

Aging Gracefully In The 21st Century The Choice is Mine

By: Julie Davis

As a society we place an increased value on many things as they grow older. Historic buildings, fine art and music, choice wines and ancient redwood trees all seem to gain importance as they age.

It was a different matter when it came to people. Oh sure, the occasional spry 100 year old person would gain 15 minutes of media attention, usually with an emphasis on what an exception they were to the image we had of “elderly people.”

I believe that aging gracefully in the 21st century is both an individual and group responsibility.

I can't deny I'm aging. My snow white hair, the “laugh lines” around my mouth and most of all, the “grandma flab” on my upper arms is proof I'm not a kid any more.

Some aspects of aging I can't control. The influence of heredity factors must be accepted gracefully, but I can choose to emphasize the good and minimize the bad.

Good Health is something to be desired at any age and is not to be taken for granted.

I have decided to work hard to maintain my health. A structured exercise program three times a week helped me lose 20 pounds of excess weight and keep it off. A proper diet, regular medical exams and common sense about safety issues helps to keep me well and happy.

My emotional and intellectual health is a responsibility I share with my family and community.

The fantastic opportunities available through our many senior centers leave no excuse to stay home and hide. After one of my sweet little granddaughters offered to teach me how to use a computer I decided to sign up for a beginning computer class at our Murray Heritage Senior Center, I'm proud to say that, after two classes, I enjoy using my new computer.

When I became a widow I wasn't sure the best way to re-join society, The Heritage Center provided that chance with a fun bus trip to Nevada and St. George. I left in a bus full of strangers and came back with a load of new friends. Since that trip I have taken part in several other Heritage activities that have provided me great pleasure.

There are many ways for a senior citizen to grow and learn in the 21st century. With the increased life span we may enjoy, it is up to us to take advantage of the medical and social benefits that are available to us. Whether we choose to take part in the wide range of activities at our senior centers or volunteer in church and civic functions, we must, as individuals, make the choice best suited to our needs and abilities.

With some thought and planning, we can continue, with grace and dignity, upon our journey into the 21st century.