

My 3rd Chapter of Life by John Schaumburg

To be honest I had not heard the phrase “[3rd Chapter of Life](#)” until I heard it from Paul Campbell during one of my visits to [Spirit in the Desert Retreat Center](#). I thought it was a great idea and something to consider, post retirement of course. Then I heard Paul say that we should start thinking of the 3rd Chapter of life around 50, well before we retire.

It started me thinking: What did I have to offer to God’s work during my 3rd Chapter of life? Nothing came to me at first, but then the answer “drove” into my life.

In June of 2014, my grandson Ethan and I were camping at an old family campsite along Tonto creek. I wanted to show Ethan where his “gramps” learned to fish and where my father and mother taught me to enjoy camping and the great outdoors. While I was reminiscing on the past, God had other plans; God was about to reveal a piece of my future vocation.

Ethan and I were setting up our tent when a man in a pickup drove into the campground, stopped at our campsite and asked if he was on the road to Woods Canyon Lake. I told him that he was not and then gave him directions to return to Highway 260 and travel further east. Normally I am not a “chit chat” kind of person around the camp site and Ethan was waiting for me to set up the tent, but then I spotted on his window a decal: “[Project Healing Waters Fly Fishing](#)”.

Just 4 months earlier, I watched a video of Captain Ed Nicholson (Navy) receiving the 2013 Purpose Prize award for his efforts to establish Project Healing Waters Fly Fishing about 10 years into his retirement. He also had received a CNN Hero award. The seed had been planted, but would lie dormant for several months.

When I noticed the decal I asked him about the project. So we began a 30 minute conversation about the Healing Waters and his fly fishing adventures. Eventually we introduced ourselves. His name is Terry.

Terry shared his story that he was a disabled vet who recently joined Project *Healing Waters Fly Fishing*. When he told me that the Phoenix chapter met at All Saints Lutheran in Phoenix, I knew God was up to something.

Before he left for Woods Canyon Lake, I gave him a few flies that worked for me on the lake and suggested a shore line location, at the lake, that a beginning fly fisher might find advantageous.

Project Healing Waters Fly Fishing, Inc., is “a national program dedicated to the physical and emotional rehabilitation of disabled active military service personnel and disabled veterans through fly fishing and associated activities including education and outings.”

The leader for Healing Waters learned from his pastor, of my interest to “someday in the future, after I retire,” volunteer with Healing Waters. He called me and invited me to a meeting of the volunteers. He also asked me if I could help him find a meeting place in the east valley to start a second chapter in the

valley. There is a new VA medical center in the Gilbert area and many disabled veterans live in the east valley. It seemed like a good place to start another chapter.

I asked a pastor friend, if the church he served would be open to hosting Healing Water. Not many days later, he shared that the council of Spirit of Joy Lutheran in Gilbert enthusiastically received and accepted my request. For the past year, Healing Water has been meeting twice a month on Tuesday evenings. We who volunteer have had the joy of serving a dozen or so disabled veterans through our courses on tying flies, casting lessons and actual fishing outings.

What I failed to mention earlier is that fly fishing has been a love of my life since I turned 21. I taught myself both fly fishing and fly tying. It has been my great joy to introduce dozens of people, mostly members of the churches I served as pastor, to their first fly fishing experience. Several of them also learned to tie flies under my tutelage.

God opened doors for me to begin my 3rd Chapter of Life well before I retired. I see Healing Waters as just one of several opportunities that I will have to share in God's great work well into my future retirement. The beautiful thing about this is that God began my 3rd Chapter through one of my great joys and gifts in life, fly fishing.