

Volunteering is embraced at AAA, and one of the reasons I am so proud to represent AAA and volunteer in the community. One of my favorite and most cherished volunteer experiences has been volunteering with Opportunity Village locally here in Las Vegas. Opportunity Village is a not-for-profit organization that serves people with intellectual disabilities. Clients receive vocational training, employment and social recreation services that make their lives more productive and interesting. Through programs and services, well over a thousand people with disabilities are learning vocational skills, working in jobs throughout the community, paying taxes and living more fulfilling lives.

Opportunity Village is a magical place. The love and compassion within the walls are an inspiration. Each day I am thankful for all I have been so fortunate to possess, yet somehow it is not enough. The inspiration of the residents and the work they do is breath taking. I am moved to tears with emotion by the positive attitudes, and work ethic displayed by so many of the working residents. Yes they have challenges, but face them head on, and make everyday a brighter one, for themselves and anyone lucky enough to be in their presence. I have seen first hand as the work shop is a buzz, with making labels, and cutlery packets to go to local restaurants, and doing printing orders. It is a happy work environment and all were happy to help me learn the ropes and show me how to do complete the task. It helped me remember what is important and the pride we can take from completing a task, that we may take for granted.

Recently as part of the Diversity Council, we wanted to do a fund raiser to help support the Wildlife impacted by the Oil Spill. We had a cookbook of recipes collected from Southern Nevada AAA team members, and decided to put it in to production. I reached out to my new found friend, Rachel Allen, at Opportunity Village to see if the print services offered on site would be able to help. I spoke to the mail center and copy center staff, who invited me back to take a look at the process of how they help clients get the end result they desired. I was offered suggestions, and given a proposal and got a demo copy to take back to the council. We were thrilled with the results, and I was again moved by the pride on the on the faces of those at Opportunity Village when they presented me with the completed product.

Opportunity Village renewed my faith in the human spirit and what we as humans are capable of; love, compassion, understanding, pride, dignity, and respect. I am continually reminded of the joyful experiences I have had at Opportunity Village and know I will be a volunteer for life, and fortunately for me – I work at AAA, which allows me to exercise my ability to give back, one day at a time. Never underestimate a human being, we are capable of glorious thing in the face of challenges we will persevere.