

June 17, 2024
Heidi Darby
Buffalo County Extension
For Immediate Release

Summer is here, time to try something new.

The summer solstice was just last week and now it is time to really get into your summertime mode. During the summer kids have the chance to break out of their routine and try new things. As a kid summer was the time to tackle the high dive board at the pool, speed down the “high” hill on our bikes and move up to the “older” kid’s ball team. So many new adventures each summer. As adults, how often do we try new things? There is nothing that says we can’t. What new things are you interested in trying? Have you thought of reading a new book genre? What about testing out a new activity? Is it time to give a new type of music a try? Yes “new” is the key word for summer.

I think it took me two summers to make it up the high diving board ladder without crying. Really it was like 80 feet off the ground or only 10, doesn’t matter it was super scary for me. It took a lot of coaxing by my mom and my own bravery to make it up the ladder and off the board. Sometimes we must be brave to try new things. As an example, I’ve never really liked boating or deep water. I’m leery if I can’t see the bottom. I can swim but still a little apprehensive in deeper water.

One spring we attended an Outdoor Expo and our kids got to try kayaking. They really enjoyed it and that ended with a kayak being added to our daughter’s birthday list. She saved her money and bought a kayak. I quickly learned that we couldn’t just have one. I couldn’t just sit on the side and watch her paddle away, alone. Really, someone had to keep her safe. So, we bought another one so one of us could go with her. I was super nervous about leaving the edge of the lake but in time I just kept going further and further from the edge. It’s so easy to get distracted by the fish or keeping up with her that I was not even thinking about how far I had come. We now have enough for all of us, and we love kayaking. I love that I can watch the fish and see them swimming around in the water. I will spend hours

floating around the edges of the lake and watching the fish. It just took a little bravery and a bit of time to become comfortable with it and now it's one of my favorite things to do.

You don't have to face your fears and try kayaking but there are other activities that you can try that would be "new" to you. If you are a reader, try a different genre of books. I really like biographies and history-based novels. I've never been much of a fan of science fiction or thrillers. I tend to read the same type of book all the time. One summer our daughter was reading "The Selection" Series by Kiera Cass. It is a young adult fiction series about people living in a caste system and how it affected their lives. Those in caste One were royalty and those in caste Seven were laborers etc. In the series, they are trying to select a new Queen from the different castes. It's a mixture between The Bachelor and The Hunger Games. Since it's a Young Adult series, it is clean and not scary. When she asked me to pick up the third book at the library, I realized it must be good if she is this excited about it. I picked up the other books for myself so we could talk about them. It was so much fun. We would talk about how the setting was different than our world, what we thought would happen if something was different and on and on. Once we finished that series, we moved to another and another. It's been fun to have book discussions with her over the years. We have both expanded our reading libraries to include both my choices and hers.

Your summer doesn't have to be filled with your facing your fears and being brave, but it is a good time to try something new. Only you can decide what makes up your list of activities for this short amount of time. Here at the Extension office, we love to hear what people are up to. If your child or grandchild tries something new, we've probably got a class for it at the County Fair. If you try a new recipe and it flops, we even have a "Flop" class. It's a fun class for all those projects that go wrong. Did they try a new cake recipe but add way too much baking soda? Make a poster about what they did wrong and what they learned and submit it to the fair. Chances are, there are others out there that have done or will do the same thing. I love the idea of this class. I remember how terrible my first attempt at

apple pie on my own was. The crust was tough. The apples weren't done. I added way too much cinnamon. In all, it was terrible. But I had the most fun. My grandma was always making pies and she let us help a lot. I thought I was ready to do it myself but clearly, I needed some more lessons. The "Flop" class would have been a perfect place to put my experiences out there for others to see and learn from.

We really hope you have a great summer from those in our office. Enjoy the next couple of months by trying new things, reading new books, and testing new recipes. Let your local Extension Office know if you would like information on submitting any of these experiences to the fair. We would love to hear what "New" things you try this summer.

Heidi Darby

4-H Extension Assistant

Nebraska Extension in Buffalo County

1400 East 34th St. Kearney, NE 68847 308-236-1235