

## Support Group Assists Families of Homeschooled Children

Many military families, for various reasons, decide to homeschool their children. Each family has a myriad of options to choose from for their curriculum, methods and even the terminology they may use. But with military families, the most common bond is that being a military family creates a unique set of challenges, especially when homeschooling.

The coordinator of the Fort Huachuca Homeschool Group, Malia Lewis wanted to be able to help other families at the Post face those challenges. Working closely with Darrell Leigh, the Post's School Liaison Officer, Lewis has encouraged parents to work together to share resources and knowledge.



*Miles, Tristan (in front) and Eva Lewis recently visited the Tucson Children's Museum with other home-schooled children.*

While many homeschool parents have expressed resistance in other areas, according to Lewis, the Fort Huachuca Community has been very receptive. "Some of the facilities for children here on post are not being used during the regular school day. The people who run the facilities have been extremely open to allowing our group to use the centers during those hours. For example, Richard Brown, the Youth Center director has been great in working with us and allowing us to come in as needed, and Suzanne Crawford, the SKIES *Unlimited* Program Director has come to meetings as well, to offer support."

Lewis credits Leigh with making sure that the group has gotten the support it needed from the first day. She says, "Without Darrell, I would not have known where to start."

While each family is responsible for the primary education of their children, the group gets together at least once a month for meetings. However, some of the group members also get together for other activities such as going swimming or playing at the park. With so many possibilities on and around the post, there does not seem to be a loss of ideas for things to do.

Ilima Lewis, age 10 says, "I really liked the science experiment we did watching ice crystals form. Then we all made fudge and muffins afterwards!"

Even for those not currently in the area, homeschooling families who are headed to Fort Huachuca may find themselves looking for information about the group or general homeschooling information for Arizona. The group has a website that can be found at <http://huachucahomeschool.weebly.com> that gives more information. There is also a Yahoo group at <http://groups.yahoo.com/group/huachucahomeschool/> The Yahoo! group is only open to members, but sending a request to the group's email address can also provide membership information: [huachucahomeschool@gmail.com](mailto:huachucahomeschool@gmail.com).

Group board of director member, Chrys Cunningham suggests, "It's great for homeschooling parents to find out about the group even before they get to the base. The group gives the families a chance to let their kids meet other homeschooled kids and have extra resources for learning."