



Rebecca, Villa participant, enjoying a Disney-themed event at Villa's Adult Day Program.

All You Need Is Love

Article by Jenny Seto, Villa Esperanza Services Events Coordinator

"All You Need Is Love" — the classic refrain from The Beatles is a fitting theme for Rebecca's life. Adopted by single mother Rosie at birth, Rebecca receives lots of love from the entire family. Rebecca's aunt, Gloria, accompanies her almost every day to Villa's Adult Day Program (ADP). Once there, Gloria volunteers helping clients and staff, while Rebecca enjoys daily activities. ADP provides a variety of activities for participants, including Zumba classes, crafts, painting, themed dances, field trips, and more. "After she graduated high school, I was looking for a program that would keep Rebecca active and engaged, not just sitting around all day watching TV," her mom Rosie recounted. "We had toured a few programs, but when I walked into Villa, I just knew it was the right place. The program was full of life, and staff were engaging with clients. I felt strongly that this is where I wanted my daughter to be."

Rosie's gut feeling proved true and four years later, Rebecca continues to look forward to attending ADP every day. Rosie shared that Rebecca "loves rocking out to The Beatles" and Rebecca's aide, Ana, makes sure to have The Beatles ready to play on their walks. Ana shared, "Rebecca also loves telenovelas, especially those with Jaime Camil. She just perks up when she hears his voice. So usually we listen to telenovelas or The Beatles." Ana has been working with

Rebecca for the past three years. "I enjoy every minute with Rebecca. She has a good outlook. Each day with Rebecca is an important reminder that though we all have obstacles, we can deal with them with a smile."

Rebecca certainly faces more obstacles than most — she is nonverbal, has been in a wheelchair her whole life, and eats using a gastrostomy tube (G-tube). However, anyone who interacts with her immediately feels her positive outlook and zest for life. Though she is nonverbal, she communicates very clearly. "I know how Rebecca is feeling from her expressions. If she's mad or upset, she gives this grimace and a little bit of side eye," Ana explained with a laugh. "Otherwise, she nods and smiles. She'll certainly let you know how she's feeling!" Rebecca indicates her enthusiasm for ADP with a nod of her head. With ADP, Rebecca has enjoyed several field trips to the Los Angeles Zoo, the park, and the mall. This year she was also crowned Prom Queen at ADP's annual prom.



Rebecca and her mother Rosie at the annual ADP Luau event.



Rebecca choosing her favorite Beatles song with Ana's help.

Rebecca's full life today is a far cry from what neurologists originally told Rosie. "The first couple of months of her life were really hard," Rosie said. "She had her first seizure at one week old and then spent the next few months in and out of urgent care. I wasn't sure at first what was going on. It was heartbreaking and so difficult." Neurologists eventually diagnosed Rebecca with cerebral palsy and developmental disabilities and gave her only five years to live. Today at twenty-six years old, Rebecca is thriving and her mom couldn't be happier.

"We are so grateful to have found ADP. The staff and the nurses are all great. I like how they treat each one of their clients," Rosie shared. "Rebecca is comfortable, happy, and active, and we couldn't ask for anything more." Truly all you need is love, and Villa is lucky to be a part of Rebecca's remarkable journey.

Villa's Annual Tournament of Hope!

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Summer Fun at Villa School!

Villa School students were busy this summer enjoying a variety of activities on campus. During Camp Esperanza, hosted by Villa's Speech and Language Center, students made different sensory bags filled with rice and gel that they could keep to use at home or in class. Students engaged in science and exploration; some students created themed snacks while others experimented with colors and made popcorn dance! Villa's Occupational Therapy Clinic hosted weekly yoga - students practiced breathing and stretching techniques to improve their motor skills while having fun at the same time.

Reading was a big part of the summer too. Each classroom chose a summer book to read and present to the school. The students had a great time acting out their favorite characters. Thank you to all the teachers, therapists, and aides for making this summer session a blast!



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VILLA ESPERANZA SERVICES

Where Hope is Hard at Work for Individuals with Intellectual/Developmental Disabilities

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Thank you to Senator Henry Stern, Assemblymembers Chris Holden and Adrin Nazarian, and to EVERYONE for your advocacy efforts.



Villa's CEO Kelly White, clients, staff, and families joined other advocates in the community to thank Assemblymember Chris Holden for continuing to champion the needs of individuals with intellectual/developmental disabilities.



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