

# Happy 2018 from our Blue Boat Home!

2017 was not an easy year. Like a lot of our friends, we kicked off the year by attending the Women's March in Topeka, and we stayed active throughout the year in local and national groups aiming to resist the Trump administration's agenda. We had plenty of good times as well, though: Planet Comicon in KC with Jessie's parents; cousin Samantha's wedding in Indianapolis; taking a train from Colorado to California with Ben's parents and sister Becca's family; hosting nephew Nicholas, friend Matt, and Jessie's brother Josh; and watching the solar eclipse; and exploring Milwaukee during Jessie's doc school session.

We also found time to renovate our bedroom and dining room, so we've now remodeled every room of the house. We helped our friend Diane with a baby shower and then with her baby, Helen! And of course we visited our parents in Oklahoma and Nebraska several times.

## **Ben**

Green Door Recycling went out with a bang in February when our trailer was hit by a train and destroyed just days after I'd announced I was ending the service, having not found a buyer as I'd hoped. I've stayed busy, though, with Web work for the Unitarian Universalist Association, Vermont Law School, Seventh Generation, and the American Association for the Advancement of Science. I also co-taught a permaculture design certification course in Lawrence in the spring and plan to do so again this spring. Over the summer I supervised a Grinnell College intern for the UUA.

During late summer I was training for a 97-mile rail-trail bike ride in early October, but about a week before the ride I started feeling unaccustomed fatigue. Blood tests confirmed that the chronic lymphocytic leukemia (CLL) I was diagnosed with back in 2014 was progressing, and I began chemotherapy in early December. The good news is, the chemo is working great with only very mild side effects. I'm looking forward to being my old self again for plenty of new adventures. Oh, and the anemia didn't stop me from completing half the ride!

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## **Jessie**

I started out the year with two trips to Chicago to continue supervising a study of art therapy as treatment for autism. Although the study is not yet complete, in November my research partner Dr. Theresa VanLith and I received the Rawley Silver Research Award, the highest research award in the field, at the national conference in Albuquerque.

I was also recognized in April as Outstanding Academic Advisor at Emporia State University, where I continued to teach and supervise students in art therapy and clinical counseling.

I continued my progress toward a professional Doctorate in Art Therapy degree at Mt. Mary University in Milwaukee. I submitted my dissertation prospectus in late November and look forward to proposing my dissertation this summer. I am also serving as interim chair for the department of Counselor Education at ESU for my internship experience this spring.

I continue to enjoy part-time private practice work. In my limited spare time, I've enjoyed getting back into painting with acrylic on canvas and experimenting with new techniques.

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