

June 2018

Dear Family & Friends of Diamond Willow,

Happy Father's Day to all of our Dads! No matter how old you are it is fun to think of special times with special men in your life.

These special times may be from decades ago. These special times may be recently. These special men may be a dad, grandpa, great-grandpa, uncle, brother or cousin. Sometimes, these special men are not blood related, but just as equally special. These special men may be a stepdad, neighbor, teacher, pastor, priest, employer or a friend.

As the decades pass, the list of who we meet often grows and this is a wonderful thing. We are fortunate to keep connected with generations of all ages. This gives us the opportunity to remember to enjoy all the moments and phases of life. There are so many phases we forget about once we are done with them. Once we see people raising kids, taking vacations, packing campers, counting down to retirement time, we remember what it was like and remember the moments when we did it too. Sometimes, you may wonder how you actually did it all.

A few weeks ago, I had the opportunity to babysit five kids. The kids were from 2-10 years of age. The moment I pulled up to pick them up you could feel their energy and excitement. Instantly, my mind was cleared and my attention was now on five little jumping beans. I call them my little M&M's, since every child has a name that starts with an M. As the oldest straps in all the car seats, I am reminded how clueless I am. I certainly do not know how to work the car seats of today. Things have changed since I had my babies 21 years ago.

For me, there is no greater joy than the purity and laughter of children. Their minds are not cluttered. They remember to sing even if they are off pitch. They love to skip, jump, and run in the grass barefooted. They love to go frog catching and build forts.

I had the opportunity to go frog catching with five kids. The kids were surprised when they saw a pond across the street from my home, with the neighbor kids' catching frogs. Soon enough, we were at the pond too. Our pants were rolled up, shoes were off, socks were thrown and kids were running to find a net. There were smiles everywhere. Suddenly, I felt like I was 9 years old again, back at our farm. Those were wonderful times, and hearing all the frogs reminded me of many nights with an open window lying awake to their loud croaks.

As the kids ate a frozen Popsicle by the pond, one said, "This is the best day ever". With a frog in one hand and a Popsicle in the other, life looked pretty good to this 7 year old child. With a 2 year old on one side of my lap and a 3 year old on the other, life looked pretty good to me too.

After a full day of playing on the slide, and frog catching the car ride was much quieter on the way home. In fact when I looked in the rear view mirror, the 9 year old girl said, "This

always happens!" I said, "Oh, What is that?" Well, apparently, the other children always fall asleep. After a few moments of silence, she perked up and began chatting away. She now realized she did not have to take turns waiting to tell me her school stories. Now, she had my full and undivided attention to which she loved.

So, when we play balloon toss, with noodles you may see kids use in swimming pools we laugh and celebrate the "kid" in all of us. After all, age is just a number. Take a moment to take your socks off and let your toes touch the grass, it feels amazing. We all need to soak up as much Vitamin D as we can, while we can. Take a moment to go outside for fresh air and look at Mother Nature. Remember to hydrate and drink lots of water each day. Sometimes, just watching the birds with a glass of lemonade is wonderful. **Better yet, watch other people mow the grass, and smile because you no longer need to do it. Life is good! There are many great joys in growing older.**

Enjoy the season,

Natalie Zeleznikar, CEO