

Home-Schooling ‘Brainy Bunch’ Family Sends 7 Kids to College by Age 12

Home schooling may not be for everyone, but it has certainly worked for an Alabama family that has sent seven of its 10 kids to college by age 12.

The Harding children—ranging from 4 to 26—are commonly referred to as “The Brainy Bunch,” but parents Kip and Mona Lisa Harding say they didn’t plan this.

“It just kind of happened,” Mona Lisa told *Today’s* Matt Lauer. “We started home schooling, and it was very efficient. Kids have to be educated, and as they accelerated, we had to find another option because they outdid me very young.”

The eldest, Hannah, started online college courses at 12 and earned a degree in mathematics from Auburn University by 17. She has also earned two master’s degrees and will begin working on her Ph.D. at Tuskegee University this fall.

Rosannah, now 24, is a registered architect in New York City and became the youngest member of the American Institute of Architects after finishing a five-year program when she was 18. Serennah, 23, is a U.S. Navy doctor who’s in her internal medicine internship at Walter Reed.

Heath, 18, calls himself “the slacker” of the Harding family. He earned an undergraduate degree in English at 15 and a master’s degree in computer science two years later, but he said he took “a bit of time off” inbetween.

Keith, 15, is a senior at Faulkner University and his 13-year-old brother Seth, who is aiming to become an archaeologist, has been a student there since age 11.

Their younger siblings also have high aspirations. Katrinnah, 11, has taken the ACT and is interested in law. Her 8-year-old sister Mariannah talks about becoming a doctor. Lorennah, 6, and Thunder, 4, are the youngest Harding siblings.

The children all agree that they weren't pushed into a rigorous academic schedule, but they have been passionate about it from a young age.

"It's not really a pushing environment," said Rosannah. "It's finding your own inspiration, finding your passion."

In response to Lauer's question about missing out on childhood by attending college so early, Kip said: "I would say you're unleashing the inner kid because you're letting them do what they want to do in life, and so if you program their studies in that way, then you're really getting them to do what they want to do."

Rosannah added: "It's all about balance really. When I finished, I was 18 years old, and I started working right away, but I had a support network. It's doing your passion, but also being social with the people your own age."

The Hardings have been sure to set aside time for their children to be kids.

"Now we do a 'Friendship Friday' thing where all the home-schoolers in our local area, they all come to this park at 1:00 on Fridays," Katrinnah explained. "So we do our school and once they're done, we pack up the van and we drive over to the park."

Kip and Mona Lisa have written a book about their home-schooling experience, *The Brainy Bunch: The Harding Family's Method to College Ready by Age Twelve*, which released last month.

Though *Today* conducted a poll showing that 93 percent of

voters would not want to raise their children like the Hardings, Mona Lisa insisted reading their book would change people's minds.

"If they read our book and you asked them again, I think it would change," she said. "It's how to raise happy, fulfilled, don't-stress-out-over-home-schooling (children)."