

At the young age of 72, Pat Curtner is a shining example of what it means to “Engage at Every Age.”

Daily, Pat attends MU Adult Day Connection where she is a social butterfly. The center offers an array of activities; and Pat loves to participate in all of them. “There’s art, music, and people to annoy....I mean talk to!” Pat says jokingly. Pat and her peers often gather around a table at the center and sing together. She looks forward to the music program that the center offers, because a talented musician visits the center and sings with the participants. “We sing up a storm and we join in whether they want us to or not and have a great time together,” Pat exclaims. Pat and her peers also like to work on puzzles. When the weather is nice, they sit outside and enjoy the fresh air and sunshine together. If the staff at the center need any help, she is happy to assist. She says, “It keeps me out of trouble.”

MU Adult Day Connection started almost 30 years ago as a partnership between University of Missouri and citizens of Boone County. The non-profit center has provided care for more than 700 individuals during that time. Pat’s husband also attended the center and it enabled him to live at home about two more years. Now Pat attends the center.

Pat loves working with children. Last summer, Pat began helping out with the Roger G. Combs Language Preschool in the building a couple of days a week for an hour and a half. “There are all kinds of things you can do with the kids. We made whales the other day. I am hoping to get to read to them because I love to read to kids. I taught my granddaughter to read.” She helps them with craft activities and likes to sit and watch them play for a bit in hopes that they will come and talk to her. Pat says working with the kids is the best part of her day. Staff at the center says that she always comes back smiling. When asked how “Giving Back” to the community and others makes her feel, Pat said it makes her feel “as high as a kite.”

Pat has 2 children – a son who lives in Maryland and daughter, Jennifer, who is a teacher at West Middle School. Pat has two grown grandchildren, ages 16 and 18, who also live in Maryland with her son and daughter-in-law. Her daughter, Jennifer, is a teacher and considers all of her students to be her kids. Pat says that a bunch of them even call her “Grandma Pat,” which she loves. Pat visits her daughter’s school every morning and catches the city bus to get to the center. Pat “chatters” with the kids while waiting for the bus in the mornings. Pat also helps out with summer school at West Middle School – something she continues to do after many years. During summer school, she assists the teachers with whatever they need help with from sharpening pencils and gathering papers to making copies. She especially enjoys helping teach students to make nutritious foods in the microwave during the cooking unit.

Pat enjoys doing all kinds of crafts, but especially enjoys counted cross stitch, needle tatting, and embroidery. She says she usually gives away the items that she makes. Remaining active in the church has always been important to Pat. Over the years her health has slowed her down a bit but with a positive attitude and determination, she keeps moving. Pat says, “We keep our hearts and heads active and working properly when we get out and interact with the people in the community. If you keep busy, you’ll feel healthier and you’ll be healthier.” She adds with her usual lightheartedness, “If you start sitting around on your thumb, you get bored, cranky and ornery.”