



2023 ARRM CARES AWARD NOMINEE

Mary Fix AbleLight

Mary demonstrates professional integrity daily by consistently providing caring, loving, and person-centered supports. Mary has had a way of helping the individuals she works with to feel calm, supported, and respected for the past 33 years. Most recently, Mary was a stable and constant support to folks through the pandemic, showing up for them, providing peace of mind in the midst of so many unknowns.

Mary's manager describes her as, 'one of those people who would give you the shirt off her back.' Mary has been a part of the organization since all persons supported lived in the 'Cottages,' two Intermediate Care Facilities. She assisted with a huge transition from the ICF setting to a beautiful home and a person-centered lifestyle in an adult family home.

Mary has been rolling with the punches for years, adapting to changes within the home and the organization; striving to learn, grow, and take on new tasks. Mary is the backbone of the home with high medical needs, picking up on signs and symptoms of discomfort, and relaying that information to the team to advocate for their health. Mary pays close attention to what individuals are saying, and what they are not saying. Nothing gets by Mary.

Mary carries forth clear communication with her coworkers as well as the individuals' teams, something we rely on every day. Mary's documentation is clear and concise, sharing plans for ever-changing medical needs. No detail too small when working to understand and track complex healthcare needs. Mary has built a respectful and trusting relationship with families and guardians alike, presenting timely updates about their loved ones.

She is supportive of building community connections and natural support, advocating for involvement with families and friends. Mary encourages independence, working diligently with everyone on what they can do for themselves. She is a cheerleader as much as she is a caregiver. Mary was part of the DSP Leadership Committee to advocate for universal rights for individuals we support, it is her passion and purpose to empower individuals in making decisions about their own lives. Mary looks to persons served for the answers about what is best for them. Mary has always been an instrumental part of our team, clearly demonstrating quality support, building relationships, and advocating for individual needs. Mary is a mentor and a role model for her coworkers, and managers can count on her to share her knowledge with others. Mary is the perfect candidate for the 2023 ARRM Cares Award as Mary does not just do direct care for her job, caring for others is part of Mary's DNA.

Mary Fix is a hardworking and dedicated Direct Support Professional with a can-do attitude. Mary doesn't bat an eye when her day is filled with medical appointments, grocery runs, and paperwork. She'll still squeeze in a garage sale adventure to find that hidden treasure or transform into a personal shopper to help pick out new bedding and bedroom decor. Mary doesn't mind being busy, she's happy to keep on moving to meet the needs of the folks she supports.



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Travis Colbert AME Community Services

Travis holds the highest standard of integrity. He shows support for each individual he comes in contact with and given how exceptionally he handles split-second decision-making, Travis works with a lot of different people across multiple settings. Travis also works and lives with his sister, who has a disability and provides care to her on a regular basis. Travis has a gift to set up the environment he works in to help give each person the ability to learn and grow. He thinks about how to help the person have an experience of their own and Travis demonstrates those examples to his coworkers daily. Travis will strap a rope to himself and pull an individual around on a sled in the snow just because he knows how much that person loves it and it helps with sensory. I often hear staff say, "I asked Travis" or "I watched Travis" when discussing things that they have learned. He has a calm presence and makes people feel cared about with minimal words spoken. Travis has helped pick up so many shifts and there is a comfort among supervisors as well as coworkers when Travis is at work.

Travis helps advocate for people with special needs across multiple settings. Travis speaks about facts and communicates them so that people understand quickly the need for additional supports and how they benefit the Individual's lifelong goals. Travis has helped implement environmental changes and spoken up about protocols including being instrumental in helping environmental changes at a home where self-injurious behavior and property destruction were minimized due to some of his ideas. He is always scanning his environment to see what can be done to improve people's lives who live with disabilities.

When Travis is not working at one of our multiple group homes or working with his sister who has cerebral palsy. Travis will be found wearing a go pro camera so people who are not able to hike mountains can watch the video and experience the beautiful hikes he has taken and continue to take in life. He will also be brainstorming new ideas to help people with disabilities safely live their best life. Travis likely has new ideas in his head not about new innovative ways to expand our level of care for people served. It is someone like Travis that humbly makes his way through the world without any recognition that deserves to shine. We at AME Community Services could not be more grateful to have Travis on our team, but also in our community. I have said and heard many times, "If we could just clone Travis the world would be a better place!"



