

November 19, 2012

To the members of the Norman Human Rights Commission:

In May of 2010, I was invited to deliver welcome remarks at a Community Disability Forum held at ReRun Junction. This was my first experience with the exceptional group of people who work there. ReRun Junction is a small thrift shop/discount store located at 325 East Comanche, just west of Porter Avenue. Since that time I have learned more about their commitment to providing employment opportunities to adults with developmental disabilities, to providing meeting space for community organizations like Oklahoma People First, a nonprofit, statewide advocacy run by, and for, people with developmental disabilities ("Nothing about us, without us."), and to raising awareness of how issues like transportation, education, physical accessibility to public buildings and events affect all of our citizens but especially those with mental and/or physical challenges. It is an honor to nominate ReRun Junction for the 2012 Norman Human Rights Award.

ReRun Junction employees 10-15 adults with a range of intellectual abilities, whose IQ is 70 or less. They all earn at least minimum wage, have specific job duties and responsibilities, pay taxes, and live in or around Norman. As one of them shared with me upon our first meeting, "We want exactly what everyone else wants: to support ourselves, to be independent, and for our voices to be heard." ReRun Junction allows many of them to accomplish these objectives, as well as serve as role models for other Norman residents who are similarly challenged. Their good work epitomizes, in my opinion, the section of the City Code that declares that "all citizens of this community shall have an opportunity in the job market and the social and economic life of the City, without regard to race, color, religion, ancestry, national origin, age, sex, national origin, age, place of birth, handicap, or familial status."

ReRun Junction provides a sense of purpose to a population that might otherwise feel disenfranchised, and opportunities for social engagement that benefits both the individual and our community. Furthermore, ReRun Junction is a Community Action agency, meaning that at its core, ReRun Junction is an initiative that empowers "...disadvantaged people by providing them with the tools to overcome poverty, live with dignity, and achieve their full potential." The Norman Human Rights Award is presented to individuals or organizations in Norman that have shown outstanding effort, achievement and/or leadership in the promotion of human rights and equality and are an example to all, and I can think of no more deserving organization to recognize with this award than the hardworking and committed individuals, both staff and employees, at ReRun Junction.

Thank you for your consideration.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Lisa L. Schmidt". The signature is written in dark ink and is positioned above the printed name.

Lisa L. Schmidt