

September 26, 2015

To Whom It May Concern:

I have reviewed the proposed Opportunity Village development and am pleased to offer my support of Betty's Village as a community based residential setting for people with disabilities. The residents of Betty's Village will engage in an active life, be integrated in society, have support of individual choice, and be encouraged to foster independence to the highest degree possible. All human beings deserve the basic human right to pursue a life of happiness; Betty's Village leads the way for those with disabilities to pursue that right in a compassionate and leading-edge way supported by our strong Las Vegas community.

I am sister to two severely physically and intellectually disabled siblings. My eldest brother, Johnny now 52, and my second youngest sister, Eileen now 43, both live with cerebral palsy and cannot live on their own much less meet their own daily needs without the help of generous human beings. In my eldest brother's late teens he lived in an institutional setting with twin sized beds lined up in a dormitory setting. It was not a situation that encouraged nor was DESIGNED to engage my brother in an active life, be integrated in society, support individual choice, and be encouraged to foster independence to the highest degree possible. My brother and my sister currently live in group homes in residential areas. My brother lives a home with five other consumers in a residential neighborhood 11 miles away from my sister who lives in a residential group home with four other consumers. I am eternally grateful for these group homes and the people who create, run and support them. These group homes so much better than institutions but also not DESIGNED to engage the disabled in an active life, to be integrated in society, have support of individual choice, and be encouraged to foster independence to the highest degree possible.

To see each other, to participate in day programs, to earn a paycheck, to enjoy a park both my siblings need a coordinated effort of a number of people and organizations simply to participate. The pursuit of happiness not easy. I can only imagine how much joy, how much happiness, my brother and sister would experience if Betty's Village existed where they could live with dignity and in wheel chair rolling distance, daily see each other and their friends, participate in day programs, spend time in Sean's Park, earn a paycheck for work rendered at the Engelstad Campus or in the shops that are part of the Opportunity Village plan and on the same site as Betty's Village: a COMMUNITY DESIGNED for the disabled to engage in an active life, be integrated in society, have support of individual choice, and be encouraged to foster independence to the highest degree possible.

My siblings have outlived my father and my mother. I am the primary family member responsible for their care and well-being. If not for housing and services for the adult disabled, I would be caring 24-hours a day, seven days a week, 365 days a year for my siblings. This is not a sustainable option for me or for most families. I would have difficulty holding down a job and providing excellent care, services and support for my siblings. I would have difficulty contributing to society beyond caring for my siblings and to sustain financially I would likely need government support for myself as well as my siblings. My parents made incredible sacrifices to ensure I had the opportunity to become a productive citizen and human while they did their best to provide a life of dignity and happiness for my disabled brother and sister with the resources that existed at the time. This is a real story and a real situation many, many, many families face when caring for the disabled. What a gift Betty's Village is to the disabled and their families. Opportunity Village and Betty's Village are at the forefront in leading change to improve the lives with those of disabilities and their families. I for one am grateful.

Thought and action leaders in Las Vegas are changing the world for those with disabilities. Betty's Village is an innovative world-class environment providing the opportunity for the disabled to fulfill their greatest possibilities and happiness. Encouraging interaction, independence and self-determination is the key to a full and fulfilling life. Betty's Village includes the many components needed to encourage greater independence and self-direction while ensuring the appropriate supports are available. I am in support of the project.

Sincerely,

Lauralyn McCarthy  
Proud Sister to Johnny and Eileen McCarthy