

Happy 2026 from our Blue Boat Home!

2025 was the year we said goodbye to Jessie's father, Jim. He will be greatly missed by his extended family and the whole community of Manley, NE. We did a lot of traveling together: to SD (with Jessie's mom Debbie), OR, ON, QC, and PA. Ben's sister 'Becca joined her kids Nick & Lydia on their annual visit. We continued to serve as church youth advisors and did some protesting when we thought it might help. We lost our guinea pig, Doodle, to old age, but our cats Didi and Dahli and dog Kooper continue to keep us busy and entertained.

Ben:

Thanks to the immunoglobulin infusions I started last year, I got through all of 2025 without a single illness, for the first time since 2020. We affectionately call them my "goblins." 🧝

I joined friend Diane and her kids Helen & Grace for their annual summer hike on the Appalachian Trail in VA.

I continued working for Encore Healthcare and Share Good USA. In November, Encore flew the entire engineering team into their TN headquarters for a conference and business meeting, the first time we'd met in person.

I continued helping to teach the Kansas Permaculture Institute's certification courses three times a year and concluded my term on the board of Green Omaha Coalition. I sold plants from our garden online and at the local farmer's market.

My Duolingo habit came in handy as I polished up my French for our Canada trip - and then didn't need it. I also learned some Yiddish and Spanish.

ben@blueboathome.com, 531-225-6036

Jessie:

It was a busy, bittersweet year. I published chapters in two books and continued to engage in professional presentations. We wrapped up the Emporia State University Department of Ed autism grant and the modules are now live.

In March, I took on the role of Associate Clinical Director for Heartland Family Service (HFS); the school I worked for is just one of many programs we provide. In October I was promoted again to Clinical Director — moving from being a "people manager" to setting clinical direction for the agency.

My dad died in May, three weeks after turning 76. The last truly coherent conversation we had felt strangely normal in a way that it hadn't been for a long time due to his Alzheimer's disease. In that conversation he said "are you the boss now?" To which I said, "sort of." I wish I could have told him in October "I am the boss now."

I continued adjuncting at UNO and providing art therapy supervision groups for new professionals. I presented at the 50th annual Art Therapy Discovery Day at ESU and the AATA conference in Portland, Oregon. I also attended a conference in December in Anaheim, next door to Disneyland!

I continue to do my own artwork, though I hope to do more in 2026.

jessie@blueboathome.com, 402-657-8236

Ben & Jessie Stallings welcome guests at 2811 N 49th Ave, Omaha NE 68104

Blueboathome.com