



New Jersey Workforce Development Insider

Direct Support Professionals Honored at Developmental Disabilities Lecture Series

The week of September 11 – 17 was one of celebration for Direct Support Professionals (DSP) across the state. Agencies across New Jersey recognized the hard work and dedication of the staff that provide supports to people with disabilities in a variety of ways. Some recognized them through articles and advertisements in local newspapers, others held recognition events and luncheons for their staff, some sent thank you cards, and many took the time to let DSPs know how much they are appreciated.

The week also marked the one year anniversary of statewide implementation of the College of Direct Support (CDS). This innovative endeavor has resulted in more than 100 provider agencies gaining access to the cutting edge, online curriculum found in the CDS. With nearly 50,000 lessons assigned by the one year mark, it is easy to see how much organizations value the availability of continuing education in their efforts to provide quality support.

This important milestone and DSP Recognition Week were highlighted on September 16th, 2011 with a statewide event. The Developmental Disabilities Lecture Series (DDLS) was held with a focus around the important role DSPs play in the lives of people with disabilities.

The presentation, conducted by Joe MacBeth, Executive Director of the National Alliance for Direct Support Professionals (NADSP) addressed current needs related to the professionalization of the field. The advancements New Jersey has made toward these efforts were emphasized through a ceremony held during the series. This ceremony aimed at recognizing the efforts of DSPs statewide began with Dr. Dawn Apgar, Deputy Commissioner of the Department of Human Services



NJ DHS Deputy Commissioner, Dr. Dawn Apgar addresses the audience while DSP honorees and Boggs Center faculty and project staff look on.

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The NJ Partnership for DSP Workforce Development

- *It's about the Quality...of supports that a well-trained workforce provides.*
- *It's about the Value...of professionalism gained through the College of Direct Support state-of-the-art training.*
- *It's about the Future...of Direct Support Professionals and the lives of people with developmental disabilities.*

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presenting Governor Chris Christie's proclamation declaring the week National DSP Recognition Week.

In doing this Dr. Apgar congratulated the efforts of DSPs across New Jersey for their dedication to providing quality supports to people with disabilities. The ceremony also recognized those DSPs who recently completed Level One and/or Two of the New Jersey DSP Career Path. The New Jersey Career Path is an innovative professional development opportunity aimed at enhancing the retention and quality of the workforce through a three-tiered career path that combines online learning with mentoring and portfolio development. The following DSPs were honored during this event:

The Arc of Middlesex County

Michael Birardi

The Arc of Somerset County

Abdul Gabisi

Elizabeth Kinyanjui

Matheny Medical and Educational Center

Richard Carreon

Sharon Davis

Lamin Golafly

Meghan Hoskins

Brittani Jones

Frank Kitchen

Liya Mulatu

Imelda Schroeder

Firnussi Tissima

Jennifer Wilson

Congratulations to these DSPs who join the ranks of more than 100 other Direct Support Professionals throughout New Jersey in their achievements through completion of the Career Path.

Course Corner: Cultural Competence

This course is an overview of cultural competence and its importance in daily support to people with disabilities. This course helps learners develop cultural awareness. It will help the learner understand how to work with people who have a wide variety of personal perspectives, cultures, and life circumstances. Through this course DSPs will increase cultural competence by learning about the five elements of cultural competence: 1) Valuing diversity; 2) Understanding ones own culture; 3) Understanding ways culture may affect interactions between persons and among groups; 4) Knowing where to find good resources; and 5) Knowing how to change ones own behavior to meet the cultural needs of others. In this course DSPs are asked to reflect on their capacities in these areas at different points during the course. The learner is given many opportunities to discover more about their own culture, reflect on the similarities and differences with other cultures; and identify DSP roles in increasing cultural competence at the organization where they work. Lessons included in this course include:

- What is Cultural Competence?
- Understanding Your Own Culture
- The Culture of Support Services
- The Continuum
- Communication
- Daily Support
- DSP Roles in Culturally Competent Organizations

