



High Country Home Educators

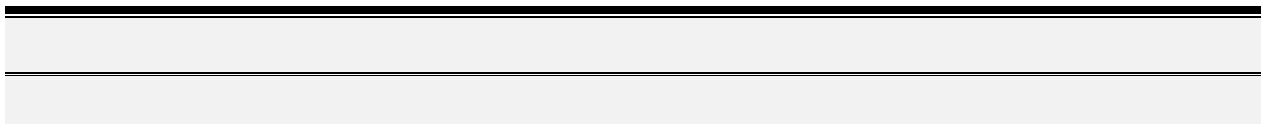
GRADUATION

May 17, 2024

Frequently Asked Questions

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General Information

Our vision and goal for the High Country Home Educators (HCHE) Graduation Ceremony is to create a memorable celebration that recognizes the accomplishments of each family and their graduate, inspires a long-term vision for other homeschool families, and ultimately brings glory and honor to the Lord.

What can graduates and parents expect from HCHE?

- Ceremony logistics including speakers, music, decorations, etc.
- Facility arrangements including rooms, technical services, memory tables, etc.
- A customized diploma with cover for each graduate. The diploma will identify the graduate's homeschool name and be signed by the graduate's parent(s). See the section on "Requirements and Diploma" for additional details and limitations on the school name permitted on the diploma. If the student is enrolled in HCCA, the director and an HCHE board member will sign the diploma.
- Graduation ceremony livestream including the memory video available for viewing and downloading from the Graduation webpage and/or other links.
- Professionally photographed Graduation ceremony pictures free from copyright restrictions.
- Reserved seating for each graduation family (up to 12 seats per family).

What are the requirements to participate in the HCHE Graduation Ceremony?

Each family must be a member of the High Country Home Educators. If you are not a member, please complete the HCHE enrollment form at www.hche.org/membership and submit it with your membership fee to be eligible.

What does HCHE expect from graduates and parents?

HCHE requires **mandatory** attendance at each of the following meetings:

- Graduation Coordination Meeting 1 on Wednesday, October 18, 2023, at 6:30 p.m.
*Graduate and at least one parent are required to attend. **
- Graduation Coordination Meeting 2 on Wednesday, February 21, 2024, at 6:30 p.m.
*Graduate and at least one parent are required to attend. **
- Graduation Rehearsal on May 10th from 6:30-8:30 p.m.
*Graduate and both parents are required to attend. **

****Note: Graduates and parents not attending the rehearsal may be dropped from the graduation ceremony unless the absence is pre-approved by the HCHE Board. Extenuating emergency circumstances will be addressed on a case-by-case basis.***

What will happen in the event of government restrictions?

We are currently planning to hold our traditional in-person graduation ceremony in the World Prayer Center at New Life Church on Friday, May 17, 2024. Limited seating and/or masks may or may not be required depending on government imposed restrictions that may be in place at that time.

In the event COVID-19 restrictions next spring prohibit us from having an indoor ceremony, we will plan for an outdoor graduation ceremony with all of the same elements as our indoor service (location and date TBD). There may or may not be a small additional charge for this depending on the venue.

If for any reason government restrictions prohibit us from both of the above options, we will provide a drive-thru alternative as we did in the spring of 2020. There would not be an additional charge if this were to happen.

Registration

How do I register for graduation?

Due to the high demand and limited space in our ceremony, registration is prioritized with early graduation registration extended to families with seniors who are current members of HCHE first. These families will receive an email in late September containing a link to the online registration form. On October 1, open registration will begin and a link to the online form will be posted on the Graduation webpage at www.hche.org/graduation. Open registration will be done on a space-available basis through the final deadline. **At any time between October 1st and January 2nd, we may close registration if we exceed our space limitation.**

Once you click the registration link in your email or on the Graduation webpage, you will see a page listing the specific information needed to complete the registration form. Make sure you have all the necessary information before you begin to register. **Once you start the registration form there is no way to save it and return later to finish. If you cannot finish the form, you'll have to start over and reenter your information again.**

Once you have entered all the required information, click the "Continue" button at the bottom of the information page and you will be connected to the online registration form. After completing and submitting the form, you will receive a confirmation email at the primary email address you entered on the registration form.

Please note that an online payment is required at the time the registration form is submitted. Any registrations submitted without payment will be considered "incomplete" and will be deleted from our system.

Families are also required to separately submit the graduate's biography and four pictures. We highly recommend the biography be composed in Microsoft Word, Google Docs, or a similar product before starting the registration form. This will allow you to cut and paste it into the biography field on the form. The pictures must include a picture as a baby/toddler, a picture in the middle years, a senior photograph, and a senior headshot.

Ceremony Costs

What is the cost for the ceremony?

