



VILLAGE OF PROGRESS

SERVING ADULTS WITH DEVELOPMENTAL DISABILITIES FOR OVER 50 YEARS

The Village View - Spring 2023

Volume LIV Number 2



Director's Note:

The other day the Village was invited to apply for a grant from the CLA Foundation. As I was filling out the application, I was struck by one question in particular: how does your program benefit the community?

In disabilities work, it's often assumed that helping those with disabilities is the goal. In other words, if we're making people with disabilities feel included, that's enough of a benefit. And the underlying assumption is that the community benefits by making them ("the weak," "the disabled") more like us ("the strong"). But seldom do we explore the more important questions - are there ways that people with disabilities can help us become more like them?

The key to this answer is accepting a paradox -- that in any caring community it is not the weak who need the strong, but the strong who cannot exist without the weak. For when those in a community enter into a relationship with those they might perceive as weak, that is when compassion and humility begin to germinate.

Timothy Shriver, in his book, *Fully Alive*, tells the story of when the International Special Olympics was held at the Yale Bowl in the US. It was a huge event with celebrities, a military flyover, and an opening procession of Special Olympians from all around the globe. As they entered the field, each athlete was given a disposable camera. Then—president Clinton gave the opening address. For security reasons, he spoke from the top of the arena. Shriver told the story of a professional press photographer who was on the field with the athletes, taking pictures. The photographer noticed one team who had their cameras aimed at the president but there was a problem -- they were holding their cameras backwards. The photographer, trying to be helpful, motioned to them, showing that if they turned the cameras around and looked through the viewfinder the correct way, they'd get better pictures. One of the athletes turned to the man and said, "Thank you, but you see, when we hold the cameras backward, we can see your president more closely. The viewfinder acts like a telescope. But thank you for helping us."

THE VILLAGE VIEW

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Oregon IL 61061

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Director's Note Continued:

The photographer was stunned.

So, here's the question I often ask others to ponder -- at that precise moment on the field, who was laboring under a disability?

Those who work in the disabilities community have long known what the professional photographer suddenly discovered -- that wisdom and strength look very different when the camera is flipped.

Another quick example from my own life. I and most of the people in my circle of friends have a nearly infinite number of choices about how to run our lives - from what food to eat, to where to attend school, what profession to enter into, who/whether to marry, and where to live. Yet as I look around I find that many are perpetually anxious about people or things they perceive as threats to their freedoms.

By contrast, the men and women our agency serve have so few choices in life - they live in a world where most cannot drive, many cannot communicate clearly. They have little choice about their meals, their living arrangements, their friends, or even leisure activities. Yet, here is something truly amazing; by and large, these men and women face life with a joy and mutual respect for others that puts me to shame.

As happens so often in life, when we invite those we consider weaker into our lives, we find that we are the ones with much to learn.

The Jewish philosopher and theologian, Abraham Heschel, summed this up well when reflecting on his own life: "When I was young, I admired clever people; now that I'm old, I admire kind people."

Maybe that is the essence of how a community might benefit from our mission. By welcoming the stranger, Ogle County can learn to value kindness over cleverness; to see that humility is more valuable than certainty. That weakness has a power strength will never understand.

Brion

The Northern Illinois Belt Sander Drag Races

WOW is about all we can say. Sometimes “stuff” surprises you and this one surprised us.

Jane Hart called the Village and explained her grandson, Cameron, attends the Village of Progress via our Attendance Grant Program. Her family wanted to feature the Village of Progress at an annual event that they do and said they hoped to raise some money for The Attendance Grant Program in the process.

When she called a few weeks later to explain they had had a check for \$11,000 - we were needless to say surprised.

The Northern Illinois Belt Sander Drag Races started in the Rochelle area in 2012 when some friends got together with the idea that anything can become a competition, including racing power tools.

They started by building a wooden track that would harness all the power of belt sanders. The first year there were approximately 16 sanders that were all in the "stock" class with around 50 attendees.

Word spread of the contest, and the fun event grew year after year. On February 11th, the 10th Annual Northern Illinois Belt Sander Drag Races were held with over 20 sanders in the stock class and over 30 in a highly competitive modified class. With over 350 guests in attendance, they raised over \$11,000 for the Village of Progress and had a lot of fun in the process!

The Attendance Grant Program is a unique benefit provided by the Village of Progress. The Attendance Grant Program lets individuals who are on the state's waiting list attend the Village on a part-time basis—free of charge.



IMPORTANT DATES
AT
THE VILLAGE OF
PROGRESS

JOHN HERRMANN
GOLF PLAY DAY
7/10/23

TOSOC
TOUR OF SCENIC
OGLE COUNTY
A CYCLING EVENT
AT THE VILLAGE

SEPTEMBER
9/23/2023

ANNUAL
BANQUET

OCTOBER
10/18/2023

AT 6:30

ST MARY'S LEARNING
CENTER IN OREGON

ANGEL
BALL

DECEMBER 12/02/2023

AT 5:30

RIVERS EDGE
EXPERIENCE
IN OREGON

Byron Library

Beginning in January 2016, Julie Reckamp from the Byron Library extended an invitation to us to join her monthly for a book reading and related craft. Thus began an activity that continues monthly to this day. Julie selects an appropriate book and creates a related craft project for up to 10 individuals. Often the crafts and books are related to the season such as spring, Halloween or Christmas.

