

Cable Connection

ALPHA IOTA-OKLAHOMA

Adrianne and her family spend five months on the road adventuring across the country.

Pandemic creates opportunity for RV life for a spontaneous family of four

by Emily Hayes, Eta Delta-North Florida

What does HGTV, a worldwide pandemic and an RV parked in storage have in common? All three led to a five-month adventure for **Adrianne Hodges, Alpha Iota-Oklahoma**, and her family, which began in March 2021 and wrapped in August.

"My husband and I saw an episode of House Hunters four or five years ago, and that family had taken a gap year and gone to Europe," Adrienne said. "We looked at each other after the show, and said, 'Oh, we're interested in that.'"

However, the two didn't see how anything like that was possible — that is, until COVID-19 hit. "It was already a weird school year anyway and then my husband's company sold in November," Adrianne said. "We'd bought an RV in June 2020 and realized this would be an exciting time to connect in our marriage and in our children's lives."

Neither Adrienne nor her husband Mike worked while on the road, which Adrienne acknowledged as a luxury. She recognizes that COVID has been tragic for many people but appreciates the opportunity it gave them. “Given this weird, last 18 months, it was a no brainer,” she said. “We knew that this was the time to go.”

While 10-year-old Claire and 8-year-old Graham were both nervous to leave

their friends and extracurriculars, they were already accustomed to a disruption to their normal lives. Claire especially loved the spontaneity of life on the road.

Although hiking and exploring was the crux of the trip, the family also explored cities, museums, zoos, and baseball parks.

"Claire loved when we were in a new place, not having something scheduled, and just being able to say, 'Hey, let's go check this out,'" Adrienne said. "She really loved Yellowstone, and Graham really loved Arches National Park."

There was plenty of downtime, too, that included schoolwork, laundry, meals, meeting and hanging out with other full-time RV families. "That downtime was necessary," Adrienne said, "because so many come back and need a vacation from their vacation."

"Some of the parks were just so busy, and it forced us to slow down and only do things for a few hours a day," she said. "That made us spend some time just sitting at the picnic table playing games, or doing something simple like exploring different grocery stores."

Overall the Hodges covered 17,000 miles, 13 states and 18 national parks. They viewed the highest and lowest points in the



continental U.S. (in the same day) and crossed the continental divide six times.

They experienced record-breaking temperatures in Utah and three rounds of the license plate game. Sights included the Petrified Forest, Winslow, Arizona, the Hoover Dam, Death Valley, the Las Vegas strip, Route 66, the San Diego Zoo, Carlsbad Caverns, Chase Field, the Alamo, and dozens more.

"We're kind of National Park people so we geared towards national parks," Adrienne said, "but we were happy to see a lot of other sites along the way, big and small."

So what's next for the Hodges family? They bought a new house while on the road and just recently moved in. The kids are remembering how to sleep in separate rooms again, and are enjoying simple pleasures like taking evening strolls down their new street. In addition to a new home and a new school, the family will have memories and lessons to last a lifetime.

"The world can stop and you can either create a different path, make a different plan, and be good with it, or you can get stuck," said Adrienne. "And I think for us it was like, wow, let's use this opportunity." 

