

Article for 7/15/15

It's so easy to be so wrapped up in our own little world, isn't it? We get in a routine and interact with our own little social circle, our own work group, our own church family, and our own family. Sometimes we don't realize that the person next to us at the post office counter, or behind us at Wal-Mart, even exists – much less what they might be going through or fighting for.

I was lucky enough to move outside of my own little world, if only for a few brief hours, this past Friday to enjoy Fun Fridays with some wonderful people in our community! Young and old, small and tall, Baptist and Catholic, with everything in between! We all gathered under the fantastic leadership of our extension office and many fantastic volunteers (I wish I knew each of your names to include!). Chadd Caperton and Leslie Lazenby work tirelessly with many programs for our youth, and I must admit, that I can certainly understand WHY they do it, but sometimes I don't quite know HOW they do it! I was TIRED after just a few hours, but that didn't slow them – or the other volunteers -- down.

A few of my grandchildren joined me, too, (which is always a blessing) as I shared a little of my world with the children and adults there. I was able to work with four different age groups to help them see inside the emergency management and 9-1-1 worlds. We talked about having a family disaster plan that really is the same basically for most emergencies, but can be expanded or contracted, depending on the situation. We crawled around on the floor to practice getting safely out of a room that is on fire, not hiding in our closets, staying accountable for our buddies, and meeting safely at a designated place outside of the home. We talked about how to shelter in place and learned that we could seal our doors and windows with plastic and duct tape, if a hazardous release occurred. We were reminded how not to panic when we must make a 9-1-1 call for help, and we talked about knowing our home addresses, posting the numbers where emergency responders can easily see them, and listening to the dispatchers instructions before hanging up. We played a game as we learned about creating a Ready Kit; compete with water, food, medications, personal items, etc., that we can use when the power is out or if we need to remain self-sufficient for several days. Each age group added their own flavor to the discussions and we were even able to consider our plans in case Zombies head our way! (Thanks, Alston and Bailey!)

Children are our future. Sometimes we just have to take the time and venture outside of our own little world and give of ourselves to others. What we gain back is way more than we give, and we can only hope that we make a difference to someone. Thank you to each and every one who participated by volunteering and allowing your children to participate. If you haven't volunteered or your children haven't experienced Fun Fridays, you might want to check with Leslie and get involved. It's quite the experience! As always, Be Safe Out There!