New Jersey Direct Support Professionals

Making a Difference in the Lives of People with Disabilities

DSP Recognition Week
September 2014
Introduction

There are more than 25,000 Direct Support Professionals working throughout New Jersey. Direct Support Professionals are the enthusiastic, compassionate, hard working employees committed to supporting people with disabilities at home, work, and in the community. They are the back-bone of the developmental disability service system.

This booklet was developed to recognize the DSPs across the state of New Jersey for their dedication to individuals with developmental disabilities. In the pages that follow you will find stories submitted by organizations and people being supported in recognition of their committed staff.

Thank you
Direct Support Professionals!
Conchetta Benjamin
Bancroft

Conchetta has worked the night duty shift at the Tenby Group Home since early 2010. She has been a steady, calming presence for the women with disabilities that she supports. As with many programs, this one has been through many transitions. One can never describe how important and valuable a consistent, caring, compassionate, responsible, trustworthy, supportive, committed team player is to the individuals in our care. Conchetta seems to take everything in stride which is amazing as she has the task of getting the women up and out on time in the morning and everything, and I mean everything, in between.

Of course when supporting four intelligent, independent, and strong willed ladies, just about anything can happen. Conchetta focuses on keeping everyone safe and stays positive under sometimes very stressful situations. Conchetta is the person who steps up and helps out without being asked. She has trained staff, taken those she supports to doctor’s appointments, ordered meds and whatever else needed to be done to keep the program running smoothly.

Conchetta is a true role model who exemplifies the traits of our core value of respect. Words cannot sufficiently express how much Conchetta is appreciated by the women she supports, their families, her supervisor, and all who work with her. When we ask what are the qualities of our best staff, we need to look no further than Conchetta.
Carol Beulah
Avenues for Independent Living

Carol Beulah has worked with Avenues to Independent Living for over ten years, and we are so happy that our clients have benefited from her experience and compassion. Carol personifies the family atmosphere that Avenues promotes, and most recently showed how highly she values compassion and relationships. One of our consumers recently had serious health issues, and unfortunately our client’s sister was also undergoing significant medical treatment. During the time that both of them were unwell, Carol stepped in and truly became like a member of their family, spending quite a bit of time off the clock in order to make sure that both of them were cared for and kept abreast of the other’s progress and prognosis. Fortunately, both our client and her sister are recovered and well, and both sisters are as grateful as those of us at Avenues are for Carol’s unending compassion and care.

Brian Botcheos
Avenues for Independent Living

Brian Botcheos brought many years’ experience to Avenues to Independent Living when he joined us about a year ago. Upon joining our staff he developed a job coaching and customized employment department within our agency and has become quite popular among consumers who are thinking about or trying to enter the workforce. Brian has a rare gift when it comes to interacting with clients, and sincerely sees the best in each and every one of them. He has helped quite a few people find jobs. Brian has gone out into his own community, often creating employment opportunities seemingly out of thin air, but always with a client’s strengths and desires in mind. Avenues is proud to support Brian’s efforts to bring out the best in the individuals he supports. We are so glad that he has brought his positivity to our team.
In 2004, while majoring in psychology at Montclair State University and looking for an internship in the field, Chris Brancato stumbled across a Direct Support position available at the Department for Persons with Disabilities. Chris has described that, “I was looking for a summer job in counseling and saw an open position (“Residential Counselor”). I thought this would be a perfect fit for my career; doing individual counseling with people with special needs. However, when I went for the job interview, I found that it was a direct support position. Upon hearing this, I was ready to turn down the opportunity. I had never helped provide support for any person in my life and didn’t think I would be receptive to this role. Upon leaving the group home, I passed by several of the Murray House residents who greeted me with an incredibly warm welcome, including Peter. Peter’s grin brought a smile to my face and motivated me to accept a direct support position at DPD.”

Peter was born on the Greek Isles 65 years ago. As a young child, Peter’s village was ravaged by an earthquake. His family’s home and everything they owned was left in ruins. Building a life back up in Greece would have been an obstacle that they didn’t think they could overcome. Peter’s family had to make a very difficult decision, whether or not to leave their homeland and seek refuge with family in the United States. As victims of a catastrophe, the US offered to provide support for Peter’s family, with one very large caveat; Peter would have to stay behind.

Peter has Down Syndrome and the government refused to provide him with additional assistance and benefits. Peter spent most of his childhood and teenage years being raised on a monastery, not far from his home, and didn’t see his family again for another 20 years when he was finally accepted into the United States.

When Peter came to the United States he had to be reintroduced to his family and it took time for him to adapt to a very new routine. He often requested to “go home” to Greece. Peter started going to school and later a day program and became very happy with his life thanks to the support
of his family. Peter lived at home with his parents until his mother’s death in 2002. Peter and his mom had been best friends and the loss was difficult on him. Peter was stuck having to adapt to a very new routine and situation once again when he moved into the Murray House Group home in 2004. “Peter and I started at the Murray House at around the same time and it was a difficult transition for both of us,” said Chris. “I think we both related to each other being ‘new.’ Peter’s new experiences included having to share his living space with a group of people whom he had never met and having to acclimate to staff and a new routine. Peter often requested to ‘go home,’ this time to his mother. I also went through new experiences, as a very young person having to care for others in need.”

Chris finished his internship at the Department for Persons with Disabilities and ended up working as a Direct Support Professional at Murray House for another 4 years before being promoted to Director of the Fitzpatrick House Group Home in Pompton Lakes. Chris earned a graduate Degree in Clinical Psychology and currently works as the agency’s Director of Development and Public Relations. Peter settled in to his new home quite nicely and has been living at Murray House for the last decade. Peter is always there to help others and has been honored at the agency’s CARE Person of the Month and with an Outstanding Achievement Award at their annual Murray House Dinner Dance. Peter still asks to “go home,” but now it is when he is away from Murray House! “I don’t know if either of us would be where we are today without the other person’s support during our first few weeks at Murray House. I am fortunate to call him a friend and am very grateful for all he has done for me,” Chris added.

Dwight Castellanos
Bancroft

Dwight considers being a Direct Support Professional his way of life. Utilizing community classroom and life coaching approaches, he considers every interaction a teachable moment. A proponent of self-directed supports and self-advocacy, he empowers individuals to make positive change in their lives and contribute to society. Having declined
advancement, he remains a leader among his peers. He mentors new staff through philosophy of care discussions to assist with challenges and encourage community supports to assist individuals in life choices. Individuals come first, even off the clock.

