

# A SUMMER TO REMEMBER

My children are completing another school year at The Villages Charter School. It is hard to believe, but our son will be a sophomore and our daughter is going into seventh grade next year. In fact, our son was part of the original group of children who started off in the first kindergarten class 10 years ago. Both are growing and maturing into fine young adults.

While I am hopeful some of our parenting has helped, I also have to give credit to the outstanding educators and support staff at The Villages Charter School and the incredible residents they have interacted with over the years. Our very first baby shower for our son was right here in The Villages, hosted by some of the best residents I'm honored to call friends. Collectively, we have all had input in the development of our children. Now our son is getting ready to turn 15 and get his restricted driver's license.

It should be a summer to remember.

I think one of the best things about living in this community and working in The Villages is watching the interactions and development of all generations that live, work or go to school here. There is a connection, a bond of sorts, with many who share in the same values and beliefs on what this community stands for. This is true for the Charter School and the Community Development Districts, both relatively young institutions when compared to other school systems and governmental entities, yet both are already making clear distinctions of who they are by their core values and high expectations for the populations they serve.

With the constant barrage of internal and external forces affecting the Charter School, the District and our community as a whole, it is imperative there are people who support the foundation and core values of all that encompasses The Villages community. I realize their story has really just begun,



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but both the Charter School and the Community Development Districts already have made great progress in developing systems that will offer perpetual and sustainable services to their respective stakeholders.

Since I have been privileged to be part of both areas, one as a parent, the other as an employee, I get to witness and participate as they take shape in developing current and future stakeholders in our community that will carry forward these shared core values. We recognize there is no "catch-all" method or program that delivers this core purpose and mission. We attempt to reach out and apply our message of who we are in numerous ways.

With summer just around the corner, one such program that helps us deliver the message of our core values, while providing a wonderful opportunity for residents to create a connection with the next generation, is the Recreation Department's Camp Villages program.

This program, also entering its 10th year, offers our residents and their visiting grandchildren, a quality recreational program where both generations have the opportunity to register and participate together for a multitude of activities to meet their personal lifestyle goals. This program runs June 14-Aug. 6. Registration information and activity brochures are available at any recreation center or by logging onto our website at [districtgov.org](http://districtgov.org).

There is little doubt that residents and grandchildren who participate together in Camp Villages will benefit from the personal interactions they will gather. In addition, the Recreation Department and the

District also benefit. These benefits go hand-in-hand in delivering our message of who we are and what our high expectations are for our facilities and the services we provide. Each activity allows us the opportunity to demonstrate our core values to our stakeholders with hands-on experiences. In fact, at some point during their participation, they will experience hospitality, stewardship, hard work and creativity and innovation.

Another benefit for those who participate in Camp Villages has been a much better understanding of the expectations of using the recreational facilities. Besides the recreational experience, our District staff also adds informational messages during the course of the program. A few examples include the proper use of recreation equipment, age requirements for using equipment and facilities and proper storage areas for equipment.

They always review the importance of carrying their guest ID and resident ID cards when using the facilities. We demonstrate friendly hospitality and assistance while showcasing many creative programs for them to enjoy. These ancillary purposes continually build on and reinforce our commitment to our stakeholders. We have learned people who are better educated and informed are going to have a more enjoyable experience and share these expectations with others.

Camp Villages is just one of many programs that build on creating a sustainable community that embraces our core values. For those who either live, work, and/or play in The Villages, you will recognize there are many ways we want to make sure we keep our community's core values alive. It is a constant conscience act of love everyday that makes our community different than all others. Together we make it happen. That's all for this week, see you soon here at Our Place.

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