

CHANGE OF PLANS

On a recent road trip across Kansas with friends, we stopped to eat breakfast at a café in a small town. The waiter was friendly and we struck up a conversation. As we looked over the menu we watched him sneak over to the place where an older gentleman had just left his hat while he filled his plate at the lunch buffet. At the table the waiter placed a cupcake with a candle. He lit the candle and snuck away. The man came to sit down with his meal, we sang “Happy Birthday.” That is small town. And it’s something that would happen right here in Sabetha.

Growing up in a small town (McPherson, population 10,000+), I knew one thing for certain, I would not be living in a small town as an adult. I knew I would live in the city so I enrolled in the MITEC student teaching program to prepare for teaching in the inner city. Student teaching at Highland Park High School was an excellent experience, but it was at this time I realized that I would be marrying a farmer from Sabetha, Kansas. Talk about a change of plans! Instead of learning to navigate the inner city traffic, I had to learn to navigate the gravel roads in between farms and the learn difference between soybeans and green beans. Northeast Kansas until that time, had been only where my family drove through to go visit my grandparents in Iowa. I truly believed that Iowa was populated entirely by grandparents and old people because that is who I saw when we went there. We finally met some young couple friends in Sabetha and settled into rural living and I never have regretted my plan being interrupted. In fact, it was just one of “my plans” that were interrupted by someone who had better plans for me.

As I searched for writing inspiration, I read a quote by author Joyce Dennys who said, “Living in a small town...is like living in a large family of rather uncongenial relations. Sometimes it’s fun, and sometimes it’s perfectly awful, but it’s always good for you. People in large towns are like only-children.” Even though it was not my plan, living in a small town has been good for me. I believe the positives far outweigh the negatives. In the 60’s and 70’s I was interested in making a positive change and saw that was more possible in an inner city. Today, I still am interested in making a positive change. GSCF was born from people just like me who strive to make positive change in our small town. Big city or small town, the opportunity to make a positive change is there, all we have to do is be a part of it!