If you register by the open registration deadline, November 30th, the cost is \$150 per graduate. If you register by the late registration deadline, January 1st, the cost is \$195 per graduate. After the late deadline, the cost is \$220, and registration is only available if space permits and has been approved by the HCHE Board. The cost for the ceremony is separate from any membership fees, class fees, or tuition.

What is included in the price?

- The graduation ceremony
- Custom diploma & cover
- Six formal ceremony programs
- Live streaming of the ceremony which can be viewed online or downloaded and burned to DVD

- Photographs taken during the ceremony by a professional photographer (photos are available online and are provided free from copyright restrictions, so you may download as many copies as you want)
- Guest reception following the ceremony
- Optional memory table

When is payment due?

Payment is due **in full** at the time of your online registration and may be made with a credit card or debit card. See “If I have to cancel, is my payment refundable?” below.

How do I cancel?

Please send an email to the graduation coordinator at graduationcoordinator@hche.org as soon as you know you need to cancel. See “If I have to cancel, is my payment refundable?” below.

If I have to cancel, is my payment refundable?

Written requests for refunds will be accepted up until the final registration deadline on January 1st; however, \$50 of your payment is a non-refundable deposit. **After the January 1st final registration deadline, no refunds will be given.**

Additional Fees

Are there additional fees?

If you are not already enrolled as a member of HCHE, you must join before you will be eligible to register for graduation. The HCHE enrollment form can be completed online at www.hche.org/membership. Each graduate is also required to purchase a cap and gown from the HCHE approved vendor. The cost varies from year to year but is usually around \$30. Other purchases are optional:

- Honor cord
- Graduation announcements (printed with High Country information)
- Additional items such as class rings, clothing, personalized items, etc.

How do I order my cap and gown?

Caps and gowns can only be ordered through the HCHE approved vendor. Families will be given this information as soon as it becomes available. This information will also be available on our Graduation webpage once it is available.

Scholarships

Does HCHE offer scholarships?

The High Country Home Educators funds a small annual scholarship that is awarded to one or more outstanding HCHE students during the graduation ceremony. The scholarship application, along with eligibility criteria and necessary documentation, can be found on the graduation page at www.hche.org/graduation. The application needs to be submitted no later than March 15th. Graduate’s family must be members of HCHE to be eligible.

Requirements & Diplomas

Does HCHE set any academic requirements for graduation?

High Country Home Educators as a corporate ministry is a support organization for homeschool families and does not verify or endorse graduation credits or requirements. According to Colorado state homeschool law, each homeschooling parent is responsible to determine the graduation requirements and eligibility for their student.

However, according to the Colorado state private school law, students who graduate with the High Country Christian Academy (HCCA) must complete the high school graduation requirements set by the board of HCCA. You can request HCCA requirements by emailing academydirector@hche.org.

What school name goes on the diploma?

If you are not enrolled in HCCA, you will need to select a name for your homeschool. The use of High Country Home Educators or Enrichment Class is **NOT permitted**. If you are enrolled in HCCA and have met the requirements set forth by the board, the HCCA school name will appear on your diploma.

In addition, **you may NOT use** a name which is similar or implies affiliation with an existing public, charter, or private school in Colorado, such as The Classical Academy, College Pathways, Colorado Springs Early Colleges, etc. Please email academydirector@hche.org if you need assistance.

Meetings

What meetings are required?

There are three mandatory meetings prior to the graduation ceremony. You **MUST** attend:

- The graduation coordination meeting 1 on October 18th at 6:30 p.m.
- The graduation coordination meeting 2 on February 21st at 6:30 p.m.
- The graduation rehearsal on May 10th at 6:30 p.m.

If you miss a required meeting, your place in the ceremony may be forfeited unless the HCHE board has approved your absence in advance.

Do you send reminders before the meetings?

A courtesy email will be sent prior to each meeting; however, we are not responsible if you do not receive the notice. Each family is responsible for knowing the dates and attending all mandatory meetings. We provide a Calendar of Events at the end of this booklet and on our Graduation webpage.

Please mark your calendar to avoid conflicts with mandatory graduation meetings.

Who is required to attend the meeting and rehearsal?

The graduate and at least one parent **MUST** attend the graduation coordination meetings. The graduate and both parents (if both are participating in the ceremony) **MUST** attend the rehearsal.

Why is attendance at these meetings mandatory?

Important instructions are given only at these meetings. We will be running through parts of the graduation ceremony itself at these meetings because, as we all know as homeschooling parents, we may think we will know how to perform some task until we actually try it and then learn what aspects challenge us. Unfortunately, we do not have the staff available for individual instruction so your attendance at the meeting is essential.

Preparation for Graduation Day

Do I need a senior picture?