There are many times Dwight has helped those he supports to be engaged in their community. For example, to help change public perception, Dwight takes individuals to dine out every Saturday to focus on being gentlemen. Dwight once noted how poor manners influenced patrons and waitresses at a raucous dining experience during their annual vacation to the Jersey Shore and ever since has worked to help those he supports to create more positive experiences. To make learning adventurous, he infused Emeril’s cookbook into cooking goals. Then they dined at Emeril’s restaurant during Mardi Gras. He introduced a full life experience, including throwing beads.

Dwight also supports the men to be regulars at the local gym. Recognizing that the gym is important for both exercise and socialization, he uses this opportunity to help the men learn how to have appropriate interactions with women. Around holidays, Dwight encourages individuals to show appreciation to community members with whom they regularly interact. This has resulted in increased self-esteem, pride and enjoyment for these individuals.

Recently, Dwight and two individuals saw someone in distress while shopping. Without prompting, one went into the store and asked someone to call 911. The other comforted this person until help arrived. Dwight trusted them to act compassionately and independently, a lesson he instilled.

Dwight has provided a great deal of support when it comes to helping the men advocate for what they want in life. Despite hearing “no” for years about moving out of cramped apartments, he never let the men he supports give-up. Now, as they live in new condos, they understand his lesson and continue to create positive change for themselves.
Carrie Colbert, Brian DeLeon, Ben Sorenson, Chris Pomp, and Manuel Solarzano

Self-Directed Supports

The direct support staff team that supports Joe Martinelli is unique; they are all self-hires. Each person is inimitable and brings distinctive skills to the team; Joe and his family believe the team members are his “Generators of Possibility” (see “An Ethics of Possibility” by John O’Brien at www.inclusion.com). They each work with Joe as he volunteers, takes classes, talks on a radio show, shops, during meals and as he enjoys his life. Their input, thoughts, suggestions and ideas are invaluable to Joe as he creates a life of choice.

Carrie Colbert has been on the team for over eight years. Her effervescent personality brought Joe to a new place in his life when they began doing a radio show at a local university in 2007. Carrie’s encouragement enabled Joe to find the confidence to speak on the air and participate in the conversations about local and world events. She also has supported Joe while he volunteers at a local telecommunications company (since 2007) where he delivers gifts to employees on the anniversary of their employment. Sometimes they just hang out at home or go out to lunch.

Brian DeLeon came into Joe’s life through Carrie in the spring of 2007. Brian spends the most time with Joe, supporting him at Brookdale Community College, where he takes classes through their Enrichment Opportunities program, at recreational events (Joe and Brian can be found at local high school and college baseball, basketball, football and hockey games throughout the year and at free concerts on boardwalks and in local towns throughout the summer), during dance classes at Family Resource Associates (FRA), shopping and during meals. Brian’s easy going demeanor allows Joe to reduce the
stress he often feels throughout his day. His steady and strong support gives Joe confidence to take on anything.

Ben Sorenson began supporting Joe in the spring of 2008 by way of an introduction from a friend. Ben’s ability to listen to him has also enabled Joe to explore new opportunities including working in an office where he has volunteered for six years. Joe has also supported Ben by accompanying him to purchase an engagement ring for his wife, select the venue for their wedding reception, and attend his wedding!

Chris Pomp has supported Joe since 2009. He came to Joe through an introduction from Brian. Chris supports Joe while he volunteers at an assisted living facility, playing bingo and pokeno with the residents. Joe became friendly with a gentleman a few years ago who eventually became unable to come to the recreation area for games; Joe and Chris would then bring ice cream to him in his room during their visits. The gentleman died and Chris helped Joe write a card to the family letting them know how much their friendship meant. About a year later, Brian and Joe were in a restaurant and the gentleman’s son came over to Joe, very emotional, and let him know how much the visits meant to his father. Chris also supports Joe during the work he does as a volunteer ambassador for Family Resource Associates, Inc. (FRA) including their golf outing and other fundraising events. Chris' quiet disposition and dry sense of humor is just what Joe often needs.

Manual Solarzano joined Joe’s team less than a year ago, but he has filled in for others when they were unavailable for dance and Brookdale CC classes. Manny shares himself with Joe and they have spent time together on weekends exploring the boardwalks in Monmouth County.

Joe and his family have embraced the ability to self-direct with the freedom, choice, and control that enable him to create a life of choice; his choice on how he lives and who supports him. His team has made all things possible!
Melissa Collins is a dedicated and hardworking support counselor who started in 2011 with Community Access Unlimited (CAU). In her years with CAU, she has gone above and beyond to support the members that she works alongside. Melissa is always professional and respectful when speaking with members, caseworkers, family members and guardians. She has a positive attitude and is willing to do whatever it takes to get the job done.

In 2012, when New Jersey was hit with Hurricane Sandy, Melissa was a leader in providing for those she supports; ensuring their safety and comfort. At a time when there were power outages and limited supplies, Melissa kept everyone at the program calm and safe. She stayed at the program well beyond her shift end if there were other staff members that were unable to get into work due to downed power lines and trees. She drove out of her way to pick up staff members when gas was limited and they needed a ride. She also sat in long lines and even made trips to Pennsylvania to get gas for agency vehicles that would provide rides for CAU members and staff.

In her day-to-day work, Melissa is a great asset to Community Access Unlimited. She is going to school full time at Kean University but always makes sure that she is accommodating to the schedule and program needs. Most recently, Melissa has been working at CAU’s Day Camp, providing one-on-one support. Even after a full day at camp, when other staff members would go home, Melissa frequently visits the program and the members she supports most often. She often volunteers for staffing assignments on overnight vacation trips and has accompanied members on trips to Wildwood and Florida. She is incredibly reliable and responsible and ensures that everyone is happy and well on trips.

Melissa has made a special connection with a particular member in the program and has recently helped her through tough times with her family. Melissa supported the rebuilding of this member’s relationship with her children’s father and in turn has provided the opportunity for the member
to connect with her children. Melissa has truly gone above and beyond to not only provide for the safety of the people she supports, but also for their well-being. She is a role model and a leader within her program and we are very lucky to have her as a direct support professional at Community Access Unlimited.

Randall Collins

*New Concepts for Living*

Randall Collins is a direct support professional at the River Edge Group Home. Over the years, Mr. Collins has developed a close-knit bond with all the people he supports. Mr. Collins has always displayed compassion, patience, and concern for consumers.

