

~ The ursa Flare ~

Volume 1
September 2024



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UPCOMING DATES

Upcoming Events
[ursa Events Calendar](#)

September 3
ursa Shared Classes Began

September 21
**Calgary Welcome Back
Open House & Resource
Swap**

September 25
ursa Registration Deadline

October 7
**Deadline to Inform HEM if
Writing a January Diploma
Exam**

October 15
5-Credit Proposals Due

October 16
**Picture Day Calgary East
Campus - Details TBA**

October 29
**Deadline to Inform HEM of
January Diploma Exam**

FIND US ONLINE

Visit www.goursa.education for **ursa** registration and upcoming events.

[Friends of ursa Home Ed Facebook group](#) is a place for families and friends of **ursa**, and your Home Ed Managers, to ask questions, meet, plan activities, share experiences, find general announcements, events of interest, & resource ideas. <https://www.facebook.com/groups/friendsofursahomeed>

We acknowledge that we are on traditional territories in Alberta of the many First Nations, Métis, and Inuit whose footsteps have marked these lands for centuries.



PRINCIPAL'S MESSAGE

Welcome to the 2024-2025 school year!

It is exciting to have such an amazing group of families join us for the year ahead. We are fortunate to have so many of our families back with us for another year and are looking forward to meeting the new families joining us.

Returning families may notice that the name of our **ursa** Parent Directed monthly newsletter has changed to *The ursa Flare* newsletter. Each year we change our focus theme, and this year it is 'The Sun'. The *ursa Flare News* is not to be confused with our Head of Schools "From Me to You" communications.

Our team has been busy planning new adventures for you to take part in while you connect with other homeschooling families. Our Edmonton team hosted their Welcome Back Park Day on Sept. 11 & Calgary hosts an Open House with student activities, information sessions and resource swap on Sept. 21. Join us!

Good luck with your program planning and fall visits. We love spending time getting to know our **ursa** families! Remember that your HEM is there to support you on your home education journey. They are only a phone call or email away.

Please let us know if we can help with your homeschooling journey.

Tracy Gilluley
Principal, **ursa**

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Welcome Back & Fall Visits	2
Out & About Around Alberta - ursa Virtual Information Sessions	3
Edmonton & Area	4
Welcome Back Park Day & Trail Walk & Games	4
Board Games Monthly Meet-Up At The Library	5
Calgary & Area	6
ursa Welcome Back Open House & Mantracker Tag	6
4-H In The City 6-Week Clubs	7
Student Spotlight	7
High School & Teen News	8
Parent Directed FREE Course For Credit & Section 6 Courses For Credit	8
Course For Credit Dates For Your Calendar	9
Homeschoolers' Specialised Support Services & Student Discounts	10
Homeschool Groups & Free Subscription To Les Plan Magazines	11
ursa's Constellation Of Choice	12

WELCOME BACK

ursa's Home Education Managers (HEMs) would like to welcome back returning families, as well as welcome new families who have joined us this year. Your **ursa** HEM will be there for you, to act as a cheerleader for your students and to offer support, friendship and resource ideas to your entire family! Welcome to the **ursa** community!



Top: [Alisha](#), [Carmen](#), [Cindy](#), [Erin](#); Bottom: [Farren](#), [Jackie](#), [Joanne](#), [Nicole](#)

FALL VISITS

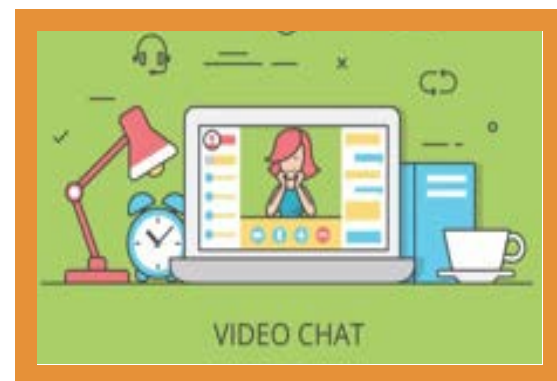
Please keep an eye on your email (and junk folder) for communications from your HEM in September to arrange a time and date for your fall visit. Please check your junk email folder to make sure you are receiving **ursa** emails by Oct. 1.

Remember to submit your [program plan](#) **prior** to your visit or by the end of September - whichever comes first.

ursa will once again be conducting virtual visits, using [Google Meet](#), [Microsoft Teams](#) or [Zoom](#).

