

*The Arc of Schuyler
Celebrates
National Direct Support
Professionals Recognition Week*

SEPTEMBER 8-12, 2008



National Direct Support Professionals Recognition Week

The U.S. Senate recently passed resolution S. Res. 613 specifically designed to recognize and bring attention to the work performed by direct support professionals across the country. The week of September 8, 2008 was designated as National Direct Support Professionals Recognition Week. We, along with others, continue to work on a national advocacy campaign to bring attention to the specialized work performed by employees who work with and for people with intellectual and developmental disabilities. Through this publication, The Arc of Schuyler wants to take advantage of this opportunity to honor direct support professionals who work at our organization and draw public attention to their dedicated service.

Being a direct support professional means being part of a profession that encompasses many job titles and functions. Direct support professionals work as job coaches, as service coordinators, and as transportation providers. Direct support professionals provide residential, recreation, day services, medical and in-home supports. Direct support professionals have the primary responsibility of the health, welfare and safety of people with developmental disabilities living in community settings. They are the people relied upon by families as being closest to their loved ones and the people who know them best. The quality of supports to people with disabilities lies in the hands of this workforce. Knowledgeable, experienced, and compassionate direct support professionals act not only as caregivers, but as teachers, advo-

cates and friends. Our board of directors and executive and management staff embrace the work of direct support professionals as the most critical activity of our agency.

Despite the fact their jobs demand complex skills, independent thinking, ethical judgment and the ability to create long term relationships of trust and mutual respect, the work of direct support professionals has not been recognized as a profession in this country. Any “profession” in the United States is defined by three major components:

“Our board of directors and executive and management staff embrace the work of direct support professionals as the most critical activity of our agency.”

1. A body of knowledge that has field reliability and validity and leads to a recognized and fully portable credential;
2. A code of ethics; and
3. A relationship with a professional association

The Arc of Schuyler, in partnership with other advocacy organizations, including the New York State Association of Community and Residential Agencies (NYSACRA), is committed to ensuring that direct support work is recognized and valued as a profession. To that end, we are committed to:

- Providing easy access to high quality, competency-based training and career development opportunities for direct support professionals;
- Promoting a national code of ethics and nationally validated skill standards to guide the training efforts and the work of direct support professionals;
- Developing promotional materials to educate the public and prospective employees

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about the significance of direct support work and careers in the profession; and

- Supporting the development of a NYS Chapter of the National Association of Direct Support Professionals

For more information on these initiatives and career opportunities at The Arc of Schuyler, contact our Human Resources Office at (607) 535-6934.

We want to thank all direct support professionals for their commitment to making the world a better place for people with intellectual and developmental disabilities. We hope the stories told here help you get to know some of the people who have made that commitment.

“Knowledgeable, experienced, and compassionate direct support professionals act not only as caregivers, but as teachers, advocates and friends.”

We also hope their stories help others gain a better understanding of the value and rewards of making this work a career choice and a profession. Finally, if you know someone who works as a direct support professional, join us in saying “thank you” for the important part they play in the lives of people with developmental disabilities and their families.



James E. Wilson
Executive Director



Shirley Kohena
Board President



Brenda Arcangeli, Group Leader

From the time she was a teenager, Brenda Arcangeli knew that she wanted to help people. She gravitated toward jobs like in-home caregiver and certified nursing assistant. In 2003, Brenda brought her dedication and commitment to helping others to The Arc of Schuyler, joining The Arc's team as a direct support professional working on the overnight shift. Soon after, she transferred to the Day Habilitation program and continued to provide supports to people with disabilities.

Brenda knows the importance of

Brenda Arcangeli...On A Personal Note

Family: Two sons, ages 6 and 3 and a 2-year-old daughter.

Greatest trait: Patience.

Favorite food: Chicken wings.

In her fridge, she always keeps: Milk and apple juice for the kids.

Her favorite childhood toy: A stuffed clown she got when she was 2.

Favorite TV show: "Law and Order."

Favorite movie: Any horror movie.

Values most in others: A sense of humor.

What really annoys her: When people grind their teeth.

If she could have a superpower, it would be to: Read minds.

what direct support professionals do on a daily basis.

"I think that direct support professionals are very special people who have a gift and who use that gift to improve and change the lives of the people they support," says Brenda. And

Brenda does this on a daily basis. No goal is too small, and no accomplishment goes unrecognized.

