

ANCOR
RECOGNIZING
EXCELLENCE
APRIL 2018 ● www.ancor.com



*The ANCOR 2018
DSP Recognition Awards
are proudly underwritten by Relias*



Relias is proud to recognize all of the great work that DSPs do to support individuals in living meaningful lives.

CONGRATULATIONS

to all of this year's award winners and thank you for your impact on so many!



RELIAS

EXCELLENCE IN ACTION!



Wait until you read about the extraordinary people profiled in these pages – ANCOR’s 2018 Direct Support Professional Recognition Award Recipients embody excellence in action. On behalf of the entire ANCOR community, thank you! Recognizing Excellence is all about you – recognizing that each and every day you support people to realize the promise of the Americans with Disabilities Act. Your stories, and the stories of your colleagues across the nation, show us why your work matters. You are truly our heroes.

The judging process is always incredibly difficult – this year’s National Recipient, State Recipients, and newly added Special Category recipients were chosen from yet another large, deeply impressive group of nominations. Thank you to everyone who submitted a nomination, and the people who stepped up

to serve on the judging panel: Forrest Austin, recipient of the 2017 ANCOR National DSP of the Year award, as well as Chumie Twerski and John Raffaele of the National Alliance of Direct Support Professionals (NADSP); and our ANCOR staff and consultants, Doris Parfaite-Claude, Sarah Meek, Kim Opsahl, Jerri McCandless, Alexis Moore, and André Floyd.

We are also very grateful to Relias, our Platinum Partner, who has generously underwritten the DSP Awards for the fourth year in a row. Relias, thank you!

Recognition of excellence is important, but we cannot – and will not – stop there! ANCOR’s mission is to advance the ability of our members in supporting people with intellectual and developmental disabilities to fully participate in their communities, and that cannot be accomplished without obtaining the resources necessary to

attract and retain professionals like this year’s award recipients. All too often we hear about previous awardees – DSPs that personified the best of the best – that with great reluctance left for a better paying job, not a profession. Turnover rates across the country are unacceptably high.

As we celebrate the accomplishments of these dedicated professionals, we ask that you join our campaign and spread the word about these fantastic DSPs. Through it we can help to educate your state and federal elected officials by showing that quality supports for people with disabilities require a stable, professional workforce!

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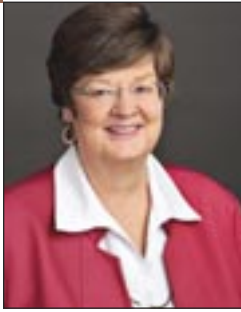
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PRESIDENT'S CORNER/Angela King
ANCOR President and President
and CEO of Volunteers of America Texas



I began my career as a Direct Support Professional, working in the state institution on the night shift, then as a recreation tech and later as a weekend group home staff member. That experience gave me the passion for this profession; the insight I needed to understand the daily challenges of the work; and an appreciation for the people who provide daily supports to individuals in community settings, in their homes, or in the vast number of places that DSPs go every day to support folks in living fuller lives with meaningful choices.

I understood early on that the individuals living in that institution longed

to participate in their communities. As a recreation tech, it was my responsibility to take people "out" to Six Flags, movies, parks, and numerous other recreational activities. This was one of the most rewarding jobs I ever had, because the individuals were so excited to participate in these events, which were too few and too limited at that time.

Only by transitioning to community living did these individuals get to enjoy the life choices we take for granted every day. I applaud the work of each and every DSP being recognized from around the country.

Through ANCOR's National Advocacy Campaign (fondly known as the NAC), we are doing everything we can to shine a light on the critical work you do and sharing stories like the ones collected in the 2018 Recognizing Excellence magazine with Congress, Administrative Agencies, and the Executive Branch, so we can advocate for fair pay and benefits.

Once a year, ANCOR sponsors the DSP of the Year awards, where we honor outstanding DSPs from coast to coast. Hundreds of nominations are submitted then de-identified and passed on to a group of people who have the very (very) difficult job of narrowing the nominations to one award recipient per state, ten special category recipients, and one national recipient.

The DSP of the Year awards ceremony is a joyous celebration where phenomenal stories are told and many deserving people are recognized. Without you, individuals with disabilities would still be excluded from the public and denied their rights as citizens.

Thank you, Direct Support Professionals, for all you do to make dreams a reality, to make our communities more inclusive, and to ensure that each person you support has a full and meaningful life.

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2018 LEGACY LEADERS

The ANCOR Foundation Legacy Leaders Circle celebrates the accomplishments of the men and women who have paved the way to life in community settings for people with disabilities. These visionary leaders have not only helped shape and guide ANCOR over the past

48 years, but have made meaningful inclusive communities a reality for the countless Americans with disabilities.

The ANCOR Foundation Legacy Leaders Circle honors our finest and most Influential leaders while creating and funding opportunities for the

development of future leaders in our field. The 2018 inductees in the Legacy Leaders Circle – introduced at the 2018 ANCOR Conference: Converge in the Big Easy are:



Carol Beatty, *Maryland Department of Disabilities*

Rod Braun, *Christian Opportunity Center*

Robert Budd, *FREE*

Michael Hutcherson, *Rose & Kiernan, Inc.*

John Severtson, *Retired from VisionOne*

Robert Christian (Chris) Stevenson, *Cedar Lake*

Tim Sullivan, *The Institute of Professional Practice, Inc.*

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LEROY BRYANT

by Tom King

Leroy Bryant is a Navajo Indian who lives in Little Naschitti, NM with his parents on the Navajo Reservation. He drives an hour each way to his job in Gallup. He's been making this trip for 17 years now, five days a week, sometimes six.

This job is his passion, his life, he says. He considers the people at the Cliff Home his family. To him, the Cliff Home is his second home. Mr. Bryant is a Direct Support Professional (DSP) at Dungarvin in Gallup, part of a staff of eight who support two men and two women 24/7, 365 days a year. Leroy helps transform lives, but he will quickly tell you that the people he has supported and is supporting have transformed his life.

Mr. Bryant, described as a humble man who always finds a silver lining, has been selected as the 2018 National Direct Support Professional of the Year by the American Network of Community Options and Resources (ANCOR). ANCOR will present the award to him at a ceremony honoring DSPs from across the nation during its 2018 conference in New Orleans April 15-17.

He was selected as the national winner from a pool of over 300 nominations.

Since 2007, ANCOR has honored exceptional DSPs with the Direct Support Professional Recognition Award for exemplary work in furthering community inclusion and full participation for the many Americans living with intellectual, developmental and other disabilities.

The person who nominated Mr.



2018 DSP of the Year
LEROY BRYANT
Dungarvin

Bryant wrote about him: "He's very humble and does not like to talk about himself. You can really see how much he cares about the individuals and to him they are just like his family. It does not matter to him that they have disabilities. His focus is making their lives richer and fuller. He's happy and upbeat and that works well in the home."

When told that he had won this honor, his reaction was: "Wow! Wow! Wow! This is crazy. I'm speechless. Other people are more qualified and deserve this more. I can't wrap myself around this."

One of Mr. Bryant's colleagues stated. "This is long overdue for Leroy and for him to be recognized. He's been a great DSP for a long long time. He loves what he does and if you ever visit his home you can easily tell how much he loves and cares for everyone. If we could only clone him."

His nominator adds: "He puts his heart and soul into his work every single day. When he walks in the door he's focused on the individuals. He is a genuine and caring person and he's a prize to us here at Dungarvin. We're trying to mirror what he does and how he does it in all of our homes."

Mr. Bryant, who is 46, says he was once very shy and had very low self-esteem. After attending college for only two semesters, he dropped out and worked various jobs before seeing a newspaper ad about the work he now does. Back then in 2001 the company was known as Disability Services Inc. (DSI). He applied, was hired and still loves it. Dungarvin took over from DSI three years ago.

"The people I have supported through the years and the ones today, they are all responsible for bringing me out of my low self-esteem days and helping me become who I am today," he said. "My co-workers too. We're all family here."

One area of focus for Mr. Bryant is ensuring the people he supports are able to rebuild and maintain tribal connections that they had lost over many years of institutional care. The people he supports are Native Americans, three Navajo and one Zuni and now live in the community. He makes certain that they remain connected to their families, their cultures and their traditions. "Leroy has assisted one man he supports receive blessings by traditional

healers at the request of his family,” his nominator says. “He works cooperatively with team members to assure that they are able to experience a range of traditional cultural events, like native festivals, Pow-Wows, feasts and dances. He’s there with them.”

His colleague adds this: “He’s Navajo and he’s the voice for people who don’t have a voice.”

The person who wrote Leroy’s nomination further elaborates: “He started working with three very challenging persons and has managed to assist all three to live successful lives. Despite all of their significant medical concerns, all three have been able to maintain relationships throughout their communities and find forms of meaningful employment. He has been an integral part in assisting all three to have meaningful lives in the community where they are recognized, accepted and valued. And in his own words, ‘I became who I am today through this process.’”

One man Mr. Bryant supports enjoyed going to the mall to shop and eat and one day he began trying to speak to a security guard, who did not understand what this man was trying to do or say to him. Mr. Bryant took the time to tell him about this man and his disabilities – Cerebral Palsy, non-verbal, confined to a wheelchair – and that he was simply trying to be friendly. That’s all it took. That blossomed into the man and

the security guard exchanging high fives and becoming friends and saying “Hey” when they see one another.

This same man is sensitive about people watching him eat. So Mr. Bryant and the staff developed an innovative strategy so they could watch him eat but still be safe. They used a mirror and arranged it so they could see him but he could not see them.

Mr. Bryant takes all of this in stride and plays down his accomplishments. “It’s just what I do,” he says. “I have always wanted to help people. This is a great job. It is challenging, but I love working with them. I love them, the people in my home. They are very dependent on us and we do everything for them ... feeding, bathing, dressing, handling their medications. Everything.”

He does at least one more thing. He helps train new DSPs who come into the agency.

“He is a role model that our staff looks up to and he’s so easy to talk with,” his colleague says. “When someone on the staff has concerns about something – anything actually – they go to Leroy with their concerns and issues and he always points them in the right direction. He is a great communicator too. He goes out of his way to make sure that everyone is on the same page.

“He stays above things, issues,” she adds. “His approach is that we’re all here to do a job and that’s all. He works well with the staff, helping everyone see the big picture and not concentrating on themselves. He is always up to date in their health care plans and makes sure everyone on the team stays updated as well.”

Both his nominator and supervisor mentioned how highly regarded he is by the guardians of the four people he supports. “They can’t say enough good things about him and they all talk about how they trust him and how loving he is,” Ms. Eriacho says.

A few years ago, his nominator recalls, Mr. Bryant was asked to be a Team Leader and move into management as a Residential Coordinator. “He was good at it, of course, but it didn’t last long,” she explained. “He found that it was more of an administrative thing than he expected and it took him away from direct care. He missed the people he supported so much, that day-to-day contact, and that’s what he loves. So he went back to his DSP job. He absolutely loves that.”

And he considers himself as just being part of the team. “This award, wow! It’s not about me, really; it’s about all of us here. We work together. We’re family.”

ANCOR's 2018 Special Category Awards

ADVOCACY

AISHA STANLEY
DUNGARVIN
West Haven, CT



Aisha has brought a lot to her DSP table even though she's relatively new to the profession, especially when it comes to being an effective advocate for the man she supports. She quickly gained his trust and confidence in a number of ways. His landlord was not paying him for work he had done. She corrected that abusive situation and helped him find a more suitable place to live, a new environment. He needed a CPAP machine and insurance refused to pay for it. She stepped in, negotiated with the insurance company and it reversed course and paid for the machine. He has substance abuse problems and is overweight. He's now sober, and she convinced him to change his eating habits and join a gym. He's lost 13 pounds. He walks daily now, works on his own meal plans that she reviews. Because of Aisha, he's becoming an effective self-advocate. Her nomination reads: "He is developing effective advocacy skills that he is learning from watching Aisha, his role model, in action." He confides in her, telling her things he will not tell anyone else. Her advocacy skills are changing his life – for the better!

