

The Scully Learning Center Foundation Reaches Out

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Learning Outside the Classroom

The Scully Learning Center Foundation knows every day should be treated as uniquely as those who live it and provides a distinctive place for those with special needs.



When Paula Scully, a former teacher with an unending love for children, stumbled upon a Cave Creek property fit for a fairytale, she saw a unique opportunity to meet one of the community's greatest needs: helping those with mental disabilities.

Along with Scully's partnership with Kiwanis, her vision was turned into reality, and she founded the Scully Learning Center Foundation, a center solely designed for children, young adults and adults with mental disabilities. "The property was the catalyst," Scully says, "and Kiwanis did a community survey and identified autism as [a cause] they wanted to work with." The foundation aids those with autism, intellectual disability, cerebral palsy and epilepsy via programs like cooking, music, ceramics, hiking, yoga, painting and drawing.

Scully was amazed that the greatest need wasn't for children, but adults. "Our initial target population was going to be 12- to 22- year-olds," Scully says. "What we found out from the community was that the need was truly for older adults, beyond 22." Scully has since sought a way to bridge the divide between learning in and outside the classroom. With nearly a year into its establishment, the Scully Learning Center Foundation has made remarkable strides in helping adults with mental disabilities, like Suzy.

"Even though Suzy is 54, doctors say she tests like a 4-year-old," says Carol Stoll about her neighbor and friend, Suzy. Suzy's I.Q. is 45, which translates to moderate to severe retardation. She does not know how to read or write; she can't drive. Stoll was named her caregiver when Suzy's father passed away last year, and lives each day as a new opportunity to spend time and learn from Suzy. "The way I look at it is, some people go to Africa on missions trips," Stoll says. "I walk right across my street; it's a blessing in disguise." Although Stoll was eager to help Suzy, she knew she would need help and found the Scully Learning Center Foundation as the ultimate assistant. "Scully Foundation has been responsible for opening amazing doors for Suzy that I would have never known about," Stoll says.

Upon discovering the foundation, Stoll was able to sign Suzy up for yoga and arts and crafts and link her friend to opportunities that would have otherwise gone overlooked. Suzy's physical advancements have been equally amazing. "In a year's time she lost almost 100 pounds," Stoll says.

One of the greatest accomplishments of the foundation has been working with the Kiwanis Aktion Club to nurture an organic garden. "We now have chickens that are laying eggs, and [the Aktion Club members] understand that chicken manure is providing compost," Scully says. "They understand the organic process, and our garden is flourishing at this point." In the future, Scully Learning Center Foundation hopes to extend the benefits of the garden by selling its harvest at farmer's markets.

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