Brenda makes sure that the people for whom she provides supports are well cared for, have nutritious meals, and have an opportunity to socialize. But it's the extra effort she puts into planning activities that people will enjoy that makes all the difference. Walk into the group area that she supervises and you'll see people doing arts and crafts, listening to music, dancing, and having a good time. Because that's what they want to do, and helping people make choices and participate in activities that they enjoy is what Brenda is all about.

To Brenda, direct support isn't just a job—it's a career. "I chose this career because of the smile I

see on people's faces and the feeling

I get when I help them. The most enjoyable part of my job is watching people achieve the goals that I have worked on with them," says Brenda. "It lets me know I'm here for the right reason."



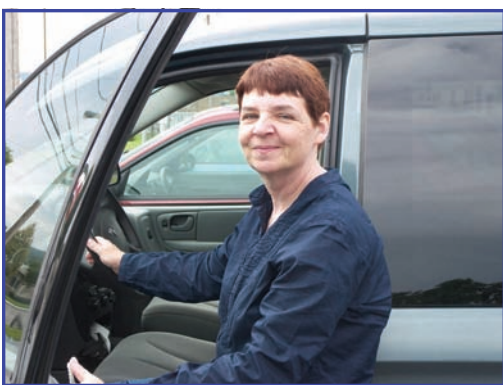
Brenda recently achieved a goal of her own when she was promoted to group leader in The Arc's Day Habilitation program. Brenda is currently enrolled at Empire State College and is taking classes to earn her Bachelor's degree. She is also a participant in the Disability Studies Certificate Program, a statewide program that provides training and educational opportunities to direct support professionals to build a foundation for longer-term employment and career mobility in the field.

Brenda will continue to strive to reach her own goals, but the people she supports are never far from her mind. Because Brenda Arcangeli, like other direct support professionals, knows what it really means to help others. And she does it every day.

"I chose this career because of the smile I see on people's faces and the feeling I get when I help them. The most enjoyable part of my job is watching people achieve the goals that I have worked on with them. "It lets me know I'm here for the right reason."

Mary Coates, Program Coordinator

School isn't the only place where you'll find a teacher. As a program coordinator in the Home Services department, Mary spends her days educating others about how to achieve the goals they set for themselves. She teaches people skills like



how to budget and manage their money, how to care for their homes, and how to be productive and contributing members of their communities. Through her teaching she promotes dignity, inclusion, independence, and self-respect.

Part of what makes Mary such a good teacher is that she understands the important role direct support professionals play as mentors, friends, and supporters. "Direct support professionals wear many hats. We teach, role model, role play, counsel, coach and cheerlead. We have to listen, be patient

and understanding, offer comfort and help people find the right direction for their lives," Mary says.

Mary spends her nights furthering her own education. She recently earned her Bachelor's degree in psychology and is currently working on her Master's degree in clinical psychology. Through her school efforts, Mary has gained conceptual knowledge that she can use in her everyday work environment. Some of the best lessons she's learned, however, have come through her hands-on experience as a direct support professional.

This knowledge will help Mary as she continues to act as teacher, mentor, and advocate. On a daily basis, Mary strives to teach others about the work that direct support professionals do. "I don't think that people who don't work in this field always understand the nature of what we're trying to accomplish or what we actually do. They view us as attendants or caretakers rather than teachers and coaches," says Mary.

Mary's goal is that people in the community will understand more about the important contributions made by individuals with disabilities and the direct support professionals

who support them. "Professionally, I would like to make a difference in the way that society responds to and accepts people with disabilities. I'd like to help people in the community understand that they don't need to be afraid of people with special needs. They have the same thoughts, feelings, desires, hopes, and dreams as everyone else and the same need to be respected."

And this is a lesson that direct support professionals like Mary will continue to teach every day.

Mary Coates...On A Personal Note

Family: Four children, ranging in age from 8 to 21.

Greatest trait: Honesty.

Favorite food: Turkey

In her fridge, she always keeps: Bottled water.

Her favorite childhood toy: Barbie dolls.

Favorite TV show: "Law and Order."

Favorite movie: "Lord of the Rings."

Values most in others: Hard work, honesty, and dedication.

What really annoys her: Laziness.

"Direct support professionals wear many hats. We teach, role model, role play, counsel, coach and cheerlead. We have to listen, be patient and understanding, offer comfort and help people find the right direction for their lives."

