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Have you ever wanted to travel the country with your family, seeing the sites and “roadschooling” along the way? Well, we’ve been doing so for over a year and having a blast!

About 18 months ago, my husband David, younger daughter Molly (11), and I gave up our home in Laguna Hills, settled our older daughter Megan (19) in college, moved into a 35’ Class A Motorhome with a small car in tow, and headed East!

It was one of those large decisions that kind of decided itself. About a year before we set out fulltime, my husband went on short trip with some coworkers in RVs and witnessed the lifestyle first-hand. He then joined Molly and me in Florida where we were vacationing, and proposed we buy a motorhome to travel in fulltime. I was sitting by a pool, so I was pretty agreeable to anything and not really thinking about all the ins and outs or pros and cons.

We began our search for the perfect rig, then for the perfect toad (aka the car that is towed behind the rig), and then for resources on how other families make this work. We joined a fantastic group called Fulltime Families (found online and on Facebook) and “met” a bunch of people dreaming of this lifestyle, living this lifestyle, and wishing they were still living this lifestyle. And within 4 months we were ready to buy our new “home”!

Since David was already working from home as a software engineer, we just had to make sure he had reliable Internet and cell phone coverage, a place to work, and a bit of quiet. He researched plans for the best coverage and bought the appropriate equipment; replaced the couch in the front of the RV with a comfy office chair and a desk large enough to hold his laptop and copier/printer; and managed to fit in a drawer unit for office supplies.

Packing was a very emotional experience! Having to go from a packed 1400 sqft condo to a less than 300 sqft motorhome with one bedroom, bunk beds, and a teeny bathroom was rough. We passed on tons of things to friends and local charities, put about two bedrooms worth of “stuff” into a storage unit, and crammed as much as we could into the RV. We have continued to purge as we travel - donating many items and sending some things back to the storage unit.

Homeschooling on the road, affectionately referred to as “roadschooling”, was a bit tough for the first seven months. We were still with a charter school and were required to meet face-to-face with our Education Specialist to turn in a Learning Record every twenty days and my daughter was required to participate in state testing. This meant we had to alter travel plans to be back in town by specific dates. We did finish out the school year, but opted to file as a private school for this year and give ourselves the freedom to travel.

Just like when living in a stick and brick home, homeschooling can be individualized for the child and the family. If you take a peek into a zillion homes on wheels, you’ll likely see a zillion different methods of homeschooling. We have met families who follow a very structured

curriculum and put a sign on the door saying “school in session” to keep other kids out; families who only formally school if they stay put for a length of time, perhaps with an online course or workbooks; and families like ours who use no curriculum, just “learn” through living.

One of the best things about travelling fulltime and what we really LOVE about roadschooling is being able to “touch” history! We have crossed the United States three times so far, and are finishing up an amazing six months on the East Coast! This current adventure through Georgia, Indiana, Illinois, Pennsylvania, Washington D.C., Virginia, and North Carolina has accidentally taken on a Civil Rights, Civil War, and Lincoln theme. So far we have visited MLK Jr.’s birthplace in Atlanta, Georgia; explored Lincoln’s boyhood home in Evansville, Indiana; saw a mantle from an inn where Lincoln stayed when he was a travelling lawyer in Illinois; walked and drove all over Gettysburg, Pennsylvania; toured the White House, the Capitol, the Lincoln Memorial, the Ford Theatre, the National Archives, and saw Lincoln’s hat at the Smithsonian in Washington D.C. during election week; visited the Museum of Confederacy and White House in Richmond, Virginia; enjoyed a Christmas in the late 1800s at a small plantation in North Carolina; and went to see the movie “Lincoln”!

The biggest challenge for our family is the fact we only have my younger daughter with us, while the majority of other families travel with three or more children, and she is very often alone. In fact she has gone months without companions other than us. To help with the loneliness, we provide ways for her to stay in touch with old friends (email, cell phone calls and text, SKYPE, online gaming, snail mail); find local activities (caring for horses at a local recue in Georgia) and interesting locations to visit (a week in NYC with just mom); enjoy family time inside (movies, games, puzzles, XBOX) and outside the RV (fishing, biking, geocaching); and search out other families as best as we can, primarily through the Fulltime Families Facebook group. This winter we were all thrilled to spend two months in Florida with over fifteen fulltiming families and at least forty children of all ages, participating in a multitude of activities and making new friends. This really helped raise our spirits and motivated us to keep going.

We do not know how long we will continue this way of life. While we appreciate the change of scenery and fun activities found across the country, we desperately miss our family, friends, and homeschool community. The positives (discovering new places, meeting new people) often outweigh the negatives (the loneliness, long drives, maintenance), but not always and at times not enough. So we will see where the map takes us and continue the journey as long as it is enjoyable!