When participants were asked their favorite part of the experience— Sharon, Sylvia and Rachel all agreed they like the reading and craft equally. Mrs. Reckamp is very expressive with her voice and makes each story very exciting. Elizabeth loves how creative Mrs. Reckamp is with the crafts. Hope explained she is always happier when she leaves the library than when she came. Mrs. Reckamp just has a way of making her day brighter. Not only do they have a great library experience but Mrs. Reckamp also sends 10—12 books back with our group that she selects so we can continue reading back at the Village of Progress.



31ST ANNUAL JOHN HERRMANN MEMORIAL GOLF PLAY DAY

**Village of Progress
Foundation, Inc.**

**Larry Young
& Friends Charities**

Monday, July 10, 2023

At Prairie View Golf Course in Byron, IL
12:30 p.m. shotgun start.

REGISTRATION FORM

Organization: _____
 Contact: _____
 Address: _____
 City: _____ State: _____ Zip: _____
 Phone: _____ email: _____

I want to sponsor a hole or tee

Numbers of holes and tees: _____
 Name of Business: _____
 Our check for \$ _____ (\$200 per hole/tee) is enclosed.
 _____ Please bill us.

Please mail this form to:
 Village of Progress Foundation, Inc.
 PO Box 418
 Oregon IL 61061
 Or fax to 815-732-3228
 Checks payable to
 Village of Progress Foundation

**Join us for a great day of golf,
 food, and prizes. And help the
 Village of Progress continue to serve
 Ogle County adults with
 developmental disabilities.**

**18 holes of golf, cart, goodie bag,
 drink tickets, steak dinner,
 raffle and silent auction.**

I want to sign up a Foursome

Golfer #1: _____
 Golfer #2: _____
 Golfer #3: _____
 Golfer #4: _____

____ Our check for \$500 is enclosed.
 ____ We'll pay at the event.



Eagle Scout Project

Caleb Brooks, a sophomore at Oregon High School and a scout with Oregon Troop 52, spent the past couple months planning an Eagle Scout Project for the benefit of the Village of Progress.

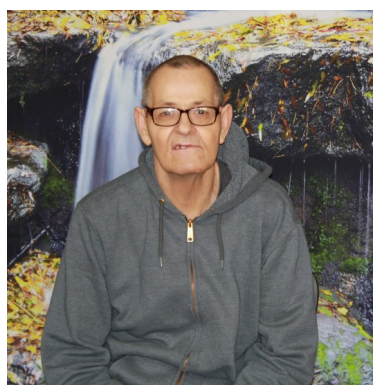
The Village has several raised garden beds on its campus, but they are old and deteriorating rapidly. Caleb thought it might be a good idea to replace one of them. The Village agreed. Caleb used landscape blocks and treated 2'x12' boards to create a U-shaped 12' x 8' garden. The raised bed is 2 feet tall and is made for wheelchair access.

On Saturday, May 13, several scouts and scout leaders arrived at the Village to help Caleb with his project. The raised bed was completed by midafternoon.



Thanks Caleb! Nice Job!

The Village has plans of planting tomatoes and peppers to make salsa this fall.



Donald Nietz

Donald Nietz started at the Village of Progress on January 3, 1994 when he moved from Lee County to Ogle County. He was involved in our programming until February 10, 2022 when his health required a nursing home setting. He died on March 17, 2023 at the age of 73.

All his friends at VOP as well as retired peers/staff/volunteers were saddened by his passing but shared memories of his life. Donald loved nothing better than sitting back and talking to staff and volunteers while drinking a cup of coffee. He also liked working on WAHL Clipper jobs which meant getting a paycheck, being outside riding a dual bike or going to area parks and watching the pelicans, eagles, as well as robins, bluebirds, red-wing blackbirds, etc. He is missed and will be remembered by everyone whose life he touched.

Village of Progress Donations

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In Memory of: Pete Cacciatore • Nancy Coffman • Chet Kobel • Toby Way • Thomas Wells •

In Kind: F.N. Smith Co. – Cylinder head for yarn Machine.

THANK YOU.... Our ability to maintain meaningful days, celebrate with special treats and create effective programs for Ogle County adults with disabilities depends on your donations & volunteer efforts!

The John Herrmann Golf Play Day

**CHECK OUT OUR
HANDMADE SEASONAL
CRAFTS THAT WE SELL
AT THE VILLAGE BAKERY**

The Village is funded in part by the
Ogle County Community Mental Health
(708) Board & United Way.

JULY 10, 2023



TOSOC

tour of scenic ogle county

September 23, 2023

**HISTORIC SITES
BEAUTIFUL SCENERY
WILDLIFE SIGHTINGS**

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