These important traits came in handy when one of the individuals we support had to be rushed to the emergency room. This was no easy task, since the individual does not like going to hospitals, which often cause him to have an anxiety attack. In this situation, Mr. Collins stepped in and went with the consumer to the hospital, refusing to leave until he knew he was calm and in stable condition. This was tough for both the person using supports and Mr. Collins, especially since this cut into the time he spends with his son. At this moment, Mr. Collins’ only concern was the person. He put his personal life to the side for a moment to help someone in need. This situation really displayed how devoted, hands-on, and compassionate Mr. Collins is toward all our clients.
Courtney Coppinger has been dedicated to supporting individuals in the human services field for more than a decade. She began her tenure with Devereux New Jersey in 2010 as a part-time direct support professional, quickly moved into a full-time position, and currently serves as a program supervisor in a community-based residential group home. She oversees the daily support of six individuals and takes great pride in her work, always aspiring to make a difference in their lives. She ensures that those residing in her program receive the best possible care provided in an environment driven by compassion and respect. Her co-workers and supervisor are quick to point out that Courtney leads by example and is always offering assistance to anyone who may need a helping hand.

During this last year, one of the women residing in Courtney’s program lost a family member to cancer. Not only was this especially traumatic and difficult for the individual, it also affected every person in the group home. Courtney took it upon herself to do everything she could to assist in the grieving process. Recognizing the signs and symptoms of depression being exhibited by the individual, she quickly sought out additional support. She successfully led her team in researching and coordinating counseling sessions for the young woman and helped her to understand some of the feelings that are commonly associated with mourning and loss. Experiencing the passing of a loved one is never easy, but with Courtney’s passion for assisting those in need, she has taught everyone that grieving is a little easier when you have a strong support system at home.
Kevin Cooper
Center for Family Support NJ

Kevin Cooper came to the Center for Family Support in 2007 and has been the face of our agency and the Hackensack Day Program pretty much from the beginning. Kevin is a man of great faith and his compassion has always shone through as a defining trait when helping the people we serve to lead fulfilling lives. From early in his career, Kevin has been a person who you can trust to be there to support our individuals even through the toughest times. He has excelled at working with people whose communication skills may limit their ability to express their needs and desires.

In 2012, Kevin was promoted to the position of Job Coach. This was a new position for our agency as we had just started a formal Supported Employment component within our existing Day Services. Our team was concerned about finding the right candidate for the job, knowing that the first person to take on this endeavor would need to be dedicated, flexible and adept at handling all possible obstacles in a community setting. That Kevin ultimately was chosen for this new post was no surprise.

In September of 2013, we were able to find a job for a service recipient at a grocery store in Lodi, NJ. Kevin was assigned to this position. At first things started out great. But after a short period of time the individual began to have a hard time adjusting to both the social expectations and job-related demands. After a couple of difficult days within a work week everyone on the team was worried the job would be lost and with it a dream this person had been working towards for almost half of his life. Kevin’s abilities really came to the forefront. He was able to establish an understanding with the employer that created a more supportive work environment. He took on a mentorship role for the service recipient. Helping him visualize a good day at work, helping him to reach achievable and meaningful goals daily, and most importantly being a friend who is there for the good and the bad. As a team, he and Kevin worked together and kept that job and the “dream” stayed alive.

This story is just one example of the impact Kevin Cooper has had on our agency and the people we serve. We are grateful to have him as part of our team at the Center for Family Support.
Luz Febus-Melendez

Bancroft

Luz joined Bancroft many years ago where she started working in the children’s program. She later became a substitute and as her work experience flourished, she became a part-time employee, and then started full-time as a Senior Program Associate. Luz is literally the backbone of Marlton 1. She puts 40 hours of work into one day. She is dedicated to the people with disabilities here, and if you ask any of them, they would tell you what a wonderful person Luz is to them. One of the individuals that she supports, had this to say about his Luz, “She’s a great advocate,” “I care about her a lot,” “She’s a good person.” Those words are so important and they matter!

Luz goes out of her way to make sure that all of the people she supports have what they need. For example, one of the women had a job interview scheduled and she didn’t have anything professional to wear. Luz dug into her personal closet and brought her a beautiful outfit so that she looked nice for her interview. That selfless act is what makes Luz a wonderful DSP. Always being mindful of what people need in order to live fulfilling lives.

Luz is a great leader, mentor, teacher and friend. She displays our company’s CORE values daily and understands her role as a Senior Program Associate. She has great work ethic and hardly calls out or takes a vacation day! Luz encourages all of the individuals here to live as independently as possible. Marlton 1 is extremely lucky to have her and I am equally proud to have her as a co-worker, colleague and friend.
Marvin Green
Bancroft

Marvin is often recognized for the great things he does for those he supports, his big heart, and his dedication to his team and the program at Bancroft. Marvin is someone that you can always count on. He is always available to cover a shift if someone is out sick, on vacation, or a last minute call out. When the program may be short staffed, Marvin is the one to say “whenever you need me, just let me know.” He is a leader and is always there for the rest of his team. He makes sure that everyone is on their game and is getting the job done. Marvin follows up with his team to check that goals are being met when scheduled. He is there for his co-workers whenever they need something. Even if it’s just a question they may have to ask. Marvin has the understanding of what is required to provide quality supports and care of the individuals, and the importance of communication and teamwork.

Marvin is always “at” the program even when he is not working. There are times when he is off and will call to remind staff or someone living there to take out the trash or recycling so things don’t over flow. Marvin will also text his fellow co-workers to remind them of planned events or other things that need follow-up in the program. Whether his co-workers are working or not, he will text to let them know how a person using supports has done in a basketball or football game, bowling, or in a Special Olympic event. He phones the program manager if he forgets to mention something exciting that happened over the weekend. Marvin is excited when the individuals that he works with accomplish something, whether it’s big or small. He is committed to making a difference in the lives of the people he supports.

Marvin is continuously available to people using supports when they need him. Whether he is working directly with them or not, they seem to seek him out so they can speak with him. Marvin consistently finds a way to help the individuals with any issues they may be having, be it with their peers, roommate, or even something from work. He is known for saying “It’s not that bad,” will take the time to explain to why, and will show ways to look at things in a different way. Marvin continues to be a great example of Bancroft’s core values. He always goes above and beyond his job expectations, and he wants to ensure that his entire team does the same.
Josephine Hall started with The Open Door of NJ in 2012 as a weekend staff person. When you think of someone who exemplifies a strong direct support professional and someone you would trust to take care of your own loved one, Josephine is one of the first people to come to mind.