BETH RYAN
LIVING WELL
DISABILITIES
Mendota Heights, MN



"Disability Matters Day" in Minnesota will find DSP Beth Ryan at the state capitol in Saint Paul, MN with some of the people she supports. They meet state legislators and are in formal meetings with the legislators. They take from these meetings energy, voice and self-worth. They humanize the various disability issues for the legislators. She teaches them to become their own self-advocates. This DSP of 29 years

is an Advocate's advocate, helping those she supports to write letters to the legislators. It gives them a self-voice and a valued sense of self-expression. It matters! In addition to this, her advocacy work is well known at Living Well Disabilities. She was instrumental in advocating for two people she supports to marry and have a honeymoon, citing them for making their own choices and creating their own independence. Her job title is "Senior Advocate Leader" and she assists in staff training and working with the agency's most challenging clients. She was key during a crisis situation in the relocation of residents after a major fire in their home. She calmed the residents and helped them adjust to the change, not an easy task. "Beth mentors with deep enthusiasm and professionalism...because of her decades of proven leadership, both family members and those we support are profoundly reassured in Beth's heartfelt care," her nomination reads.

INNOVATION

ADAM HARTWELL
NEW ENGLAND
BUSINESS
ASSOCIATES
Springfield, MA



A man supported by Adam had always wanted to start his own web-design business and grow his networks in the process. Using his technology and infrastructure skills, Adam helped this man realize his dream and combine it with his passion for professional wrestling. As part of his business, this man created his own website and social networking platform for wrestling fans. Adam has helped him with office maintenance, bookkeeping, and operations management – things this man never thought he could do. He's now a web designer and a social media engineer/manager. Another man Adam supports was having issues with his fine motor dexterity skills in wrapping silverware in napkins at work. Adam designed and built a personalized tool out of PVC piping to assist this man. It worked. A woman who works at a large retail store has a job that requires her to bring rolling racks of mer-

chandise onto the sales floor. At first she had problems locating where the merchandise was to be placed. Adam developed a “flag” system for her. Today, she’s doing the work quickly and independently and is a top performer at her workplace.

This senior DSP of 18 years thrives on utilizing innovation and person-centered support to help those he supports throughout the agency.

WHITNEY NEWTON
RISE
Salem, OR



A man this DSP of two years supports had, in the past, used his Picture Exchange Communication System (PECS) to help him communicate. He is non-verbal and had not used it consistently for some time, so a few months ago Whitney reintroduced him to PECS. He loves to watch Disney movies, so she created bright and colorful PECS of the movies. He loved it. He also was having a problem keeping track of his daily schedule. She used PECS by creating scenes of light and shadows in front of their house to show the time of day so he can better manage his schedule. She even put together three different refusal PECS so he can let others know when he does not want to do something.

Whitney took classes at a community college on her own time to learn sign language so she could teach him more sign language so he could communicate with her and others. Again, on her own, she’s been studying and learning more about Autism and leading a class for the DSPs who work with this man so they can better understand his needs. It was new and challenging, but she began taking him on neighborhood walks. He’s now interacting with neighbors and even with children at a playground. Whitney is described as being “patient and innovative.”

LEADERSHIP

DONNA PRICE
VOLUNTEERS OF
AMERICA
SOUTHEAST
Hartselle, AL



This DSP is known throughout the agency as possessing outstanding and effective leadership skills. She is someone who is never hesitant to take the initiative. With 18 years as a DSP, everyone from management level employees to new hires pay close attention to what she says – and what she does. “She is very personable, so others want to follow her lead,” it reads in her nomination. New employees learn about the preferences of the people they will support from her. She mentors new employees until they learn to do their jobs. Donna considers those who she supports as “family” and speaks up when she thinks something is out of the ordinary or if someone is not feeling well. She advocates equally and effectively with managers, physicians, nurses, family members and case managers on behalf of those she supports. One of her priorities is allowing those she supports to experience life in the community in which they live and she is always helping them meet people within their community. She cares about every aspect of every person she supports. She has a gift and is a gift to her agency!

KEITH RICHARDSON
RESCARE
Indianapolis, IN



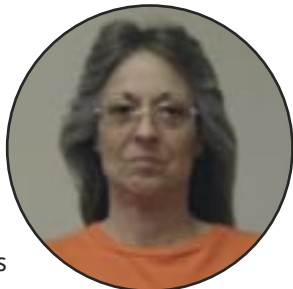
Keith is referred to as a “star employee” who trains and mentors most of the agency’s new employees. “Keith provides them with strategies and methods to be successful and mentors them along the way,” his letter of nomination says. A DSP for 15

ANCOR's 2018 Special Category Awards

years, his experience enabled him to manage his schedule and work with a dozen clients with little to no guidance. He takes the lead in scheduling bingo nights, painting parties and movie nights for those the agency supports. He helps his peers with their planning of activities. He is recognized and known for his skills and gifts in working with people who have difficulty coping with aggression issues. One man who had trouble expressing himself would revert to aggressive behavior over and over. Using the phrase “words first before action” repetitively over several months, Keith has taught this man how to effectively express himself and be accepted into the day program. He now works three days a week and rides a bus independently to and from work. Here is a telling quote about this DSP: “Everyone who has had the opportunity to meet Keith and see the passion he has for those we support come away wanting to be a little bit better themselves because of him – and many people have.”

RELATIONSHIPS

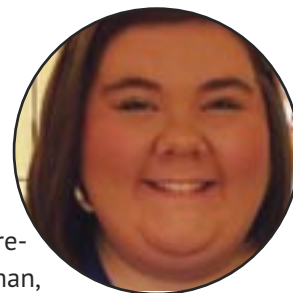
JANET JOHNSON THE MENTOR NETWORK Peoria, IL



When one reads the NADSP Tenets and reads the nomination form for Janet Johnson, the “Relationships” tenet is the one that comes to mind about this DSP of 12 years. One of the most difficult and time-consuming things for many DSPs is helping those they support reconnect with estranged family members and rebuild those relationships. Janet has worked tirelessly to do this, even with family members who live long distances from the agency. She has helped many individuals she supports call, write letters and communicate with family members. When needed, she takes them to see their families so that milestones like birthdays and holidays are never missed. When the individuals supported go into

their care plan meetings, they request that Janet be there with them – Janet helps them communicate and build a working relationship with the care plan team. They want her insights and ideas. “She is able to speak to and connect with every individual in our program,” it is written of her. One man she supports wanted a cat as a companion. Janet helped him find a cat to rescue from a local shelter and even adjusted her schedule to take him and the cat to a veterinarian. If it was important for him, then it was important for her as well.

EMILY WARD RESCARE Huntington, WV



One of the men Emily supports is really into the superheroes – Superman, Spider-Man, Captain America – to name three. This Rescare DSP surprised him with a trip to a local “Comic-Con” event. When he walked into the indoor stadium and saw the characters he loved, his face lit up like never before. He met other people who share his love of these superheroes. He even got to meet his heroes, shook hands with Spider-Man and had his picture taken with Captain America. It was a day he will never forget and Emily was there with him and for him. Getting those she supports outside and into the community and building relationships is one of her passions. Emily also supports a woman in a vocational program who works in food service. She wants to learn more about the field so she can perhaps find a real job one day. Emily suggested that she be given the opportunity to go through the same Food Handler’s Safety certification course that agency employees take. Now, she and Emily are taking the course together. Through this training, Emily is helping pave the way for this person to form workplace relationships in the future – an important part of life.

NADSP TENETS

STEVE HOLLEY
NATIONAL
CHILDREN'S
CENTER
District of Columbia



Steve is a veteran of 26 years with the National Children's Center and he is deaf, as are the people he supports. His support work checks off a number of the boxes of the NADSP Tenets – promoting Person-Centered Supports, Relationships, Respect, Advocacy and Self-Determination. His body of work is impressive. He spent time taking one of those he supports on visits to various churches until he found one he was comfortable attending. Steve realized that a few of the people he supports were not voting in elections. He solved that problem and today makes sure that whoever wants to vote will. He even takes them to the voting booths. One man had a dream to be a performing clown. So Steve helped him select a costume, helps him get dressed and works with him in dress rehearsals. He also created a flyer so the clown could advertise his services. Today he performs at churches, birthday parties and nursing homes and events within the deaf community. Steve helps co-workers and others with sign language to foster communication with this man and others he supports and to better understand the deaf culture. He's even taught grocery store cashiers how to sign "hello" and "thank you" to the people he takes grocery shopping.

JEFFREY PAGEL
INNOVATIVE
SERVICES, INC.
Kaukauna, WI



Jeff likes and takes the one-on-one approach to his supports at Innovative Services. His skills today come from his 29 years as a DSP. He was able to help one man become part of the community by taking him swimming twice a week. He also helped him cook rather than cook for him. Advocacy is important to Jeff. One man had difficulties with his mother, who also was his guardian. She was aging and problems kept cropping up. Having appropriate and caring conversations with the mother, Jeff encouraged her to enjoy her time with her son instead of worrying about the challenges of being his guardian. In time she decided to give up the guardianship, and their relationship improved a great deal. One man – along with others – had problems with balance and falling so Jeff transferred to that program to help. Jeff is known as "Gentle Giant" at 300 pounds. Using a Person-Centered Supports focus, he worked on gait and instability issues, walking beside the man, and greatly reduced his falls. Jeff respects everyone and his approach is for staff to be fully engaged with those they support – reducing falls and inappropriate behaviors. One woman always used negative self-talk about herself. Instead of "I can't" Jeff taught her to say and to think and say "I can" in her conversations. It worked. This woman now prefers that Jeff work with her for support, and he does!

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2018 DIRECT SUPPORT PROFESSIONAL OF THE YEAR

S T A T E R E C I P I E N T S



ALABAMA

STEVE BISHOP

Resources for Independence
Tuscaloosa, AL

When his parents passed away, a gentleman was forced to relocate from the family farm in Utah where he had lived his entire life to a house operated

by Resources for Independence/Sunrise Community in a far away place in Alabama. That would be a difficult transition for most people. It was for this man. DSP Steve Bishop stepped in to ease his apprehension and smooth his adjustment. Steve helped this man build his own backyard garden like they had on the farm – growing tomatoes, okra and peppers. His garden flourished, so much so that he basked in showing it to visitors to the home. He felt like he was back home on the farm.

Loretta Paige, the agency's Director of Operations, nominated Steve for Alabama's DSP of the Year award. In her nomination she wrote: "The Mission Statement of Sunrise is 'To provide people with disabilities the assistance and support necessary to enable them to live valued lives in the community.' This statement exemplifies Steve Bishop as he embodies those qualities as a DSP."

Steve, a DSP for 10 years, helps those he supports with managing their money and he spends a lot of time with them in the community, going out to eat or to browse yard sales, shopping and visiting their friends in the agency's other homes. An individual in the Day Program was eating a sandwich and it became lodged in his throat and he began choking. Steve was there and saved this man's life with the Heimlich maneuver. When a tornado ripped through Tuscaloosa, many individuals were displaced and ended up in a hotel. Steve worked hard and was creative in making their rooms comfortable and look like their rooms at their agency home. The words they use at Sunrise to describe Steve are "caring" and "considerate" and "kind" and thoughtful."

ALASKA

TAMMY PORTER

ResCare
Fairbanks, AK



Tammy seems to have a real knack and talent when working one-on-one supports. One elderly woman who had dementia had to be moved from a home she truly loved to an assisted living home and Tammy helped ease the transition. The woman had lived independently and the move was emotional. Tammy was there as her companion and built trust. She decided to take the woman back to her house for visits, be with her in the community and visit the Senior Citizens Center to be with old friends. They regularly enjoyed visiting the ice cream shop. Those supports made such a difference in this woman's life. After 1½ years the woman passed away. Her guardian says that he is "extremely grateful" for Tammy's care of his sister.

A DSP for seven years, Tammy also provided support to a man paralyzed from a spinal cord injury. He chose to live at home and Tammy's community-based supports allowed him to remain at home and continue his job as an engineer with the city. She helped him stay connected to his friends and remain involved with the community.

Today, she is providing support for an elderly and frail woman who lives with her son. The woman was depressed and withdrawn and stayed in her bed most days. Not now. The woman is now active, eating nutritious food again and is healthy. Better still, she says she "really looks forward to Tammy's visits."



ARIZONA

ROBERT RUSKOWSKI

The MENTOR Network
Phoenix, AZ

Meet Robert Ruskowski. He's also known around the agency as "Bob."