Employment: A First Choice for Everyone

By Bret Li-Vaks

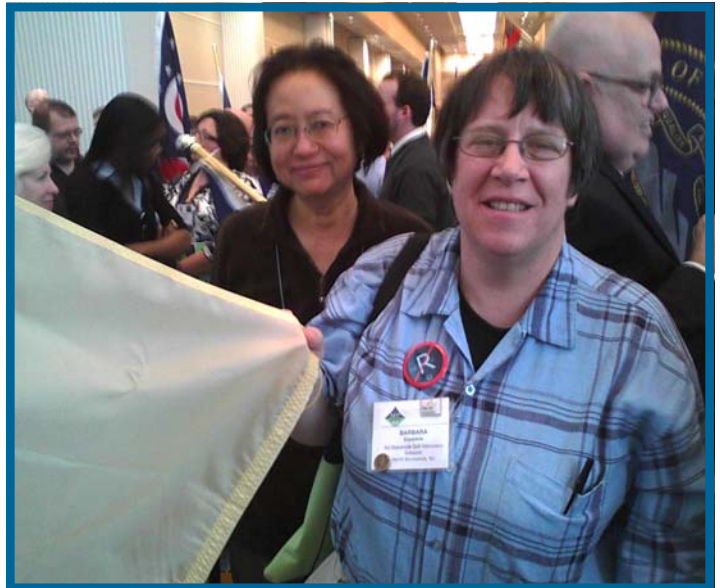
The New Jersey Alliance for Full Participation (AFP) Summit 2011 aptly titled Employment: First Choice for Everyone was held on Friday, October 28, 2011 at the Heldrich Center in New Brunswick in conjunction with National Disability Employment Awareness Month. A total of 110 people including family members, advocates, employment specialists, state employees, and supported employment vendors and providers met to discuss New Jersey becoming an Employment First State. Participants met to address and respond to the vision of the National AFP Announcement of its new campaign, “Real Jobs – It’s Everybody’s Business,” and its goal of doubling the employment rate for people with developmental disabilities by 2015. All who attended the Summit received a new Employment/Job Development Resource for students in the transition process and their families to help guide them and dispel certain myths that individuals with disabilities cannot work. This resource is also available on the Boggs Center website at: <http://rwjms.umdj.edu/boggscenter/projects/NJAFP.html>

Employment Specialists, as Direct Support Professionals (DSP), are the foundation of supported employment. These DSPs help people find and ultimately keep their jobs through the all phases of employment. Although some find it difficult to develop jobs during this tough economy, Employment Specialists continue to support people to become competitively employed despite the challenges. If

we are going to be successful in increasing the employment rate for people with disabilities, it is vitally important to not only acknowledge the important role of DSPs, but to understand their concerns and listen to their ideas. During the NJ AFP Summit, several of the Employment Specialists in attendance met as a focus group. This group discussed many ideas to promote employment opportunities for people with disabilities. Throughout their conversations they emphasized the importance of celebrating individual milestones. They also discussed the need for providers to continue to support growth in the use of technology in effort to help both the individual as well as the Employment Specialist find and sustain good job matches. They also shared the need for greater emphasis and funding sources to promote education as an opportunity for employment growth.

Several members of NJ AFP went on to attend the National AFP Summit: 2.0 Real Jobs--It's Everyone's Business in Washington, DC held November 17-19, 2011 at the Gaylord National Harbor. Over 1,250 people participated in the Summit which marked the mid-point in the campaign to double integrated employment for persons with intellectual and developmental disabilities by the year 2015. The Summit’s plenary speakers included U.S. Department of Health and Human Services Secretary Kathleen Sebelius and Special Olympics CEO Tim Shriver. The event also featured national advocates Ricardo Thornton, David Egan, and Julie Petty. In addition to these highlights, a Town Hall meeting, moderated by former CNN Reporter Frank Sesno, was convened to discuss the current state of supported employment.

Each Summit served to re-engage employment specialists, agency and vendor administrators, business leaders, advocates, family members and government leaders to sustain an ongoing dialogue. This framework will focus on which elements of employment is currently working, what areas need to be enhanced, revamped, or redeveloped with an emphasis specially on employment first policy development. The hope is that this will lead to establishing permanent, competitive, and long-lasting employment opportunities for people with disabilities.