Fall visits are not an evaluation! It is a chance to discuss your plans with your HEM, where your student is at now, their recent accomplishments, what they are excited about and to ask any questions you may have. Fall visits should be completed by November 20.

Students pursuing credit for high school are encouraged to sign up sooner rather than later to ensure that their school year is off to a quick start.



OUT & ABOUT AROUND ALBERTA

Join us on our [Friends of ursa Facebook group](#) for information on upcoming events across Alberta. Please note that parents are responsible for their students' supervision and safety.

ursa VIRTUAL INFORMATION SESSIONS

Please join us for this month's virtual information sessions, followed by a question and answer period. More virtual information sessions to follow in upcoming months.

All virtual sessions use this [Zoom link](#), Meeting ID: 839 3537 8458, Passcode: 306959.

- **September 18, 7:00 pm** – **Homeschool Resources** will focus on the many ways that you and your students can learn, from unschooling to complete curriculums to eclectic learning. Join [via Zoom](#).
- **September 27, 7:00 pm** – **Creating a Parent Directed Course for Credit** offers advice on creating your own courses for high school Parent Directed credit. Join [via Zoom](#).
- **October 3, 7:00 pm** – **High School Essay Writing for ELA** will use **ursa's** [ELA](#) Essay Guide & Rubric to walk you through how to set up a PRT & CART essay in grades 10-12 English Language Arts. Join [via Zoom](#).
- **October 10, 7:00 pm** – **High School Essay Writing for Social Studies** will use **ursa's** [Social Studies](#) Essay Guide & Rubric to walk you through how to set up a position paper and source analysis essay in grades 10-12 Social Studies. Join [via Zoom](#).
- **October 17, 7:00 pm** – **Reading Aloud** offers an interesting discussion on the importance of reading aloud to your students at any age. Join [via Zoom](#).
- **October 24, 7:00 pm** – **Writing a Formal Science Lab** is open to all families & students who want to learn how to do a complete lab write-up in science. This is primarily for families of teens or possibly upper elementary students. Join [via Zoom](#).



EDMONTON & AREA

A FUN TIME AT THE EDMONTON'S WELCOME BACK PARK DAY – September 11, 1:00 to 4:00 pm, at Argyll Park, 6750-88 Street NW, Edmonton



A big thank you to the growing Edmonton **ursa** homeschool community who joined their HEMs and other families for a fun start to another fabulous homeschooling year together - despite the uncooperative weather!

It was nice to see you all there. Fingers crossed that the next park day has more predictable weather.

We look forward to seeing you again!

TRAIL WALK & GAMES – October 4, 1:00 pm to 4:00 pm, at Alfred Savage Centre, 13909 Fox Dr NW, Edmonton