He is a Program Supervisor for The MENTOR Network, where he has worked 23 of his 26 years in the disabilities field. He is a key member of the MENTOR staff. He steps up and volunteers to train the agency's new Program Coordinators and DSPs.

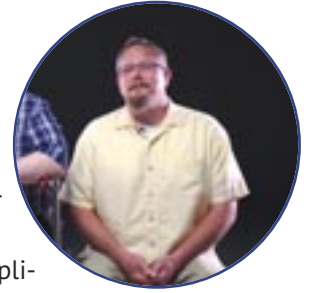
In 2017 he was selected as the Direct Support Supervisor of the Year by the state of Arizona DES/DDD, a major honor for him. Here is what was written about Robert: "Robert treats his clients as part of his family with love, compassion and care; he is truly a genuine and rare individual. Robert spends each and every day ensuring the people in his care are provided the opportunities that allow for maximum independence and yet ensures their safety. Robert advocates for his 'family members' like a rabid bear, he does not settle for less than the best when it comes to their care. Robert has a great relationship with caregivers, nurses, doctors, families and support coordinators. Robert is proactive and resolves issues before they even rise to the level of a problem."

The homes he supervises and coordinates are always in full compliance with state licensing and monitoring and have zero deficiencies annually. He advocates for those he supports in making sure their medical and follow-up appointments happen. He tracks all medications and models this for his staff consistently. "Robert's emotional care of those he supports is evident," said Steve Smalley in his letter of nomination for this talented professional.

ARKANSAS

ALLEN LOWERY

Bost, Inc.
Fort Smith, AR



Allen, a DSP for 13 years at Bost, focuses his work on person-centered supports and his work is best exemplified with how he has worked with one man for a number of years. Their bond is strong. Allen has worked hard to expand this man's world. They visited Knott's Berry Farm and Disneyland, beaches in Florida and they have been from Texas to New York together. Closer to home, they love going to a farm to gather fresh eggs to donate to local shelters. They even work together in the kitchen at their home, making homemade soups they deliver to women's shelters. On Mother's Day it's off to the nursing homes to pass out flowers.

On a daily basis, Allen makes sure this man knows the plans for the day and what they will be doing and where they will go. No surprises. Allen even makes sure that he knows when he will be off work and who will be supporting him. Allen is creative with his supports, organizing this man's clothes by color so he can dress appropriately. He created special cards to let this man know about the weather outside and what clothing he will need. He coaches the agency's Special Olympics basketball team. Allen attends summer camps with this special man he supports. They love to go bowling. They stay busy!

"Allen is a continuous example of how to build and maintain important and long-lasting relationships," says Trish Hice of Bost in her nomination of Allen. "By continuing to build relationships Allen has opened up many opportunities for this man's life."

CONGRATULATIONS
to our
Award-Winning DSPs!

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for Taking Us
to New Heights!

Dungarvin
Respect
Response
Choice



LEROY BRYANT
NATIONAL DSP OF
THE YEAR
(New Mexico)



Alicia Wallace
California



Jennifer Dailey
Indiana



Elizabeth Lobb
Minnesota



Maxine Hensley
Nevada



Stephanie Burnham
New Jersey



Terilyn Barton
New Mexico



Teri Arquilla
Oklahoma



Aisha Stanley
Connecticut
National Advocacy
Award Winner



CONGRATULATIONS
Mina Nardi

OHIO'S 2018 DIRECT SUPPORT PROFESSIONAL
RECOGNITION AWARD WINNER

Koinonia Homes thanks Mina for her dedicated commitment to person-centered support by encouraging choices and honoring individual preferences. We are privileged to have you as a member of our team.



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CALIFORNIA
ALICIA WALLACE
Dungarvin
Hayward, CA

This Dungarvin DSP has been in the field for 25 years and makes a difference in the lives of those she supports. That's why Laurie Johnson nominated

her as California's DSP of the Year. She has a unique skillset and a special way of connecting to and motivating those she supports. She focuses her energy on the abilities of people and not their disabilities.

Her work with one man is especially noteworthy. This man has a limited vocabulary but wanted to do volunteer work. He wanted to help others. She noticed that he enjoyed setting up tables with the silverware, so she began to give him step-by-step directions on how to set the tables and how to clean up. He was developing new skills, so she asked if he would like to volunteer at Meals on Wheels. He agreed and learned the routines and tasks and now has his own houses on the delivery route. She improved his communications skills, teaching him how to identify himself, how to say "Meals on Wheels" and how to greet those receiving the food. These were major steps for him. He has developed new relationships and become more independent and vocal in talking with other volunteers. He's also now doing volunteer work at a Community Kitchen.

The agency recently had a new woman come in to the program who had trouble fitting in and using inappropriate means to express herself. Alicia stepped in and quickly got to know her. Alicia became a trusted support for her and is now teaching her how to address problems and how to reach out when needed. She is coaching her on how to interact with peers and deal with stressful situations. The result: she's happier and better able to focus thanks to Alicia!

CANADA
GREG CURRY
ResCare
Ontario, Canada



Greg is a Rehabilitation Educator who has worked almost exclusively with adults with ABI – Acquired Brain Injury - for 12 years. He has successfully supported and worked with many individuals with diverse impairments – from individuals who are non-verbal and fully dependent on others to people returning to school or work.

Each year he accompanies people he supports to an ABI survivor camp for four days. He helps them interact with others. He also goes on family visits and sometimes drives them to another city to see their families. He is adept at working with family members in adjusting to their brain-injured family member, especially those with cognitive and communication impairments.

As written by the person who nominated him: "Greg is naturally able to tailor his approach to the cognitive and physical abilities of the participant without being awkward or patronizing. This ability to be genuine regardless of the abilities of the participant permits him to develop rapport quickly with many participants and their families, which in turn helps the participants work toward their goals."

His peers view him as a leader. He is always willing to pitch in and help his co-workers and excels at training new employees. He is described as being diligent, conscientious and always empathetic.

"Greg consistently role-models integrity, responsibility, accountability, and common sense; and by doing so he is a positive role model for both other employees and our participants," his nomination reads.



COLORADO
KATRINA VINCENT
 Continuum of Colorado
 Aurora, CO

The difference that a DSP can make in the life of someone they support can be astounding. Katrina is one of those DSPs blessed with the talent and

ability to change lives. A young man she supports has severe autism, a serious seizure disorder and a limited ability to speak. He has an outgoing personality and enjoys being social. He needs constant one-on-one supports and she's there by his side. With her support, he goes to local restaurants and orders for himself. He enjoys performing, so they dress up in Halloween costumes for the festival.

She works with him to build relationships. He goes with her to her family's reunions and parties. He enjoys dances at his school and he even developed a friendship with a girl who had similar support needs. Today they attend the dances as a couple and Katrina even takes them out for other activities as well.

While supporting this young man, Katrina works in a special-education setting and has coordinated with professionals there to help this young man grow and learn beyond his abilities. She helped him grow beyond initial challenges he faced which had kept him from going to school his freshman year of high school. For her work there the Colorado Developmental Disabilities Council recognized Katrina for her success and inclusion and developing new support strategies.

Thanks to Katrina, he now plays tennis and basketball, sports his mother thought he could never participate in. He's also playing on Special Olympics teams in both sports and has won a number of trophies. The seizures continue, but Katrina is there to assist him and keep him in the game.

This DSP of 11 years, five years at Continuum, is changing a life day by day.



CONNECTICUT
LEON GUERRERO
 Ability Beyond
 Bethel, CT

This is how this 17-year DSP is described in his nomination for the state's DSP of the Year: "Our perception of Leon is that he lives through a mindset of life cannot be lived to the fullest if the person living it is not present and happy. He is naturally, personally invested in making sure the individuals he works with, his teammates and his management team, feel happy, engaged, and supported. It is second nature for him to enthusiastically put the needs of others before his own."

Leon is a recent graduate of the agency's Pathways to Excellence course. His feedback about the experience is telling: "The Pathways to Excellence Course has given me a burst of confidence that I needed to continue supporting the individuals I serve in a polite and professional manner. I will continue developing a relationship based on respect and trust."

He utilizes 1:1 supports with a man he supports in a residential setting and has changed this man's life. This man's behavioral challenges included perseveration, a need for rigidity in his schedule and outbursts of aggression. All three for the most part are in his past. It took patience, calm and consistency from Leon to get to this point. The man is now in the agency's Day Program and is involved with a youth academy, playing sports, swimming at the YMCA, taking a cooking class and going bowling. Leon has transformed a life.

His nomination states that he does his work with mindfulness, optimism, authenticity, and kindness and is an example to peers and individuals served. "Everyone he encounters learns through his example." High praise indeed!



DELAWARE
ADEYEMI KEHINDE
 Mosaic
 Wilmington, DE

A man came to the agency after being homeless for a time, living and sleeping in cars and on park benches. His mother had recently passed away and he had no means to contact anyone in his family. Adeyemi realized how important this was to this man once he expressed how alone he felt. Adeyemi got busy and located the man’s father and sister, and on Thanksgiving 2017 he even got together with his cousins and uncles. Family mattered to this man and it mattered to his DSP as well.

When reading Adeyemi’s nomination, these are the words used about him that stand out: Honor, perseverance, motivation, inspiration, pride, integrity, protecting, advocating, and serving. That speaks legions about this DSP of four years.

He helps those he supports with their finances and health care. He’s an advocate with management, to the point of bringing issues to their attention even when they could have legal ramifications because it is the right thing to do. Adeyemi encourages his peers to become effective advocates for those who can’t advocate for themselves. Be a voice, he says. Lead by example. He once met with the CEO of an organization to explain how they needed to improve their agency to better support people. He also serves as a representative for an advocacy group for individuals with intellectual disabilities and takes pride in reaching out to legislators on their behalf.

This quote from his nomination says it all: “Adeyemi is not someone who needs a title or a position to prove a point to others. He is someone who does what is needed to protect and serve others.”



FLORIDA
CATRINA CLEVELAND
 ResCare
 Dunedin, FL

DSPs at times wear a number of hats and fill a variety of roles. Catrina, who has been at ResCare for four years but in the profession for 15, dons many hats as she goes about providing supports. She is a gardener, a psychologist, a teacher, a cook, a social director, a mediator, and a rock on which those she supports lean on heavily. She’s comfortable wearing any of those hats, too.

The gardener job came about because two men she supports wanted a garden – an herb and veggie garden. She took the initiative to build the garden. But this garden had many practical implications for those she supports. They became more involved in their meals; they took responsibility for watering and maintaining the garden; and it gave them a sense of responsibility and ownership for their home.

Remember Hurricane Irma? August 2017. Catrina does. During Hurricane Irma, she stepped up and helped make her home comfortable for individuals from the other homes who had been displaced. She created activity schedules to keep everyone comfortable and actively engaged in treatment; she developed activity stations and even set up the sleeping arrangements. Her efforts effectively alleviated the stress associated from the storm for those displaced and they enjoyed the experience so much they didn’t want to leave after the storm!

Her ability to reunite individuals the agency supports with their families is one of her many strengths. One man who had basically given up on life today visits friends in the hospitals and gives them flowers. Her hats are many as are her skills!



GEORGIA
SHANTA LUSTER
 Sunrise Community
 of Georgia
 Thomasville, GA

Many agencies in the disabilities field have what is known as a “Go-To DSP.” Those are the DSPs who can tackle some of the toughest problems and maintain strong supports, work effectively with any and all individuals supported as well as with staff. Shanta is a “Go-To DSP” at the Sunrise Community.

When she came to work in one home, she immediately began working with an individual who was a crisis admission, who was non-verbal with challenging behaviors. Shanta worked hard, remained calm and knew how to appropriately redirect this woman to being more comfortable. Shanta told the agency the woman needed support staff who could be patient, understanding and help her have good days. She loved Shanta and she quickly became one of this individual's favorite staff. Today the woman is speaking, her behaviors have lessened and she's even working in the garden.

Shanta's leadership skills are solid. In nominating her for the Georgia DSP of the Year, here is what was written about her leadership skills: “Shanta immediately became a leader in this home. She takes on tasks that other staff didn't want to do and worked with a person viewed as the ‘most difficult’ person to work with..... Shanta is a DSP that management will look to in order to train new staff. This is because management believes she will provide the best education on how to best serve the individuals in the home. Shanta is engaging, professional and very helpful to other staff in the home. She is always willing to step up and help in any situation while maintaining a positive attitude.” That is a Go-To DSP for sure.