Josephine helped support one woman as she moved from a developmental center into the community. One of the many reasons we would like to recognize Josephine is that although she hasn’t been working in the field of developmental disabilities long, she jumped into providing supports for this individual and did such a great job. When the woman transitioned into our group home, her mother had requested that we work on physical therapy and supporting her ability to walk. The team, through the strength and determination of staff like Josephine, were able to overcome various obstacles to help this consumer achieve this goal. Daily she walks short distances with Josephine, but huge strides with what she hopes to achieve. She has increased her independence, and a lot of it has to do with Josephine’s influence and perseverance to work with her as she achieves her goals.

Josephine is a true blessing to the care and success of the life of an individual transitioning into the community. She is hard working, dedicated, and devoted to the individuals she works with and we, as an agency, are thankful for that.
For Wayne Jones, it may have been a matter of divine intervention that led him to a career as a direct support professional. “Our church has more than 10,000 members, and when you have a group that large, you see a lot of family members caring for people with disabilities,” said Wayne, a job coach with the Community Vocational Services for Adults (CVSA) program at Bancroft. “So, I often found myself looking after these individuals so that their families could be more involved in events.”

Wayne was particularly moved by the grace he observed in one prominent church leader, who provided special compassion and care to congregant families touched by disability. “I thought it was so interesting that someone with his status at such a large church showed that kind of humility, the way he cared for these individuals,” Wayne recalled of the man, who also worked in direct support. “I had never seen that before.”

At the time, Wayne was not aware that there was a field for direct support professionals.

“To me, it was always family who took care of them,” he said of people with disabilities. Wayne began volunteering in the homes of fellow churchgoers, providing assistance to parents who needed a night out while he cared for their loved ones. “When I saw what went on at home – the changing, the medical issues, the feeding – I was kind of surprised, but I stuck with it,” he recalled. “The satisfaction of seeing enjoyment in the individual – they sense and see that care you’re providing – was something I found very rewarding.”

Now, 15 years after joining the Bancroft staff as a one-to-one direct support professional, Wayne manages a vocational program known as The Cutting Edge. A professional landscaping operation, The Cutting Edge maintains the lawns and landscape of Bancroft-owned facilities, offices and group homes throughout Marlton, Cherry Hill and Voorhees, N.J. His staff of seven men, all served by Bancroft’s CVSA program, are also sometimes called upon to do autumn cleanups at area municipal buildings.
“I was just informed that we’re adding two additional properties, so we’ll go at them with full force, too,” said Wayne, who has managed The Cutting Edge for nine years. The men who work for The Cutting Edge tend to excel at a particular facet of landscaping, says Wayne, so he tailors their assignments to those skills. “They might find it difficult to perform a sequence of tasks, but they will totally own that one thing,” he explained. The Cutting Edge is a vocational program, designed to impart the professional and social skills that come with regular employment. That includes the benefits of a steady paycheck. “They know that’s their reward for what they’ve done, and they look forward to it,” Wayne said.

The crew enjoys heading out to worksites, explains Wayne, adding that if the weather cooperates, they can complete three properties in a day. That does not include requests from neighbors to make their own yards look just as nice. “That makes all of us feel good,” he said. “It’s them saying our guys do an excellent job.”

Years after finding his professional calling, Wayne still draws a straight line from his concern for people with special needs to his faith. “None of this could be without this part of my life,” said Wayne, an ordained Baptist minister of the Gospel. “This is what has developed and shaped the character of my person.”

Nop Kongtong  
*New Concepts for Living*

One of the women we support at New Concepts for Living (NCFL) had been longing for a new companion kitty ever since her beloved cat Honey passed away this past spring. Nop would tell me stories of how Honey would wait for the woman everyday by the window ready to welcome her. With the support and help from the guardian, Petco adoption, and staff, we were able to find the perfect match; a mother cat and her kitten. Together Nop, the woman using supports, and other staff that helped were there to share the special moment of bringing her new kittens home. Before the cats arrived, their new owner had everything all set up and ready for them. This included plenty of food, toys, and cat beds to make
them feel as comfortable as possible. The kitten was named Honey Rose and the mother cat Annabelle. The moment the loving owner opened the cage to let them out, you could tell they knew they were home. The woman supported by Nop has had a permanent smile on her face since that day! She makes an amazing cat mom! Nop has been such an amazing source of support throughout the grieving of Honey’s passing and then the arrival of the new kitties.

Janett Lester
Easter Seals

Janett Lester has been a direct support professional at an Easter Seals group home for people living with mental illness in Essex County for the past six years. She is a dedicated individual who enjoys being productive and working hard to make sure the needs of our program participants are being met daily. Janett is responsible for facilitating a weekly Wellness Group with the residents, which she uses as a tool to provide detailed information on the importance of maintaining a healthier life style. Willie, one of the residents she works closely with, credits Janet with supporting him and ensuring that he stays focused on eating healthy foods, exercising and maintaining a healthy life. “Being a direct support staff member is the most rewarding job that I have been privileged to have,” says Janet. “I consider myself to be a temporary support for our program participants. When they no longer need my assistance and move forward successfully with their lives, that’s my reward.”
Liz Moore has been working for 21 Plus since February 2007, and has worked in various positions within the agency during her employment. Liz is highly dedicated to the mission of 21 Plus and she exemplifies leadership to her peers and to the individuals that she supports. Through her time at 21 Plus, Liz has worked in several different homes and has formed life-long bonds with many of the individuals within the agency. Even as Liz moves through the agency from home to home the relationships she has formed never waiver and she always maintains contact with people and keeps abreast of the happenings in their life.

Liz has proved time and time again that she is compassionate, understanding, and patient. Liz treats every person she meets with dignity and respect and never talks down to them. She understands that she has as much to learn from them as they have to learn from her. Because of the qualities Liz possesses, she works very well with individuals with difficult or challenging behaviors. Post Hurricane Sandy, 21 Plus had to relocate one of its programs. Until we found a replacement residence, 2 of the women we support moved into our Onyx Drive group home. One of them was Shannon, who recently moved to her 21 Plus residence after living for many years at the Woodbridge Developmental Center. Shannon does not use words to communicate, but uses sign language and a picture book for expressive communication. She has a history of challenging behaviors and for Direct Support Staff, getting to know Shannon could be very difficult, but not for Liz Moore. She thrives when working with someone like Shannon.

