

EPISODE 02**[INTRODUCTION]**

[0:00:05.2] AARESS LAWLESS: Hi there. Welcome to Today's Homeschool Teen, a podcast for homeschooling parents who want to help their teens meet the challenges of high school and reach their incredible God-given potential. I'm your host, Aaress Lawless. On behalf of our team at Dual Credit at Home, thank you for joining me.

Now, today, we're talking with our very own Becky Muldrow, the founder of Dual Credit Home. Becky is also a veteran homeschool mom. Today we're going to be talking about tips from a pro including avoiding distractions in school, where to start with young teens who are thinking about a career, how to get involved in Dual Credit and most importantly, how to hear your teen's heart.

[INTERVIEW]

[0:00:47.5] AARESS LAWLESS: Okay, well Becky, thank you so much for joining us on the podcast today. It is great to have you with us. Now, last our folks heard, your family was in the middle of some pretty epic stuff, building a new house and moving, how is all that going?

[0:01:03.8] BECKY MULDROW: Well, most of that's behind us, it was a really big deal. I kind of thought it would be easy since we're just moving across the street. But I realized you still have to pick up everything, you still have to make all of those decisions but we moved in January and then we spent six weeks or so getting that house ready to go on the market in the middle of spring break and some other travel with some of our big kids.

But we put it on the market and within seven days, we had a contract.

[0:01:34.9] AARESS LAWLESS: Wow.

[0:01:36.4] BECKY MULDROW: Closing is coming up now, later this month. We really have most of that behind us and we are ready to go forward.

[0:01:45.8] AARESS LAWLESS: That is awesome, congratulations.

[0:01:48.0] BECKY MULDROW: Yes, thank you.

[0:01:49.5] AARESS LAWLESS: For those of the folks that haven't been with us in a webinar recently, can you kind of give us an introduction to your family, tell us a little bit about your home schooling background, how you got started with dual credit, that kind of thing.

[0:02:02.8] BECKY MULDROW: Okay, well, we have 10 children and Adam is the oldest at 32 and Jason is the youngest at 14 and all we've ever done is home school. I just – well, most of what we've done is home school. We did do public school for one year and we did a semester of Christian school along that route. But most of it has just been strictly home schooling.

We've graduated seven of our kids and so that leaves me three and Kristin is a senior this year and then I have a ninth grader and a 10th grader. Maybe an eighth grader and a 10th grader. But, the way that we got started with Dual Credit was Adam, wanting to go on to law school. We looked for ways that we could accelerate his bachelor's degree.

We did that using Credit by Exam. That kind of started us on a journey of doing college different when that fit that next teen's career plan. Then we could allow them and even guide them through doing college different. That's been quite an experience.

[0:03:12.3] AARESS LAWLESS: Now, with the kids that are still at home, you've got seven home school graduates so far, congratulations on that. Where are the other three? Are they still planning on earning dual credits, do they have a college in mind? Where are they at in their journey?

[0:03:27.3] BECKY MULDROW: Okay, Kristin, being the senior, she has about 80 college credits and she will be graduating in May and then she'll spend a summer doing mostly mission work but then when school picks back up again in August, she will just focus on those last 30 credits or so, 40 credits. She will complete those during the next school year.

That will give Kristin a history major and her goal really is to become a third grade teacher. Julie, the sister but above Kristin is a kindergarten teacher and Kristin thinks she would prefer about third graders. She is earning a history major and then hopes the following year to maybe do a full time sub position or go ahead and jump right in as a third grade teacher.

Then, Michael and Jason are the last two and they are boys and they are not as far along, in their Dual Credit journey as all of their siblings have been. I don't know if it's because it's my last two kids or I don't know what has caused this. But we are already making plans for this next school year to get them back on track and headed in the direction, educationally, that their career is called for.

[0:04:50.8] AARESS LAWLESS: That's awesome. Now, you mentioned about that two that are coming up the boys, and how they are getting started, they're not as far along but that's okay because that's the beauty of Dual Credit and there is no rush. They're still going to be quite ahead of the curve. As they've grown up, watching their older siblings earn dual credits. Besides seeing such great examples in their brothers and sisters, what have you done to help prepare these younger kids, Kristin, Julie and the boys to get ready for Dual Credit.

[0:05:25.7] BECKY MULDROW: Okay, well, I think one of the main things that we can do as moms and that I've tried to teach the boys and all of my kids really is diligence, when it comes to their school work. It not just prepares them for excelling academically, earning their degrees ahead of time but it just teaches self-discipline in so many areas.

That is just really knowing that Monday through Friday, those are school days. Because when one slips and then it's hard to get back in the groove the next day. By Thursday, you kind of just chalk the week up as a loss and we're going to start again next Monday. We really work hard, we start school every morning at 8:00. I try to schedule other things or outings or appointments in the late afternoon. I just want my kids to know that on Monday through Friday, we're focusing on school. That really has just prepared them in a lot of ways to keep school the focus.