IDAHO
ELSA GLEASON
 ResCare
 Mampa, ID

“Elsa is a rare gem!”

“She has a contagious smile that makes our clients feel important and special.”

“She is always willing to work no matter the weather or the time.”

“She is a model DSP.”

Elsa has been a DSP of two years at ResCare in Mampa and the quotes above were all part of her nomination as the Idaho DSP of the Year. As you can tell from the quotes, she is a very special DSP valued by her agency, her peers and management.

The agency has an individual who “had gone through several DSPs” and in steps Elsa. This lady has to have dialysis three days a week. Elsa motivated her to get up and start walking, something this lady had been wanting to do for years. She is now out of her wheelchair and walking around the home.

The agency also utilizes her skills to train new DSPs.

This excerpt from her nominations speaks to why she was selected for this honor: “She started with us back in 2016, but in just over a year she has covered countless fill-ins along with taking ongoing clients. Sometimes the notice for a fill-in is less than 20 minutes, and she still accepts the shift. Elsa works more hours in a week than most caregivers do in a month! She has willingly trained other DSPs who work with her clients to ensure they take great care of her clients while she is gone. She goes above and beyond and will offer assistance when we have a DSP who may not be comfortable with a shift, to train that DSP if needed.”

CONGRATULATIONS

Rise Services would like to congratulate two of their outstanding DSPs for their recognition as winners of prestigious ANCOR awards.



KRISTIE GEERTSEN

Sincere congratulations to Kristie Geertsen of Rise Services, who has been chosen as the 2018 ANCOR DSP Award Recipient for the state of Utah.

WHITNEY NEWTON

Sincere congratulations to Whitney Newton of Rise Services, who has been chosen as a special category recipient for Innovation in the 2018 ANCOR DSP Awards.



Congratulations to Sunrise's Direct Support Professionals of the Year **YOU INSPIRE US ALL**



Shanta Luster

2018 Georgia DSP of the Year

Sunrise Community of Georgia, Inc.

Shanta Luster has supported individuals with intellectual disabilities for 5 years. She is passionate about her job and enjoys working with each individual, in her care, to ensure everyone enjoys inspirational and gratifying days. A true leader, Shanta always goes above and beyond in the pursuit of excellence.

Steve Bishop

2018 Alabama DSP of the Year

Resources for Independence, Inc. – Alabama

Steve has years of experience working with people who have varying abilities. He believes that everyone deserves quality of life and that social interaction is essential to good health and well-being. Steve strives to ensure that the people, in his care, are connected to their community.



Shanta Williams

2018 Virginia DSP of the Year

Resources for Independence of Virginia, Inc.

Shanta Williams has over 14 years of experience working with people who have intellectual and developmental challenges. She inspires the people she supports to be a part of the community exposing them to meaningful activities. Shanta believes each person has a voice and encourages them to advocate for themselves.

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ILLINOIS
BRENDA SMITH
MarcFirst
Normal, IL

After 19 years as a Marcfirst DSP, Brenda was recently promoted to the position of Lead DSP where she is using her many gifts to train the agency's new

DSPs and pass along her skills, practices and passion for the job. Laura Furlong, Marcfirst Chief Executive Officer, nominated Brenda and writes about this in her nomination: "In supporting the planning process for people, Brenda has taken the lead to develop tools to assist in the implementation of strategies to be carried out from a person's plan. This practice is now being used in other programs in the agency. Brenda has been a leader in communicating with the local Housing Authority. She has worked to support people in addressing their concerns and needs with this entity."

Brenda is a very busy Lead DSP these days. She has been working hard to help the people she supports become better self-advocates, attending the statewide "Speak Up Speak Out" training. She urged people she supports to be on the statewide self-advocate leadership executive team, ensuring that people get to important meetings and conferences. Brenda has initiated engagement and supported people to attend community activities, including voter registration, meetings with legislators, and community meetings. She wants their voices to be heard.

Brenda has other priorities as well. She works hard to keep those she supports connected with their families, helping them write letters and even driving them to nearby communities for reunions. Making sure individuals attend the wellness center is another priority for her. She even works to have those she supports share their successful wellness stories in the local media.

INDIANA
JENNIFER DAILEY
Dungarvin
Indianapolis, IN



This DSP's support of one man is an example of the impact a DSP can have on someone's quality of life. Prior to coming to Dungarvin for support, a man was found alone in a room, in a neglected state, curled up in the fetal position on a soiled toddler mattress. After coming to his new home, he remained in the fetal position for weeks, non-verbal, and would not even gesture to communicate. Jennifer's calm and gentle demeanor during her daily supports eventually built a foundation of trust. Today, he moves around the house and uses a communications device to let Jennifer and others know his wants, his needs, and his choices.

Self-determination is an NADSP Tenet that Jennifer exemplifies in her work. This story from her nomination speaks legions about this: "This man's team discovered it was very challenging to have open communication with his father/guardian. Unanswered phone calls and unsigned documentation were the norm. Jennifer uncovered that his father/guardian is rarely home, as he spends his waking hours visiting his wife at her nursing home. Without Jennifer's work, his team would have remained frustrated. Instead, once Jennifer learned the whereabouts of his father/guardian, she began to call the nursing home directly to speak to him and now takes him to the nursing home on a monthly basis to visit his parents."

She created a picture book for him that includes pictures of each of his direct care staff, other team members and close friends. She also found that she could connect with him through music. He had a small radio he loved. Today he has a big radio with a large dial that helps him select a station he likes. Jennifer has helped him get a tambourine, maracas, and a small drum.



IOWA

SHANNON HENSON

Exceptional Persons, Inc.
Waterloo, IA

Shannon has worked in the disabilities field for 3½ years and almost two years with Exceptional Persons, Inc.

Her DSP role is that of a Job Coach 2 and she's very skilled and talented in this role. Katie Slade nominated her and tells this story in her nomination form:

“An employment situation with very little supports wasn't going well. From this unfortunate experience, the business thought supported employment wasn't a worthwhile endeavor and was about to let an individual go. Luckily, our organization was invited in and Shannon was able to identify the missing supports needed to be successful. The supervisors of the business listened to Shannon as she advocated for this man with a new support plan. He has been successful since. Shannon learned this initial bad experience had built a number of preconceived notions about working with people with disabilities – not only at this business – but throughout the community. Businesses were hesitant to give people with disabilities a chance. Shannon has worked to re-educate the community about our way of supporting people by building relationships, helping them be successful, and gain independence. Now, more businesses in this community are willing to hire our job seekers.” Her intervention was key!

Shannon is really skilled at building relationships. There are businesses in Waterloo that want only Shannon supporting their employees. She never gives up and time after time she has gone in, assessed what was happening and solved problems that kept the people the agency supported in jobs and earning money. She trains and mentors her peers, too.

“With Shannon on our team, we've been able to place a high number of persons in jobs this year,” Katie wrote.

KANSAS

SUMER WHITAKER

Mosaic
Ellsworth, KS



Sumer is a Direct Support Associate and has been with Mosaic for more than four years. She acts as the right hand assistant for the agency's Health Services Associate. In that role she is the primary support staff to attend medical appointments with the individuals the agency supports. She helps them communicate with the health providers and encourages them to be open with the doctors and nurses.

This story is one of the reasons the agency nominated her for the Kansas DSP of the Year honor. Last fall she accompanied an individual who was unable to speak for himself. She told the doctor that she thought the man had suffered a stroke. The doctor was disregarding that and was prepared to release the man, but she didn't feel comfortable with the physician's diagnosis. Because of her professional relationship with the doctor and persistent advocacy for the man, the doctor had him admitted for additional testing. During a CT scan, a Subdural Hematoma (internal bleeding outside of the brain) was discovered and the man was admitted and underwent the necessary procedure to relieve the pressure. Today, that man is doing fine thanks to Sumer's persistence.

She's also a strong advocate for people with disabilities in the Kansas Legislature. At a recent Push Day Rally in Topeka, she spoke to the press and expressed her concerns about the potential damages done to individuals from a lack of Medicaid funding. She's also quick to call state legislators if an action alert comes out that would hurt people with disabilities.



KENTUCKY
JAMAR "BARKIM" GOWINS
 ResCare
 Elizabethtown, KY

We've often heard the adage "It's the simple things in life that matter most." ResCare's Barkim Gowins seems to understand the adage. One man this DSP of

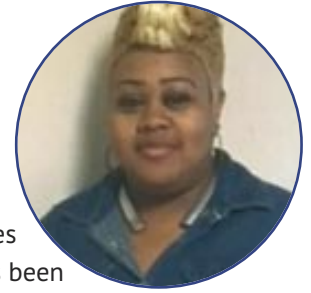
13 years supports had never been able to write, draw or color. Barkim would put a crayon in the man's hand and he would put it down. One day, instead of putting the crayon in his hand, Barkim put the crayon down in front of this gentleman. The man picked up the crayon and drew a line across the paper and then started scribbling. Barkim was amazed and excited. "It wasn't a big deal to anyone else," Barkim said. "But he had never done this before. It's not just a line drawn on paper. It's amazing."

Here's another example. Barkim was called to the agency office and asked to train the team that screens applicants for DSP jobs. They wanted to know what he thought the screeners should be looking for in the applicants. Barkim said one important thing is to ask if they had anyone in their family or knew anyone with an intellectual or developmental disability. This, he said, would begin a dialogue and would make a personal connection. Small things can lead to big things, like a job.

One man he supports wanted to go fishing. So Barkim took him fishing. They didn't catch any fish, but Barkim said the look of excitement on the man's face when he handed him the fishing pole was obvious. "We didn't have to catch a fish, but fishing is what he wanted to do, so that's what we did."

Another man wanted to learn how to cook. They cooked a meal together and now do so weekly. "I love making a difference in people's lives," Barkim said.

LOUISIANA
MIYA WINFIELD
 ResCare
 Ponchatoula, LA



Advocacy and helping someone become a self-advocate are qualities that all DSPs should have. Miya has been a DSP for four years for ResCare in Louisiana and her support for one man is noteworthy.

This man saw a dream come true – he received a waiver slot, which meant he could move out of the group home and live independently. It turns out that he was reluctant, fearing the unknown, leaving his familiar surroundings and the security there. Miya was supportive along the way, but not pushy, in encouraging him. She reminded him about his dream. She said it would work if he believed in himself. He finally decided to make the move and now he calls Miya weekly to keep her updated on his new independent life.

Miya is also big on relationships. She helps the men she supports stay in touch with family members. She fosters a culture where the relationships between the family and staff are part of the support system. One of her favorite sayings is "We Are Family!"

Respect is another value that Miya models. She knows the men at this home want to be respected and empowered to have control of their lives. She works constantly to ensure that all staff members understand and believe that "this is their house" and staff are to provide assistance only when needed. This understanding and focus has created an environment that fosters outcomes to be achieved through self-directed services, from choices in daily schedules to building relations with family and girlfriends.



MAINE
DANI MCKENNEY-HALLETT
 OHI
 Hermon, ME

Persistence coupled with advocacy is a strong attribute for a DSP. Dani has that attribute. This DSP of 22 years at OHI is amazing. Dani took a woman she supports to her primary care physician with what Dani said was a broken foot. The doctor examined the woman and concluded that the break had healed -- without ordering X-rays to confirm his conclusion. Dani went back and forth advocating for six months with medical providers that the woman's foot had not healed. This was based on her observations and the woman's constant complaints of foot pain from the woman. Dani finally convinced a doctor to order the X-rays. The woman's foot was indeed broken.

After years of living in a rental home where the landlord regularly failed to provide acceptable upkeep and maintenance, Dani convinced the two women she supports to find a new place to live. She scoured countless rental ads in newspapers and on the Internet, took the two women to look at dozens of rentals before they found a rental home where they all felt safe and comfortable. Their new home even has a deck the women sit out on in the summer and enough space for a craft room where they spend a lot of time.

Taking the initiative is nothing new for Dani. She takes the lead in coordinating an annual week-long trip for a woman she supports. This woman's guardian insists that she attend this camp, but it is an expensive camp for adults with disabilities. This year the guardian or the woman could not afford the \$1,900 trip. So Dani got busy researching and applied for several scholarships for the woman and found the money to cover all but \$60 of the camp cost. That's advocacy and persistence again!