Even though Shannon was, at the time, a temporary guest in the group home, Liz worked with her to further develop her picture book. Liz helped Shannon set up her computer and showed her how to use the webcam to take pictures. Liz understood the importance of Shannon’s communication system being understood by her peers, so Liz taught Shannon’s new peers how Shannon communicates so they can get along better.

Liz has an uncanny ability to bond with everyone we serve. But she demonstrates an even greater ability to forge the most significant
relationships with people others would deem our most challenging. Liz seems to almost effortlessly handle violent or aggressive behavioral issues as well as discover communication techniques that work with people that don’t use words to communicate and have multiple disabilities. While working Liz exudes a confident, calm presence that enables the people we serve to rise to the occasion, experiencing personal success. The time that she invests in the people she supports shows through the mutual respect that they have for her. That same calm presence also aides her peers, to have a role model that they can learn from and count on during challenging times. Liz uses her skills to help her peers be successful and to also helps people using supports achieve a lot and build meaningful lives.

David Moore
The Arc of Cape May County

David, as many young staff do when starting out, had to find his niche supporting people with challenging behaviors and navigating various ways people with disabilities need to be supported. Once David found his way with these situations, he became one of the most productive direct support professionals I have ever had the pleasure of working with in my twenty plus years of service.

There are many examples that demonstrate ways David has been such an asset to our community we serve. David had worked with one consumer that was having major anxiety issues within the group home over the course of several months, and found out that this person enjoyed raking and doing things around his house. Using this information, he helped the person make a garden. This helped the person focus on gardening, relieving much of his anxiety. David helped another consumer who often struggled with completing routine daily tasks like keeping her room clean. He worked with her slowly on a weekly basis to follow simple tasks, giving her praise for the small tasks completed. Through doing this he helped her gain a better quality of life at home. Now she looks forward to completing these tasks. These are just a couple of examples of the many times David has stepped up to help make the quality of life within that group home setting the best it can be for the folks we serve.
Ivahna Moses

Ivahna Moses is the epitome of flexibility when it comes to the challenges in the field of human services. She has worked for Avenues to Independent Living for a year and a half. Although she would never pat herself on the back or advertise her skills, she unfailingly gets the job done with a smile on her face. Whether she is working in the office, helping things to run smoothly, or supporting a client at a last minute’s notice, Ivahna is able to say yes to whatever comes her way.

Recently, while working an activity that was scheduled to end in the mid-afternoon, Ivahna volunteered to change her own personal plans and stayed until almost 9 at night, simply to make certain that the people she was supporting were able to enjoy every bit of their day. It’s no secret as to why the clients of Avenues love to work with her!

Donna Nelson-Beckett

Donna began her career with Easter Seals New Jersey over 21 years ago as a direct support professional in an adult day program for people with developmental disabilities, and worked primarily with individuals whose behaviors presented the most challenges. Donna is proficient in sign language and understands the frustrations of individuals not being able to express themselves because of her own challenges as a person with a hearing impairment.

After several years, she became an employment coach supporting the individuals through the ATSE Follow Along program. Donna did much more than help people find employment and support them at their jobs. She helped many of them with other areas of life, like setting up bank
accounts, helping find medical and legal professionals, seeking out organizations to support their interests, and assisting in the development of friendships and natural supports within their communities. During this time, a gentleman who was visually and hearing impaired came to live in one of Easter Seals NJ’s group homes. He exhibited significant behavioral outbursts resulting from the frustration of being unable to communicate his needs. Donna was asked to work with him and the staff to improve the communication between them. This was Donna’s true calling; she preferred working in the group home where she could spend more individualized time with the residents. In 2005, she was promoted to service coordinator of the Manchester group home where she remains today as a true role model whose dedication and core values serve as a guide for all of our direct support professionals to follow.

Vehemently advocating for our program participants, Donna has helped to make many of their personal dreams come true by refusing to allow a person’s disabilities stand in the way of their dreams. There is a set of twins residing at the group home who spent most of their childhood and adult life in an institution. Their greatest dream was to “see Mickey Mouse” so Donna contacted a relative of hers who owned a condo near Disney World in Orlando. Without hesitation, she packed them up and off they went to Disney for a week making certain that the twins would meet their beloved “Mickey.” Another instance of Donna’s selfless commitment to the individuals we serve is when another resident at the group home, who’d been treated for cancer, turned 75. Donna threw a huge birthday party for her and, along with her friends and family, donated supplies, food and funds to ensure that it would be a very special day.

Donna truly loves the holidays and goes above and beyond to make every one of them special for her residents. She holds a Halloween party every year for all five of our group homes for people with developmental disabilities, complete with games, prizes and food supplied by her, along with family and friends. The residents who have nowhere to go spend Christmas and New Year’s Eve with Donna and her family.

As the Service Coordinator of Easter Seals’ Manchester Group Home, Donna has taken the time to mentor new group home managers and direct support professionals within Easter Seals. Donna has been described by her subordinates, peers, and supervisors alike as a selfless
human being who asks nothing of her staff that she isn’t willing to do herself. As a result, Donna was nominated for and received the New Jersey Association of Community Providers (NJACP) Leadership Award in 2012 for her consistent leadership by example, her loyalty to the program participants, her countless acts of servitude, and for always going way above and beyond the responsibilities of her position. For Donna, this is not a just a job…it’s her true vocation.

Katy Nolan
Bancroft

Katy’s job performance is outstanding and the quality of her work is excellent. She is a team leader that always has a way of making everyone smile. Katy’s every day work ethic is outstanding, and she is often seen a role model for other employees and people supported alike. With Katy, there is no detail left unchecked or too small to improve upon. She can list the likes and dislikes of every individual off the top of her head, as well as all other required information. Katy is a person who pays attention to detail and uses this to continually develop. The program’s success is due to Katy’s dedication, initiative and compassion.

To the individuals she supports, Katy is a friend who will go to any length to advocate for their rights and who truly cares for their well-being and quality of life. To her peers, she is well respected and one who can always be counted on to help in any way possible. In addition, Katy is the guardian for her brother who is also supported with services. She is an amazing sister that assists her brother in enjoying and experiencing life with greater independence. Katy has a very unique perspective of both preforming the Direct Support Professional job and being a guardian; this is where the origin of her excellence comes from.

