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## Arc Honors Staff During National DSP Recognition Week



### DSPs By The Numbers

- The Arc of Somerset County employs 232 DSPs.
- The Arc's DSPs hail from 18 different countries.
- Their experience with The Arc ranges from one month to 23 years.
- The average age of the DSP staff is 45 years old.
- DSPs make up 72% of The Arc's total staff.

### DSPs In Action!

### National Direct Support Professionals Recognition Week September 13 - September 19, 2015

Direct Support Professionals (DSPs) assist individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities in every aspect of their life including helping with dressing, administering medication, preparing meals, supplying transportation, providing vocational training, and helping with the individual's general daily affairs. Their work ensures individuals with disabilities continue to live productive lives in the community of their choice.



"Direct Support Professionals enhance the lives of individuals with disabilities and their families every day," stated Lauren Panarella, Executive Director. "The work they do is a vital to The Arc's mission." During their daily interactions, the individual and DSP often build a trusting and supportive relationship which ultimately improves the quality of support the individual receives.

For example, one DSP voluntarily changed her work hours to accommodate the transportation needs of a family whose child attends one of The Arc's work programs. She realized the family was having difficulty and without hesitation offered to help.

Another DSP devised a system so an individual who is legally blind can continue to wash his own clothes and can continue to maintain his independence.





[Click here](#) to to read more stories about the dedicated and hard working DSPs at The Arc. And when you encounter a DSP, please take a moment to thank them for all they do!

## US Senate Resolution for DSP Recognition Week

The US Senate has issue a resolution designating the week beginning September 13, 2015, as "National Direct Support Professionals Recognition Week". Please read below for their resolution.



Whereas direct support professionals, direct care workers, personal assistants, personal attendants, in-home support workers, and paraprofessionals (referred to in this preamble as "direct support professionals") are the primary providers of publicly funded long-term supports and services for millions of individuals;

Whereas a direct support professional must build a close, trusted relationship with an individual with disabilities;

Whereas a direct support professional assists an individual with disabilities with the most intimate needs on a daily basis;

Whereas direct support professionals provide a broad range of support, including: preparing meals; managing medications; bathing; dressing; helping with mobility; providing transportation to school, work, and religious, and recreational activities; and helping with general daily affairs;

Whereas a direct support professional provides essential support to help keep an individual with disabilities connected to the family and community of the individual;

Whereas direct support professionals enable individuals with disabilities to live meaningful, productive lives;

Whereas a direct support professional is the key to allowing an individual with disabilities to live successfully in the community and avoid more costly institutional care;

Whereas the majority of direct support professionals are female, and many are the sole breadwinners of their families;

Whereas direct support professionals work and pay taxes, but many are impoverished and are eligible for the same Federal and State public assistance programs on which the individuals with disabilities served by the direct support professionals must depend;

Whereas Federal and State policies, as well as the Supreme Court in *Olmstead v. L.C.*, 527 U.S. 581 (1999), assert the right of an individual to live in the home and community of the individual;







Whereas, in 2013, the majority of direct support professionals are employed in home- and community-based settings, and this trend is projected to increase during this decade;

Whereas there is a documented critical and growing shortage of direct support professionals in every community throughout the United States; and

Whereas many direct support professionals are forced to leave jobs due to inadequate wages and benefits, creating high turnover and vacancy rates that research demonstrates adversely affects the quality of support provided to individuals with disabilities:

Now, therefore, be it Resolved That the Senate-

(1) designates the week beginning September 13, 2015, as "National Direct Support Professionals Recognition Week";

(2) recognizes the dedication and vital role of direct support professionals in enhancing the lives of individuals of all ages with disabilities;

(3) appreciates the contribution of direct support professionals in supporting the needs that are beyond the capacities of millions of families in the United States;

(4) commends direct support professionals as integral in supporting the long-term support and services system of the United States; and

(5) finds that the successful implementation of the public policies of the United States depends on the dedication of direct support professionals.

### Arc Thanks DSPs

During National DSP Recognition Week, program departments at The Arc will honor the staff who work tirelessly to support the individuals we serve.

The Employment Services Department will host a lunch at each of the four Employment Programs in Somerset County. Lunch will be

delivered to a different program site Monday through Thursday, and Lauren Panarella, Executive Director, will visit the programs to thank the staff for their hard work and dedication to The Arc's mission.



"I am very proud of all of the staff here at The Arc," stated Gary Kummer, Director of Employment Services. "They bring passion and dedication to their jobs on a daily basis and it is evident to everyone that comes out to see our programs. Whether it is a parent or guardian or a DDD representative, they are always impressed with our staff."

The Residential Services Department will honor five outstanding DSPs at their Managers Meeting scheduled for this Friday, September 18. The DSPs, who were nominated by program



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managers and administrators for their outstanding service to Arc Residents, will each receive a Visa Gift Card.

"Residential DSPs are our front line staff who selflessly support our residents around the clock," commented Stella Ecep, Director of Residential Services. "To many of our residents, the staff are like family."



## More DSPs In Action!



**The Arc**

Foundation of  
Somerset County



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