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### WatchKnowLearn.org hits the road

By JB Clark  
News Reporter

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Joe Thomas and his family are leaving their perfectly good home in Memphis for the next year to drive across the U.S. in a motor coach, promoting their website [WatchKnowLearn.org](http://WatchKnowLearn.org).

[WatchKnowLearn.org](http://WatchKnowLearn.org) is an educational website developed by Wikipedia co-founder Larry Sanger and funded by St. Charles Place through the Community Foundation of Northwest Mississippi.

The website is a resource intended to save classroom teachers time in their lesson plans while increasing the interactivity of their classes.

Last week, the website hosted its 27,500th video and has more than 20,000 teachers who actively contribute videos.

The videos are logged and categorized by subject, student age, rating and classroom type to help teachers navigate through the database.

The database is organized like Wikipedia, using user contributed content.

"We've grown a lot and what's real exciting is that we have been given a grant by the Phil Hardin Foundation and Barsdale Reading to link all of our videos to the Common Core standards and that's huge because all of the teachers in Mississippi are required to start teaching by the Common Core standards by the end of this year in K-2," Thomas said. "There is a big scramble to get materials and understanding and we jumped right in there and started linking all of our videos so now you can go in there and find an entire section for the standards and find videos to supplement your curriculum."

Over the course of the next year, Thomas and his family will be living in a motor coach wrapped in the [WatchKnowLearn.org](http://WatchKnowLearn.org) logo, meeting with legislators and educators all over the nation to let them know about the free educational resource.

"Our purpose is to not only get the word out but to do training at the schools, meeting with decision makers and letting them know about the resources," Thomas said. "We'll meet with home school groups too - our kids will be home schooled this year."

Thomas said his wife Gerri came up with the idea to promote the website on the open road.

"We were feeding the twins at 6:30 on a Saturday morning in March and Gerri looked at me and said, 'I think we should take this on the road,'" Thomas recalled. "We were sitting in a perfectly good house in Memphis and she said, 'You can't reach everyone sitting behind a computer,' so we presented it to the board on Wednesday - they loved it - and within two weeks we had an RV, within another week or so we had a press guy and had the RV wrapped and now we're on the road."

DeSoto County was the last stop for the team in Mississippi and they will set out for Washington in September.

The family will focus on the major education states of California, Texas, New York and Florida but will visit most states on their way.

While on the road, the Thomas' daughters will be using watch know to supplement their home-school curriculum.

"Danielle was just reading and said, 'This book is so dry,' and so we found a video on [WatchKnowLearn.org](http://WatchKnowLearn.org)," Gerri said.

The family of seven will be leaving in September and traveling for the better part of the next year.

Contact JB Clark at 662-429-6397 ext. 236 or email at [JClark@DeSotoTimesTribune.com](mailto:JClark@DeSotoTimesTribune.com)



Gerri and Joe Thomas sit on the make-shift front porch of their [WatchKnowLearn.org](http://WatchKnowLearn.org) motor coach with their daughters (l-r) Eliana, Ella, Lexa, Danielle and Juliana. The family will be traveling across the U.S. for the next year to promote the free educational website. Photo by JB Clark

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