

Graduate

Her path is not uncharted. Candice's older sister, Melissa, began home schooling at about fifth grade, leaving Northeast Elementary School. She is now at Smith College in Massachusetts.

The sisters said their mother decided to home school her four children because she was uncomfortable with public school.

"She was Christian, and she was pretty religious at the time," Candice said. "She didn't like that they were teaching about evolution."

An older brother brought condoms home from ninth grade about the time their mother pulled the children from school.

At about 0.3 percent in 2006, home schooling rates in Connecticut are lower than the national average, and the state takes a respectful position about parents' rights. The Department of Education recommends parents file a letter annually describing education plans and urges parents to submit to an annual review with school officials. Local school districts, however, have little enforcement authority.

The Stamford's student support services office has a record of 18 students being home-schooled in the city this school year. However, the full number could be larger.

For Candice, Melissa and their two brothers, education became less structured in home school. They read the Bible and books that interested them, went to the library, wrote and learned practical skills such as sewing. They joined other home schoolers at the Evangelical Community Church on Newfield Avenue, a launching point for field trips to museums and elsewhere.

Their brothers did not earn their diplomas; one became a dance teacher in Norway, and the other is a Stop & Shop manager, according to Melissa. She had always wanted to get her diploma, but she didn't talk with her mother much about college.

"I always let her know that I wanted to. It wasn't like, 'Oh, you can't,' or, 'You shouldn't.' It was like, 'If that's what you want,'" Melissa said. Once Candice started night school, Melissa drove her to class and helped her study, even math, which was also a difficult subject for her.

"My mom, she didn't find education that important," Candice said. "I am really thankful to my sister and my teachers that had patience and helped me learn."

Candice's only low grade came in one of her first classes, a D she received in a class on law and justice.

"I didn't even know how to take notes," she said. "I didn't know how to follow what the teacher was saying and what I should write down, I was very nervous, I had never been in a classroom like that."

However, the writing she did in home school paid off in an English class that semester, where she earned an A.

Candice acknowledges

her path would have been easier had she gone through public school, but the resentment she once felt toward her parents and their decision has tempered, and she has come to appreciate it.

"My mom died in 2006,

and I am glad for the time I had with her," Candice said. "She did teach more about life."

— Staff Writer Wynne Parry can be reached at wynne.parry@scni.com or 964-2263.

UConn to release economic forecast

HARTFORD — Editors of the Connecticut Economy are set to present lawmakers with their findings on what is driving the state's recession. The summer issue of the quarterly, which is produced

by the University of Connecticut, looks at the size of state government, the effects of the collapsing housing market and stock market on the state, and the latest jobs, unemployment and housing price forecasts.

According to estimates, state revenue is down 20 percent from a year ago and the state's budget is nearly \$10 billion in deficit over three fiscal years. The presentation takes place at 11:30 a.m. Monday at the state Capitol.

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