Sherri Cornett

Claudia Stephens is the strategic planning specialist for Ag Workers Health & Services in Billings. She recently spoke to Voices from the Valley about her work and the challenges faced by migrant workers.

Voices from the Valley is an occasional series of profiles of community leaders and organizations.

Claudia Stephens: Our legal name is Montana Migrant and Seasonal Farmworkers Council, Inc., but we changed the clinic name to Ag Workers Health & Services, as we hope to build community among agricultural workers and the non-agricultural community. We work to educate people, have a program for children, and an annual fundraiser, which will be on Sept. 23, is a way for people to come together.

Sherri Cornett: Such opportunities make us feel so good, because we are creating community and a sense of belonging, instead of looking for scapegoats to blame for what is happening in our world.

Claudia: Things are changing, and we are concerned about. Sometimes there are nice breakthroughs. Sometimes there are people you can’t reason with, but you always want to emulate her and you always want to be the best neighborhood everyone could be part of.

Sherri: Yes, I remember my mother and I discussing kind and give back.

Claudia: What brings you hope, especially in Billings?

Sherri: I believe the basic character of Billings is the compassionate and to be the friend I would want to have. I believe the basic character of Billings is the compassionate, to be the friend I would want to have. For scapegoats to blame for what is happening in our world.

Claudia: What do you think gets in the way of reaching out?

Sherri: Other people’s fears.

Claudia: Which is, as some people continue to call it, the fear of the other.

Sherri: And how could it be better?

Claudia: Such opportunities make us feel so good, because we are creating community and a sense of belonging, instead of looking for scapegoats to blame for what is happening in our world.

Sherri: I am reminded of the block parties in one of the neighborhoods of my youth — families bringing out their grills, sharing food, impromptu games.

Claudia: And being kind. My grandmother told me to bring us together.

Sherri: I bring us together.

Claudia: Our desire to be the best neighborhood everyone could have.

Sherri: I look forward to dancing and laughing with you in September. Thank you, Claudia!

Claudia: I look forward to dancing and laughing with you in September. Thank you, Sherri!