

## Recycled card project gives gift of experience

BY SARA CURETON

The turnaround tale of St. Jude's Ranch for Children's Boulder City campus is really more of a Cinderella story. The refuge for abused, abandoned and neglected children was on the brink of financial disaster just a few years ago, but is now thriving under new management. One of the perks of the revitalization is a reinvention of the once-suspended Recycled Card Program.

Under the staff's supervision, older children involved in the St. Jude's Ranch Transitional Living Program operate the project, which removes the front of donated cards for all occasions and applies a new back. The "new" final products are handcrafted by the children and sold in packs of 10.

"Once we came up with a new process, in June of last year, we posted jobs and encouraged the children 14 years and older to apply," said Christine Spadafor, CEO of St. Jude's Ranch for Children. "We wanted to give them the tools they need and get them ready to transition into the community."

Management of the Recycled Card Program is up to Jacob Wilson, 16, and Sebastian Marquardt, 15, who serve as CEO and vice president of operations, respectively. Wilson and Marquardt developed a mission statement and handle nearly all executive decisions with the program.

With three paid youth employees and a handful of volunteers, the Recycled Card Program has sold 788 packets, or 7,880 cards, in three months. In addition to generating income for themselves and the ranch, the young entrepreneurs are learning what it means to be an employee and follow workplace rules.



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Sebastian Marquardt, left, and Jacob Wilson sort through bins of incoming used holiday cards, which are part of the Recycled Card Program at St. Jude's Ranch for Children.

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"It is hard to find a job in this time and environment," said Veronica Hueming, community relations specialist. "So the experience with the Recycled Card Program adds to their resume and provides them with job skills they might not have been able to obtain elsewhere."

The program accepts donations of all occasion cards year-round, but expects its highest influx now through Feb. 28. Cards may be sent to: St. Jude's Ranch for Children Recycled Card Program, 100 St. Jude's Street in Boulder City, Nevada 89005.

To buy card packs or learn more about the program, visit the St. Jude's Ranch Web site at [www.stjudesranch.org](http://www.stjudesranch.org).

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