

Happy 2019 from Buckingham Manor!

What a year! After ten years of active involvement in the community of Emporia, KS, we sold our house in July and pulled up our roots and moved to a modest apartment in a pretentiously named building in Omaha, NE. During 2018 we had visits from Ben's Uncle Ken, friend Malinda and her daughters, two of Jessie's doctoral classmates, and the MIT cross-country cycling team, along with both sets of parents. We celebrated Jessie's grandpa's 90th birthday, her brother Josh's masters degree, Ben's parents' 50th wedding anniversary, and weddings of Jessie's classmate Melanie and cousin Amy. We went to 20-year reunions of Ben's college and Jessie's high school. We visited Eureka Springs, AR and Orlando and Miami, FL as well as Pittsburgh, PA and Milwaukee, WI. And we walked the dogs about a thousand times.

Ben:

This time last year I had just started chemo + immunotherapy for my chronic lymphocytic leukemia. My final treatment was in May, and we're happy to say I'm now in full remission! I was able to carry on with many of my activities during treatment, including co-teaching a permaculture design certification class in Lawrence, KS and helping with tornado cleanup in Eureka. When our friend Matt came for his annual visit, Jessie was out of town, so Matt and I explored Lawrence instead of Emporia. When I didn't feel active, I stayed home and worked on the computer, polishing off data migration projects for the American Association for the Advancement of Science and Seventh Generation as well as my continuing work for the Unitarian Universalist Association. Three months after chemo, I joined our friend Diane and her daughter Helen for an unforgettable three days of hiking on the VA "tunnel of trees" section of the Appalachian Trail. In the fall I went to a permaculture convergence on the Pine Ridge reservation in South Dakota and presented at a Drupal conference in Des Moines. I ended the year in Austin helping our friend Marisa care for her bedridden parents in the same room where they let me convalesce 14 years ago.

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Jessie:

Spring semester I served as interim chair of the Counselor Education department at Emporia State University (ESU), while the chair was on sabbatical. I produced, directed, edited and appeared in a short documentary film about Art Therapy, its use with Autism Spectrum Disorders (ASDs), and the need for licensure in Kansas. I completed my final colloquium for my doctoral degree and am proud to say I am officially ABD (all but dissertation), after presenting my proposal in August. I began my research and created a Website to present it (arttherapyandneurodiversity.com). I presented at conferences including ESU's Art Therapy Discovery Day in Emporia, Mt. Mary University's (MMU) annual symposium in Milwaukee and the American Art Therapy Association annual conference in Miami. I taught a weekend course about Art Therapy and ASDs at MMU. Last but not least, I left my job as Associate Professor at ESU and took a position as a Program Therapist for a Partial Hospitalization Program (Intensive Outpatient) for 5-12 year olds at Immanuel Hospital in Omaha. I've temporarily left private practice, but not for long! It's been a busy and bittersweet year, but it's good to be home in NE, and I'm thankful Ben feels it is home too!

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