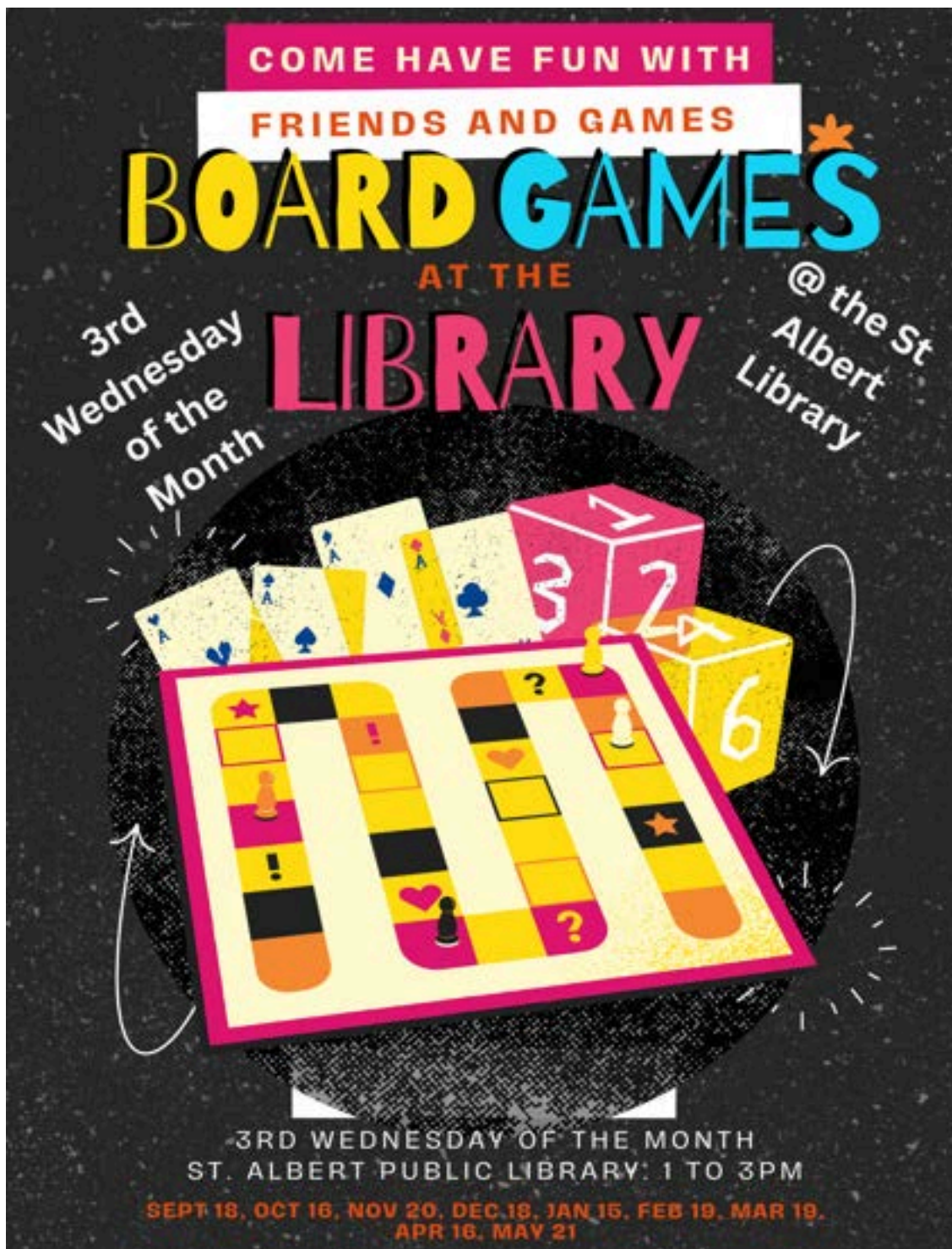
Join the Edmonton area HEMs and **ursa** families for a trail walk and games afternoon at the Alfred Savage Centre. Bring chairs if you would like to sit around the fire pit, and games to play in the Savage Centre after we go for a walk.



BOARD GAMES MONTHLY MEET-UP AT THE LIBRARY – September 18, 1:00 pm to 3:00 pm, at the St. Albert Public Library, 5 St. Anne Street, St. Albert

[HEM Jackie](#) is hosting a monthly board game meet-up at the St Albert library on the **3rd Wednesday of each month** - mark your calendars!

Please bring your favourite board games to play with others and head over to the children's section to set up. See you there!



CALGARY & AREA

WELCOME BACK OPEN HOUSE – September 21, 12:00 to 2:00 pm, at Calgary East Campus, 400 Prince of Peace Way, Rockyview

On Saturday, September 21, at 12:00 pm, you are invited to pack a snack and join us at **ursa's** Calgary East Campus to celebrate another year of learning together.

Your local HEMs will be offering activities in the gym for the students, where we will have some water and snacks available.

There will be tables available for parents to use for a resource swap. Please bring your gently used curriculum for others to try, and maybe pick up a book to read this fall!

In the library, HEMs will hold in-person information sessions on getting started in homeschooling along with resource ideas, and a discussion on what high school portfolios and courses for credit may look like.

See you there!



MANTRACKER TAG – September 18, 1:30 to 3:30 pm, at Nose Hill Park in Calgary

Join us for 'all-ages' Mantracker, a hide-and-seek/infection tag game! Once found and tagged, you also become "it." Hiding in bushes and trees is fair. Wearing camouflage and appropriate clothes to run and hide in wet or dry conditions is encouraged.



Meet above the parking lot at Shaganappi Trail & Edgemont Blvd NW. Our playing field is a grove of trees in a valley to the right of the main path. Parents typically sit near the paved pathway south of the playing field or in the trees near the teepees where each game starts.

