

News Column – Donna Krug, District Director and Family and Consumer Science Agent - Cottonwood Extension

Self-Care is an Important Part of a Healthy Lifestyle

A few years ago I wrote an Extension publication titled, “Action Plan for Healthy Living.” While much of the fact sheet focuses on improving eating habits and adding physical exercise to ones’ daily routine, the importance of Self-care cannot be overlooked. Taking time for self is so important in this fast paced world we live in. Getting adequate sleep, surrounding yourself with positive people and managing stressors in your life are all important components of Self-care.

In early April my husband, John, and I set out on a road trip to catch up with family and friends. Our goal was to take in a healthy dose of “Self-care” along the way and come home renewed and energized. I planned an itinerary that would allow for some stops to take in sights along the way. Catching up with my 93-year-old Aunt Beth was our first stop. Still able to live in her own home and staying active in her churches sewing circle gives her the determination to carry on. Our next stop was to visit a cousin and her family in a Nashville suburb. It was so good to see Michelle doing well after her year-long treatment of breast cancer. She is motivated to eat healthy and stay active so that she can enjoy her busy family. We even got to watch Samuels’ street hockey practice and flag football game during our brief visit.

Our next stopover was to spend a couple of days with an Aunt and Uncle in Northeast Georgia. The two-story cedar cabin they built in a heavily wooded area is about the most peaceful place I’ve been to. We met Del and Sue’s church family and just enjoyed the beautiful dogwoods and azaleas that were everywhere. When we left Del and Sue’s place we purposely avoided the Atlanta traffic and meandered along less traveled roads through small town America. It took a bit longer but my nerves were intact!

After catching up with a dear friend in Gainesville, FL, we made it to our destination for a week of relaxation. Our youngest Son, Matt, moved to Southern Florida two years ago. Several visits to the beach provided wonderful salt water foot baths and beautiful sunsets. Matt works for the Florida Extension Service so during our visit he took us to an open house of an Extension Office that was heavily damaged by Hurricane Irma, nearly 2 years ago. It was fun interacting with staff and hearing their story about the damaging storm. We enjoyed the staff picnic that coincided with Matt’s birthday before we started the long trip home.

Taking the southern route, we saw remnants of last fall’s storms in the panhandle of Florida. Our final adventure was to meet up with our good friends for a couple of days and explore New Orleans. Walt and Cheryl had lived there 40+ years ago but still knew their way around. We experienced a street car ride through the historic area of New Orleans, walking to Jackson Square, which was near our hotel, and touring a historic cemetery. (yes, cemetery!) A visit to a plantation and enjoying a couple evenings of jazz rounded out our unique experience.

Taking a self-care trip can make a huge difference in your life. Even if you’re not feeling particularly stressed, getting away for a weekend every now and then can help you disconnect, relax, and be rejuvenated. Take time for yourself in the month ahead!

If you would like a copy of the “Action Plan for Healthy Living” publication, I am happy to share.

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