

National Direct Support Professional Recognition Week

September 11 - 17, 2011



Our Mission

The Arc promotes and protects the human rights of people with intellectual and developmental disabilities and actively supports their full inclusion and participation in the community throughout their lifetimes.



Please join The Arc of Schuyler as we celebrate National Direct Support Professional Recognition Week

Direct support professionals are individuals who assist people with disabilities lead more independent and socially inclusive lives. They provide personal care, emotional support, advocacy, mentoring, and teaching for thousands of people across our nation. Because these jobs require a high level of dedication and skill, the National Alliance of Direct Support Professionals has developed a Code of Ethics to help guide individuals who choose this career option. The job is both challenging and rewarding. The challenge may be in helping someone communicate their wants and needs, ensuring that a person's health care needs are understood and addressed, or from finding meaningful ways for someone to demonstrate their talents and abilities and connect with others who have similar interests. The rewards come in knowing you have made a difference in someone else's life, and that what you do is recognized and appreciated by that individual, their family, and friends.

This newsletter highlights just a handful of the dedicated professionals who work at The Arc and assist people who live in our community. There are many, many more stories that could be told. We hope we have given you some additional insight into the necessary and important role direct support professionals play. We recommend you check out the website of Dr. Thomas Pomeranz (www.universallifestyles.com) who is quoted throughout the publication. He is a nationally recognized authority, trainer, clinician, and consultant in the field of services for people with disabilities. The Arc has been working with Dr. Pomeranz to enhance the skills, competencies, and sensitivities of our staff. We want you to feel inspired about the great potential people with developmental disabilities have to be involved and productive citizens. We hope reading these stories excites you and moves you to want to know more about the people and the careers available here at The Arc.

Sincerely,

Jeannette Frank
Executive Director,
The Arc of Schuyler

Jay Hoffmeier
President, Board of Directors

ANGELA COSTON

“Don’t care for people - care about them.”

Dr. Thomas Pomeranz



For Angela Coston, caring comes naturally. She and her husband have raised three sons, have three grandchildren, and are anxiously awaiting the arrival of a fourth grandchild. She’s had many opportunities to be a caregiver.

When Angela accepted a position as a direct support professional at The Arc of Schuyler two years ago, she found that caring for people can take on a whole new meaning.

Angela understands that as a direct support professional, her job is to teach and support people to do things for themselves. “I like to help people achieve goals they have struggled with,” Angela said. “I feel rewarded when I see people I support learning, growing, and smiling.”

And those smiles are readily reciprocated. It’s not often that you’ll see Angela without a smile on her face—or without a proud moment to share. “One of my proudest moments as a direct support professional was when a person I was teaching started doing things to take care of himself without my prompting. It feels good to help someone be able to do things on their own.”

So Angela, with the help of her fellow direct support professionals, has given a new meaning to the word “caregiver.” They care enough about the people they support to give them chances to succeed. That’s a whole new way of looking at things. But for Angela, it’s second nature.

NANCY MEEHAN YAO

“The most important thing in life is to be respected.”

Dr. Thomas Pomeranz



Ask Nancy Meehan Yao what she values the most in people and she’ll tell you that it’s respect for others. Ask anyone who knows Nancy, and they’ll tell you that they aren’t surprised.

Nancy has worked as a direct support professional at The Arc of Schuyler for over a year. From her first day on the job, Nancy understood the important role that direct support professionals play as teachers, encouragers, and friends. “I chose this job because I like to help people.” Nancy says. But Nancy doesn’t just help in the ways you might think. One of Nancy’s strengths as a direct support professional is her ability to help people learn how to help themselves.

Nancy provides options and allows people to make choices. She is a natural teacher and shares her gift by teaching the people she supports about things they like to do. When asked about her proudest moment as a direct support professional, Nancy’s answer was simple, “I am proud when I can help make a person I support have a comfortable, enjoyable day.” When does Nancy know that she’s had a good day? “If someone else’s day is better because of something I did, then I have had a good day.”

Direct support professionals like Nancy deserve to have a good day because as teachers, supporters, and encouragers, they make everyone’s days better. For that, they have our respect.



CHRISTINE EDDY

“Direct care staff are task-focused. Direct support professionals are person-focused.”

Dr. Thomas Pomeranz

Christy Eddy knows how to get things done. As the mom of three very active toddlers, she’s constantly on the move, completing the tasks necessary to get through the day. And anyone who sees her with her family knows that she is a devoted and caring wife and mother with healthy and happy triplets.

As a direct support professional, Christy never allows routine tasks to get in the way of supporting people to reach their goals. Nor does she allow herself to forget that the people she’s working with are capable adults. Spend some time with Christy and you’ll hear her offering options, speaking words of encouragement, and providing praise—lots and lots of praise.