MARYLAND
EURICKA STEVENS
 Progress Unlimited.org
 Owing Mills, MD



This DSP inspired meaningful words from her nominator: "Everything Euricka does, every word she utters, every deed, every response, every laugh, is a genuine expression of her ability to see each and every person she serves as a unique individual. Euricka doesn't see limitations or disabilities. She sees a person for their distinctive collection of traits and strengths and frailties and meets them there. She listens to the person and has an uncanny knack for unearthing what makes them remarkable. How could the folks Euricka serves not want to be the very best they can for her and themselves! Those of us fortunate enough to know Euricka are proud to affirm that she is the face of what is best about our agency."

One story speaks to the innate skills this DSP possesses. One man was having a difficult time in the agency's center. He was often seen hitting himself in the head and was unkind to others. Euricka was, unlike many of her colleagues, unafraid. She worked with him in her quiet manner. "She discovered that he was bothered by noise but loved sitting in a recliner. She found, to the surprise of everyone, that he actually liked attention," her nomination reads. "And she figured all this out without a word from this man, who is not able to communicate verbally." This man today participates in the life of the center and, thanks to Euricka, when things get too much, everyone knows to offer him an opportunity to move to his recliner in a quiet part of the center!

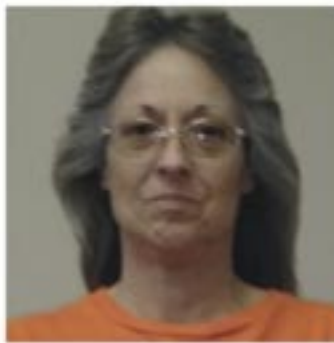


Congratulations to our outstanding team members on being named Direct Support Professionals of the year by ANCOR!

Our amazing DSPs make a difference in the lives of the individuals they serve every single day. These five winners from across The MENTOR Network exemplify our organization's mission of building relationships and enhancing lives. They go above and beyond to help the people we serve live life to the fullest in the communities they call home, and for that, we thank them. **Congratulations to all of our winners!**



Lucy Garadwey
MENTOR Oregon



Janet Johnson
Illinois MENTOR
Community Services



Lou Perkins
REM West Virginia



Robert Ruskowski
Arizona MENTOR



Marty Shaw
REM North Dakota

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MASSACHUSETTS
JESSE FARREN-JAMES
 WCI
 Waltham, MA

Jesse serves as a Support Coordinator in her role as a DSP at WCI. She has worked at WCI for

11 years and has become a key support staffer within the agency.

Her nomination as Massachusetts' DSP of the Year ends with this quote from her CEO: "It's her caring, her respect for each person as a unique individual, and her attitude that anything can be accomplished if you are willing to think about different possibilities, that make her the best."

One man she supports wanted to expand his education. She helped him enroll at Mass Bay Community College. This man has Cerebral Palsy and a serious Traumatic Brain Injury. Jesse worked with the staff and they went with him to school, assisted in note taking and assignments. He stayed with it and earned a degree.

Jesse is described as having these qualities -- person-centered, promotes self-advocacy and self-determination and above all respect. All are NADSP Tenets. She lives and breathes these tenets in everything she does at WCI. She is a "What is needed to make/let this happen" kind of thinker.

One gentleman she supports lost his father. Jesse worked with the family to include him in the services and saying his goodbyes. Historically, this man would have fallen apart and had significant behavioral and mental health concerns. With Jesse's support and her leadership of a team of other supports, he was able to be a part of his family's process and he read a passage of scripture at the funeral. It wasn't easy. He hugged Jesse on the way out of the church.

As her CEO wrote: this is what "makes her the best."

MICHIGAN
SUE BEYTHAN
 Bethesda
 Frankenmuth, MI



Sue is a builder of relationships...a compassionate listener...a champion of those she supports...with gentle coaching and listening skills....and a calm and encouraging demeanor. Reading her nomination makes it clear why she is Michigan's DSP of the Year. She has worked in the disabilities field for 18 years. She began as a DSP and eventually became a Program Manager, a role she filled for 14 years. Just recently she went back to being a DSP to have more time to care for her mother and grandchildren. "So now we all can enjoy the benefit of working alongside her with all her experience as a bonus to the team," her nomination reads.

She opens her home at Christmas to some of those she supports, people who have no families to see during the holidays. Sue understands the importance of family and builds meaningful relationships with families and guardians. She takes time to get to know them, to know what's important to the family and their family member. She shares success stories about those she supports, building self-esteem. The families enjoy hearing these stories.

Encouraging people to exercise is always a challenge. It's something many people with disabilities avoid. Sue got creative. She met with those who were interested and together they developed an exercise program, complete with a star chart so they could easily track their progress. Each person picks their own reward for completing each step. One purchased a math workbook and another prize was going out for pancakes with Sue. Sue's now tweaked the process and giving special rewards for non-traditional exercises -- like for raking leaves or volunteering to help clean the church. The result? Positive attitudes, pride in accomplishment, and losing weight -- overall better mental and physical health.



MINNESOTA
ELIZABETH LOBB
 Dungarvin
 Mendota Heights, MN

This DSP has been with Dungarvin for just over a year now. She has a real knack for paying attention to

details and knowing all about the people she supports in their group home. One day she noticed small changes in one man’s speech. She grew concerned and notified his father that she’d like to have him checked out just to be safe. They took him to the emergency room, where doctors ran tests and discovered that he had blood clots and was at high risk for a stroke. The individual was able to get immediate medical attention thanks to Elizabeth’s concern and quick action.

When she began working, the men she supported would spend their days at home. One man rarely left his room. He watched movies all day. Elizabeth knew that they needed to become active for their overall well being and health. So she called multiple vocational providers and set up tours for the men. She arranged for assessments. Today, three of the men are happily working in the community with supports and the man who stayed in his room is participating in the Special Olympics, bowling and attending fairs. He also shops for his own needs and the home and is active in the community.

Another gentleman she supports struggles with depression, diabetes and isolation. So she began going with him to weekly therapy sessions. She learned that he liked to visit a nearby gas station to buy a soda. Instead of driving, Elizabeth walks with him to the gas station and they stop in the park for some basketball and to walk on the trail. She is working to find him supported employment as well. He is healthier, happier and thriving thanks to her.

MISSOURI
JONI RESIDES
 St. Louis Arc
 St. Louis, MO



In 2017, Joni, an Employment Specialist DSP, became an official mentor for Workplace Supports. St. Louis Arc requires all employment staff complete this training program through its partnership with Maryville University. Joni spent many hours preparing for and teaching mentoring sessions. She customizes her approach to meet her co-worker mentees where they are in their own journeys. Joni spends time in the field with each co-worker, helping them develop new and improved strategies for supporting individuals in their jobs. Joni was so successful with her mentoring that other mentors are now being taught to follow her methods of customized, collaborative mentoring!

A DSP for 3½ years, Joni provides person-centered supports with personalized goals and solutions. Her advocacy for two individuals she supports recently earned them recognition from Missouri State Treasurer Eric Schmitt for excellent self-advocacy and their work ethic at jobs they perform in the community.

She is a natural at building relationships and creating successful outcomes for every stakeholder. Her nomination to be Missouri’s DSP of the Year explains how she does it: “Joni must not only build relationships but maintain them to help the people she supports reach their goals toward competitive employment. She approaches each relationship with an individualized strategy. Joni demonstrated this recently while supporting an individual who works at a local Senior Living Center. Through this support, Joni focused on educating the employer on how to best support their employee by highlighting the employee’s strengths and skill sets that make her an asset. Because of Joni’s relationship focused support, the Center’s management team has hired 5 individuals to date with intellectual disabilities due to the relationships that Joni has built over time.”

Congratulations!



to our

Oustanding

DSPs



Deneen Lewis

DSP of the Year

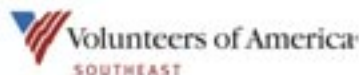
Texas



Donna Price

DSP Award

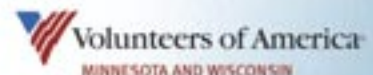
Leadership



Dori Young

DSP of the Year

Wisconsin





INTERNATIONAL / MOLDOVA

NATALIA DEDIU

Keystone Human
Services International

Natalia began her work as a DSP when Keystone opened its community home three years ago in the village of Baimaclia in the Cantemir district.

Two years ago she was promoted to the position of House Manager, supervising a support team of six employees who together support six people – four men and two women. These six people need high-level supports and under Natalia’s direction they all have an excellent quality of life in the community.

One woman she supports is 27 and spent 13 years in a residential institution. In the Keystone home she has learned housekeeping, cooking, reading and writing. Natalia helped her with her vocational education and also with relating to people and making friends. Today, she is a housekeeper at the children’s kindergarten and her dream of having a paying job has been attained. She thanks Natalia for this. Natalia also supported three others from the self-advocacy group to have training and all have jobs now.

She has helped a young couple with their wedding following their release in the spring of 2017 from an institution. Natalia also organized some community members to help the couple with repairs to their home. Her home has become a model in Baimaclia and staff members from other social services agencies visit to learn how she and her team manage it and support the six residents.

The woman working in the kindergarten says about Natalia: “I tell her many things and she can help me in everything I need. She helps me day by day to learn as many new things as I can do in my life. She helps me prepare for life as independently as possible and to prepare for family life.”

MONTANA

BETH SAGATO

Opportunity Resources, Inc.
Missoula, MT



Beth is a Supported Living Coordinator at Opportunity Resources who provides supports to men and women in residential settings. She has been a DSP with the agency for 10 years. Her support work included taking a man she supports shopping and one day as they shopped he began sweating and having breathing problems. She knew something was wrong and rushed him to a hospital. Doctors discovered that he had a blocked artery. Doctors performed a procedure to unblock the artery and Beth was there with him. He then developed a bad reaction to a medication and she quickly alerted the staff and the problem was solved. After being released the man exercises at cardiac rehab and Beth was cleared to exercise along with him. Beth’s strong support saved his life and now he’s lost weight and is doing great.

Montana’s DSP of the Year was supporting a woman who lived in her own apartment. The woman fell and suffered a broken pelvic bone. She needed 24/7 supports when she left the hospital, but her care plan would not support that financially. Beth got busy and obtained a temporary placement in a group home so she could have the 24-hour support she needed. Beth took on additional shifts in the group home to help support her and monitor her progress. She also pitched in and helped the staff with all of their supports. Yes, she is a team player.



NEBRASKA
CARRIE DIAMOND
 ResCare
 Lincoln, NE

Carrie is the Lead DSP in a group home that supports three women. She has been a DSP for 13 years -- six with ResCare. One story about her tells us a great deal about how she goes about her work. A woman was new to their home and within a few days Carrie had a new nickname. This woman called her “Mama Carrie” because she felt so comfortable around Carrie. The woman’s mother wrote a letter to the agency and it said, in part: “Carrie goes above and beyond with such wisdom, balance and grace ... to ensure the safety and well-being of each client and person involved.” Carrie has a unique understanding and connection with the people she supports – she grew up with family members who have intellectual/developmental disabilities. Choosing this field as a profession and career came naturally to Carrie.

The women in Carrie’s home all have very-high medical needs. She leads her team and helps them maintain loyalty and dedication to the three women. Recently, her group home had its annual survey done as a Center for the Developmentally Disabled. The state surveyors were impressed and pleased to report that they found no deficiencies and they had no recommendations to give because the house was so inviting and organized thanks to the staff at the location. Surveyors pointed out that Carrie’s leadership and care were to be commended as the Lead Staff for the home. High praise.

She is a great advocate for those she supports in all aspects of their lives. Carrie has open and outstanding relationships with their families. She works to make sure the women make their own choices. She advocates effectively for their medical needs, as well. As her nomination points out, “She walks the walk and talks the talk.”



NEVADA
MAXINE HENSLEY
 Dungarvin
 Las Vegas, NV

Maxine is a Host Home Provider and Home Manager who has been a DSP for almost nine years now. She is described as a “fierce advocate” for self-determination, rights and employment opportunities. She was asked to step in and support a man she previously supported. With her support the man is now involved in all aspects of his life. She believes in teamwork, and people who are peers, team members and members of the community think of her as an “old friend.” She makes them comfortable.