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Maddie Maday Aveyron Homes

Maddie has worked at our Glencoe home for 3 years and Maddie is exceptional with the ladies that live there. She always makes sure they have what they need, takes them on outings, and makes sure that they have the best time possible.

There are a lot of great things to say about Maddie! In fact, I cannot say enough great things about her!

Maddie makes sure information is always relayed to the Program Director if any issues arise, but she can handle many issues on her own.

Maddie has always accepted any task that is asked of her, whether it's running to the pharmacy at the last minute, or making sure the house is decorated for holidays. She arrives at work ready to be helpful and focus on client needs.

Maddie always has a smile on her face, and the clients just enjoy having her work with them. They are always asking, 'When does Maddie work next?'

Maddie lends a listening ear. Whenever there are any problems, Maddie helps the ladies work through it and make their own best decisions.

Maddie encourages our clients to bake. There are always enough treats on hand to share with their families, when they go out for holidays and birthdays, etc., she also helps clients make gifts from the heart. Maddie is a positive role model for the ladies as well as newly hired staff, making sure new staff have the information they need to do their job. New hires aren't afraid to ask her questions.



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Daniel Clark
Aveyron Homes

I would like to nominate Daniel Clark for the ARRM Cares award. His efforts are a great example of teamwork, and he is indeed a role model for others.

In the last year, Daniel worked 2,256 hours as a part time DSP. While the home's Program Director was out on a leave of absence, Daniel stepped up to the plate and took care of things around the house. Daniel pieced together the staff schedule every week in a way that worked for everyone, while avoiding as much over time as possible. Daniel ensured that appointments were scheduled, the budget was followed, and the clients were safe.

Daniel has been with Aveyron for 5 years. He is a part time employee who is scheduled to work overnights but is always willing to pick up hours where he can.



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Josh Bougetz Beacon Melbrick

I nominate Josh Bougetz for the ARRM Cares Award. When I think of Josh and why he should receive such award is for so many reasons. First and foremost to even be in or work in an environment of dealing with individuals who have been diagnosed with mental health issues one have to have a passion to do so and Josh has such passion.

Josh is gained so much personal growth, he's self sufficient, understanding, knowledgeable of the clients we serve as well as a direct role model to his peers. Josh has gone above and beyond to ensure the clients have what they need as well as advocate for them and their needs.

Josh has shown his flexibility, taking on extra shifts without questions, limited to no call ins and making sure the program has adequate staffing patterns.

It is with great honor to nominate Josh for such an award, as writing this nomination doesn't serve justice for what he does has done and what he aspire to do.

It is truly an honor to make such nomination.

Josh has great communication skills and has gathered resources to ensure he is knowledgeable of what's available to best support the clients we serve.

Josh is creative and have learned new ways to deal with the individuals we serve as well as using a client centered approach. Josh has never taken a negative situation personally but have learned from such issues, treating the participants on an individualized basis and understanding that 'one size does not fit all', treating the participants as human beings, dignity and respect.



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Samir Kalib

Beacon Specialized Living

Samir holds himself to the highest standard, he sets the bar for his coworkers by showing up early daily. Without being asked Samir will regularly check the MAR to make sure meds aren't missed. He will stay late to help with clients special dinner requests.

Samir is always willing to pick up shifts to make home visits possible when staff is short.

A previous individual served was Russian and non verbal, the client understood mostly Russian and Samir taught himself a few words to help make the client comfortable. He also suggested using google translate to other staff to help support this client.



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Quinn Bang CCRI

Quinn works in a home where her clients struggle with negativity. Quinn has brought positivity, and self-love into her clients' lives. Quinn created an 'I am' board at the site, which consists of a mirror surrounded by positive affirmations. Every time her clients walk out the door, they can see themselves in the mirror with those statements as a positive reminder. This has helped remind them to look for the positive each day!

The site's calendar is filled with appointments they often dread. Quinn has added fun stickers, sayings, and color-coded it to relieve some of the stress surrounding this calendar. This has changed her client's views about this calendar making it much more approachable and welcoming!

Prior to Quinn coming into Curt's life, he struggled opening up to staff and often refused to partake in his preferred activities. When Quinn was hired to be his 1:1, they quickly found a common interest for their love of cats. Quinn and Curt have volunteered at a local animal shelter together twice a week. Curt has enjoyed this activity immensely and has developed relationships with the people he volunteers with at the shelter.

The duo also used their common love for coffee to develop a routine of stopping at Starbucks along the way. They have also shopped at many antique stores often looking for military memorabilia; which is something Curt really enjoys. Over the course of the last year and a half, Quinn has used these common interests to build rapport with Curt and the progress he has made has been incredible.

