

MASON DIXON HOMESCHOOLERS ASSOCIATION
ANNUAL GRADUATION CEREMONY INSTRUCTIONS
CLASS OF 2018

Ceremony Date: Saturday, June 30, 2018 **Time:** 1:30 p.m.

Rehearsal: Graduation Ceremony rehearsal is held the same morning as the Ceremony (see times, below):

Please be prompt to keep the Ceremony on schedule.

8:30 – 9:30 a.m. – Talent Rehearsal: For Graduates who are participating in talent, student address, or choral reading

9:30 a.m. - Remaining Graduates and at least one parent

Parent(s) and graduates **must remain** at the church throughout the **ENTIRE** rehearsal.

Bring/wear the clothes you are going to wear for the ceremony to the rehearsal! Rehearsal and group photo shoot take until about noon, so it is wise to bring a lunch or plan on buying at one of the local stores (Sheetz, Wendy's, Food Lion, etc.)

Location: **Open Door Church** **600 Miller Street** **Chambersburg, PA 17201** 717-264-326 www.theopendoorchurchpa.com

Directions: *From I 81 take Exit 16, US 30 West towards Chambersburg; Continue west on US30, going through the square of Chambersburg; continue on US 30W for about a mile, then turn right onto Grandview Avenue. (If you pass Sheetz on your left, you went about ½ block too far.) Go .3 mile and turn left onto Miller Street, which serves as the entrance to Open Door Church. The church is at the top of the hill.*

About the Ceremony

MDHSA had an annual graduation ceremony since 1999.

The ceremony starts with a processional of seniors wearing caps and gowns of various colors, followed by a welcome and invocation, selected student talent, a student address, and a challenge to students by a commencement speaker. It culminates with parents going up on the stage and presenting diplomas to their students while the biography is read aloud by a moderator. In recent years, there has been a beautiful candle ceremony when the parents hand a lighted candle to the student during the recessional. Some parents also include a small Bible. It is important for parents to dress in business-casual or Sunday "best" attire. There will be photos taken by a photographer as each graduate receives his or her diploma from the parents.

There is a rehearsal in the morning, with the parents practicing awarding the diploma to the students. Diploma Program parents are given the student's diploma at this time. A group picture is usually taken by a photographer.

At **12:00**, there is a break for lunch. Graduates must be done with lunch by **1:00**.

Guests should arrive no later than 1:15 or 1:20 as the ceremony begins promptly at 1:30.

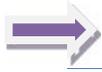
The ceremony lasts approximately 1 ½ hours. The number participating in the Ceremony is typically between 25-40 graduates.

If you have any questions, please email diploma@pa.net.

REGISTRATION INFORMATION

Please read THIS ENTIRE REGISTRATION INFORMATION DOCUMENT(3 pages) before completing the 2 page Registration Form.

SAVE THIS DOCUMENT FOR REFERENCE DURING THE REHEARSAL.



STUDENTS SUPPLY THEIR OWN CAPS, GOWNS, AND TASSELS FOR THE CEREMONY



Important Information:

- Please observe all Registration Deadlines (*see page 1 of the Registration Form for details, including Early Bird discounts.*)
- A current year Registration Form is required. Graduation Ceremony Registration Fees can be found on the current Graduation Ceremony Registration Form.
- **Membership in the MDHSA Support Group OR Diploma Program (or CVS) is required to participate in the Ceremony. Registration forms and fees for these groups must have been received by the MDHSA office prior to (or accompanying) the Graduation Ceremony Registration Form.**
- **The Support Group and Diploma Program are separate entities from the Graduation Ceremony, and have their own registration forms and fees IN ADDITION TO the Graduation Ceremony registration form and fee.**
- All forms/information are available at www.mdhsa-pa.org, or by requesting the forms by emailing/ mailing your name, phone and address to the MDHSA office (diploma@pa.net)
- Please remember that this is a group activity and the needs of the larger group will be foremost in planning the Ceremony, rather than individual desires and opinions.
- Animals are not permitted, unless they are registered service animals.
- The fees may be used to pay for MDHSA employee wages, grad speaker remuneration and mileage, decorations, pianist, building rental, audio workers, and, if funds permit, a photographer.

MDHSA Diploma Program participants: Contact your Evaluator to schedule your Evaluation for March or April and mail the paperwork immediately! The Diploma Request form and fee, as well as ALL FINAL PAPERWORK must be received by the MDHSA office by **May 30.** Please make sure EVERYTHING is included in the final paperwork.

Please note that it is stressful on the part-time staff and volunteers if families need to be repeatedly contacted for missing / incorrect documentation, and it does not arrive until the week of (or sometimes the day before) the ceremony! If paperwork is received by May 30, you will be contacted if anything is missing or incorrect. If we do not receive the corrected paperwork by June 11, the diploma will be issued AFTER the ceremony and, if the student applied for an honors distinction, it will **not** be noted in the paper program.

Other Diplomas (including parent-issued): If your student is receiving a non-MDHSA diploma, please bring it (*or a suitable substitute if the diploma is not available*) with you as you will be presenting it to your student during the ceremony. If you are receiving a Parent Issued Diploma (PID) it MUST be the one from the PA Department of Education website and be signed by the senior year evaluator or it will NOT be recognized by the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania.

INSTRUCTIONS

→→**You must enclose with your registration, a self-addressed stamped postcard or envelope** with the words “MDHSA Grad Ceremony Form Received” on the back of the envelope or card, to confirm receipt of registration. MDHSA cannot e-mail or call you to confirm receipt. If your envelope is not returned to you **within 10 days** (or within 5 days if registering after April 20) of mailing your registration form, please contact our office immediately. It is important to confirm that your registration did not get lost in the mail!