Another gentleman’s longtime provider became ill and Maxine became his support staff. His family preferred that he have a male in Maxine’s role. She showed compassion for this man, getting him involved in activities that allowed him to continue accessing social and work settings of his choosing. “Whatever hesitation there was of her being a permanent replacement as a host home provider because she was female does not exist anymore,” her nomination reads.

This man she supports had restrictions from using Internet-related devices. Maxine worked with the team and got him an iPad. Working with the family, his team, and with him they added protections to the device so he could use it without being monitored. Now he tells others about his new iPad with pride and confidence.

Maxine is a native of Hawaii and is taking a vacation to visit family. The man she supports is going along with her, and this will be his first trip to experience another culture and travel outside of the continental United States.



NEW HAMPSHIRE

LATA SUBEDI

The PLUS Company
Nashua, NH

This DSP joined PLUS in June 2008 and her nomination says that “she has been a role model for all other

DSPs since that time.” Her nomination continues with these words: “Her first thought is always the client, their needs and their wishes. She understands that every individual, no matter their disability, is a person with hopes and dreams just like everyone else, and helps each and every one work towards their goals. She takes a different approach with every person she works with, somehow knowing how to help them be the best they can be with little to no direction from others. Lata listens. Lata cares. Lata works hard each and every day for her individuals and WITH them, understanding that helping them learn is the best way to create empowerment and happiness.” That’s high praise.

The parents of those she supports have come to love and appreciate her as well. One parent wrote this to PLUS about her: “We feel very fortunate to have Lata as our daughter’s daily coach at The PLUS Company. Lata is very kind and thoughtful, and very patient!! She always brings out the best in our daughter and she looks forward to being with Lata and working on projects with her. Lata gives it 150%!”

Sprinkled through her nomination are words describing her, words like great attitude, positive and patient, upbeat, dependable, cooperative, and resourceful. She leads through efforts such as teaching the Job Club and relaxation techniques class. She empowers people and helps them be independent – both key parts of the PLUS company mission.

NEW JERSEY

STEPHANIE BURNHAM

Dungarvin
Burlington, NJ



Stephanie was hired by Dungarvin to provide 1:1 supports for a man with severe PICA. She dedicated her days to learning everything she could about this man. She found out what snacks he enjoys and activities he likes, among other things. One very important thing she learned that the previous support team did not know – he knew sign language. “Stephanie challenged the written documentation and historic verbal reports and discovered that he was capable of going into the community and enjoying a cup of coffee or other outings without exhibiting PICA behavior. As a result, he now enjoys regular community outings,” it says in her nomination as the state’s DSP of the Year.

She has, her nomination reads, opened a whole new world for him. Stephanie identified 37 signs that he knows. “She is literally rewriting his life story so that the focus is not on his PICA diagnosis but on who he is as a person.... She has discovered abilities that the rest of the support team didn’t know he had.” In fact, he gives her a smirk when she discovers he is signing something new that she didn’t know that he knew.

This ability to communicate has changed his life and those around him. His PICA issues have improved and he is now making and communicating with friends in the program. He has no family and Stephanie has become his family. “The relationship between this man and Stephanie is truly something special to witness and it is evident that their care for one another is genuine,” her nomination says.



ResCare
ResCare.com |  

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to our 2018 Award-Winning
Direct Support Professionals!
Thank you for *helping people*
live their best life every day!

 Carrie Diamond
Nebraska
 Robert Moulton
North Carolina
 Elsa Gleason
Idaho
 Catrina Cleveland
Florida
 Shilo Deede
Washington
 Tammy Porter
Alaska
 Emily Ward
West Virginia*
 Miya Winfield
Louisiana
 Greg Curry
Canada
 Jamar "Barkim" Gowins
Kentucky
 Keith Richardson
Indiana**

*Special Category Winner: Relationships
**Special Category Winner: Leadership

CONGRATULATIONS

JESSE FARREN-JAMES

MASSACHUSETTS DSP OF THE YEAR



For 12 years, Jesse has advocated for the Individuals that she supports to become more independent, educated them in self-advocacy and facilitated friendships and relationships. She is a leader who is person-centered and promotes self-determination. The Individuals, staff, family members & Board congratulate you and thank you for all that you have accomplished at WCI.





NEW MEXICO
TERILYN BARTON
Dungarvin
Farmington, NM

Terilyn stretches herself to give the people she supports the resources they need. For example, even though she is not a job coach, she has helped in that area. A lot of the people supported have lost jobs of late and she has been active in the community, helping individuals with their resumes. Terilyn has met with business owners about the people she supports. Whatever it takes, she does it.

Terilyn is an accomplished marathon runner and health is paramount for her. She brings that same passion for health to her role as a DSP. She is instrumental in assisting individuals to maintain their health with appropriate exercise routines that she helps tailor for each person. Terilyn also shares with those she supports the nutritional guidelines so that they are all eating healthy.

One of her big talents, however, is helping people achieve their dreams. She goes with them on vacations and to visit their families. She recently helped one man cross something off of his bucket list – to visit the Royal Gorge in Canyon City, CO. He rode in a helicopter over the gorge and she was his advocate for this lifetime experience!

NEW YORK
LUIS ROSARIO
Liberty
Amsterdam, NY

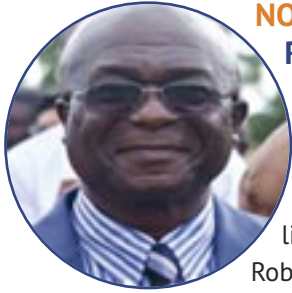


This gentle giant of a DSP impacts lives and has fun doing it. “He has a huge heart and is truly inspired to help people.” That’s a quote from his nomination as DSP of the Year. He’s focused on allowing the people he supports to have fun and love life as well. Advocacy and creating relationships are two of his real strengths.

For example, Luis works at various homes in the agency and is known for setting up “guys night out” for men from the different homes. They enjoy wrestling matches, music events and just going out for dinner. He organizes people with the same interests to take overnight trips to the Quincy Market in Boston, to New York City or to take train rides to different places. Bonds are formed and that social aspect of life matters.

One couple he helps support were both overweight. A plan for them to become healthier was put in place. Luis helped them get a gym membership, attend Zumba classes with them and walked with them. He worked with them on meal portion control and found healthy between-meals snacks. They each have lost 75 pounds.

This DSP of 10 years is truly inspired to help people. He supports a married couple living in a supportive apartment. What he did is described in his nomination: “The most inspiring event happened recently. It was their 16th wedding anniversary and he helped them budget their money well in advance for an exciting night out. They chose their favorite restaurant, Red Lobster, rented a limo and took four friends with them to share their special night. Luis’ unwavering support of this relationship is the basis of his exemplary service to everyone.”



NORTH CAROLINA
ROBERT MOULTON
ResCare
Charlotte, NC

A mother's praise is not to be taken lightly, and the mother of man Robert supports in his group home wrote to the agency: "When Mr. Robert is working at the group home, I know my son is being well taken care of."

Robert has been a DSP for four years and has become an integral part of the lives of the men he supports. Advocacy is a real strength for this DSP. He promotes independence for the men. One member of the agency's Human Rights Committee wrote to support Robert's nomination for DSP of the Year: "He advocates for the guys and suggests new ideas and ways to improve the home."

He is a leader as well, setting the example for his colleagues. When new staff members are hired, Robert shifts into his coaching mode, updating them on each one of the men in the home and about how to make sure the home runs smoothly. "He is a reflection of the values of ResCare," his nomination reads. "He is authentic in his interactions and is always willing to offer motivation during difficult times."



NORTH DAKOTA
MARTY SHAW
The MENTOR Network
Minot, ND

This DSP gets it done, be it in the categories of Advocacy, Relationships, Leadership, Innovation or NADSP Tenets. He has been a DSP for The MENTOR Network for 16 years. He takes his work so seriously that, as the person who nominated him wrote: "In the 16 years Marty has been serving our individuals he has not been issued a single medication error. He is meticulous in charting, documentation and medication administration."

One woman wanted to learn how to use a computer, so six years ago on every Monday he would sit down with her for an hour. He taught her how to type and navigate the computer. Today, he says, she is better with the computer and a cell phone than he is. "When something in my phone isn't working, she says 'Oh it's easy Marty...you just do this.'"

He is a relationship builder, so much so that for the past 12 years he has driven a man across the state twice a year to visit a former employee who supported him. They visit her on her birthday and during the holidays. This man has no family so he's become part of Marty's family, so much so that he calls Marty's mother "Grandma Shaw." By the way, she makes sure that the people in his home all have Easter baskets and stockings along with the rest of the family.

Marty is also the agency's "Go-To" DSP. One man wanted a garden, so Marty worked with him to create a garden. But Marty knew a garden would help more persons than just this man. Today, everyone helps with the garden and the vegetables they pick are donated to the 2nd Story social club for adults with development disabilities.

CONGRATULATIONS!

DELAWARE



Adeyemi Kehinde
Mosaic in Delaware

KANSAS



Sumer Whitaker
Mosaic in Ellsworth

Mosaic is proud of our Award-Winning DSPs!

Adeyemi and Sumer are great representatives of Mosaic's outstanding DSPs across the country. They are true advocates for people, both in daily matters and in the legislative arena. They build strong relationships that create bonds of trust and caring with the people they serve. Their work inspires and motivates co-workers to keep their focus on the people they serve.

Thank you, Adeyemi and Sumer. You deserve this honor.



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Congratulations

SUE BEYTHAN

-Michigan's DSP of the Year-

We want to take this opportunity to thank you for everything you do. You make a difference in the lives of the people you support every day.



Bethesda

BethesdaLC.org





OHIO

MINA NARDI

Koinonia Homes
Independence, OH

Mina has been a Koinonia DSP for four years, but in those four years she has made quite an impact. Not long ago she was asked to serve at another group home to help stabilize things after a leadership change. The residents did not like the changes and responded with challenging behaviors. Here's what happened next: "Mina went in and did what she does best: identify and analyze the situation, put systems in place that were missing, develop relationships with staff and individuals while maintaining a positive spin at all times! Mina did an amazing job and laid the groundwork for new management to step in. She returned to her home site. The individuals and staff welcomed her back with open arms and there were tears of joy shed by both the individuals and Mina."

She is known for her Person-Centered Supports and she encourages choice and honoring individual preferences. Mina understands that the people she supports have their own unique gifts and goals in life. One man has lost 20 pounds after she and other staff created a picture book of foods for him so he could gesture and let them know what he wanted to eat. They have worked with him to make healthy choices, too.

One woman Mina supports would sit with her eyes closed, shutting out everyone and the things around her. She had three sisters who came back into her life. With Nina's support, this woman is now active again and out of her shell, embracing her sisters and enjoying her housemates and life again, even pitching in to help with the household chores. She is, in short, enjoying life again – thanks to this Ohio DSP of the Year!



OKLAHOMA

TERI ARQUILLA

Dungarvin
Oklahoma City, OK

Teri is a DSP who loves her job and the men she supports (and their families) love her. This portion of her nomination as the Oklahoma DSP of the Year paints you a picture of this DSP: "...Although they are medically fragile, technically non-verbal and depend on others for all their needs, the men know that they are loved and they know their lives improved drastically when Teri showed up to work in their home two years ago. When you see Teri and one man, you can clearly see the deep connection they share. His eyes track her as he follows her through the house, using his feet to move his wheelchair to wherever she is. She speaks to him and interacts with him, teaching him new words and you cannot deny his smile. Teri has this same relationship with family members. They are thrilled to see the difference she has made in the lives of their loved ones."

When she became the Program Coordinator for this house, it was easy to see the changes. There was a distinct difference in the way services were delivered. She raised the bar for the staff, spent hours mentoring them and would not leave them alone until she was certain they understood all of the protocols. The home came alive.