Having spastic quadriplegic cerebral palsy created obstacles for Curt, one of those is being in a wheelchair. When his team noticed he needed a new chair, Curt was referred to physical therapy. When PT came up with a plan for Curt to stand, he wasn't so sure. Quinn was quick to jump right in and be right by his side while he completed his goal of standing for 1 minute a day. She played cat racing videos and model train videos to encourage Curt during this time. The cat racing videos entail multiple little kittens racing in a field. Before the video begins, Quinn and Curt each pick which kitten they think will win the race. Curt begins standing when the cats begin. Meanwhile Quinn performs a wall sit to show they are in this together. Once the first kitten crosses the finish line, Curt and Quinn will sit down. Because of Quinn's relationship with Curt and creativity, he conquered this goal and has progressed to walking! This is something both Curt and his family never thought he would be able to do. His team cannot wait to see what the future holds for Curt with Quinn alongside!



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Dongo Ndaou CCRI

When you walk into the home, one of the first things you will notice is the smile on Dongo's face when he's working with the guys. The happiness that fills the room when Dongo is on shift is contagious, and it is apparent just how good of a relationship he has made with the guys.

Dongo is the appointment maker, activity planner, goal motivator, and biggest advocate for his clients. Dongo has spent countless hours making his clients homes and lives a better place. He can often be seen at the YMCA, out for bike rides, or at Applebees with one of his clients. When one of the guys has a goal in mind, Dongo will be their biggest coach, encouraging them to continue working hard to complete it. This was exemplified with Brady using his stander referenced below as well as when another one of the guys wanted to increase his exercise. Dongo came alongside him, got him to the gym, and was his motivating cheerleader the whole time!

When Dongo started, Cole had very limited outings due to the pandemic. When activities opened, Cole's family worried how he would do in settings with many people, like the YMCA. Cole has always loved the YMCA, but due to some behavioral needs it was a challenge supporting him there. Due to turnover, there were few staff who had taken him before. Dongo took on this challenge, and spent countless hours working with Cole's behavioral specialist and doing trials during non-busy times so Cole could become comfortable again. Dongo used Cole's favorite activities, like going to Applebee's, as a motivator. Cole now frequents the Y weekly, and enjoys doing a number of activities such as the pool, treadmill, weights, and the basketball courts!

Dongo recognizes how important structure and knowing what to expect is for Cole, and providing him with this has changed his life. Cole has made tremendous progress over the past year and recently got his first job helping on a Farm! This is something Cole's family has dreamed of for years and he couldn't have done it without Dongo by his side. Dongo will be working alongside Cole and we know this will make it a successful placement.

Dongo was able to get Cole back to the YMCA following the break for COVID through his patience and creativity. When Dongo met Brady, his physical therapist was the only person who was trained on using his stander. They had appointments twice a week so Brady could use this device, which is very important for those with cerebral palsy to improve hip stability, prevent contractures of the hip, knee, and ankle, and reduce sedentary behaviors. Those who know Brady know that doing his stander was one of his least favorite things. Dongo set out to change that. Not only did Dongo spend countless hours learning the stander from top to bottom, but he assisted with developing a training packet for other staff to feel comfortable using the stander with Brady. Dongo wanted to turn what was a dreaded task for Brady into a fun activity. He learned Brady's favorite movies and had them playing while Brady used the stander, meanwhile conversing with him about upcoming trips or events. Brady now only has a physical therapy appointment once every other month.



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Trystan Gregory CCRI

Authentic, respectful, compassionate, patient and empathetic are just a few words used to describe one of our most highly requested caregivers ever- Trystan!

Trystan assists 10-year-old Joe with daily routines, managing behaviors, and getting to therapy appointments. Joe has responded better to Trystan than any other caregiver. Trystan's calm demeanor allows him to often prevent larger meltdowns that can be common for Joe. Joe's parents say, 'Our family has truly been blessed with how Trystan has helped us. He has done so much for us. He updates us after every shift with Joe, both good and bad. He demonstrates "old school" work ethics and frequently makes up hours if he takes time off, does an amazing job at pushing Joe through difficult tasks, and consistently thinks of new activities for Joe that help him grow both in his schoolwork and with his daily living skills.'

Trystan is often at activities with the people he supports. He does a great job promoting socialization and inclusion with this clients. Even if the activity will present challenges, he is always up for it, planning ahead and making it as successful as he can.