Katy introduces new and fresh ideas to work every day. The individuals have a variety of different health needs ranging from one end of the spectrum to the other. Katy has made mundane tasks fun and rewarding. Menu planning is always an event that is talked about throughout the week. Katy introduced fun new dishes that the individuals
make songs up for and look forward to preparing. Now dinnertime is never dull and always very creative. Exercise is something each individual takes pride in and finds rewarding due to the incredible effort that Katy makes to provide praise and self-understanding. She shares each individual’s achievements with all team members, which allows the individuals to truly take pride in their accomplishments.

Katy’s ability to provide such an exceptional quality of services every day is what makes a difference in the lives of the people we support. Her performance is truly an example for others to learn from. The words “something extra” do not even begin to describe what Katy does for the program. Yes, she spends countless hours of her own time assisting the individuals. She has and would volunteer for any Bancroft event. But to Katy that’s just what needs to be done, so she does it. Katy’s ability to understand, respect, and nurture the individuals in our program is inspiring to everyone who works with her. Katy respects the women using supports so much and she consistently shows them this, day in and day out. Katy knows everything about them; she knows the little things and even the things they have yet to figure out. Katy always puts their needs first, NO MATTER WHAT.

She has opened their minds to new ideas,
She has taught the individuals “it’s okay to be yourself,”
She has helped them do the things they thought they could not,
And she makes them laugh, laugh, laugh, laugh, laugh, laugh, laugh.

Maria Saurez
Spectrum for Living

Maria Suarez has been employed at Spectrum for Living since 1991. During her time at Spectrum, she has held a few different roles in Spectrum’s Support Services Department, assisting individuals and their families who live in the community. She first worked as an In-Home Trainer, going into individual’s homes a couple of hours a week, teaching and working with individuals with developmental disabilities on developing their community living skills. Maria then worked as Spectrum’s Family
Counselor, where she met with families in the community and linked them to financial assistance programs to help with respite care, medical assistance and adaptive equipment, and referred them to additional community resources. For more than the past 20 years, Maria has been an invaluable member of Spectrum for Living’s Case Management Team, both providing direct support and linking individuals to essential services in the community.

During her time at Spectrum, Maria has touched countless lives through her kindness, patience, hands-on assistance and tireless advocacy. She has provided support, training and advocacy to dozens, if not hundreds, of individuals with disabilities and their families. She has assisted individuals and families through all kinds of circumstances. Maria has been there for individuals when their caregivers have passed away. She has been there for individuals who have been homeless, and has - instead of writing them off as being uncooperative or unable to be served - gotten up early to catch them before they’d leave the homeless shelter, or she has searched for them on park benches and other local hangouts. Maria has been there for individuals through illness and has been there for families during the death of their loved ones. In all these circumstances, Maria has treated each person with kindness, compassion, respect and dignity, always trying to help each individual reach their highest potential.

It is difficult to choose one example of what makes Maria such an extraordinary Direct Support Professional, but I will try. A few years ago, Spectrum received a call from one of the local Adult Protective Services offices. They referred a middle-aged man who appeared to have a cognitive disability, and lived on his own in a small rented room in a dangerous neighborhood. “John” had been working here and there, and had no family or friends to help him. He was in poor health, suffering from severe heart and respiratory problems, was not eating regularly, was wearing old, dirty clothes and was now being evicted from his room. Maria began working with him. She became his friend, advocate and lifeline. John tried to reach out for help previously, but due to his limitations, he was unable to complete applications for needed services and unable to keep scheduled appointments. Maria had to help John in all areas of his life, providing him with daily support and guidance. She encouraged him to maintain his personal hygiene, taught and assisted him in completing
applications to get needed services, and accompanied him to get needed medical care. Maria assisted him in budgeting his money, helped him find a nicer apartment in a safer neighborhood and taught him how to take his medication. Maria spent many late nights with John at the hospital due to his difficulty breathing and chest pains. She spent many early mornings accompanying him to appointments. Through her hard work, John thrived. His health was stabilized, John was able to find a job and now he’s receiving the support and care he so desperately needed in a supervised apartment.

John is just one of many individuals whose lives Maria touched through her dedication and hard work. She truly makes a difference, and should serve as an inspiration to others in the field.

**Alberete Savaielle**

*Self-Directed Supports*

Alberete Savaille has been supporting Djemaha for the past two years. She has provided Djemaha with exceptional supports that stem from her compassion, dedication and kindness. Before Alberete started supporting Djemaha, Djemaha and her family had a difficult time finding not just the supports that she needs in order to remain healthy and safe, but finding someone who was passionate about her work and who truly cares. To Djemaha and her family, this was extremely important. Her family is committed to Djemaha living at home, despite her complex support needs. Alberete shares this commitment to Djemaha, and this shows up in her hard work.

Alberete already knew Djemaha and her family before she became a self-hire and Direct Support Professional for them. She would visit with the family, every now and then see them in the community, help the family when she could and just do kind things for Djemaha, without getting paid. Why? Simply because she has a big heart and cares for Djemaha. When Alberete accepted the position as a DSP, she took the position very
seriously and worked from her heart. She cares and supports Djemaha as if she was her own family. She is considerate of her needs and wants and always demonstrates respect and professionalism, regardless of her personal relationship with the family.

Since Alberte has been supporting Djemaha, the family has noticed the Djemaha is much happier and is thriving. Her mom says that she can tell that her daughter, who does not communicate with words, feels content and respected. Mom also stated that when Djemaha knows that Alberte is coming, her face lights up and her eyes glow. Before, Djemah didn’t get to spend much time in her community (because she utilizes a wheelchair and her mother had difficulty taking her out alone), but now she goes to church and for walks with Alberte and sometimes her family. This makes her mother very happy and she is comfortable knowing that her daughter is safe, loved and part of her local community.

Alberte deserves great recognition for her dedication. When talking to Alberte about Djemaha and watching her provide support, one can just feel the love and passion that Alberte has for her position. It is also exemplified in her outstanding work!

Grace Scully
Bancroft

Grace Scully has been a direct support professional for over 9 years in our Chestnut program. She is always amazing, with a sense of humor that could help in any situation.

She met two big challenges this year. Her Senior Program Associate became suddenly ill and ultimately he could not return to work. Grace took over his duties at work without being asked and also watched over him in hospital and rehab. She was probably the first person that brought a smile to his face.