Bring water & lawn chairs; bathrooms are in the parking lot. Check [Friends of ursa](#) for weather cancellations or contact [HEM Nicole](#).



4-H IN THE CITY 6-WEEK CLUBS

Calgary Foundation is bringing back 6-week introductory [4-H Clubs](#) to Calgary this fall for \$120 per student. See the links below for details. Sign up soon!

4-H is being offered out of three Calgary locations:

1. [NW Calgary](#) at 3527 Boulton Rd - on Wednesdays, 1-3 pm or 6-8 pm, from Nov. 6 to Dec. 11.
2. [SE Calgary](#) at Millican Ogden Community Hall - on Tuesdays, 1-3 pm or 6-8 pm, Sept. 17 to Oct. 22.
3. [SE Calgary](#) at CARYA Village Commons - on Wednesdays, 12:30-2:30 pm, Sept. 18 to Oct. 23.

Supported by CALGARY FOUNDATION

CANADA 4-H

4-H IN THE CITY!

6 Week 4-H Intro Clubs are back in Calgary this fall!

DAYTIME or EVENING programs for youth ages 9 - 16

REGISTER TODAY!

The poster features a QR code and a group of diverse children smiling and posing together on the right side.

STUDENT SPOTLIGHT

Our student spotlight is a place where our students can share what they have been doing and what they are passionate about learning. If you would like to include art, poetry, short stories, video, articles, etc., in a future newsletter, please send it to your HEM or [Nicole](#).



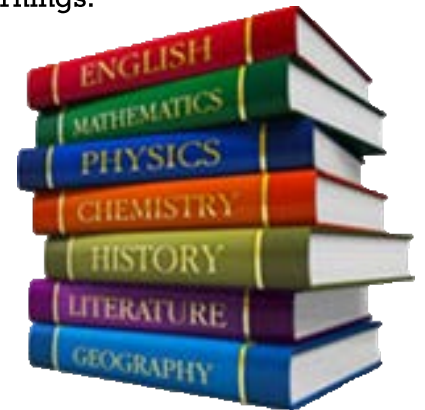
HIGH SCHOOL & TEEN NEWS

FREE 3-5 CREDIT COURSE FOR PARENT DIRECTED STUDENTS

Parent Directed students in grades 10 to 12 are eligible to complete 3 to 5 credits in [Teacher Directed online or onsite \(in Calgary\) course\(s\)](#) for **FREE** each year. The free course may be an online real-time core course such as ELA 10-1 or Math 10C, both offered in the first semester or full-year asynchronous options. Full-year in-person, 3-credit courses at the Calgary East Campus are also offered in Art, Foods, Music, Physical Education or Genius Hour, which covers many topics. Onsite classes run on Wednesday mornings.

Register soon! Online classes began on **September 6**, and onsite classes first met on **September 4**. Registering as late as **September 25 is possible** if space is still available, but students will miss content and need to catch up.

Contact your Home Education Manager (HEM) for information.



EXCITING NEW OPPORTUNITY FOR **ursa** STUDENTS!

ursa is thrilled to announce the launch of a new peer-to-peer mentoring program designed specifically for home based students in grades 7-12. This program will provide a safe, engaging space for students to connect, build friendships, and develop social skills with the guidance of a teaching professional. Keep an eye out for an upcoming information session where [HEM Alisha](#) will share more details about how your child can participate.

Stay tuned for more information!

PARENT DIRECTED SECTION 6 COURSES FOR CREDIT

Families may also choose to develop their own Parent Directed section 6 courses for credit for students in grades 7 to 12. A section 6 Parent Directed course for credit involves designing your course by choosing appropriate resources, activities and evaluations that address the [Alberta Program of Studies Learning Outcomes](#). Your course proposal is submitted to your HEM team for approval; **ursa** HEMs have many ideas and resources to help you get started.

For a quick overview of the process, please see the [ursa Parent Directed Courses for Credit Guide](#).

Once your course proposal is approved, you deliver and evaluate the course, collecting documentation of all evaluated work for your portfolio. Book your fall visit early in order to discuss your plans with your HEM. Parents and students are also invited to attend our virtual information sessions on creating a Parent Directed course, essay writing, and labs.