Yes, but nothing fancy or expensive is required. Some students in the past have provided flattering photos taken by a family member with a digital camera or high-resolution cell phone. Each family is responsible for getting their senior's photo taken. We suggest having the pictures taken as soon as possible in the Fall or early Winter.

What is a memory video and how many photos are required?

The memory video is a montage of graduate photos that is played during the ceremony. Each graduate will need to submit three photos for the video as specified below. An optional fourth photo may be submitted for use in the ceremony program adjacent to the graduate's biography. If we only receive three pictures, then we will use your third picture as the program picture. We recommend the following:

- Picture #1 - baby or toddler picture for the video (required)
- Picture #2 - school age picture for the video (required)
- Picture #3 - senior picture for the video (required)
- Picture #4 - head and shoulders picture for the program (optional)

Photos must be submitted online in a separate form from the registration form. You can submit them at <https://highcountryhomeeducators.wufoo.com/forms/sp4smi20ziwjgb/>

There are four fields for uploading your photos. The maximum size of all four image files may not exceed 20MB. One of the standard image formats (jpeg or bmp) is preferred. No PDFs please. We recommend you resize the photos before uploading if they are too large. Trying to upload files that exceed the size limitation will result in an error message on the form. Also, please name the picture files in sequence from first (youngest) to last (oldest) and include the graduate's last name (i.e. Smith01, Smith02, Smith03, and Smith04).

The deadline to upload the photos and biography is March 29. No submissions will be accepted after this date.

HCHE reserves the right to review each photo for modesty and family friendliness. We will contact you to request replacements for any photos which we determine are not appropriate within the context of this formal ceremony.

Do I need a photo for the ceremony program?

Each family must submit a senior picture that can be used in the ceremony program. The photo should be a close-up head and shoulders image of the graduate's face. If you have a flattering photo that is not just of the graduate's head and shoulders, we may be able to crop it to make it work. If the third memory video photo is a facial head and shoulders picture, you may use it for both the memory video and the program photo. If we do not receive a fourth picture, then we will assume you want to use picture number three in the memory video and the program.

What goes in the graduate's short biography?

Each graduate should describe accomplishments, goals, ambitions, or future plans in a short biography of no more than 750 characters. This information is printed in the ceremony program adjacent to the graduate's head and shoulders photo. **Please use first person when writing the**

biography. In addition to the biography, each graduate may include a scripture verse (please include Bible version used) which will be added at the end of the graduate's biography.

The *combined* length of the biography and scripture verse cannot exceed 850 characters, which is approximately 150 words and must be written in first person. This word limit is necessary because of the program's page size limitations.

We will edit biographies for grammatical and spelling errors but not content unless it is inappropriate for the graduation program. If that decision is made, you will be contacted and given an opportunity to revise the information.

Sample biographies from past ceremony programs are available on our Graduation webpage at www.hche.org/graduation. This will give you an idea of how a biography should be written.

The biography must be submitted with the four pictures on this form <https://highcountryhomeeducators.wufoo.com/forms/sp4smi20ziwjgb/>. We highly recommend that you compose the biography **before** filling out this form. Prepare your graduate's biography using Microsoft Word, Google Docs, Notepad, or a similar program, then cut and paste the text into the biography field on the Biography & Picture form.

May I give a speech or perform a song during the ceremony?

We welcome graduates to audition to give a speech or musical performance for the ceremony. Graduates are generally allowed five minutes or less during the ceremony to share this musical presentation or speech. We are unable to accommodate all types of talents and performances other than instrumental or vocal music and speeches.

One way we remain within the two-hour ceremony time frame is choosing to limit the number of speeches and musical presentations. We will not know how many graduates we will be able to accommodate until the final registration deadline and all of the auditions are complete.

If you are interested in auditioning, please complete the audition application on the Graduation webpage at www.hche.org/graduation and request to participate in auditions. Because we can only have one audition day, we apologize that anyone who cannot attend the audition that day will not be eligible to perform. Auditions will be held on April 10 at 3:00 p.m.

What is a memory table?

The purpose of the memory table is to visually share the life of your graduate through pictures, awards, and memorabilia. We will provide you with half of an 8-foot table and a black tablecloth. Graduates and parents are responsible for arranging their items on the table before the ceremony and for cleaning it up after the ceremony. Please note: no weapons of any kind are allowed on New Life Church property, even if they are part of the display (i.e., arrows, knives, swords, nun chucks, etc.). The online graduation registration form contains a field for reserving a memory table.

Note: To honor the hospitality staff of New Life Church (NLC), we regret that the use of confetti, glitter, shiny stars or any other small decorative items that could leave a mess behind are not permitted to be used on memory tables. Tape of any kind is prohibited on the walls and floors.

The Ceremony

How long is the ceremony?

The ceremony is a minimum of two hours long, in respect for all attending. While it can go beyond this time limit, we do carefully plan to try to stay within that time frame.