Christine Nightingale, Service Coordinator

Change can be a good thing. For Christine Nightingale, wanting a career change is what led her to The



Arc of Schuyler. After years of working as a preschool teacher, Christine became interested in working with people with disabilities. “I previously worked as a tutor to people with and without disabilities who ranged in age from kindergarten to college. I thought being a service coordinator would be something I’d be interested in doing,” says Christine.

Christine quickly found out that she made a good choice. “I am really enjoying service coordination and getting to know all the people I work with,” she says. As a service coordinator, Christine makes sure that people are aware of the supports that are available to them and

assists with identifying services that will help people work toward their goals. This means doing a lot of paperwork and spending a lot of time on the phone. But it’s the hands-on, day-to-day support she provides that really makes a difference. She strives to give information and options so that people can make informed decisions and choices. And, like other direct support professionals, Christine is there to listen, assist, and guide.

Perhaps what’s most important is her willingness to let people make their own choices. Sometimes that means putting in the extra effort to show people that they are able to do something themselves. “Most people don’t realize how much people with disabilities are capable of,” she says. Christine’s focus is to provide opportunities for independence, choice, and enrichment, and she tailors her style and her approach to meet the unique needs of each person for whom she provides supports.

Through it all, Christine plays the part of advisor, advoca-

te, and friend. “I really like working with people and getting to know each person individually to help people achieve their goals. I enjoy being an advocate,” says Christine. Her hope for the people she supports is that each person will have the opportunity to reach their goals. She knows there might be roadblocks along the way, but she’s up for the challenge. And that’s why Christine, like other direct support professionals, will continue to help people make choices that will change their lives for the better.

Christine Nightingale...On A Personal Note

Family: Husband, one daughter, three sons, and a grandson.

Greatest trait: Patient.

Favorite food: Lemon meringue pie.

In her fridge, she always keeps: Milk.

Her favorite childhood toy: Patti Play Pal

Favorite TV show: “House.”

Favorite movie: “Steel Magnolias.”

If she had a round-trip ticket, she would go to: Hawaii.

The accomplishment she is most proud of is: Her children.

If she could have a superpower, it would be to: Become invisible.

“I really like working with people and getting to know each person individually to help people achieve their goals. I enjoy being an advocate.”

Janet Osborne, Pre-Vocational Specialist

Janet Osborne knows the value of hard work. She greets each morning at 3:30 a.m., which gives her just enough time for a cup of coffee before she heads out to the barn to feed her cows and pigs and to do farm chores.

And that's all before she comes to work. So it's not surprising that, after several years of factory and



food service work, Janet found her niche as a pre-vocational specialist in The Arc's Glen Industries vocational program. Janet spends her days teaching, coaching, and encouraging the people she supports

to learn job skills. She has a natural ability to recognize the capabilities in people, and not their limitations. Her focus is on supporting people and finding ways to adapt jobs so that everyone can accomplish a positive and productive outcome, regardless of their abilities.

At every step, Janet expresses her highest respect and regard for people's achievements. "I enjoy helping the individuals get through their work problems and love to see a smile on their faces. It is very rewarding when I can help people with their problems. This is one of the best jobs I ever had!" says Janet.

Brian Bockelkamp, director of Glen Industries, has worked with Janet since she started at The Arc of Schuyler in 2006. He values the contributions she and other direct support professionals make. "Janet inspires others to work hard and provides support to help people achieve their goals. She makes people proud of what they accomplish," says Brian.

Janet's dream for the people she supports is that everyone will have a chance to have a job. "I would love to see everyone work in the community someday using the skills I taught them," she says. And, like other direct support professionals, that's something she'll work hard to accomplish. Even if it means getting up at 3:30 a.m.

Janet Osborne...On A Personal Note

Family: Husband, Ed; two children; four grandchildren.

Greatest trait: She's a hard worker.

Favorite food: Hot fudge sundae with no cherries or whipped cream.

In her fridge, she always keeps: Milk.

Her favorite childhood toy: A monkey that could play the drums.

Favorite TV show: Anything on TV Land, like "The Andy Griffith Show" and "Leave it to Beaver."

Favorite movie: "On Golden Pond."

Values most in others: Honesty.

If she could have a superpower, it would be to: Be able to make people more open-minded.

I enjoy helping the individuals get through their work problems and love to see a smile on their faces. It is very rewarding when I can help people with their problems. This is one of the best jobs I ever had!"