Whether it's Dual Credit or just keeping other assignments done ahead of time, things like that.

[0:06:36.3] AARESS LAWLESS: What has been the biggest trap as you speak about focus for you guys. Is it the extracurricular activities? Is it devices? Is it life happening? What do you think is your biggest focus trap as you've been working with the younger kids?

[0:06:49.7] BECKY MULDROW: Well, for us, a lot of it is just life. You know, a daughter getting married in May a couple of years ago. Travel with big kids. Kid college or graduate school. When all of those things are happening or even a new grandbaby coming in May. When all of those things are happening, it makes it hard to really be consistent but as I have these last three kids, I'm finding that devices, I don't even know which one I would say is the biggest trap.

It's either the devices or just real life happening. When it comes to devices. You know, they do a lot of their schoolwork on a computer and so if they have to go look something up, then all of a sudden, it may be 10 minutes and they are telling me all about something in the bronze age that's really irrelevant to what their research was. It's interesting. I mean, at least they're not over on social media but it's a loss of focus and so we really have to work on that.

[0:07:50.2] AARESS LAWLESS: On a similar note, reading comprehension, good study skills, all these habits and habit of being focused are extremely critical in high school. How do you help your kids improve in these areas?

[0:08:03.2] BECKY MULDROW: In the area of reading comprehension, I've never done anything that just really taught reading comprehension. Just like you improve your writing by writing and more writing, you improve your reading and your comprehension by reading and reading. That's something we've done all along. I just – I buy the good books, I lay them out there and I require them to be read.

Some of it is fiction, just all kind of good books but I want them to read those but as they do that, even over their middle school and high school years, they comprehend it. Now, I do want them to read on their ability level where there's some grade level or whatever. I don't want to give my sixth grader a high school topic, even if it's a classic piece of literature, they're not really ready to comprehend that.

I wouldn't push them in their – what I'm requiring them to read but I would just ask them to read often. The reading comprehension happens. Then when it comes to study skills, I have found that when we're

organized, just in our household, that spills over into their school work. If we are disorganized, they don't know where their text books are, where their notebooks are, all those things, whether it comes to chores or meals or whatever.

But an organized home is going to spill over into organized school work which is going to be a lot of their study skills.

[0:09:35.9] AARESS LAWLESS: That's a good point. Organized home spills out into organized school work. Really good. Now, with the younger kids, one question that we hear a lot a dual credit home is what do I do if my teen has no idea what they want for a career? Should they wait, should they wait till they have a degree decision, is it worthwhile starting dual credit even if they don't have an idea yet?

[0:10:05.1] BECKY MULDROW: Well, typically, where families start with Dual Credit, whether they are going to be earning credit exam or if they're going to go over to the junior college and take a course. They're going to be starting with those basics. US History 1 and English, government, things like that. Those courses typically apply to every degree plan.

You don't have to have a specific career in mind and I would even say that when I see students put that decision off through ninth grade, through 10th grade, through 11th grade. They even think or suspect that mom and dad are okay with the fact that they don't know yet, then they put it off through 12th grade and even beyond.

At some point, I think it's wise for us to really pin our kids down and let's start making a decision. It's not – you know, used to – let's say my husband's grandfather and father. They had a job and they held it for 43 years and retired or something like that or 48 years or whatever. That is not the trend anymore. You can change careers, you can move companies and still stay close to the same career track but maybe not exactly.

If our kids – let's take for example Julie, who is the kindergarten teacher. She may tire of that. Let's say in four years, she wants to do something else, well, she has a history major, she can go do something else. It's not like our kids are locked in to something. But, at some point, we do – I think we would serve them well if we would pin them down and start them going in a certain direction.

So, if they don't know exactly what degree it is or what occupation, you can at least start earning all of those core subjects, those core credits. How you're going to do that may depend on what school they're going to go to. If you're going to use clap exams or DSST exams or any type of credit by exam.

Or if they're going to go to the junior college and earn those credits. Another thing to think about is the fact that they can earn one bachelor's degree, and if they finish it before, you know, say age 18 or 19. It could be an English major or general studies major or history major. Then they choose nursing or engineering. Something that's a genuine calling on their life but they didn't know it when they were 15.

They've already got one degree done and that second degree is just that much faster because they don't have to repeat their core subjects or their electives.

[0:12:43.8] AARESS LAWLESS: Now, those general educational requirements, how easy is it to combine that with your high school studies at the same time?

[0:12:52.4] BECKY MULDROW: Well, that's a very good point because those general education requirements are typically English and history and government and science like biology, math, the very subject that our kids are doing in high school. They're going to turn around and college and repeat them.