Barbara Coppens (advocate) and Nantanee Koppstein (parent) at the National Alliance for Full Participation Summit.

A Good Match Builds Employment Success

“Choose a job you love and you will never have to work a day in your life.” Confucius said this thousands of years ago and it is a statement that has withstood the test of time. Phil Tellep represents this quote to a T, and much in part to the efforts of Joanne Kaiser, the Manager of Supportive Employment and Job Developer from The Arc of Somerset County.

Phil is an expert on the subject of Legos. No longer considered to be just a kids’ toy, Legos have expanded into many areas of society with full scale exhibits at the Philadelphia and Bronx Zoos, the Mall of America in Minnesota, the Museum of Science and Industry in Chicago, and many other places across the country. Phil has particular expertise in the building of vehicles. He can view almost any vehicle and build it from memory out of Legos. His creations have wowed crowds at various Lego shows in NJ held at libraries and other venues. The portfolio he keeps, documents his success.

“It’s very important to remember the bigger picture. ..

A good match is extremely important.”

-Joanne Kaiser (The Arc of Somerset County)

When Joanne met Phil in 2009 she was tasked with one thing, get him a job with Lego. It sounded easy, Phil was successful with the job he had at Lowes for 6 years, he was passionate about the Lego product, and the Lego store at Bridgewater Commons was just a car

ride away. It was also November, the busy holiday shopping season was just beginning, the store wasn’t advertising for employees, and the manager didn’t have any experience working with someone with a disability. The initial call Joanne made to the store resulted in rejection, but Joanne knew once they met Phil they would see his potential. A visit to the store followed, resulting in the opening of possibilities from a Lego employee enthusiastic about Phil’s desire to work at the store. Joanne called the manager, Chad Kettering, the next day. Still apprehensive and not completely open to an interview, he gave them a fifteen minute meeting.

That fifteen minutes turned into more than an hour as Chad inquisitively listened to Phil as he shared his portfolio and explained how many of the models in the store were put together. By the end of their meeting everyone was smiling from ear to ear and Chad presented Phil with a seasonal job offer on the spot. Joanne supported Phil on the job and gradually faded out as Phil learned the job. Then the job coach and natural supports from the other employees took over.

Two years have passed as that seasonal position turned into permanent part time employment. Phil has taken ownership of working on an elaborate display wall that is the keystone of the store. He also conducts inventory procedures and helps customers find products they’re looking for. The assistant manager Lisa Batruch developed a great working relationship with Phil, going the extra mile to push him to learn new duties in the store with her assistance. Joanne continues to check in periodically, giving support as needed, and is always just a phone call away. She modestly attributes much of Phil’s success to store, describing how “management support sends an important message to the other employees.” Chad says he is glad he “broke down his wall of apprehension,” and recommends that other employers do the same. He stated that you have to “give it a try, it may not work out, but that’s true of other employees.” Chad is happy he did and shared his appreciation of Phil’s “conscientiousness and attention to detail, stating that “no one is more dedicated.”

Joanne exemplifies the role direct support professionals play in supporting people to achieve successful careers. She recognizes that a job is more than a job and there are many things to consider. As she explained, “It’s very important to remember the bigger picture. You [job coach/job developer] need to keep in mind that if you don’t do your due diligence to make it a job match, it may close the door for others. A good match is extremely important.” As for Phil, if you ask what he likes best about his job, he’ll tell you “the discount.” What you know from his actions, the times he needs to be reminded that his shift is over, the pleasure he gets from building his wall, and the smile that’s on his face when he’s helping a customer, is that he loves his job.