Steven Spina, Medical Support Professional

When Steven Spina first applied for a job as a direct support professional, he never thought he'd make it his career. In fact, he didn't even really know much about the job, other than what he'd heard from a friend who worked in the field. What drew Steven to The Arc of Schuyler were the flexible schedule, stable work environment, and good benefits. What's kept him here for the past six years is something entirely different.

For Steven, it's all about the people. "The role of the direct support professional is to find out what people's goals are and to assist people in reaching those goals by teaching and showing them the steps to get there," says Steven. "The important thing is that, as a direct support professional, you stand up for people when they can't stand up for themselves." And it's clear that he believes this. In his role as a medical support professional, Steven spends his days taking people to medical and dental appointments. This means that he's able to spend a lot of one-on-one time with each person.



Steven takes advantage of this time to get to know people better and to spend quality time with them. This extra effort means that Steven has good information about what supports he can provide people to help them succeed with their

medical appointments and how he can assist by advocating on their behalf. It also means that the people he supports get some extra-special attention.

Karen Petrie, director of clinical services, has known Steven throughout his tenure at The Arc. She recognizes the contributions he makes as a direct support professional. "Steven demonstrates a working belief in dignity. He adapts his style to those with whom he's working. He is patient, ensures people are understood, and responds to people in ways that meet their needs. As a result, the individuals he supports are happy to see him and respond well to him," says Karen.

Steven is happy to see them, too. He knows the impact direct support professionals can have on the lives of people with disabilities. "The most enjoyable part of this job is seeing the difference you make with people's independence. I want to stay here to see the day that the individuals I work with won't need me anymore," says Steven. As he and other direct support professionals continue to work toward helping people reach their goals, Steven Spina will continue to make a difference. And he'll know that the work he's doing is important.

Steven Spina...On A Personal Note

Family: Wife, Crystal; three sons, ages 10, 6, and 4.

Greatest trait: He's a happy person.

Favorite food: Spaghetti.

In his fridge, he always keeps: Milk.

His favorite childhood toy: Transformers.

Favorite TV show: "House."

Favorite movie: "Transformers."

Values most in others: Politeness and respect.

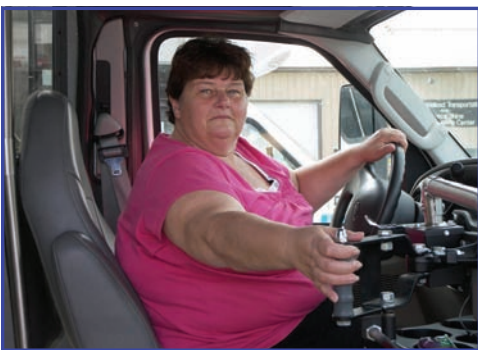
What really annoys him: When you walk by others and they don't acknowledge you.

If he could have a superpower, it would be to: Have X-ray vision.

"The role of the direct support professional is to find out what people's goals are and to assist people in reaching those goals by teaching and showing them the steps to get there."

Kathy Swarthout, Transportation Coordinator

Sometimes your life's work is waiting for you in your own backyard. At least, that's what happened to Kathy Swarthout. After years of being a stay-at-home mom, Kathy decided to re-enter the workforce and was hired at The Arc of Schuyler in the Transportation Department. The job appealed to her



because it was in her own community and it meant spending her days driving, which is something she's always liked to do.

That was almost 12 years ago, and she's never looked back. Kathy's current position as The Arc's transportation coordinator means that she spends her time managing schedules, dispatching drivers, and making sure that the agency's fleet of vehicles is operational. But it's her focus on the people she supports that makes what Kathy does so special. To Kathy,

providing transportation services isn't just about getting people from here to there. She takes the time to get to know each person and finds ways to make the time she spends with them enjoyable and enriching.

Tim Wickham, director of facilities, works with Kathy every day and sees first hand the importance of her relationships with the people she supports. "Everyone likes to start the day with a friendly face. Kathy gives people extra attention and makes sure that they feel recognized and special," he says.

Kathy also understands the importance of these relationships. "Direct support professionals have a responsibility to provide the people they support the things they need, and to do this with dignity and respect," says Kathy. And she demonstrates this on a daily basis. Spend time with her when she drives a bus and you'll see her dedication and her focus on customer service. Kathy takes the time to greet each person she's transporting and carries on conversations with people throughout the entire ride. She understands that, as a direct support profes-

sional, the people on her bus are her customers and she's committed to making the time they spend with her the best it can be. As a result, the individuals with whom she works with respond well to her and it's clear that they enjoy interacting with her.

