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## **Undercover Highschooler**

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What you didn't want to know

Shari Popejoy & Elle

Injoy, Inc.

Undercover Highschooler

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## Dedication

This book is dedicated to the memory and vision of

Scott Jett

February 8, 1975 - September 12, 2008

“Where there is no vision, the people perish: but he that keepeth the law, happy is he.”  
Proverbs 29:18 KJV

A teacher who taught tomorrow’s leaders how to make a difference in today’s youth.

For inspiring me to do things I didn’t think I could do, and believing me to be things I didn’t  
think I could be!

-Elle-

## Introduction

This book tells of the experiences of a seventeen-year-old girl who goes to public school for the first time. Her journal-like entries recount her perceptions of what she experienced when Undercover Highschooler she observed the students in that environment. She shares her opinions about the effect of public school on the students, as compared to the students she’d observed who were home educated.

Interspersed between her journal entries are reflections on homeschooling by homeschool mom, Shari Popejoy, who has homeschooled her three children over the last fifteen years. Shari has worked with hundreds of home educated students and parents while coordinating a not-for-profit homeschool organization, and directing the Fine Arts Department for a large homeschool co-op. She also manages Oh Joy!, a blog for homeschool families, is a columnist for Home Educating Family Magazine, and contributor to the Home Educating Family blog and review team.

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The book begins with Elle's first day of school.

*Elle's entries are formatted with this font.*

Shari's entries are formatted with this font.

## **First Day of School,**

**January 5**

*Today was my first day at school. I was so excited and nervous! Unfortunately it was also finals day, from the second quarter, and I got to witness all the kids at their worst. For the most part I forgot their names, but I remember several Undercover Highschooler of them.*

*A bunch of the kids have attitudes. They all yelled at Mrs. Daly a lot, because they couldn't remember what they Undercover Highschooler had learned. I heard several new words today. I finally learned the "F" word. I went my whole seventeen years of life without hearing that word. Once you hear it you can't go back, though.*

*One of the kids, I think it was Jon yelled, and told Mrs. Daly she was the devil. I couldn't believe he would have so little respect for her. Several kids would yell across the room Undercover Highschooler "Hey, Daly, come here!". They don't speak to her in a very nice manner, and don't give her the respect she deserves. Most of them just treat her like she is one of them, but not really in the chummy sort of manner, just in a manner that allows them to say whatever they want to her, or about her.*

*This afternoon was a shocker! I met all the students. Luckily I wasn't the only new one. Another guy, Brian, started Graphic Arts today. Most of them all seemed really nice, I don't know them yet, though.*

*Today I got Undercover Highschooler to sit in the front room, which wasn't so bad, except one girl, Undercover Highschooler I think her name was Sheila, kept ranting and raving about how her boyfriend was cheating on her and having sex with another "chick". Mrs. Daly would tell her to cut it out, but as soon as Mrs. Daly would leave, she would be back at it again. She was getting all hyped up, and mad because she thought he was cheating on her. Does she have so little respect for herself to think she deserves a guy who won't stay loyal?*

*I don't believe any of these relationships are for life, they are just for convenience, so the guys Undercover Highschooler can get what they want out of the girls, and the girls can get what they want from the guys. It's such a meaningless way to live.*

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*It was sort of humorous - one question on the final exam required them to multiply 5 X 6. So the four girls in the front room were trying to figure it out. I didn't want to butt in and Undercover Highschooler tell them that it was 30, but I was pretty tempted. Between all four girls they couldn't figure it out, and finally someone came Undercover Highschooler up with the genius idea to use the calculator on Undercover Highschooler their phones. It still took them a little bit, but I think they finally came up with it :D.*

*One girl, Lori, seems pretty nice, but she has a nasty mouth on her! She's constantly cussing, even when she's not mad, she just does it because she can....It confuses me.*

## **Out of The Nest**

Elle is getting ready for her senior year of high school. At every stage of Undercover Highschooler her development we have provided more and more responsibility and opportunity for her as she has proven herself capable and ready. We started when she was ten by sending her off for a week at a time with grandparents on trips and visits. She could choose to take some school along, or catch up at home later.