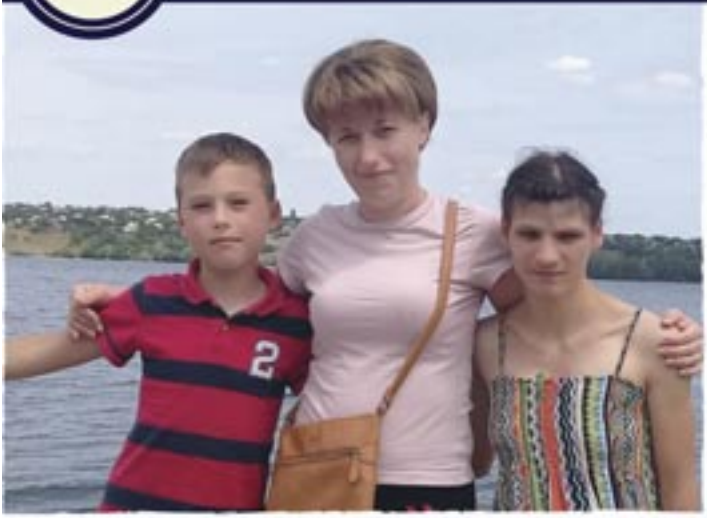
She takes the men to a park with swings for people using wheelchairs. One man had stopped sitting on the patio because of his reaction to mosquito bites. So she found some netting and made a tent to cover him and he's outside again now, enjoying the outdoors. She even bought head lamps for the staff to wear if and when the power goes out. To her, little things are big things.

Congratulations!

Natalia Dediu

2018

Moldova's DSP



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HUMAN SERVICES
INTERNATIONAL MOLDOVA ASSOCIATION

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We are honored that ANCOR chose you as Moldova's Direct Support Professional of the Year! Thank you for your commitment to our Mission to Advance the Human Spirit!

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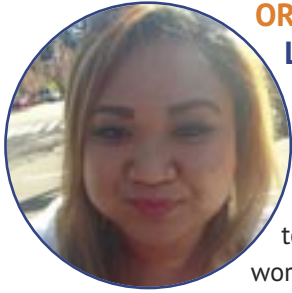
**EURICKA
STEVENS**

**Maryland 2018
DSP of the year**



Progress Unlimited, Inc.
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www.progressunlimited.org

PUI is proud of Euricka Stevens. She makes a difference empowering individuals with disabilities to lead fulfilling and productive lives at home and in the community.



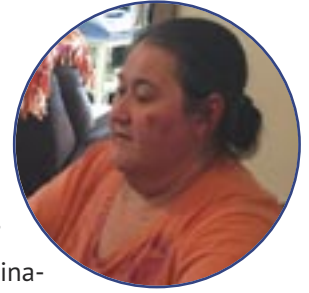
OREGON
LUCY GARADWEY
 The MENTOR Network
 Portland, OR

When you read Lucy’s nomination to be Oregon’s DSP of the Year, six words jump off the page that say so much: “...her heart is in the job.” You can’t

teach heart. You’re born with it. Perhaps that’s because she comes from a family with a history of working in the ID/DD field. A DSP for 12 years, she has been at MENTOR for just over two years and her work has been so impressive that she was recently promoted to the position of Lead Direct Support Professional.

Lucy’s nominator wrote of her: “She has been at the program for over two years, taking on much more than would be expected of a DSP with opening/closing, managing paperwork, training new team members, keeping the team on track, finishing all duties that may have been missed, and being the great example for others. She does this all without even being asked and without ever a complaint. I have had somewhere around 50 DSPs work for me at this point in my career and I can’t think of anyone else who is so well rounded and gives back to the program in the ways she does.”

When the agency put out a new day-of-the-week activities list, it involved the staff selecting a day where they would lead an activity that fit one of these categories – art, music, stories, science, and client choice. Many thought science could not be done. Not Lucy. She put together a fun tie-dye science experiment that showed everyone “Hey, we can do this!” That’s how she approaches her DSP role every day.



PENNSYLVANIA
KAREN COGAR
 Fayette Resources
 Uniontown, PA

Karen’s motto is “Communication is the key to making everything work.”

This DSP of 16 years is a Site Coordinator for two homes who never gives up. One man she supported for more than a decade became ill and was hospitalized. Doctors decided to send him back home under Hospice care to die. This man could not communicate and she was not giving up on him. She worked with the agency’s nurses to develop better ways to support him. Now, five years later, this man has gained 50 pounds and is thriving.

Her nomination tells us this about her: “Barriers do not exist to Karen. She makes things happen.” One man suffered from allergies and his medications did nothing to help. One visit to an allergist did no good. She did some research and found a highly rated allergist an hour away. She took him for the appointment. New tests showed that he was not allergic to some things that he had been allergic to and had developed new allergies. His medication dosages were better suited for a child rather than an adult. Now, he has a new treatment plan, new meds, and is doing the things he loves, like fishing.

Karen leads by example and believes in hands-on training and face-to-face meetings. She helps train staff in three homes at Fayette. Teams that have struggled in their homes have been turned around thanks to her leadership. They quickly learn what she expects of them and are held accountable. Her focus is on the personal success of those supported and of her staff members. As her nominator writes of her, “She embraces creativity in all that she does.”



RHODE ISLAND
SONJA BARR

West Bay Residential
Services
Cranston, RI

Sonja has been at West Bay for her entire 26 years as a DSP and the NADSP

Tenet that best exemplifies her work is her ability to build strong relationships. She does so with those she supports, her peers, with family members and with people in the community.

She also is known for her advocacy of those she supports. Two years ago a man wanted to start his own business. He enjoys baking and loves dogs, so they developed an entrepreneurial idea – starting a dog treat business. Sonja talked with pet shops, groomers and dog accessory stores and then visited them again, but with him. With her help he bakes and packages the treats and his new business has been a huge success.

There's more along these lines. She has been instrumental in the success of a recycling business that the people supported have run for 20 years now. She has had a newspaper route for 15 years and has helped the ones she supports run a Meals on Wheels route for 10 years.

As for her leadership skills, she trains new DSPs, orders all of the medications, healthcare needs and household supplies that are needed. She is recognized as a Lead Staff who always steps in during a crisis. And she was the first DSP at West Bay to complete the Association of Community Resource Education (ACRE) certification this year, in addition to her everyday responsibilities.

Relationships matter deeply to her. She helps people send birthday and holiday cards to friends and family and works with them to make dinner plans and be involved in social events. "She believes that everyone should have people in their circle and those relationships are critical to people's happiness and wellbeing," her nomination reads.

SOUTH CAROLINA
VERNIELL HANNIBAL

Darlington County DSN Board
Hartsville, SC



According to the person who nominated her: "Verniell is very skilled in handling the individuals. She does this with love and respect. She is very gentle with the ladies and always concerned about their comfort and dignity. She has a calm spirit and is always willing to assist. She is dependable and can be counted on to complete any task given. She is always concerned about their health and happiness and puts them first."

One woman Verniell had supported wanted to die peacefully in her home of many years surrounded by her friends. Her family wanted to put her in a nursing home. Verniell went to great lengths to show the family how happy she was in the home. She had them come visit and watch how she interacted, laughing and talking with the housemates, being with people she loved. The family agreed with Verniell.

She does seemingly little things that matter so much. Another woman was gravely ill and Verniell would sit by her bed, holding her hand, reading Bible verses to her and singing her favorite songs. When the resident could no longer talk, Verniell would hold the phone to her ear so she could hear her loved ones' voices.

As a House Manager, she trains new staff and during new employee orientation she teaches consumer goals and understanding disabilities. She trains new House Managers as well. Blocker adds to this: "Verniell willingly assumes roles and responsibilities where needed. When there was the need for monitoring and keeping track of goals, she stepped up to the plate and began doing the work. She never grumbles or complains when it comes to doing anything to help the individuals we serve."



IOWA'S DSP OF THE YEAR!

Shannon connects *people*, creates *opportunities*, and nurtures *growth* - living our mission daily.

Shannon becomes EPI's fourth *Iowa DSP of the Year!*

CONGRATULATIONS,
Shannon Henson!

www.episervice.org | (319) 232 - 6671

Congratulations Beth Ryan



2018 ANCOR Direct Support Professional Recognition Award for Advocacy
For 30 years your advocacy has inspired us!
and transformed lives

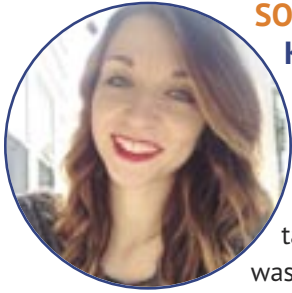


Beth Ryan
and Rick



Bill and
Beth Ryan

1168 Northland Drive • Mendota Heights, MN 55120 • livingwell.org



SOUTH DAKOTA
KRISTEN JUNG

Aspire South Dakota
Aberdeen, SD

These are great times for this talented DSP of three years. She was selected as Aspire's DSP of the Year and honored with the "Simply the Best" award as well. And now she is being honored as the DSP of the Year for the state of South Dakota.

She helps those she supports maintain relationships with family, and will even drive them to their family members. She helps them make phone calls and with writing letters that include pictures. In 2017 a man she and her team supports became unresponsive. Kristen took control of the situation, told the staff what to do, and then started CPR and saved this man's life.

Her nomination for the state award says this about her Leadership: "Kristen exemplifies leadership each and every day and searches for ways for personal and professional growth! Kristen applied and was accepted to the Leadership program within our agency. It is a year-long process and a huge personal commitment. Even though the Leadership is a daunting task all in itself, Kristen has also taken it upon herself to become a mentor for the agency to assist new staff members to feel welcomed, build friendships in the workplace, learn their jobs, be a resource for others, or just someone to be there to vent to."

She is kindhearted and honest. Here is how she is described in her nomination: "Kristen 'gets' what it means to be a DSP. She lives and breathes the agency's mission and vision. She is dependable, hardworking, and committed to the agency and the people that she supports. She can acknowledge when she has failed and then strives for ways to learn and grow from that. She also understands that if her team fails, she fails."

TENNESSEE
TERRY MILLER

Core Services
of Northeast Tennessee
Johnson City, TN



Terry's thoughtful approach to his work has had an amazing effect on one man's life. Terry began supporting a man who came to his agency after spending his life in segregated settings, including sheltered workshops. He did not trust people or new situations. He preferred isolation. Staff members would try to take him places, but he refused to get out of the car, so they stopped trying. Terry stepped in and slowly earned the man's trust. He took him to the Dollywood theme park four times (150-mile round trip) before he could coax the man to walk into the park. So what changed?

It was simple. Terry wondered if holding on to something like a walker would help him feel more secure, so he borrowed a walker. Bingo. Today the man goes anywhere and everywhere. The walker was a simple but a huge solution that solved many problems. Today he spends six hours a day in the community, has become close friends with his housemates and is exploring supported employment options. He even went on a vacation to Myrtle Beach, SC and goes to game night every Tuesday with friends. "Terry's approach to assist this man in exploring new environments was brilliant," his nomination as Tennessee's DSP of the Year reads. "Without question the entire landscape of this man's life changed because of Terry's supports."

Today, this man makes his bed and helps with the upkeep of his home. He refused to wear his glasses. No more. He will not leave home without them. Recently he and Terry enjoyed a two-hour movie together. "This man's life before and after Terry Miller is a glaring example of what happens when supports are designed around the person," his nomination concludes.



TEXAS

DENEEN LEWIS

Volunteers of America Texas
Houston, TX

Deneen is a Program Coordinator/DSP and is known for her innovative supports she puts in place – both inside and outside of the agency’s day program. She started a daily current events class to discuss the news and things people see on the Internet. When some did not understand what was being taught in church, she had a pastor lead a weekly Bible study.

Deneen began sign language classes for everyone to take so they could communicate with their families and others. She even created a spelling and text messaging vernacular class to help those who were struggling with text messages. As her nomination for state DSP of the Year reads: “She is always in tune with the little things.”

A DSP for 15 years, she brings a lot of experience to her work. She has helped some of those she supports develop relationships with members of the opposite sex. Two mothers tried to stop this, fearing safety issues for their daughters. Deneen worked to educate the two mothers, explaining their daughters wanted what others had – companionship. Now, the families are happy -- as are their daughters.

One message she emphasizes to her staff is “know your caseload!” Know each person because you need to know how to communicate with case managers, agency staff, guardians, family and therapists. She began to notice changes with one man in her program who was sick and kept getting worse. She notified the guardian and nurse, who told her not to call 911. She made the call anyway. Once in the emergency room doctors said he was suffering from respiratory distress from pneumonia. He was in ICU for several days. It was a reminder to her staff to pay special attention to those supported who are non-verbal. Paying attention may have saved a life!