If you ask Christy, the five years she’s been a direct support professional have flown by and that’s because she enjoys what she does. “My proudest moment as a direct support professional is when I see a person I support achieve their goals,” Christy shared.

And you won’t see her doing things for people. Christy’s love of working with people drew her to the field, but her natural abilities to help people help themselves have kept her here. You’ll never hear her talking about what needs to be done in a particular day. Instead, you’ll hear her talking about what she’s going to support others to do. Christy is a direct support professional—one who really cares—and that makes all the difference.



BILL TAYLOR

“If you always do what you have always done, you will always get what you have always gotten.”

Dr. Thomas Pomeranz

Bill Taylor has had the same job for eight years. As a seasoned and experienced direct support professional, Bill has become a fixture on the overnight shift at The Arc’s home on Church Street. For some, that would mean doing the same old thing, night after night. But if you ask Bill, you’ll find that his job has changed a lot in the eight years that he’s been a direct support professional and that’s a good thing. “I get a good feeling when I help people move in the right direction. As a teacher and supporter, I get to see the fruits of my labor,” Bill said.

And Bill has had the opportunity to see a lot of things change for the people he supports. He’s there when people wake up in the morning and when they go to bed at night. He celebrates accomplishments and works through challenges, always keeping each person’s individual choices and needs in mind. He’s learned that the same approach doesn’t work every time, for every person. “Bill is a natural teacher and he helps people reach both long and short term goals,” says Brenda Arcangeli, Bill’s supervisor.

As you can imagine, Bill has many proud memories about his career as a direct support professional. His proudest was helping a person he supports learn to like sleeping in a bed. “He used to sleep in a recliner every night. Now, he has chosen not even to have a recliner in his room anymore,” Bill said with a smile.

For direct support professionals, every day brings something new. For Bill Taylor, who looks forward to sharing the new opportunities of each new day with the people he supports, that’s something to celebrate.

Contact Holly Baker, Director of Community Relations, at hbaker@arcoschuyler.org or Jennifer Mong, Director of Human Resources, at jmong@arcoschuyler.org if you would like more information about The Arc of Schuyler and our services, volunteer, and career opportunities.

SARAH TUTTLE

“Work is the great equalizer.”

Dr. Thomas Pomeranz

Sarah Tuttle never expected to work in the human services field. When she accepted a position as a job coach with The Arc of Schuyler about a year ago, it was her first experience working with people with disabilities. Since then, she has spent her evenings teaching, coaching, and mentoring people as they gain valuable vocational skills.

And it's obvious that she's a natural. Watch Sarah and the people she supports and you'll see a cooperative and supportive team with Sarah working alongside the crew to help them learn new skills. Sarah blends an encouraging tone of voice and frequent smile with a strong work ethic—something she strives to role model.

The results of her work are evident. One of her proudest moments as a direct support professional was when she taught a person she supports how to run the floor scrubber. “They’ve done it three times now and are very proud of their accomplishment!” Sarah shared.

Sarah knows the importance of a supportive work environment. “My co-workers and supervisor are very understanding and are always there to support me.” That support helps Sarah know the important role she plays in supporting others to have their own jobs—because having a job that means something can make all the difference.

National Alliance of Direct Support Professionals Code of Ethics

The National Alliance of Direct Support Professionals is a non-profit organization with a mission to promote the development of a highly competent human services workforce which support individuals in achieving their life goals. Find out more at www.nadsp.org.

Person-Centered Supports

As a Direct Support Professional, my first allegiance is to the person I support; all other activities and functions I perform flow from this allegiance.

Promoting Physical and Emotional Well-Being

As a Direct Support Professional, I am responsible for supporting the emotional, physical, and personal well-being of the individuals receiving support. I will encourage growth and recognize the autonomy of the individuals receiving support while being attentive and energetic in reducing their risk of harm.

Integrity and Responsibility

As a Direct Support Professional, I will support the mission and vitality of my profession to assist people in leading self-directed lives and to foster a spirit of partnership with the people I support, other professionals, and the community.

Confidentiality

As a Direct Support Professional, I will safeguard and respect the confidentiality and privacy of the people I support.

Justice, Fairness and Equity

As a Direct Support Professional, I will promote and practice justice, fairness, and equity for the people I support and the community as a whole. I will affirm the human rights, civil rights, and responsibilities of the people I support.

Respect

As a Direct Support Professional, I will respect the human dignity and uniqueness of the people I support. I will recognize each person I support as valuable and help others understand their value.

Relationships

As a Direct Support Professional, I will assist the people I support to develop and maintain relationships.

Self-Determination

As a Direct Support Professional, I will assist the people I support to direct the course of their own lives.

Advocacy

As a Direct Support Professional, I will advocate with the people I support for justice, inclusion, and full community participation.



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