Jack Miller’s prescription for good health and a happy retirement is simple: “Keep active, exercise, and stay busy.”

No secrets there. People have been talking about doing that forever. The difference is that Miller, 87, follows his prescribed regimen every day of every week, with a rigor that borders on fanaticism.

His schedule includes volunteering regularly, walking and riding his bicycle, traveling, socializing, reading, singing in the Village Presbyterian Church choir, and many other endeavors.

A chemical engineer, Miller retired from Procter & Gamble in 1985 after 37 years with the company.

“I retired early so I could spend more time with my wife, Elizabeth, who was suffering from cancer,” he explained. Elizabeth died a year later.

“I quickly realized it was important for me to keep busy,” Miller said.

“Before I retired, I walked an hour every evening when I got home, but I knew I needed much more than that.”

So he contacted the volunteer coordinator at Village Church. She asked whether he would be interested in working at a school for children with disabilities.

“At first, I didn’t think I’d like it,” said Miller, “but I agreed to give it a try. I wound up staying for 20 years.”

During that same time, Miller volunteered with Head Start, the Johnson County Museum, and Shawnee Mission School District elementary schools. He’s now at Rising Star Elementary.

“I work with kids in first through fourth grades who are having trouble with math,” he said. “I especially enjoy helping youngsters.”

During the summer, he volunteers with Habitat for Humanity projects.

“Each Christmas for the past 25 years, they’ve all gathered in Colorado to ski for the holidays.

“Being together is important to me,” he said. “We’re a close family; we like each other.”

Every year Miller and his two sons also go on a vacation just for the guys. Last year they hiked in Rocky Mountain National Park.

Miller grew up in western New York State. He was accepted into the Navy V-12 program in 1943 and was sent to Purdue University for school and training. After World War II ended, he returned to Purdue to earn a master’s degree in engineering, and in 1948 he joined Procter & Gamble.

In 1950 he met Elizabeth at an Independence Day party in Long Beach, Calif. Six months later, they married, moving frequently during the early years.

“Each child was born in a different city,” he said. “When I was transferred to Kansas City in 1958, Elizabeth said, ‘It’s time to put down roots.’ I agreed.”

After her death, Miller continued living in their Leawood home until 2003, when he moved to Lakeview Village in Lenexa.

“I didn’t enjoy living alone,” he said. “It was a positive move for me.”

Joe Henderson was a federal court reporter with The Kansas City Star for 40 years and is now a freelance writer. He lives in Overland Park.