

# Making Covid-19 Vaccine Decision: A Local Woman's Journey

by Kitty Mayo

Recently Michelle Miller of Two Harbors wrapped up her Covid-19 vaccine series. However, when vaccinations starting rolling out at the beginning of the year Miller said she had no interest in getting a vaccine whatsoever.

The one and only time Miller chose to get a flu vaccine was about 15 years ago, and that experience left an unpleasant memory with her feeling pretty sick afterward.

“So, it was kind of why fix what's not broken? I'm generally a really healthy person, so my thought was why mess with it when I haven't had any issues or anything, just keep it status quo,” said Miller.

Miller says that she does not have any strong opinions about vaccinations in general, and is not concerned with government involvement, or the medical community, or privacy issues.

“I didn't have any fear that control was being taken away from me, it was more like I thought that first let's get those targeted populations that really need it most,” said Miller.

Once vaccines started being offered to more and more people, Miller says she began hearing generally positive feedback about the experience from people she knew.

“Then the 'aha' moment came when I saw the bigger picture,” said Miller.

People in her group of friends were starting to share that they were making the decision to get the vaccine because they had older or vulnerable people in their lives.

“The biggest thing was when my boy-

# Friends of Tettegouche is Seeking your Input

submitted by Morris Manning

Friends of Tettegouche is seeking public input into a Nature Play Area at Tettegouche via an online survey with emphasis on outreach to kids and youth at <https://friendsoftettegouche.org/nature-play-area-survey/>.

Plans are underway by Friends of Tettegouche State Park to develop and construct a Nature Play Area at Tettegouche State Park. The goal is to provide several areas within the Nature Play Area that actively engages kids with nature and its elements and provides opportunities for physical activity, social and imaginary play. At its very best, nature play isn't scheduled, planned, or led by adults, nor is it confined by grown-ups' rules. Instead, it's open-ended, free-time exploration and recreation, without close adult supervision.

The natural features of the site, near the High Falls parking and picnic area, includes water, logs, cedar grove and a variety of natural materials in a woody setting with varying topography, a seasonal stream and boggy areas which will encourage curiosity, exploration, experimentation, observation and manipulation. Several activity areas are planned that will be wheel chair accessible. It is anticipated there will be occasional naturalist led activities at the site. The Nature Play Area will lend itself to use by families, teachers and school groups, scout and church youth groups, homeschooled kids and others looking for a unique play opportunity right in our back yard. This is a multi-year, volunteer driven project open to participation by all. Partners in the project include the DNR and Minnesota Parks and Trails Council. Individual and public support is welcome.

friend said he was going to get his shot because of his dad, who is almost 91. He said, 'My dad had the vaccine and it really doesn't make any sense if he's got it and I don't,' said Miller.

A trusted family member who works in health care also encouraged getting the vaccine, another reassurance that helped Miller make the decision to get vaccinated.

“In the long run I decided who cares if I feel crappy for a couple of days, it's an easy procedure and I am keeping those I love safe,” said Miller, whose own mother, who is over the age of 65, has also been vaccinated.

As it turned out Miller experienced just a little muscle soreness at the shot site. While Miller says she did not feel any social pressure either way about getting the vaccine, she did appreciate hearing testimonials from people who had already been vaccinated.

The fact that there is not yet very long-term research from real-world Covid-19

vaccinations is another reason that Miller says she decided to get the vaccine. She says that as a healthy person she is able to contribute to learning about the vaccine and the virus in a meaningful way.

“If I can be one more percent of that data so we get a true picture of what's really happening then I'm contributing to that body of evidence that's either positive or negative results with the statistics to back it up,” said Miller.

Miller says it's important to her that no one feels like they are being pressured, or like she's trying to convince them to get the vaccine. But, rather, she wants to share her vaccination journey in the hopes that it might help others make an informed decision on a complex topic.

“The journey took me to learning more and thinking about it in a different perspective. Just because your belief or thoughts were this one day, doesn't mean there can't be transformation on another day,” said Miller.

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