Armenian Student Association is Organization of The Year | CPD

Utah State University’s Armenian Student Association has done so much for the Center for Persons with Disabilities, they were a natural fit for the CPD’s Organization of the Year award. They cleaned up the grounds at the CPD’s Bear River Activity and Skills Center, helped clean USU’s spectrum arena as a fundraiser for the Post-secondary Education, Employment and Research project and built flower boxes for BRASC participants. “They’re very dedicated and committed,” said Jeff Sheen, the CPD’s volunteer coordinator. “They’re also a lot of fun.” Working with them, he has learned about their culture. He was impressed that they came to him, asking what they could do to help out at the CPD. In addition to what they have done here, they worked with an army of volunteers to build the Adventure Playground in Logan, raised money for the Huntsman Cancer Institute, donated money to a fundraiser for the All Armenian Fund, and participated in an anti-genocide activity on the USU campus. They partnered with the Utah State University bookstore to distribute 400 T-shirts to orphans in Armenia and worked with the Armenian General Benevolent Union in Armenia to provide food and firewood to a family that needed it in the town of Gyumri. But for Yeva Muradyan, one of the more touching moments came when they did a presentation at the Logan Senior Center and discovered people with Armenian roots right here in Logan. “It was a unique experience,” she said. “By helping each other we get to know a lot of people.” All those building projects have taught them how to handle tools, said Gagik Melikyan, the association’s president. “We could build a small hut now, when we go home.” Their association includes a group of Armenian students who came to Utah State University on a scholarship provided by Jon Huntsman. When he brought them here for an education, he did something for them that they couldn’t do for themselves, said Vahan Ptrosyan, an association member. It inspired them to give back to the community. “We follow his example.” The association also has non-Armenian members—returned missionaries who served in Armenia and some people from Saudi Arabia. “We have pretty busy schedules but when we have a project, it is a way to get everyone together,” said Melikyan. Those projects bring the community in, too. “When people find out we have a service project going on, they always try to help.”