→→**Student Biography:** Your student’s biography must be submitted the same day or within a week after your registration. (If you have e-mail you must e-mail the biography to diploma@pa.net. Do not email the biography as an attachment; it must be put in the body of the e-mail to avoid any software compatibility problems! **Attachments will not be opened, but will be returned to you to type the bio into the body of the email and resend.** Please put “GRAD BIO - STUDENT’S NAME” in the subject line of the email. Failing to do so may result in the biography being lost.

The biography is to be written in the 3rd person (as if someone wrote it about the student) and should be **75 words or fewer**. The biography should include the parent’s names, student’s town of residence, and indicate homeschool involvement, education, awards or future plans, etc. Please check the document carefully for grammar and proper punctuation. Either parents or students may write the biography.

Example: Mary Louise Grove Chambersburg, PA Mary is the daughter of George and Jane Grove and has been homeschooled since 5th grade. Her interests are horses and music and she has won many awards in both areas. She has been an example of faithfulness in her church youth group and completed a mission’s trip to Mexico this past summer. In September, Mary will major in music at Cedarville University.

Once the biography has been received via email, a return e-mail will be sent to you that will simply state “RECEIVED.” If you do not receive this confirmation within 1 week, re-send the bio. If you receive an email stating that the bio has not been received, please resend it, (even if was previously sent.) If the bio arrives too late, only the student’s name will be read aloud at the Ceremony.

→→**Student Participation: Talent:** Check the space on the registration form if you have a talent (musical, reading/recitation, quoting an excerpt from a play, etc.; to be no longer than 3 minutes) that you would like to share during the graduation, or as a musical prelude. Send a detailed description of the performance, if it is instrumental or voice, if it is to be a solo or a duet or ensemble, title and words to the song or reading, as well as the names of other seniors performing with you. **BE SURE TO PUT YOUR NAME** on any attached pages in case they get separated from the Registration Form. Indicating interest in participating does not guarantee acceptance. You will be notified if you are chosen to perform at the ceremony, either via the Follow-Up Information Letter or through an MDHSA staff member contact. Acceptance is determined by number of applicants, date of application, and the decision of the Graduation Committee. No gymnastics or dance routines will be accepted. Be sure to rehearse the performance before arriving, and again at the church during Saturday morning talent time. Bring any music CD’s, if needed, for accompaniment. A piano will be available.

→→ **Student Participation---Scripture Medley:** Three students read a pre-selected Scripture (about 3 minutes long) in unison and individually. Selections will be emailed to participants ahead of time. Students reading the scripture medley will need to arrive during the “talent rehearsal” time on Saturday morning, to rehearse together and do a sound check. Check the appropriate space on the registration form if you desire to participate.

→→**Student Participation---Student Address:** The student must be a good public speaker, and the student address should be spoken **TO YOUR FELLOW GRADUATES and should challenge them for the future!** Preference will go to the earliest submissions and content of speech, so submit early by emailing or mailing the speech **with** the Registration Form or by **March 31**. You will be contacted with the decision, whether you are chosen or not. The speech should be approximately 3 pages long, double-spaced, using New Times Roman 12 point font (about 3 minutes). One to three speakers may be chosen, depending on time restraints and quality of speeches received. (Obviously, you can count this speech preparation as part of your senior year studies.) Check the appropriate space on the registration form, if you would like to give the Address. The decision will be made shortly after April 20.

→→**Caps, Gowns, Tassels, Invitations, Announcements:** MDHSA does not order these. Multiple colors look lovely and distinguish the students as homeschoolers, thus you may choose any color for a cap and gown. However, the cap and gown colors should be the same. The tassel may be of any color or combination colors you choose. All students are **required** to wear caps, gowns, and tassels for the group graduation picture and for the ceremony. If there are exceptions or needs regarding this, please contact the MDHSA office by **April 20**. Anyone arriving at the ceremony refusing to wear a cap and/or gown, without contacting the office prior to the ceremony, will be denied the right to be in the ceremony. Your graduation registration fee will not be refunded. **PLEASE DO NOT ORDER, OR HAVE YOUR STUDENT(S) WEAR, HONOR CORDS AT THE MDHSA GRADUATION CEREMONY.**

For your convenience, below is a list of potential sources for ordering a cap, gown, and tassel. MDHSA does not endorse or promote any of the listed companies. The list is provided for informational purposes only. Families are encouraged to research all companies, products, and delivery times before making a purchase. Graduates may wear any color cap and gown. **ORDER EARLY** (winter or early spring) to be assured arrival in time for the ceremony.

- <http://www.milligans.com/> 1-800-544-4696
- <http://www.homeschooldiploma.com/> 1-877-466-2563
- <http://www.capsngowns4less.com/> 1-985-898-2620
- <http://www.gradshop.com/graduation-cap-and-gown> 1-855-719-4723
- http://www.jostens.com/grad/homeschool_lp_main.html 1-800-854-7464
- <http://www.graduationsource.com/high-school.html> 1-800-352-6162

→→**Follow-up INFORMATION LETTER** will be sent to each family by the middle of May. If you do not receive the follow-up letter by **May 25**, please contact the MDHSA office promptly at diploma@pa.net, or call 717-749-5767. Please watch for it in the mail (or in your email) and send confirmation immediately according to instructions in the letter, so we do not have to call you! For families that check their email often, please check the box on page 1 of the Registration, indicating your Follow-Up Letter may be emailed. (This is the fastest way to receive the letter.)

Please complete the two-page Registration Form.