

Dear FWAHS Graduates & Parents,

Fort Wayne Area Home Schools (FWAHS) *organizes* the formal graduation ceremony. Each individual home school *determines the requirements* for their home school graduate.

The 2025 Commencement Ceremony is scheduled for May 31st at 11:00am. **Required rehearsal** is on Friday, May 30th at 6:00pm (for grads) & 7:30pm (parents arrive and join grads).

Location: St Michael's Lutheran Church, 2131 Getz Rd, Fort Wayne, IN 46804

If you have decided NOT to participate in the graduation ceremony, but have signed up for it, please let me know immediately. Call or text Heather Kemerly at 260-415-2210.

Please carefully read all of the enclosed information, paying careful attention to FWAHS requirements, due dates, and items needed for the ceremony.

General Requirements:

- The graduate must have been homeschooled at least his entire senior year. Homeschooling is defined as 50% of the student's education is completed in the home by an individual with a legal relationship to the students. An exception will be allowed for those students enrolled in an institution where they are receiving dual credits.
- \$40 participation fee due by March 15. *(If this deadline is missed & you still want to participate, a \$100 late charge along with all required submissions will be accepted until April 1. If the April 1 deadline is missed, the graduate will not be able to participate.)*
- Graduate Families must be *FWAHS Homemade News* subscribers.
- Graduates & parents/guardians must attend the Friday evening dress rehearsal.
- Parents/guardians will present their school's diploma.
- Student biography (more info below)
- Pictures of graduate (more info below)
- A commercial, unaltered matching cap & gown with tassel.
- List of immediate family for reserved seating (more info below)

Dress Requirements:

This is a formal event and dress attire is expected. No shorts, jeans, or other very casual clothing is to be worn under the gowns. Young men are to wear dress shirts, ties, dress pants, and dress shoes. Young ladies should wear a dress or skirt no longer than the academic gown or dress pants and dress shoes. Please wear comfortable yet dressy shoes...no flip-flops or athletic shoes. Girls are not to wear extreme high heels or open-backed shoes that flap when you walk.

Generally, the graduation gown length falls below your knees and above your ankles, which is usually **eight to ten inches from the floor**. Shoes do not affect the gown length. In addition to the graduation gown length, consider sleeve fitting. Sleeves should measure below your elbow and above your wrist.

The graduation cap should be the same color as the gown. The tassel may be any color.

Here are some vendors who sell grad supplies (including diploma covers):

- HSLDA <https://store.hslda.org/graduation-essentials-c19.aspx>
- <https://www.homeschooldiploma.com/>
- Amazon (of course)

You could also post in one of the local homeschool Facebook groups to see if anyone is ready to part with a previously used cap & gown. Sometimes people will post these for sale also. If you go this route, be sure to buy a new tassel with the correct year!

Due by March 15:

- Payment of \$40. You may pay on the website at www.fwahs.org or mail a check payable to FWAHS to my home address. FWAHS % Heather Kemerly, 1521 Green Rd, New Haven, IN 46774
- Registration form on www.FWAHS.org completed

- Brief biography of graduate with a **125-175 word limit**, written in third person. This is a professional commencement program. Please respect your fellow graduates & your family in composing your bio. The program coordinator will edit as necessary. Email the bio to notone2mny@gmail.com (Heather Kemerly). Heather will send you a response upon receipt of the bio.
 - Please do *not* send a PDF version of the bio or a Google document. You may attach a Word file to the email, write the bio in the email, or copy & paste the bio into the body of your email.
 - Include the graduate's first, middle (if desired), and last name and parents' names. Many bios also include the names of siblings. Other ideas include: homeschooling history (how many years, school name, etc), interests, hobbies or extracurricular activities, future plans, or a significant Scripture verse or quote.
- Submit 10 clear photos to be shown as the graduate walks to the stage.
 - Email photos to notone2mny@gmail.com
 - LABEL EACH PHOTO with the *grad's name & order in which you want it shown*. (example: Charlie Brown #1, Charlie Brown #2) Most grads start with a baby/toddler picture and end with a current picture or senior photo.
 - Send in JPG format.
 - Ideas for photos: baby picture, toddler, elementary/middle school years, hobbies, high school, current photos/senior photo.
 - Please review your photos with modesty in mind.
- List of *immediate* family members who will be attending the ceremony. Sometimes there is enough space for married siblings or grandparents to sit with you, but we will not know that until we create the seating chart. One way to help with this is to give both numbers (immediate family members only and immediate plus grandparents/married siblings/etc) and we will see how many we can fit. There is plenty of seating in the church, so invite whomever you wish, but the seating chart is for *reserved* seating for the grad's immediate family. Please advise of any special needs in the list of individuals such as wheelchairs or walkers.
- **Due by April 1:**

\$100 late registration fee (if registering after March 15) plus all items listed under the March 15 due date.

Everyone: Be sure you've purchased (new or used) your matching cap, gown, & tassel. Be sure you have a diploma cover for the diploma presentation. These items can be ordered from a variety of places online. If you are borrowing a cap & gown or have purchased a used one, be sure to buy a new tassel with the correct year on it.

Due by May 1 (optional):

Graduates who wish to do a musical presentation just prior to the ceremony will need to send a tryout video via email to notone2mny@gmail.com, DVD, or YouTube. This should be a performance exactly as you plan to perform it. No more than three graduates will be chosen.

DVDs should be mailed to Heather Kemerly, 1521 Green Rd, New Haven, IN 46774

Friday, May 30th, 2025

Dress Rehearsal! Grads be there & ready to begin at 6:00pm. (Grads only...no siblings or friends.) Bring your bring cap (with tassel) & gown. Label cap & gown with your name. Remember, the cap & gown should match and be unaltered. Parents—be there and ready to begin at 7:30pm.

Saturday, May 31st, 2025

Commencement @ 11:00am

Ceremony Details:

- There will be an invocation & a message given by a special speaker before the graduates are announced.
- Grads (with parents joining them) will be called on stage, one at a time, in alphabetical order. Your photo slideshow will be playing as you walk to the stage.

- PARENTS: You have up to ***one minute TOTAL*** to say a few words about your graduate and present the diploma. Please plan what you want to say ahead of time. Time yourself to be sure it fits in the required one minute time frame.
- GRADUATES: You have up to ***30 seconds*** to thank your parents. (You do not have to say anything though. We know some of you get a little shy on stage. ☺) If you plan to say something, write it out ahead of time & be prepared.
- Each graduate will present a rose to his or her mother/parents.
- A benediction will be given and the graduates will gather in front of the stage to be presented as a group.
- Graduates will file out of the sanctuary and are then free to greet friends & family (& most likely take a bunch of pictures!). ☺
- The ceremony will probably last for more than an hour & a half. PLEASE keep within the allotted times that you are given.