If they could go ahead and get their college credit when they're studying it the first time. Then that is a big help to them.

[0:13:18.7] AARESS LAWLESS: Yeah, as teens enter their high school years, how can parents avoid that one size fits all approach. To home schooling high school. It seems like to me, most go a lot of time start of wanting to be different and wanting to be unique. But then, when it hit the high school years, all of a sudden, they feel, oh my, I have to do it exactly like the public school down the street. How can parents avoid that?

[0:13:42.2] BECKY MULDROW: That is a really big concern. We all need to be just really leaning on the Lord when it comes to that decision. If we know that we're doing what god has called us to do, from one of our kids to the next one, then that's where our confidence comes from.

It doesn't need to be shaken when we talk to somebody and their child is over here doing this or they are going to go to this coop over there or they are going to the junior college. We don't need to just be ready to throw out our plan that fast and go try something new. We just need to know that our plan that we have in place for that specific child of ours, that's the plan that God had for them and so really ultimately, we have to ask God what is His will regarding their school.

And then we just have to pursue that with our whole heart and complete confidence and not waver when we hear of new things.

[0:14:41.6] AARESS LAWLESS: Good point and it all starts with going back to the Lord and seeking His wisdom and also taking into account the particular child's interest because not every child is going to have the same interest as their older siblings. Now have you seen that work out in your family because you had multiple kids take the same credit by exam approach in high school but how has it been a different path based on each child uniquely?

[0:15:10.0] BECKY MULDROW: Okay. Well, a couple of our kids were really headed to law school. So their high school subjects didn't include chemistry. They didn't include really even biology. What I would really consider some basic sciences, they covered them as much as was required for their bachelor's degree but they didn't go any deeper than that. They did not go beyond that. Even the same thing with the math but I let them choose their high school subjects, which would be more along the lines of speech and debate.

And business law, things like that, those subjects were going to be what would help them take the path that God had for them and then when it comes to a different child, some of the things that Julie studied, some of the exams that she took for credit, so I was also giving her high school credit. We're on topics like teaching literacy in the elementary school. That was an exam title so therefore, a high school subject. So because of her direction of being a teacher her subjects were just different than those law school kids.

She didn't take business law, things like that. Then I have other kids who are more – Kristin right now, she's a senior, she's just going more – she is still a history major but she's throwing in some marketing

exams, things like that because that interest are she attempted psychology, which all of her siblings had taken and earned college credit in psychology. She tried it and within about I'd probably say an hour but I think it was more like a week, she said, "Mom I'm not interested in this."

And so I let her pull out some college exams that were more interesting to her. So ultimately, they have the same goal, 120 college credits that satisfy all the core requirements and all the major requirements but within that 120 credits they can pick and choose the things that interest them.

[0:17:10.5] AARESS LAWLESS: And it helps keep things fresh and unique for each kids and it helps you avoid that path of trying to do the same mold. Now what age do you typically start with younger kids on earning dual credits?

[0:17:24.4] BECKY MULDROW: So typically we start at 13 but I don't consider us ever late like Michael is about 16. There is still plenty of time even if they were 17 or 18 and graduating from high school, it wouldn't be dual credit but I would still use credit by exam and let them earn as much of their degree as they could at their own pace.

[0:17:47.9] AARESS LAWLESS: Now the feelings of behind that you mentioned, I think that is something that a lot of families can identify with. Some families have their teens that they feel teens are ahead but a lot of times it is common to wonder, "Okay my teen seems to be behind." When you feel those feelings of being behind, what are the steps that you take to acknowledge it and also start catching it?

[0:18:08.8] BECKY MULDROW: Okay, that's really good and sometimes when we are behind it's just a feeling. We are not behind, we are right on God's timetable but sometimes when we feel behind we really are. I certainly have had times in our homeschool, years where I have been lazy but I also had times where babies are born and we were moving and different things and I did get behind. Either we should have been much further along in a certain curriculum, a certain math lesson number.

So sometimes it's my fault and sometimes it isn't. So when it is not our fault and it's just a feeling then we have to recognize that as the enemy really just wanting to give discouragement or make us feel like we aren't good enough as a teacher to do this and then that's when we just go back to the Lord and

conquer that and go forward in history but when we realize that we are behind because truly we are behind, then we just have to acknowledge it and shore up that schedule.

To see what has caused us to get behind, are we not doing school diligently each day? Are we stopping too soon? Are we wasting our time in subjects that don't interest our kids or that are not relevant for them? Can we remove any fluff so that we can get caught up? There are different ways to get caught up and get ahead or get back on track and as long as we know we're doing the plan that God has for each one of our kids.

[0:19:47.9] AARESS LAWLESS: And that's the most important part, doing the plan that God has not the plan that maybe mom, dad or even the teen has. God's plan is the ultimate goal of this destination. So speaking of arriving at destinations, you've had seven kids successfully graduate high school. Now looking back on those years, if you could do anything different or could possibly change your approach or something you did in high school, what would it be?