Kathy hopes that someday the people she supports will be able to live and travel more independently. And because she and others have chosen direct support as their life's work, she might just see that dream realized.

Kathy Swarthout...On A Personal Note

Family: Husband, four children, three grandchildren, and several granddogs.

Greatest trait: Her sense of humor.

Favorite food: Homemade macaroni and cheese.

In her fridge, she always keeps: Chocolate.

Her favorite childhood toy: Her invisible friend.

Favorite TV show: All the "CSI" shows.

Favorite movie: "Charlotte's Web" (the original version).

Values most in others: Honesty.

What really annoys her: When people click their pens.

"Direct support professionals have a responsibility to provide the people they support the things they need, and to do this with dignity and respect."

Susan Wayne, Cook

If you walk into the kitchen at the Canal Street residence, chances are you'll find Susan Wayne there. As the residence's cook, Susan spends her time ordering food and supplies and preparing nutritious meals and snacks for the people she supports. Ask anyone who's ever eaten anything that Susan's cooked and you'll get rave reviews.

But it's what Susan does outside of the kitchen, behind the scenes, that deserves special mention. Amidst the hustle and bustle of the



daily routine, Susan is a stable, comforting presence to the people for whom she provides supports. Her primary objective is to help people get their day started on a positive note. "I like to be the person who gently wakes people up in the morning," says Susan. "I use my tone of voice and the touch of my

hand to make people feel comfortable, safe and secure."

Susan also takes extra time to make sure that people get individualized attention and the opportunity to make choices. She realizes the importance of the work direct support professionals do, especially in situations where people depend on staff for assistance with their physical needs. Like other direct support professionals, she's put a lot of time into building relationships with the people she supports.

"Susan is one of the most nurturing people I know," says Debbie Peskin, residence manager. "She understands the important role that direct support professionals play in creating relationships of trust and mutual respect. She pays attention to detail and takes the extra time to get to know people, then adjusts the way she works with them to better meet their needs."

Sometimes, it's the details that make all the difference. Susan values the small moments she gets to spend with people, like sitting and having a cup of coffee, watching the sunrise, or smelling the freshly cut grass. Whatever the situation,

Susan Wayne...On A Personal Note

Family: Five children—two sons and three daughters.

Greatest trait: Patience.

In her fridge, she always keeps: Milk.

Her favorite childhood toy: Barbie dolls.

Favorite TV show: She doesn't watch TV.

Favorite movie: "The Princess Bride."

Values most in others: Kindness.

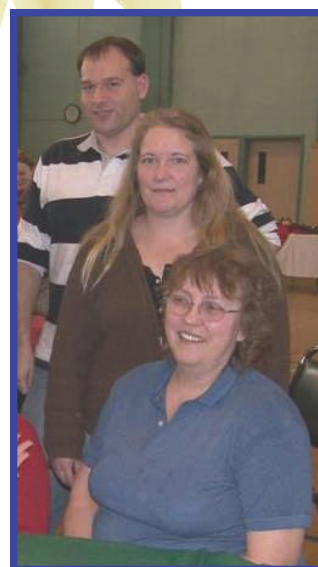
What really annoys her: Hypocrisy.

If she could have a superpower, it would be: The ability to transport herself from place to place.

Susan makes it a priority to ensure that the interactions she has with the people she supports are meaningful and enriching.

This thoughtfulness, creativity, and attention to detail are examples of the commitment to providing personalized and attentive care that Susan and other direct support professionals make on a daily basis. And that's a recipe that's always a hit.

"She understands the important role that direct support professionals play in creating relationships of trust and mutual respect."



The Arc of Schuyler

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June 2008—May 2009

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Our Mission

The Arc of Schuyler is committed to securing for all people with developmental disabilities the opportunity to choose and realize their goals: where and how they learn, live, work and play. This is accomplished by creating an environment of independence, productivity and integration through individualized services.

The Arc is further committed to reducing the incidence and limiting the consequence of developmental disabilities through education, research and advocacy, and the support of families, friends and community.

Through the successful pursuit of quality and justice, The Arc provides leadership in the field of disabilities and develops the necessary human and financial resources to attain its goals.

The Arc also provides community leadership by participation in a wide variety of activities that make our region a better place to live for all citizens.

**30 years of believing in dreams
and making a difference**