Joanne Kaiser, Chad Kettering, and Phil Tellep at the Lego Store in Bridgewater Commons

Siblings: A Partnership Throughout Life

By Jaime McGeady

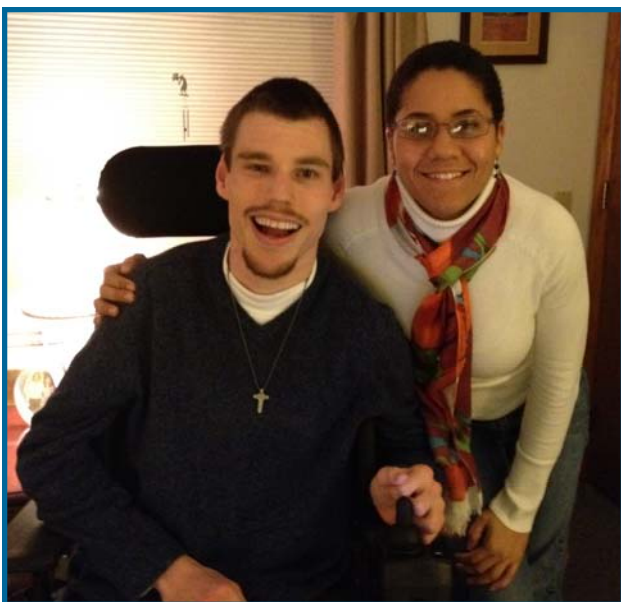
For the most part, my brother and I are like typical siblings in their mid-twenties. Overall we get along just fine. We share many of the same friends, and we like to sneak in your typical sibling quarrel over trivial topics. I'm currently in my Junior Year at the Ocean County campus of Kean University and am looking forward to graduating with a bachelor's degree in Special Education. I attend school in the same location as my brother Andrew, a human services student at Ocean County College. We both live at home with our single mother, who works full time.

What makes us unique is Andrew's disability, and the effect that has on our everyday life. Andrew has Cerebral Palsy and uses a motorized wheelchair. He relies on support staff to get to school, go to the gym, and assist him with working out, toileting, and everything in between. That means that our whole family relies on Direct Support Professionals.

Andrew has had great staff and terrible staff. The great DSPs are the reliable ones; the ones you can set your watch by. Having reliable, consistent Direct Support staff is key to our family and the way that it functions. Andrew and I are both college students with part time jobs, which can often lead to a hectic week. In order for us to be where we need to be and for our family to have a good balance it is critical that we have reliable, quality support staff. One DSP in particular that Andrew had for about nine months, was phenomenal. He was always on time, always happy, and never let Andrew down in any way. He and Andrew would plan their days, independently from my mother and I, this really helped Andrew to grow as a person. He and Andrew developed a relationship that went beyond a worker and his boss. Although he is no longer a DSP, Andrew is still in touch with this former staff person, on a personal level, and they get together regularly.

"The times when the Direct Support Staff are working out well are some of the best times of our lives. We all feel liberated, free and independent."

- Jaime McGeady (sister)



Siblings Andrew and Jaime McGeady in their home.

When there is a loss of a DSP, then something needs to give. Usually that something is actually someone. This is not normal. Families are too often relied upon to make many sacrifices when there is not adequate staff. This could mean missing an appointment, calling off from work, not attending a class, or even having to leave a job or school. They love their son, daughter, brother, or sister so they do what they need to. They essentially have no choice in the matter, but that doesn't make it any easier. Times without staff truly affects the whole family. They feel uneasy, unsure, and out of control. When Andrew doesn't have staff, I usually provide much of the support. This requires a lot of planning, in anticipation of a problem. When we plan our schedules each semester, I try to make sure that I am never in class at the same time as Andrew. I do this so that if there is a last minute lack of staff, I can be available to drive Andrew to school and/or attend class with him to act as his DSP.

The times when the Direct Support Staff is working out well are some of the best times of our lives. We all feel liberated, free, and independent. Thankfully we are currently in the middle of one of those times. Andrew currently has a wonderful staff person. He does not need to worry about getting to where he needs to be, nor do our mother and I. Having these feelings enables us to move ahead in life and promotes independence not only for Andrew, but the whole family. This is a feeling that you cannot put a price on.