[0:20:18.6] BECKY MULDROW: Well in the overall big picture of raising kids and parenting well, I would focus more on their heart in my relationship with them and I would focus less on rules and perfectionism but more specifically regarding school and what I would do different, I can name a few things that I would do different. Number one, I would make sure that my kids had an experience in some classroom that's out of the home before they hit graduate school.

Whether it is a coop class, a junior college class, an online class, something like that but a couple of my kids I failed to do that and so they hit graduate school, actually law school and have been in no classroom situation and I regretted that. Another thing that I think I would encourage them to do would be – and these are so specific or you might have been asking for something real general that I would do different?

[0:21:19.6] AARESS LAWLESS: No, this is great. Specifics are good.

[0:21:21.6] BECKY MULDROW: Okay, I would instead of trying to teach a subject that I cannot teach myself like biology, I would go ahead and let my kids take that at the junior college and I might feel more freedom to say that because we know the teacher of biology at the junior college and the fact that he's

a Christian and the view point that he is teaching that class from but I would let my kids do that in order to get that college lab and go ahead and have that subject taught to them by someone who has a passion for that subject.

So it may not just be biology, it might be algebra and then I would also – if I had to do it over again, I would steer my kids toward earning a degree even if they didn't know if they needed one and really, I have only one of my kids that we didn't do that with her and it's okay but now, she would make more at her job if she had a degree and she could have done it easily if she had done it back in high school. So those are just some things that I personally would do different.

And then of course for me the general thing, I should have sought God more diligently regarding not just school but parenting, wisdom in parenting and wisdom in the best ways to meet the needs of each of my kids, not just what credits they needed, choices in careers or sapling here in our home things like that.

[0:22:56.4] AARESS LAWLESS: You got some great resources on the dual credit home website that talk about relationship building as well but in this last question that we have time for today, what are some of the practical things that you have done with your younger kids? Your 13, 14, 15 year olds to start building that relationship before they hit the high school years because you don't just wake up and have good conversations with your teens when they're 18.

The foundation for that starts many years earlier so how have you and your husband started developing those strong relationships that withstand the test of time?

[0:23:32.5] BECKY MULDROW: Well time is going to tell but I did have some of my kids really say to me, "Mom you need to work on this or you need to work on that." And I resisted that for a long time until God really prompted me to just humble myself and just say, "Is there any truth to what they're saying?" And immediately I could see that there was. So I begin to work on the things, being approachable and listening and so, as far as things that we've done I've learned not to think that it is either my way or the highway kind of an attitude or my way is the only way.

There are multiple right ways to do things and I hate to say that I was maybe closer to 50 years old before I realized that. So a lot of it is just being willing to put down whether it is the dishes I am washing or the lesson plan I'm creating or whatever it might be and really look at that young person, my child in the eye and hear with my heart what they are saying from their heart. Those kind of conversations, not to say at 9:00 at night. I don't want to say "No more this. It's shower time, bed time."

Sometimes that when kids just really want us to open up and I may be ready to shut down, close shop for the day but I need to listen and so some of those kind of things have changed and then I would say just a lot more fun in our days than there used to be. Now I don't know if that is because I am a little older and a little wiser or if it's because I am no longer have six kids under the age of 10. So I don't know what caused the difference.

I know it was God making me into more of the kind of mom that my kids needed but lots more laughter, a much more relaxed attitude especially about our schedule or get up time or go to bed time or if there is laundry in a basket in the living room that just doesn't control me like that used to control me. So just learning to relax has gone a long way in the building relationships with my kids and I would also say, accepting them the way God created them.

Not try to make them fit a mold that I thought would be the best for them but realizing God gave them some of these quirky habits or strengths or weaknesses that is not necessarily what I would have chosen but that's who God created and loving them that way.

[0:26:18.1] AARESS LAWLESS: That's awesome. Well, thank you so much for taking time to share with us today Becky. It's always a pleasure to visit with you.

[0:26:25.6] BECKY MULDROW: Well I enjoyed it too and thank you so much, Aaress.

[END OF INTERVIEW]

[0:26:29.5] AARESS LAWLESS: And thanks to all of you listeners for joining us today. Now we have some dual credit resources linked in this episode's show notes and you can find those at dualcredithome.com/podcast. Also in the show notes, you'll find the links to some of Becky's online

workshops. So be sure to check that out and you can attend those workshops for free on demand. Plus, if you have any questions about Dual Credit, take advantage of the live chat and send those to us.

Now if you have enjoyed today's episode, be sure to subscribe to our podcast so you don't miss the next episode of Today's Homeschool Teen. Thanks again for joining us and we're praying that God blesses you and your family as you homeschool high school.

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