

Along the Welcome Trail: (September 2015)

We were invited to a dinner party recently at the home of close friends. I met them and their then-college-student son when I was doing welcome visits in a new neighborhood. She was out walking when I stopped and asked if she had her welcome visit yet. "No," she said, unsure what a welcome visit was. I told her as we walked together, and I learned that she was originally from Belgium, and her husband originally from Africa, and that they had moved from another part of Delaware County. She invited me in to their beautiful new home (they bought the model, furnished and decorated). It was about 7:30 p.m. At 10:30 p.m. I called Bob, my husband, to tell him I was having a perfectly wonderful time with a great family, and that I would be home soon, but don't worry. That was 16 years ago, and the friendship has only grown.

The dinner party included neighbors across the street. When that couple walked in, she looked at me and said "I know you! You visited me when I moved across the street, remember?" I replied, "And the thing which I remember most clearly is that you were 8-1/2 months pregnant with your first child and had to make the move all by yourself, and your husband still had to finish out his job on the other side of the country before he could join you and your baby-to-be!" She said, "That visit was so helpful to me. You introduced me to our friends here, who helped me meet all the other neighbors." "How old is your child, and is it a boy or girl," I asked.

Her daughter is now 14 years old, and both she and I remembered so well that visit. I helped her find an obstetrician, a pediatrician, other medical connections, and all the other local resources she needed. I left my phone number so she could call if she had another connection she needed help with.

It's what we do. We take joy in helping people meet their neighbors, find a dentist, a great restaurant to celebrate the move, and a pizza shop which delivers (very necessary when you're unpacking boxes for days).

As for the friends who hosted the dinner party, they've become some of our dearest friends.