UTAH

KRISTIE GEERTSEN

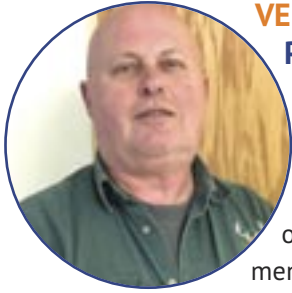
RISE Services, Inc.
Orem, UT



Kristie has seen a lot in her 26 years as a DSP, and she knows a lot. When you read her nomination form for Utah’s DSP of the Year, there is example after example of the important work she performs for those she supports. Here are just a few examples:

- She realized that a para-transit driver was not properly securing wheelchairs in the bus. She talked to the driver. Nothing changed. So she contacted the company to make sure the driver was trained.
- One woman she supports was declining physically and did not want to go out any longer and shop for groceries. Kristie taught her how to shop online and now they shop together for the groceries.
- Another person thought people were reading her mail. So Kristie got her a Post Office box and she has the only key. Problem solved.
- One of the ladies who Kristie has supported for over two decades has a condition with a life expectancy of three to five years. Her abilities have declined from being able to walk to using a walker and now a wheelchair. Throughout, Kristie has encouraged her to continue to do as much for herself as possible. Her family feels that it has been the constant encouragement to do things for her self that has allowed her to live far past her expectancy. She is now 32.
- One woman who loves her job is declining physically and was struggling at work. Instead of letting her go, Kristie convinced her employer to give her a day off in the middle of the week to rest. The employer agreed and she is still enjoying her job.

Her nomination concludes with this: “Kristie is truly committed to the health and well-being as well as the personal growth of each of the six people she supports every day. She is a problem solver and a team player.”



VERMONT
PETE COOK
 GMSS
 Morrisville, VT

Pete has worn many hats at GMSS over the years – supported employment, a service coordinator, a home provider, a manager of a home where two of the agency’s most challenging people lived, and now he’s a DSP supporting two people. He also is trained as an instructor in the National Core Indicators and was an EMT for Hardwick Rescue for 30 years and brought those skills to GMSS.

This DSP knows how to motivate someone. One man he supports wanted to work in a kitchen, but a combination of poor hygiene, his large size and lack of abilities worked against him. Pete worked diligently on the hygiene issue and he was able to enroll him in a 6-8 week culinary arts class. He passed and was certified and found a job.

Pete opens up his personal wood shop to people he supports and together they build things like birdhouses and bookshelves. They come up with a design, create a materials list and then go shopping. Then the work starts and it may take three to four weeks to complete the project. He says it is a reminder that people can accomplish their goals even if it takes a long time.

VIRGINIA
SHANTA WILLIAMS
 Resources for
 Independence of Virginia
 Fairfax, VA



Shanta has many strengths as a DSP, but her nomination to be the Virginia DSP of the Year says Advocacy is her strongest. “Advocating for her individuals is something she does on a daily basis. It is very important for those she supports to receive the support according to their needs. Shanta has advocated on their behalf to family members, Support Coordinators, community representatives, and her supervisor. It is important to her for her individuals’ voices to be heard. When she finds that their supports aren’t person centered or they’re not being treated accordingly she quickly becomes their voice. She identifies who, what, where, when, and how to rectify the problem. She believes in seeing the person and not the disability.”

She supports six individuals and is known as a problem solver. Here is what she did for one man she supports: “One man found himself facing barriers that prevented his ability to make rental payments, have food in the home, and seek dental care that was critical to his health. Shanta began immediately identifying community resources that were able to offer the individual the support he needed. She contacted each care coordination team member, not only to inform them of the issues, but provided the resolution to the issues as well. She had already scheduled appointments to housing resources that assisted with rental payments, identified a dental practitioner that lowered costs based on her advocacy for that individual, and identified food banks where the individual can receive groceries on an as-needed basis.” Problems solved!



WASHINGTON
SHILOH DEEDE
 ResCare
 Seattle, WA

She's known as the "Secret Supervisor" and it is a nickname of endearment. It's also very true. In her DSP role she is usually the first to identify a problem in the program, the needs of a person supported, or the needs of her teammates. In many ways she fills the role as an advisor to the supervisor. "She is a gentle person and tends to lead by example, setting the tone at a program and demonstrating the expectations of our agency in all that she does," her nomination for DSP of the Year reads.

Her approach is always person-centered and she brings 20 years of experience to the job every day. In her world, the person supported is always first and foremost. She takes pride in her work, day in and day out.

She takes multiple-day vacations with people she supports. She helps them develop relationships and friendships. One woman she supports is blind and immobile and has a passion for art – but no outlet for it. Shiloh got busy networking, got local artists and organizations involved and that led to showings of her artwork.

Shiloh is now working with senior management to form a dementia support group for staff and managers working with people who have dementia. "Shiloh has been encouraged to take a leadership or management position but continues to decline the opportunity," her nomination reads. In her own words, Shiloh says: "I can better serve my clients when I work with them all day, every day."

WEST VIRGINIA
LOU PERKINS
 The MENTOR Network
 Charleston, WV



Lou's nomination says this about him: "Lou has developed innovative ways for the individuals to connect with their community while also fulfilling dreams and goals."

Here are two quick stories that tells a great deal about this talented DSP.

Lou found out that one man he supports had dreams of being an artist, so he provided instruction, coaching, and got the resources together to help this man to start painting. What started as two people with a common interest has led to this individual having paintings displayed in local attractions and even used in printed materials. There are currently three of his paintings displayed at the Culture Museum in Charleston.

Lou also helped a person he supports who wanted to write his autobiography. This was going to be a challenge. To help this man, Lou made a big commitment to help. Lou sits with him for hours, talking and transcribing his life stories, and has been beyond influential in getting the book completed.

His Advocacy work is well known at the agency. He helps facilitate the involvement of those he supports to get involved with West Virginia People First. One man he supports spoke at a Disability Day Rally and went to Washington, D.C. as a self-advocate and is now chair of the People First chapter in Charleston. That has led to this man being presented with the Lifetime Achievement Award at the People First Conference and Lou was with him for the presentation.

As written in him nomination: "Lou has always encouraged his clients to strive for their goals, be confident in their abilities and to never let their limitations inhibit their success."



WISCONSIN
DORI YOUNG

**Volunteers of America of
Minnesota & Wisconsin
Waukesha, WI**

She takes the time to get to know each and every resident of the home in which she works. She is known as the DSP you want working during a crisis. She is creative and specific in her support strategies. She has a strong grasp of the needs of the people she supports. Meet Dori Young, Wisconsin's DSP of the Year.

This DSP of nine years with Volunteers of America is also creative. Here is a story about what she did for one man. He believed he was a major league baseball player, so she worked with her fellow DSPs and Program Manager to come up with innovative ways to encourage healthier

choices around activities of daily living. Her nomination recounts what happened next: "The team then redesigned this man's bathroom in his favorite major league baseball team's colors/logo items, including team towels, a team shower curtain, and wall decorations. When it was time for activities of daily living to occur, Ms. Young and her colleagues introduced the man to his new 'locker room', used sporting language, and provided supportive language to him that he needed to have good hygiene if he wanted to be on the team. When this client saw his new locker room he definitely wanted to be part of the team!"

In 2017 the agency created a new Employee Recognition program. The award was created to "highlight employees who regularly go above and beyond their regular job duties on multiple fronts and who regularly demonstrate leadership consistent with the Mission/Strategic priorities of the organization." The first award went to Dori Young.

Congratulations Jeff Pagel!

Innovative Services is proud to have you on our team, and we're excited ANCOR selected you for the Recognition Award for NADSP Tenets! Your ability to provide exactly what each person needs is an incredible gift that makes peoples' lives better. Thank you for seeing the possibilities in others!



INNOVATIVE
SERVICES, INC.



Congratulations

KAREN COGAR

Pennsylvania

**Direct Support Professional
of the Year**

Your compassion and dedication inspire everyone who has the opportunity to work with you. We are so proud of all that you have accomplished



Congratulations.

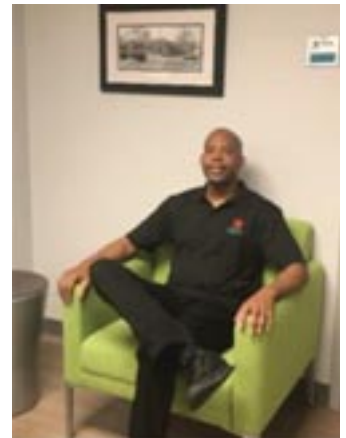
Steve Holley

2018 District of Columbia's DSP of the Year

It is with great honor that the NCC family celebrates Steve's achievement for his outstanding service as a Direct Support Professional and a special recognition for being chosen in the category of NADSP Tenets.

His hard work and dedication exemplifies his commitment and passion for the persons he supports.

We congratulate Steve on being a double winner. NCC is proud to call him one of our own!



Congratulations Luis Rosario

New York State DSP of the Year

Liberty ARC is extremely proud that Luis has been recognized as ANCOR's 2017 NYS DSP of the Year. His work excellence, strong ethic and enduring dedication are inspiring.

Luis, you have deeply touched the lives of those you support and work with. Your kindness will have a far-reaching, life-long impact on us all.

Thank you ANCOR for awarding Luis this prestigious accolade. We're proud he's a part of our family!



To work together to support people with disabilities and others in need to achieve a quality of life each person values.

A chapter of **The Arc**
New York

Celebrate



We are **beyond** excited for
Leoncio Guerrero
CONNECTICUT'S DSP
OF THE YEAR!



www.abilitybeyond.org

At Ability
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discover,
build,
& **celebrate**
the ability
in all
people.

Congratulations Sonja Barr

Rhode Island's DSP of the Year

Providing innovative, person-centered supports to people with intellectual and developmental disabilities in ways that promote community inclusion, personal power, self-expression and life fulfillment.



West Bay

Warwick, RI

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westbayri.org

CONGRATULATIONS KRISTEN!

The people that you support, your co-workers and the Board members thank you for your dedication, your quick thinking and determination that inspires each of us at Aspire.



2018
SOUTH DAKOTA
DIRECT SUPPORT
PROFESSIONAL OF
THE YEAR

We are very proud of you and all that you have accomplished!



We ASPIRE for ALL People to be...Valued...Connected...Empowered

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The St. Louis Arc Congratulates

Joni Resides

Missouri DSP of the Year – 2018



Respect • Collaboration • Empowerment

Joni's commitment to our core values ensures that the people she supports are partners in their own planning process, and that makes all the difference.

Congratulations

BRENDA SMITH
DSP OF THE YEAR

State of Illinois



Thank You
for your support, advocacy, &
years of dedication



Terry Miller
2018 Tennessee
DSP of the Year



Congratulations!

Continuum of Colorado

We Wish To Congratulate Colorado's
Direct Support Professional of the Year:

Katrina Vincent



Your commitment to providing person-centered services is an inspiration to all of us! You exemplify our organization's Mission, Vision, Guiding Principles and Key Commitments and we are so proud of your achievements.

www.continuumcolo.org

Congratulations to
Allen Lowry
of



for being named
Arkansas DSP of the
Year!



Allen's long-term dedication and commitment to those served by Bost, Inc. exemplify the culture of the organization. We are so proud of Allen and all his hard work! #weareBost

CONGRATULATIONS!

Danita "Dani" McKenney-Hallett!
Maine DSP of the Year



OHI is immensely proud of Dani McKenney-Hallett (pictured on the right). She inspires those she supports to reach for the stars!!

Everything is Possible.



25 Freedom Parkway, Hermon ME 04401

www.ohimaine.org

Congratulations!

BETH SAGATO

Montana's DSP of the Year



Beth,

Thank you for being a prime example of what it means to have a Heart of Gold. Your dedication to our mission, and to all of our clients, makes a profound difference in the lives of so many.



Congratulations, Beth!

orimt.org | 406.721.2930 | Missoula, MT

Congratulations
Verniell
Hannibal
South Carolina's DSP of the Year



*Enhancing the
lives, developing the
abilities, and
promoting the
independence of
people with
disabilities.*

**Darlington
County
Disabilities and
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