

Our Trip Takes Us

By Becky Hirn

A couple weeks ago, I got an SOS call from my brother. He was in northern New Mexico. We were in southern Arizona. Just like so many cross country moving trips, his was not going as planned. He and his U-haul were stuck in a tiny town outside of Albuquerque. Twenty-two hours from home, we were the closest people he could call for help. We packed up and headed his way as soon as he said the word. Even with eight hours between us, I felt lucky to be in the right place at the right time.

A couple phone calls to mechanic friends, and a repair shop and a few hundred dollars got him back on the road. We followed him to Phoenix. After just a couple days in the country's fifth largest city, I started to realize why so many people flock to it. It's no secret really. It's the weather.

Even after our trip to the Grand Canyon, we came back for more Phoenix weather. While the rest of the country got rain and snow and other varieties of February weather, we stuck with Phoenix. So now we're very familiar with the area. I'm starting to recognize the street names and the suburbs. I enjoy the way the saguaro cacti stand tall with their arms sticking out as if to wave at me. I also love the city parks and libraries. One day we spent the majority of the day at Cactus Park. Dan, the kids and I exercised on the fitness trail, doing sit-ups and attempting pull-ups at various stations. We also threw the ball around on baseball diamond. At our campsite in the Estrella Mountain Regional Park, we hiked up into the mountains after dinner one evening. The bonus was that the usual wildlife in the Sonoran Desert, scorpions and rattlesnakes, are in winter hibernation. Once again, I realized we were in the right place, Phoenix, at the right time, February.

The other reason we decided to stay in the city had to do with Dan's bucket list. As a fan of the game, he's always wanted to go to the Spring Training games. Initially, we figured we'd miss it by a couple weeks. We would have moved on to Nevada or California when the pitchers and catchers started showing up for practice in Arizona. But with the change in course to help out my brother, the lure of the weather, and the flexibility our trip offers, we chose to stay and make Dan's dream of attending Spring Training come true. On top of that, since we planned to linger for awhile, we both applied for the temporary jobs at the Spring Training facilities. Amazingly, we got them. We were hired to work in the team shop on opposite days for the duration of the pre-season. So for the month of March we're adding a new chapter to where our trip is taking us. It's taking us out to the ball games. It's also putting us in the right place to see my parents when they come to visit my brother next month. We haven't seen them since the holidays.

A friend told me the other day that although we didn't know it, Dan and I have been preparing for this trip all of our lives. The things that seem to simply work out are actually how they are supposed to be. Maybe that explains the feeling that I get about being in the right place at the right time. We're just following the map we charted.

Becky Hirn is a Delphos resident traveling America with her family for a year. She documents the journey at www.ourtriptakesus.com. Follow the Hirn family in photos, blogs, on Facebook and Twitter. Or learn how to partner with the trip as an advertiser. You may e-mail Becky at beckyhirn@ourtriptakesus.com