

Pittsburgh Adventure

by Jane Rosenthal

As one of 50 Active Adults I signed up for a Pozez JCC trip to Pittsburgh this past September. First stop on our three-day journey was Fallingwater, the house that cantilevers out over Bear Run designed by architect Frank Lloyd Wright in Southwestern Pennsylvania.

I climbed the winding stone staircase to the first level of this three story custom-designed house built over a waterfall. Everywhere I looked I marveled at the geometric modern design and the organic relationship between architecture and nature in rooms filled with sunlight. Later that evening I walked with friends to the remodeled railway station at Station Square near our hotel where we dined at the Grand Concourse Restaurant.

The next day we climbed on the bus for a two-hour city tour featuring a breathtaking ride on a railway car suspended by steel cables up to the top of the Duquesne Incline, 400 feet high and 793 feet long. From the top of the incline, I had a panoramic view of the Pittsburgh Steeler's football stadium at the confluence of the Monongahela and Allegheny Rivers.

Pittsburgh is known for having the most bridges in the world, and the yellow painted bridges dotting the city skyline connect suburban and urban communities. We drove past one of the oldest neighborhoods named Squirrel Hill and paused in front of the Tree of Life synagogue to remember the victims who were killed while attending services on a peaceful Saturday morning last year.

Overlooking the old Manchester Bridge, a statue saluting Fred Rogers (1928-2003) who hosted "Mister Rogers' Neighborhood," on PBS gleamed in the sunlight. The show was produced in Pittsburgh where Fred Rogers grew up. I remember many hours spent with my children watching Mr. Rogers hang up his sweater and put on his sneakers at the start of each show.

The downtown headquarters of industries instrumental in Pittsburgh's growth: steel, coal, paint, and glass that ushered in the Industrial Age, were clustered around PPG Place. One of the most impressive buildings, "The Cathedral of Glass," was designed to showcase 19,750 pinpoints of light.

Everywhere I looked there was a blending of past and present in the Carnegie Art Museum juxtaposed to the Andy Warhol Museum, a tribute to another Pittsburgh native son. Another prominent philanthropist, former Senator John Heinz of the Heinz ketchup family, founded the Heinz History Center, a museum tracing the growth and development of the city from prehistoric times to the present.

On the last day our trip we made an unexpected mystery stop at the University of Pittsburgh and took a guided tour of "The Hall of Nations" where each room was reconstructed out of native materials reflecting the architecture and furnishings typical of many of the countries represented by students at the university.

When we pulled into the parking lot at the Pozez JCC several hours later and piled our luggage and souvenirs into our cars, I realized the memories I carried with me from the three-day trip were wrapped around the new friends I had made and the sites I had visited.