She accepted a Senior Program Associate position at a time of transition for Chestnut. The program was being converted from a Brain Injury program to one for people with developmental disabilities. Grace had worked with the residents who lived there for years. She focused on what
they needed, assisting each with packing, checking out their new homes, and supporting them through the transition. She continues to stay in touch with them even now that she doesn’t provide their direct supports. Today, the new and very diverse group of residents at the Chestnut residence are the recipients of all of Grace’s special talents of making this new space feel like home.

**Gladis Serrano**  
*Avenues to Independent Living*

Gladis Serrano has worked as a DSP with Avenues to Independent Living for over 3 years, and often jokes that she “grew up with us.” She has demonstrated a unique ability to build relationships and rapport with any and every family with whom she has worked, and is universally loved by staff and clients alike. While many DSPs share a great deal of concern and compassion for the people they support, Gladis has gone above and beyond, having shown the same love and dedication to her coworkers. Recently, Gladis helped one of her peers study for her driver’s test, even allowing her to practice on and take the final exam with her own personal car. While this was completely unexpected, Avenues is grateful to have Gladis as one of our staff members, and proud to be the type of agency who has employees that will go the extra mile to help a colleague improve her life.
Cara Siudut  
*The Arc of Atlantic County*

Cara Siudut came into my son Devin’s life as a part-time temporary substitute when his full-time DSP had to take extended leave. Devin needs support 24 hours a day and has Cornelia de Lange Syndrome. He has a rare, unique combination of significant medical, physical, mental and behavioral challenges. Devin doesn’t use words to communicate and often experiences anxiety in social situations. Cara’s background working with people with developmental disabilities prompted the staff to send her to meet Devin. They bonded immediately, and Cara has been with us ever since.

Since Cara’s arrival, the change in Devin is incredible. The anxiety is all but gone when he is with her. Devin is going on frequent outings: shopping, dining out, going to the park, and making and visiting new friends, all of which were virtually impossible before. She introduced him to Zumba, which he looks forward to, and other activities sponsored by the Arc. His social circle is growing.

Cara is helping Devin work through obsessive-compulsive behaviors and impatience. Cara learned quickly that Devin needed to be constantly engaged or he gets into trouble. She is always one step ahead of Devin and keeps him busy and safe. She is constantly looking for activities or events that Devin will enjoy and can participate in. She will do whatever is necessary to keep him happy, whether it’s spending hours doing laps outside in his wheelchair, swinging at the park on the swing, playing in the pool, or going bowling. No activity or event is too much trouble. In Cara’s words, “It’s all about Devin – whatever he needs.” Devin has come such a long way, thanks in no small part to Cara.

Cara is a dedicated, conscientious, creative, innovative, calm, patient, kind, supportive, sincere, generous, nurturing and loving “buddy.” Devin thrives on routine, and Cara is dependable, never late, always quietly handles whatever Devin throws at her. Cara is one of the reasons life at home with Devin has become easier on us, his family. She keeps him safe, takes care of all his physical needs, and is a creative entertainer.
She doesn’t hesitate to jump in and take an extra shift when other staff cancels. Her quiet, calm demeanor is invaluable when assisting at doctor appointments and procedures. Devin adores her. The bond they have makes my heart soar.

Cara is extremely thoughtful. She knows that Devin often gives us a hard time, and that we don’t always see his best side. She takes, and shares with us, photos and videos that allow us to see a happy, laughing Devin, out in the world having fun. There are no words to describe the joy this brings us.

Cara is a hero to both Devin and his family. Having Devin regain independence and have a life outside his home is priceless. I know he is safe and with someone who wants to help him grow and be an integral part of the community; someone who wants the same things for Devin that his family does. I am so grateful Cara is part of Devin’s life.

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**Monique St. Clair**  
*Delta Community Supports*

Monique St. Clair is participating in the NJ Career Path for Direct Support Professionals. Not only has she taken the initiative to participate, but she is taking everything she’s learned very seriously and has already used this information to make a difference in someone’s life.

One assignment Monique was working on for her portfolio directed her to do research on another organization’s best practices. She figured since she was working with individuals that are visually impaired that she would research organizations that are committed to deaf and blind individuals. When she did the research, not only did she discover the history on how the organization began to advocate for the deaf and blind but she also discovered a law that was put into effect by the Obama Administration that says all places that have services where people come to view things like movies, theaters, plays, etc. must have accommodations for blind and deaf individuals.

On a whim, Monique wanted to see how much that was actually true so she called the local move theater and to her surprise the manager said
they had just gotten the technology three weeks ago. He also said that if she wanted to come to the movies that they would just need to arrive 30 minutes early to make sure the technology is set up. Monique then asked one of the people she supports, who is blind, if he would like to go to the movies. He said yes because he had never been to a movie. She arranged for them to go and both of them were set up with headphones. While the movie was playing the headphones were giving a description of what was on the screen. Monique was amazed and wanted to check if it was working for the consumer. In one scene a woman was sitting down at the table reading a newspaper and drinking coffee, and in the headsets you could hear a narrator describing what the woman was drinking. Monique leaned over and asked the consumer if he knew what the woman was drinking and he responded, “yes, coffee.” So even though the consumer could not visually see the screen, he was able to imagine what everything looked like.

When they got home, the consumer’s brother called and after speaking to him asked to speak to the staff. The brother asked what was wrong with him because he told him a story about watching a movie and described what was happening in the movie. The brother said it couldn’t be true because he has never been to the movies. To this Monique proudly responded, “Oh yes he has!”

Nicole Taylor
Avenues to Independent Living

Nicole Taylor is a second generation direct support professional with Avenues to Independent Living, as she is the daughter of one of our long-term staff members. Nicole has a special ability to empathize with the clients she supports, and recently showed her true nature and helped to define what it really means to give back to her community. When one of Nicole’s clients found herself and her two young children suddenly homeless, Nicole opened her home to her client, and helped her to secure benefits and an independent living situation. Nicole
shared not only her living space, but her food, friends, and family during what otherwise might have been an insurmountable challenge. She truly helped her client get through and come out on top, and for that both the client and Avenues are extremely grateful.

Anthony Usher
Bancroft

Like his colleagues at Bancroft and throughout the larger community of direct support professionals, Anthony Usher finds motivation and satisfaction in the way he helps improve the lives of those he supports. Earlier this year, however, Anthony was called upon to save the life of a man in a perilous situation that was nearly undetectable to the rest of the world.