When she was little, her independence was limited to going into the store by Undercover Highschooler herself, but as she has grown we've given her more responsibility, Undercover Highschooler and now she is handling the completion of more difficult projects.

When she was fifteen she decided to start a cake decorating business to earn money for an expensive camp she wanted to attend. She later decided that the camp wasn't where she wanted to spend her money, and is Undercover Highschooler saving her money for her education. She keeps up the cake decorating business, maintains a blog, and is learning about advertising and pricing, and how to reinvest her profits into tools of the trade. She specializes in custom designs, and her cakes are usually one-of-a-kind creations.

Currently she is beginning to do the graphic design for a small family business; it's a job she can do from home, even after she marries and has children.

When she needed some more formal instruction in graphic design, we began Undercover Highschooler to look into educational options like on-line programs, community college, and industry-based workshops.

Then we discovered a vo-tech program through our local school district. It was nearby, and led by one of the best teachers in the state, who was willing to take Elle under her wing and even arranged a flexible schedule for us. The only catch was that we had to enroll her in our local public school to participate in the vo-tech classes. She didn't have to Undercover Highschooler

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go onto that campus, or take other required courses, but could drive a few miles to the regional vo-tech campus that was near our home. She was still a homeschooler, but enrolled Undercover Highschooler in the public school for graphic arts classes.

We knew she would face some new challenges going into a classroom setting for formal instruction. In the course of her schooling she had taken many classes, but nothing as routine as a daily program with assignments and outside assessments.

We didn't anticipate any problems with her joining the class mid-year, and welcomed a new opportunity for her to learn new skills. She didn't have any trouble making new friends, and was socially well-adjusted. Although we knew she would learn a lot about life and other people, she was ready for the adventure. This was just one more step toward independence for her. She was seventeen, and it was time to venture a little further from the nest.

Now, I'll admit that she had lived a sheltered life, by most standards. We guided the selection of her friends by setting up activities with the girls we thought would enhance her, challenge her, and be good examples to her. She participated in co-ed activities and classes with other students that were well-supervised and wholesome.

Because network TV was unpredictably inappropriate, we substituted it with a huge library of DVD's, videos, and satellite programming, so she hadn't been educated in the pop culture, or heard foul language or seen much media that was wasn't specifically geared for her age range. Her extended family was conservative and balanced, and her community was in the middle of the Bible belt.

She really went into the classes with other high school students with a fresh eye. She had grown up sheltered from any pressure to form or recognize stereotypes, bigotry, social class distinction, and cliques. We had taught her to think, and question, and examine everything practically, logically and analytically, and had not brainwashed her into our way of thinking. Undercover Highschooler We had created a certain environment, but now she was free to explore another one.

All values could be questioned, and she knew she would be free to choose her own path when she left our home. Now was the perfect time to research and examine a bigger world, with the safety net of parental support and guidance to catch her if Undercover Highschooler she needed it..

She was ready to meet a new peer group. Everyone has a peer group, where they feel most comfortable. For some it is at work, or within their community, or church, or a special interest group Undercover Highschooler or club or sport. Rarely in life, are we grouped with a random sampling of people our exact age and required to complete the same task and then graded, compared, ranked, labeled and assessed, as we are while attending school.

She had many friends her own age. We met regularly with hundreds of students, and from these students, she chose a group of friends that she liked to hang out with more frequently. They talked Undercover Highschooler on the phone, chatted by internet, went to movies,

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experimented with hair, make-up and clothes, went shopping together, and formed a girl band. Instead of seeing these friends on a daily basis, we arranged full afternoons or days of activities every week or two.

Occasionally they experienced petty annoyances, but generally her peer group was made up of people who had similar character, beliefs, values, and who supported one another. I rarely heard of any mean girl stuff, and the boys were trained to be gentlemen, although some weren't catching on as quickly as others.

Undercover Highschooler

So, there was our bright, cheerful, naive and cautiously-optimistic-leaning-toward-slightly-gullible daughter going into a public school setting. Undercover Highschooler Although we had long ago abandoned any hope that public education could be fixed, we were going to accept a segment of it for our own particular use for one semester.

## Undercover Highschooler

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