How many seats may I reserve?

Each family is allowed up to 12 reserved seats*. The number of reserved seats should include the parents, siblings, and grandparents. Do not include the graduate in this number. General seating may be available for any other guests that exceed the 12 seats in the reserved area. Those families that may require less than 12 reserved seats will be seated closer to the stage, due to the row configuration in the church.

***Note: Reserved seating may have to be limited further by the number of graduates, facility restrictions, or other unforeseen circumstances such as Covid-19 restrictions in place at the time of the ceremony. Thank you for your understanding.**

Can we take pictures during the ceremony?

We request that you do NOT use flash photography during the ceremony. The flashes negatively affect the livestream video. We have a professional photographer who will take photos of the graduate and parents during the diploma presentation and candid shots throughout the ceremony.

How are diplomas presented?

Parents will confer diplomas to their graduate during the ceremony. Parents are allowed only a maximum of 90 seconds per family to confer their student's diploma.

To honor other graduates, their families, and all of our guests, we ask that the parents plan and practice what they will say during this special moment to keep it within the required 90 seconds.

You will have the opportunity to view past ceremonies and see parents conferring the diploma at the coordination meeting. This will give you an idea of what is said and how to stay within the time limit. Because this special time will be captured on video you will be instructed on how to use the microphone, where to stand, and how to face the camera, etc., at the rehearsal.

What is the honor cord?

The honor cord gives parents an opportunity to explain in front of guests and other graduates the area(s) in which their graduate excelled. Some examples would be high academic achievement, excellence in character, honorable service, etc. This is optional and cords may be ordered with the cap and gown. Parents will present any honor cords to their graduate during the presentation of the diploma; however, the graduate may not wear it before the ceremony.

Will the ceremony be recorded or livestreamed?

We will make every effort to provide a live stream video of the ceremony for family and friends who are unable to attend. They will be able to view it in real-time on our YouTube page. We will provide a link to be shared prior to the ceremony. The entire video will also be provided to all registered graduates and their families for viewing and download after the ceremony.

Calendar of Events

Preparation for Online Registration

ASAP

- **Check List:**
 - Select family school name, if not already chosen and if you are not enrolled in HCCA.
 - Have senior pictures taken.
 - Select three photos for the memory video.
 - Select one senior close up photo for the ceremony program.
 - Compose graduate biography for the program.
 - Estimate the number of graduation announcements you will need.
 - Decide if graduate will be auditioning for a speech or musical performance (optional).
 - Complete audition application on the graduation web page.
 - Download scholarship application from the graduation web page, if desired (optional).
- **You are now ready to register online!**

Submit Graduation Registration

www.hche.org/graduation

- **The following items must be provided during the online registration process:**
 - Completed graduation registration form.
 - Payment in full: \$150 if student registers by November 30th and \$195 if the student registers by January 1st. After January 1st, space permitting, the cost is \$220.
 - Payment must be made online with a credit card or debit card.
 - Payment includes a \$50 **non-refundable** deposit.
 - Refunds are not available after January 1st.
- **The following items must be provided in the submission form after registering for the ceremony (NO LATER THAN MARCH 29):**
 - Graduate biography and optional scripture verse.
 - Photos for the memory video and the ceremony program.
 - Photos must be uploaded into the Biography/Picture submission form.
 - Audition application - music and speeches (optional).
 - Scholarship application (optional).

Graduation coordination Meetings

New Life Church

- Wednesday, October 18, 2023, 6:30pm in room 251
- Wednesday, February 21, 2024, 6:30pm in room 264/264
- Attendance by graduate and at least one parent is required.
- This is a mandatory meeting (board approval is required if you are unable to attend).

Performance Auditions
New Life Church, Student Chapel

- Wednesday, April 10, 2024 3:00pm in the Student Chapel
- In order to participate in auditions:
 - Graduate must submit an audition application by April 3, 2024.
 - Contact the graduation coordinator in advance if special arrangements are required to support your audition.

Rehearsal
New Life Church, World Prayer Center

- Friday, May 10, 2024, 6:30pm
- Attendance by graduate and both parents (if both are participating in the ceremony) is required.
- This is a mandatory meeting (board approval is required if you are unable to attend).

Graduation Ceremony
New Life Church, World Prayer Center

- Friday, May 17, 2024, 4:00pm
- All graduates and parents must arrive by 2:30pm for final walk-through and pictures.
- Additional times will be provided prior to the ceremony.

Acronyms

HCCA	High Country Christian Academy
HCEC	High Country Enrichment Classes
HCHE	High Country Home Educators
NLC	New Life Church

Contact Information

Graduation Webpage: <https://www.hche.org/graduation>

Coordinator Email: graduationcoordinator@hche.org or graduationassistant@hche.org