COURSE FOR CREDIT DATES FOR YOUR CALENDAR



- **Ongoing** – Bookmark the [ursa Events Calendar](#) to stay on top of high school deadlines.
- **September 25** – Registration deadline for **ursa** semester 1 courses, whether Shared Responsibility or the FREE 3-5 credit courses for Parent Directed students. **Register soon** - classes began in the first week of September.
- **September 27** – Create a Parent Directed Course Info Session at 7:00 pm. Join [via Zoom](#).
- **October & ongoing** – Parent Directed students completing core courses for credit must schedule their **ursa** final exam at least 2+ weeks before the requested exam date.
- **October 3** – High School ELA Essay Writing Info Session at 7:00 pm. Join [via Zoom](#).
- **October 7** – Deadline to inform HEMs if you will be writing **ANY** January diploma exams. Students who wish to write the ELA or Math January diploma exams at the **ursa** East Campus in Calgary must inform their HEM by October 29.
- **October 10** – High School Social Studies Essay Writing Info Session at 7:00 pm. Join [via Zoom](#).
- **October 15** – 5-credit course proposal submission and approval deadline for semester 1 parent directed course submissions.
- **October 24** – Writing a Formal Science Lab Info Session at 7:00 pm. Join [via Zoom](#).
- **October 29** – Deadline to inform HEMs of **ANY** registered January diploma exam location(s), including those scheduled using [myPass](#) or at the Calgary East Campus.
- **November 15** – 1 to 3-credit course proposal submission & approval deadline for semester 1 parent directed course submissions.
- **January 7** – Semester 1 coursework /portfolio submission deadline.
- **January 9** – *Tentative* deadline to complete Parent Directed core course final exams for semester 1 submissions.
- **January 31** – *Tentative* deadline for Parent Directed grade 10-12 students to register for the FREE semester 2 course (starts Feb. 3); only 1 free course is available per year.
- **March 15** – 5-credit course proposal submission and approval deadline for parent directed courses.
- **March 18** – Deadline to inform HEMs if you will be writing **ANY** June diploma exams. Students who wish to write the Social Studies or a science June diploma exams at the **ursa** East Campus in Calgary must inform their HEM by April 7.
- **April 7** – Deadline to inform HEMs of **ANY** registered June diploma exam location(s), including those scheduled using [myPass](#) or at the Calgary East Campus.
- **April 15** – 1 to 3-credit course proposal submission and approval deadline.
- **May 22** – *Tentative* deadline to complete any Parent Directed core course final exams for the 2024-2025 school year.
- **May 30** – Final coursework/portfolio submission deadline for the 2024-2025 school year.
- **June TBA** – Grade 12 Graduation Celebration



HOMESCHOOLERS' SPECIALISED SUPPORT SERVICES

AISCA (Association of Independent Schools & Colleges of Alberta) continues to offer a range of specialised support services for home education students through [Khan Communication Services](#). Services may include consultations with relevant professionals such as speech-language pathologists, occupational therapists, mental health consultants, behaviour consultants, and psychologists.

To register for Learner Support Services, visit our website at [ursa Parent Directed \(goursa.education\)](#) and click on [Support Services](#).



STUDENT DISCOUNTS

Homeschooling families are often eligible for student discounts on admissions or teacher discounts for school supplies. Be sure to have your **ursa** acceptance letter, which can be found on [SchoolCloud](#), on hand to request a discount.

- **Royal Tyrrell Museum Admission in Drumheller** – Homeschoolers and their primary teacher can have free admission during the school year. Please check in advance if additional documentation is required.
- **Calgary Flames Free YMCA Admission in Calgary** – [Calgary Flames Grade 6 YMCA Membership](#) allows grade 6 homeschoolers in Calgary to receive a free YMCA membership and access to a variety of programs. Often it is helpful to bring your acceptance letter as well as your Program Plan or Fall Report.
- **Grade 2 Fun Pass** – The [Grade 2 Fun Pass - Resorts of the Canadian Rockies](#) allows unlimited access to all four of the Resorts of the Canadian Rockies including Fernie Alpine Resort, Kicking Horse Mountain Resort, Kimberley Alpine Resort and Nakiska Ski Area for only \$29.
- **Stores & activity centres** – Many stores and activity centres offer teacher discounts or teacher appreciation days such as **Mastermind Toys** (save up to 15%), **Chapters and Indigo** (hold teacher appreciation events usually at the end of September), **Staples** (possible 10% discount in mid August to early September), **Launchpad** in Edmonton (offers schooltime discounts), **Big Fun** in Balzac (offered discounts midweek) and the **science centres** have all given homeschool discounts in the past.



