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Headline: For Many Older Americans, Retirement Just Doesn't Work Out

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By Marilyn Gardner

Provided by

A year after Helen Davis retired, ending a satisfying 22-year career as a marketing official for the Colorado Department of Agriculture, she longed to reenter the workforce.

"I've always enjoyed working," she says. To fill the gap, she took a job as an educator with a national charity, helping older people. But when her part-time position expanded to full time, she left. After another year off, traveling with her husband, she worked part time as a community outreach director at an assisted living community.

"I really enjoyed that," Ms. Davis says.

Why retirees return to work

55% say they actually enjoy working

53% would like more disposable income for fun purchases or travel

39% are bored

20% say their spouse is driving them crazy

16% of married seniors said they spend too much time with their spouse

Source: Financial Freedom Senior Sentiment Survey of 1,129 retirees conducted June 21-25.
Margin of error +/- 2.9 percentage points

Until recent years, the phrase "retirement jobs" was an oxymoron for most people. Retirement meant freedom from work. Now, as more retirees like Davis want or need employment, they are finding both challenges and rewards.

Money does not always head the list of motivators. A new Financial Freedom Senior Sentiment Survey reports that among the 35 percent of seniors who plan to work in retirement, more than half say they enjoy working. Nearly 40 percent are bored. Twenty percent say their spouse is driving them crazy, while another 16 percent think they spend too much time with their spouse.

"There are some who will always be bored and want to go back because they miss the structure," says Joan Cirillo, executive director of Operation ABLE of Greater Boston, a

