

June 23, 2020

Dear Community,

Hi, my name is Rickette York and I work at the Calico Cat Café, a program of Community SEEDS, a nonprofit. If you don't know about SEEDS and the work they're doing, I will tell you. They help people with disabilities get into the workforce. This program is very important to people like me who have a disability. I have applied for tons of jobs only to be denied and turned down. It really makes you want to just give up, which I had done before I heard about the café opening up in Zillah. I applied and was so happy to get the job!

I show up early and give it my all each and every day because I love it – and love the fact that someone finally gave me a chance to work to have a normal life. It improves my mental health, and gives me a reason to get up and get out of the house each day. I'm not the only one at SEEDS with a disability working at the Calico. There are nine employees. We all feel the same way.

At the Calico Cat Café I have been so happy, but now there is a chance that the doors might close because of the pandemic, just when we finally found a place to belong, where we fit in, and now it might be taken away from us. If you don't have a disability, you won't understand how hard it is to find work at a place that will accept you, and work around your disabilities. We have to compete with people who have full function of their bodies and minds, so it's not that simple for us, and even worse now during this time when so many others are also losing jobs. I don't know where we will turn.

If anyone can help us in any way to keep the café open, you would be a blessing to us. We've been so thankful for the support we've had in getting open last August, but we need a lot more now to get us through the pandemic when so many restaurants are closing. I hope this letter is not swept under the rug like most of my job applications in the past. Our challenges in finding jobs is real. I hope that you can understand how much this job means to me and all of us who work at the Calico Café.

Thank you for taking the time to listen.

Sincerely,

Rickette York

*And my coworkers at the SEEDS Calico Cat Café:*

Rey B

James W

Pedro G

Rose R

Leandro R

Tasha C