



**Give Kids The World Village**  
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## Abstract

Give Kids the World Village is an 89-acre non-profit village in Kissimmee, FL, that partners with organizations such as Make-A-Wish to provide theme park tickets and housing to terminally ill children. The village runs on volunteers, from their on-site shuttle service to serving breakfast, lunch, and dinner to operating wheelchair-friendly rides. They rely on volunteers to make sure that families can get the most out of their one-week vacations, and just worry about spending time with their family.



## Course Connection

A lot of what we learned in my course was about how to correctly work with people with special needs. We learned about a lot of mistakes that people make when talking to people with special needs. One of the biggest and most common mistakes is that most people don't really assume that the person has competence. They will immediately start conversing with the adult who is with that person. I feel like it is also pretty easy to do that when you are talking to children in the first place, so having that reminder went a long way in cultivating a positive environment. We also use all 7 C's that are a part of the Social Change Model. Most notably, commitment and collaboration.

## Community Impact

Give Kids the World Village has had a tremendous impact on the community. For one they are giving families that generally have a ton of other worries, a week where they can just enjoy time as a family. They don't ask for payment for anything on the property and provide tickets for the three major theme park systems in Orlando: Walt Disney World, Universal, and SeaWorld. They are also home to Matthew's Boundless Playground, a Candyland-themed playground, that is accessible to most children with disabilities, and Amberville, an area with wheelchair-accessible rides. The village has done a great job at presenting inclusive ways for children who normally wouldn't be able to experience things these kinds of things. They also help to foster a great community outside of the village. I have met many friends while volunteering there, as well as convinced multiple friends to volunteer with me. One of the biggest things for my friends and me to come back and volunteer is that they make volunteering fun, by having a lot of shifts that you can't find anywhere else. One of our favorite shifts is the Pizza Delivery at night. You get to drive golf carts around the village and deliver pizza and some other items to families that missed dinner, whether they were at the pool, or were just getting back from the parks.

## Reflection

I have learned so much from the many hours that I have spent volunteering at Give Kids the World Village. I have learned that I am very privileged to be in a spot where I didn't have the opportunity to utilize any organizations such as Give Kids the World. I learned what kinds of volunteer shifts help me feel self-fulfilled and help me want to keep on volunteering. But most of all I've developed a sense of what I want my future to look like. I want to always be able to give back to these organizations that are helping our community and helping those who are less privileged. This organization has helped me to grow in areas that I didn't realize that I needed to grow in and has helped me to foster a sense of compassion towards more people. It has also helped to realize the importance of volunteering. The village runs almost completely off of volunteers, and since they don't have to spend money on staff to cover those positions, they are able to spend more on the families. Knowing that even if I'm only there for three hours, I am helping to give these families a wonderful experience, and the village is able to provide more for them, in one of the only times that these families get to continuously say yes, is a great motivator to make me want to continue volunteering, both here and in other places in the community.

## Civic Responsibility

Give Kids the World Village has helped not only foster my sense of civic responsibility but also help me choose what kinds of organizations I would like to volunteer with. Give Kids the World has helped me to realize that I get a lot of self-fulfillment out of helping both children and people with special needs, it has helped me to realize that organizations, like Give Kids the World, are ones that I actively want to volunteer at and help out with. All of my leadership classes have helped with my feeling of civic responsibility. I was always told that I had a lot of free time in high school and I could do things like volunteer every weekend and it wouldn't be a problem but then when I got to college things would be more cramped and it would be a lot harder to make time for, but these leadership classes have not only given me a reason to make sure that I have time to volunteer but they have also helped me realize that I like volunteering and I can go out of my way to make sure that I have time in my schedule to volunteer in our community.



## Citations

Komives, S. R., & Wagner, W. (2016). *Leadership for a Better World: Understanding the social change model of leadership development*. Jossey-Bass.

## Acknowledgements

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