CDS Administrator Tips: Manager Zone

Whether you have primary access (under your admin button) or secondary access (under the manager zone button on your personal page) to staff in the CDS, you are able to assign them online training. If you only have manager zone access to staff, follow these instructions to assign online courses to them.

To assign online training through Manager Zone:

- Manager Zone
- Manager Training
- Enter the learner's last name, then click search
- Search results will yield all staff you have access to under manager zone that matches your search criteria
- Click on the "Manager Training" button for the staff you want to assign training to
- The page will refresh and show the learner's training information
- Click "E-Learning Assign Modules" tab
- Select and assign training



New Jersey's Innovative Workforce Development Strategies Put on the National Stage

This year representatives from New Jersey were invited to present at the Money Follows the Person (MFP) Project Directors' Annual Meeting in Baltimore, Maryland. The invitation was extended as a result of the success New Jersey has seen with implementing a Direct Support Professional (DSP) Career Path and expanding training and competency development opportunities through statewide implementation of the College of Direct Support. Nationally, such activities are seen as critical components to addressing the workforce crisis. The implementation of workforce strategies such as Career Paths are recommended solutions for increasing the retention of DSPs and enhancing the quality of supports and services provided to people with disabilities and the aging population. On October 18, 2011, Joe Bongiovanni of the Division of Developmental Disabilities and Colleen McLaughlin of The Boggs Center had the honor of presenting to a national audience interested in hearing about these innovative workforce initiatives.

Money Follows the Person (MFP) is a Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS) program aimed at providing states with an opportunity assist individuals to transition from institutional settings and strengthen and improve community based systems of long-term care for low-income seniors and individuals with disabilities. MFP does this by giving states enhanced federal reimbursement for the cost of services provided to individuals who enroll on a Medicaid Waiver program when they move to the community. The federal reimbursement leads to a rebalancing fund which enables states to reinvest the monies into the community long term care support system in order to increase the availability of Home and Community Based Services.

Workforce development is a critical part of MFP because people who transition from institutional settings to the community need quality services and supports in order to remain in the community. Much of that quality comes from Direct Support Professionals who are knowledgeable with the best information in the field related to providing home and community based services and supports. Mr. Bongiovanni and Ms. McLaughlin addressed how New Jersey is addressing this through pragmatic solutions aimed at enhancing the training opportunities available to staff. In their presentation they demonstrated the rationale and outcomes of the successful Career Path Pilot, outlined considerations for implementing new training initiative, and described use of the College of Direct Support by Developmental Centers in relation to transition to the community. New Jersey looks forward to being able to share many more workforce success stories as use of the College of Direct Support continues to expand across the state.

Agencies Present Ways to Use the College of Direct Support to Enhance Staff Development

This November, a panel of provider agency representatives and Boggs Center staff presented at the 28th Annual New Jersey Association of Community Providers (NJACP) Conference in Atlantic City. The workshop was titled “Innovative Ways to Make the College of Direct Support Work for Your Agency” and provided information on how to make the most of the robust, state-of-the-art curriculum found in the College of Direct Support. It provided information on how to incorporate the CDS courses in organization training plans and new innovative ways to address staff training needs. It also outlined best practices in using the curriculum on a course-by-course and lesson-by-lesson basis and addressed topics related to the New Jersey Direct Support Professional Career Path.

The panel included representatives from three agencies in various stages of using the College of Direct Support curriculum: Dot Faherty (from the Family Resource Network), Pete Cartwright (from Bancroft), Linda Cobb (from The Arc of Atlantic County); and two Boggs Center staff members, Shellyann Dacres and Colleen McLaughlin.

Although the Boggs Center staff spoke briefly about the specifics of the system (availability and flexibility in assigning online training to staff), the real focus was on the three agency representatives who spoke about how their agency decided to use the online curriculum to further staff development and supplement in-classroom training.

The three agencies represented on the panel varied in size, location, and types of services provided. One thing they all have in common is that they are dedicated to providing additional and alternate means of developing their staff and improving the lives of people they support.