HOMESCHOOL GROUPS

Across Alberta there are a number of volunteer run groups that offer activities, support, and field trips for homeschoolers. The following is just a small sample of popular groups:

- [Calgary Homeschool Baseball Co-op](#) – in NW Calgary
- [CHE – Cochrane Home Educators](#) – CHE’s not back to school event is Sept. 18, 11am - 1pm at Mitford ponds
- [Gathering Tree](#) – Edmonton area
- [GRASS sports programs](#) – Edmonton Area homeschool sports
- [Happy Homeschoolers Field Trips](#) – Edmonton area field trips
- [Homeschool Soccer Meetup](#) – in SW Calgary
- [NW Calgary Homeschool Soccer](#)
- [SHINE - Society for the Homeschool Network of Edmonton](#)
- [Smells Like Teen Spirit - YEG](#) – Edmonton area gatherings for teens
- [Wandering Wednesdays YYC 2024-2025](#) – Calgary area field trips – holding their not back to school event on Sept. 11



FREE SUBSCRIPTION TO LES PLAN MAGAZINES

Families with **ursa** have access to **FREE** subscriptions to the current events magazines by [LesPlan](#), an excellent resource for Canadian students [published eight times](#) yearly. Your HEM will email you the new copies every time they are published. The first issue of the year are linked below:

- [The Canadian Reader - Issue 1](#) - recommended for grades 3 and up
- [What in the World? Level 1 - Issue 1](#) plus [Maps](#) - recommended for grades 5 and up
- [What in the World? Level 2 - Issue 1](#) plus [Maps](#) - recommended for grades 8 and up

Our **ursa** students also have access to other **FREE** resources such as [Exambank](#) quizzes and tests that are aligned to the Alberta curriculum in all subject areas, as well as [Learn Alberta](#), which offers aligned resources under the “T4T Courses”. Ask your Home Education Manager (HEM) for the passwords.



ursa's CONSTELLATION OF CHOICE

1. **ursa Parent Directed programming.** This is Parent Directed home education for students in grades 1-12. Our Home Education Managers are dedicated professionals who are experienced homeschooling parents. They offer their guidance, support, and vast knowledge in accordance with the Home Education Regulations. We recognize the unique needs of each student and encourage our families to find the educational style that works best for them. We would love the opportunity to help you and your family meet your educational goals.
2. **ursa Shared Responsibility programming.** This is flexible home based education, with part of the program delivered by the teacher and part of the program delivered by the parent. Families can choose between 20% and 80% of their programming to be Teacher Directed, online or in person options at the Calgary East Campus. Students wishing to earn senior high credit may wish to use **ursa** Shared Teacher Directed courses for up to 80% of their credits, combined with Parent Directed courses for credit through Section 6 of the Home Education Regulations.
3. **ursa Distance programming.** This is a Teacher Directed, home based program for motivated students across Alberta, with the opportunity for students in the Calgary area to attend onsite programming, at our 400 Prince of Peace Way Rockyview East Campus location, for Physical Education, Music, Art, Genius Hour, plus Foods for the teens.
 - o Grades 1-12 courses following the Alberta Program of Studies
 - o Planned, taught and evaluated by a team of experienced Alberta Education certified distance educators
 - o High school programming leading to an Alberta Diploma
4. **LYNX Shared or Distance programming.** LYNX is a Teacher Directed program of no more than 18 students that follows the Alberta Program of Studies. English Language Arts and Math (approximately 30% of the program) are delivered in the morning by **ursa** distance online at home or at our school, or at home by the parents. The other ~70% of the program (Social Studies, Science, Phys Ed, and Health) is delivered in the great outdoors in a variety of locations in Calgary. Surrounding communities - your student's classroom will be a 'breath of fresh air.'
5. **ursa Global Online School programming.** NEW: **ursa** Global Online School offers distance online program support for students located all over the world. **ursa** students living internationally, or travelling for a few years, can continue to follow the Alberta Program of Studies under the direction of our excellent teachers - **ursa Global Online School** is there for you, wherever that may be.

For information on **ursa** shared and distance learning or the **ursa** bursary program, please contact Sunil Mattu, Head of Schools, at (403) 690-1408 or smattu@thirdschools.ca.



It's home based education, your child's way.