Anthony works as a Program Associate for Bancroft, where he provides direct support to individuals served by the organization at its Lakeside Campus in Mullica Hill, N.J. He was with a small group who headed out on the morning of January 24 to deliver meals through a volunteer partnership between Bancroft and Meals on Wheels of Salem County, a private, nonprofit organization that delivers nutritious meals to eligible county residents who are homebound.

Upon arrival that day to a home in Pittsgrove, N.J., Anthony noticed something was amiss, as the familiar resident who would typically be outside waiting for Bancroft’s arrival wasn’t there. “I rang the doorbell, and I heard him screaming for help,” said Anthony, who has worked for Bancroft for nearly three years. “He told me the key was underneath the mat by the front door.” Complicating the issue was the fact that the doormat lay beneath approximately eight inches of snow that had accumulated from one of last winter’s numerous storms. Undeterred, Anthony located the key and entered the home to find the resident, who has unspecified disabilities, prone upon the floor beside the bed, where he had been face-down for three days.
After calling 9-1-1 for assistance, Anthony assisted the resident to a safe seat and provided him with some much needed hydration, and stayed with him until an ambulance arrived. Anthony also helped clear the abundant snow from the path leading to the resident’s door in order to create access for the rescue team from the New Jersey State Police.

Peg Marshall, Executive Director of Meals on Wheels of Salem County, said that while she knows her organization can always depend on Bancroft for reliable volunteer assistance in delivering meals, Anthony’s heroism went above the norm. “Anthony certainly demonstrated Bancroft’s core values in action on that day,” said Michelle Fuerst, Day Program Director at Bancroft’s Lakeside Campus. “And those values made an incredible difference and quite possibly saved someone’s life.”

Jeff Weiss
The Arc of Atlantic County

Jeff Weiss, Supportive Living Counselor, has worked at The Arc of Atlantic County since 2010 and has held a variety of positions. Since his arrival, Jeff has been an amazing advocate for the individuals that we support. He does his best every day to see that needs are met, particularly when it comes to advocacy. This has been evidenced by his attention and care when dealing with medical professionals and other members of the community.

Most recently, Jeff helped to support an individual with a traffic citation that resulted in a mandatory court appearance. In the days leading up to the court appearance, Jeff went over possible questions that the individual could be asked in order to help keep him from being confused or scared in the courtroom. Jeff personally assisted him to be sure he was appropriately dressed and groomed neatly to present a favorable first impression with those that he would encounter. When they spoke to the Prosecutor, Jeff helped him to advocate his side of the story and was willing to speak to the Judge as well, if needed. Due to Jeff’s diligent and
intelligent handling of the situation he ended up having one of the two tickets dismissed and his points and fines were greatly reduced. This is the perfect example of a Direct Support Professional and the many hats that they must wear to help the individuals we serve on a daily basis. Jeff is a great example of what that means and continues to be a role model to others around him.

Delorence Woodards  
**Bancroft**

Delorence has been with Bancroft almost 15 years and has been working at the same program the entire time. Over the years, he has supported individuals with transitions in and out of the program. He always makes it a point to make his first greeting with an individual special. He will do whatever he can to make them feel comfortable. Delorence is always available to support their needs, from helping overcome hard times with work, their roommate, their peers, girlfriend and sometimes their families, to simply providing some company. Delorence always has a way to show the bigger picture of things and helps those being supported understand the importance of this in their everyday lives.

Delorence supports the individuals when working with their daily routines, such as exercises and eating healthy. He supports them with their goals as outlined in the annual IHP plans. He supports them with learning how to walk safely over to the plaza shops so they can eventually do so independently or with a peer. He also provides support with time management, social skills, meal preparation, menu planning and grocery shopping, just to name a few. His consistency helps the individuals reach their goals. Delorence also makes sure that the rest of the team is consistent with this as well so the people they support continue to grow.

Delorence likes to help individuals to be involved in community activities. Every day that he works they have something going on. Time is no issue for Delorence. If the men he supports want to go to the mall or to the plaza or out window shopping, Delorence will support them with that. The people Delorence supports enjoy going to the library. Delorence organizes
this activity every Tuesday, and the men look forward to going. Even if Delorence is not working with them, they will make it a point to call him to see if the outing is still a go.

Delorence is very flexible with his schedule. He is always willing to pick up an extra day or two to help keep the men he supports in their normal routine. Even with staff vacations, mandatory training, and someone being out sick, Delorence wouldn’t have a problem with flexing his schedule, switching a day, coming in early or staying later if needed. Delorence works part-time here at Bancroft, as he is also a school teacher. When the summer rolls around, he has the opportunity to spend just a little more time with the individuals he works with.

Delorence has trained new staff as they have come into the program. He often reminds them why we are here and what the purpose of our work is. He has the attitude, “it’s not about you,” and he will sometimes remind his team the same. He continues to make himself available for any questions they may have. Delorence shares his knowledge and is a great support to his fellow co-workers. He knows that it’s not about him and that we all are here for the same purpose, to work as a team to support people with disabilities to enrich their everyday lives and help them to become as independent as they can.

Delorence continues to be not just a great role model for the individuals he works with, but for his team as well. Delorence is a very dedicated person and he loves what he does. He enjoys the satisfaction of knowing that he has played a part in someone’s life as far as helping them to achieve their goals. His joy is to know where the individuals were years ago, where they are now, and where they are going.
New Jersey’s Direct Support Professionals are:

- Dedicated
- Compassionate
- Supportive
- Engaging
- Encouraging
- Caring
- Strong
- Patient
- Humorous
- Spiritually
- Motivated
- Enthusiastic
- Positive
- Thoughtful
- Open-minded
- Responsive
- Empowered
- Tenacious
- Admiring
- Protective
- Cooperating
- Clever
- Nurturing
- Helping
- Hard-working
- Deserving
- Role-models
- Amazing
- Respectful
- Determined
- Inspiring
- Patient
-信直

Productive
Flexible
Diligent
Incredible
Risen
Proud
Quality
Awesome
Loyal
Selective
Tender
Incredible
Proud
Advocates
Tenacious
Dynamic
Responsive
Admiring
Caring
Positive
Amazing
Incredible
Incredible
Proud
Advocates
Tenacious
Dynamic
Responsive
Admiring
Caring
Positive
Amazing
Incredible
If you have DSP success stories to share throughout the year, email them to CDSTA@rutgers.edu