

Story of Faith: Susan Boteler

Life is what happens when we're busy making other plans. My plan had been to work at Emory as a nurse for at least another decade, but in 2013 a health issue derailed me. My physician strongly encouraged me to step away and retire. Do you know I fretted for a year before I took the advice? We plan. God grins. We plan anyway!

I clearly remember the Sunday when Patti Lanford mentioned to the congregation that a weekend Thornwell mission trip was coming up. Since I was no longer working (and still fretting), the first thought that popped into my head was that I didn't have an excuse. I went. After the campus tour and close to tears, I asked the Thornwell volunteer coordinator what the kids did during the summer. She said they had a pool. I said we had a boat on a lake. This has been an infusion of pure joy in my life.

"I need to put more meaning in my life", I told Gary a couple of years into my furlough. I placed an ad in our local Dunwoody paper, advertising my nursing services, looking for a senior citizen to care for. I was hired by a 94 year old WWII dive bomber pilot. I'm now in my fifth year of home health nursing. I've laughed and cried and have had a glorious time. Best job ever.

I was flipping through TV channels one day and a story aired on a non-profit in Chicago called Humble Design. As there was no affiliate in Atlanta, I searched for homelessness in Dunwoody and found Family Promise of North Fulton DeKalb; turned out their day center was 2 miles from my house. My eyes were opened to the plight of situational homelessness and the needs of these most deserving families. And once again, this experience has enriched my life immeasurably. Had I still been working full time, I wouldn't have volunteered; no time.

My life didn't work out as *I had planned*, and I thank God every day! Proverbs 19:21 – Many are the plans in a person's heart, but it is the Lord's purpose that prevails.

Susan Boteler