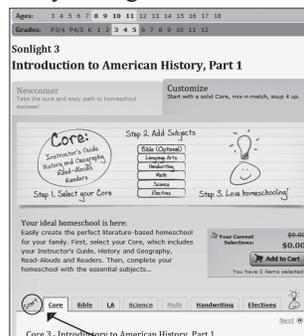
Develop character in your children and still get the laundry done ...

Want tips to help your kids grown into people of character in the midst of everyday life? Read this practical new article online at www.sonlight.com/character.html.

Web team offers a "Newcomer/Customize" tool to simplify your homeschool shopping

Sonlight's web team spent months brainstorming a way to help you simplify your homeschool decisions... and still get just what you need. Now they're ready for you to enjoy their hard work. Check out Sonlight's Newcomer/Customize options when you click on any curriculum package on the left-hand navigation bar at www.sonlight.com/curriculum.html. You can choose an all-inclusive curriculum package, or customize a package to fit your needs.

Here's a glimpse of the page with fun graphics to guide you through each curriculum element you might need...

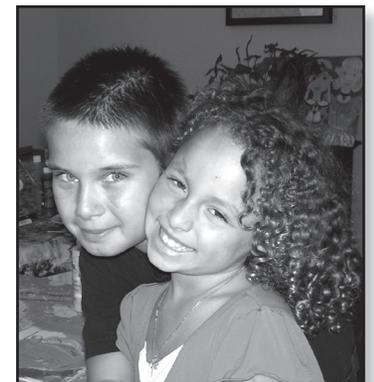


See the word "Start" next to a row of tabs labeled by subject? You're already on step one, ready to create your unique program...

Sonlight Photo contest voting begins!

Cast your vote for Sonlight's "cover family" Aug. 8-31 at www.sonlight.com/vote2008.html. Sonlight will feature the winners in the 2009 catalog and award the winning families a Sonlight gift certificate.

You could be one of these featured families next year! Add your own photos to "My Account" when you sign in at sonlight.com, and share and enjoy memories of your family's experience with Sonlight all year long! ♦



"Sonlight books bring our lessons to life," says Michelle L of Miramar, FL. "Sonlight did all the [prep] work and made life so much easier. My children have grown closer than ever as they spend time together." Here, Tyler (12) and Gabrielle (7) enjoy art together as the family studies Cores 4 and 1.

Tonight my 10-year-old son, Gavin, came out of his bedroom holding a book—and crying.

Gavin likes to read at night when the house is quiet. Often, he will confess later that his book was “too good to put down,” but tonight he was reading *Bruchko* [from Core 4] ...

“This is the most inspiring book ever,” he said. Then he told me that he had just given his heart and life to Christ.

We talked and cried together for a few moments. On his way back to bed, Gavin said, “I love God, I love Sonlight, and I love you, mom!”

Tonight, my own heart is full indeed. And I, too, am thankful for our Sonlight journey.

—April G, Heirloom Sonlighter Club Member ♦



Gavin, Ben and Luci G (2nd, 3rd and 4th from left) are nearing the end of their second year with Sonlight. Together with their parents, they are doing Cores K and 4.

Want to know how we can ship your order in 3 days or less?



This year's seasonal crew just had time, after their morning “huddle,” for this group photo. Many return year after year—some (like Eldina; read her bio on page 2) even join our full-time staff.

Big thanks to our great “seasonal” team for 2008! Each year, come Spring, the full-time staff here at Sonlight gets a lot of help. And for a few hectic months before your new school year begins, we make good use of the extra hands!

Our promise is to pick, pack, and ship your order within three business days—during Sonlight’s busiest season, we could not do that without this energetic bunch of seasonal workers. If you have an order you’d like to place for this year ... why not let these dedicated (and well-trained) folks handle it for you before they take off for school and other opportunities? ♦

American Express

Now you can place Sonlight orders with your American Express card.

We’ve had regular requests and comments from Sonlighters, so the finance team here at Sonlight worked out the details and made it happen.

Are you an American Express cardholder? Watch for their partnership announcement in your August statement (in the western U.S. states). ♦

**Homeschool
Helps!**

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