The Family Resource Network is largely an in-home supports based agency. Ms. Faherty described how her agency assembled a taskforce made up of upper level management charged with reviewing the online courses that would be most pertinent to the kind of supports their agency provides. She described the various steps they are taking to come up with the best way to roll-out the training. She described some of the topics they’ve discussed including: whether to

make training mandatory or not, the availability of computers, and which department they will start the rollout process with.

Both Bancroft and The Arc of Atlantic County participated in the NJ Career Path pilot project in the three years prior to statewide rollout of the College of Direct Support and already had experience assigning online training to their staff. Since statewide implementation, Bancroft has included some lessons from various courses in the CDS into their New Employee Orientation process. During their week long orientation process, staff are introduced to the College of Direct Support, shown how to log in, and required to complete one assigned lesson before

the end of orientation. In addition to this, they are then required to complete eight assigned lessons within the first twelve months of their employment. Supervisors are encouraged to use the On-the-Job Training statements from the CDS courses to ensure competency and engage in discussions with the staff during supervisory meetings.



Pete Cartwright, Linda Cobb, and Dot Faherty at the NJACP Conference in Atlantic City, NJ.

“The Family Resource Network, Bancroft and The Arc of Atlantic County are three agencies working to make a difference one step at a time; growing, changing, improving, and learning along the way.”

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Monthly reports are done to ensure timely completion of assigned trainings. At the time of the presentation, Mr. Cartwright announced that Bancroft had assigned 728 staff their Direct Support Series training and 43 supervisory staff has take lessons in the College of Frontline Supervision and Management through the CDS. He shared that they continue to work on improving the process by tackling such issues as ensuring computer access for staff, designating time to have staff complete lessons, and promotion of the CDS throughout the entire agency.

The Arc of Atlantic County has developed several different ways to offer the online training to their staff. Ms. Cobb spoke about the anxiety and hesitation of staff with doing training in a new format (online compared to in-classroom). She described how she has presented a lesson to a group of staff by projecting the lesson on the wall and having everyone go through the lesson together. She shared the role the training participants played in helping each other to learn how to use the system, and was pleased that after a couple of times doing this, the staff became comfortable with using the CDS and began to do the lessons on their own. This format of completing the lesson as a group also allowed for discussion and built confidence in the staff on their ability to navigate the system. Ms. Cobb described the ways promoted the CDS throughout their agency. They have done such things as: sending out a “fax of the week” to different departments, adding flyers about the CDS in paycheck envelopes, talking at staff meetings about the availability of additional training, mentioning it in the employee newsletter, and sending out emails to staff. Ms. Cobb also spoke about using the CDS to train interns working with her agency and helping staff meet the yearly required continuing education training quota for the agency. Some of the benefits she presented included adding specialized skills for staff, promotion of teamwork through mentoring, and answering requests for additional training.

Although all three agencies are different in their structure and the types of supports they provide, there were some common themes discussed by all of the agency representatives. They shared the importance of identifying desired outcomes of training, assessing current skills and development needs of staff, and setting expectations for learning. The agencies also stressed the importance of buy-in and promotion of the courses by agency leadership. They agreed that the benefits of using the CDS are numerous, and similar to other new ventures there are barriers that organizations should address to ensure the most effective use. The paths taken by these organizations may vary, but they exemplify the value that needs to be placed on continuing staff development and training and the important role it plays in the lives of DSPs and the people they support. The Family Resource Network, Bancroft, and The Arc of Atlantic County are three agencies working to make a difference one step at a time, growing, changing, improving and learning along the way.

For more information on ways to incorporate the CDS curriculum into your agency’s training plan register for:

“Making the College of Direct Support Work for your Agency”

Information on training related to the College of Direct Support can be found at:
<http://rwjms.umdnj.edu/boggscenter/training/CDSAdministratorTraining.html>



Staff Contacts:
Colleen McLaughlin, M.Ed.
Shellyann Dacres, M.A.
cdsta@umdnj.edu

Information about New Jersey’s DSP Workforce Development Initiatives can be found on the NJ Division of Developmental Disabilities website:
www.nj.gov/ddd/DSPWD

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