Trystan took Reese to the 'Night to Shine Prom,' and many pictures reflect the joy everyone observes from Trystan daily. This prom is such a fun event for Reese because Reese gets to socialize with his friends from other agencies that he doesn't see as often. Upon returning to our house after the prom, Trystan exclaimed, 'That was the best prom I've ever been to!'

Trystan is extremely person-centered, always putting the person he is working with first. Trystan works with a gentleman with a mental illness diagnosis and it can be hard to be on guard in how you phrase your conversations with him. Trystan does a great job with this, never seeming to cause any confusion or extra ruminating for the person he works with. He also never hesitates to help with things and always does so without making the individual feel less intelligent. Trystan has a genuine passion for helping and promoting success for each person he works with. It is evident in everything he does. He epitomizes patience, never showing the slightest frustration with any challenging scenario, increased processing time, or plain old stubborn behavior. He is so positive and the best 'cheerleader' for all his clients. Trystan is the first to offer positive praise for skills and behaviors that he recognizes as accomplishments for his clients. A few of the people Trystan works with can get 'stuck' by changes in routine or changes in the environment and Trystan always takes it in stride.



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Nicole Carlson CCRI

One of the gals Nicole works with thrives on consistency and had the same staff for so many years. Due to multiple life changes, she basically had complete turnover, but Nicole remained steady and was her rock through this extremely challenging time. During this time, she had several fill in staff (her home was like a revolving door of staff). She struggled greatly with both her mental and physical health. Nicole took the brunt of the behaviors, but continued to show up and be her constant.

After surgery, she struggled with basically all of the "fine print" side effects one could possibly imagine including adverse effects to medications, foot drop, etc. She ended up in the ER several times (always in the middle of the night) and it was always Nicole who was there holding her hand, reassuring her everything would be ok. She would be up all night, running on minimal sleep and still wake up the next day to take care of day-to-day tasks and keep the household running as if she wasn't awake the entire night before.

Nicole does a great job facilitating connections and maintaining relationships with family, past caregivers, and other relationships important to the person she works with. She will schedule lunches during her shift to meet up with former caregivers, the agency Executive Director, former county social workers, etc. She also helps the gal she works with use Facebook to keep up with the people in her life, including keeping up with the kids of her former caregivers she adores so much!

Nicole has played a significant role in the gal she works with maintaining her relationship with her neighbor. Nicole helps arrange phone calls, coffee dates, and visits with this neighbor.

Holidays and family are so important to the gal she works with. Nicole always encourages holiday activities with her client's family at her home. Nicole will help her prepare by inviting, shopping, baking, cleaning, etc. Nicole's talents in the kitchen result in a delicious holiday treat event! She also plans a holiday open house for current and former team members to visit during the holiday season.

Nicole never gives up and always is finding creative ways to remedy situations. Recently, the gal she works with needed assistance during the night, but staff weren't hearing her wake. She got a bell which helped alert staff to what she needed. Nicole's client needed a major surgery. Her fear of hospitals and the concern of a rehab facility post-surgery made this surgery a hurdle for her. Nicole was confident that her home staff could provide the aftercare needed. Her 20 years of experience with this individual made the surgery and the aftercare at home possible! Knowing this surgery would be tough, Nicole worked with her client on a variety of physical therapy exercises to help her better understand what after surgery would look like. This helped establish a routine and helped the aftercare be smooth. The surgery required intensive therapy and aftercare, so Nicole filmed informative 'how to' videos for the other staff to ensure everyone knew how to best complete and were consistent with her therapies and aftercare. Nicole's encouragement and belief in her teammates and the person she works with allowed the surgery to happen and she overcame the hurdle of a long hospital or rehab stay!



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Vicki Lenssen CCRI

Vicki provides exceptional care. She shares her tips and tricks with new team members and prefers to train them with Gloria. Gloria doesn't enjoy training staff, but Vicki does a wonderful job of explaining why new staff are there and including Gloria in the training process. This helps Gloria be more open to new team members and ensures the new team members get great training.

The bond Gloria and Vicki share is incredible. Gloria's speech is hard to understand and Vicki understands her so well she often can complete Gloria's sentences! Gloria enjoys Vicki so much that she often waits until Vicki arrives before she gets dressed and then will emulate what Vicki is wearing so they can be twins for the day.

Vicki recently had a situation which took her away from work for a bit. Vicki still texted the staff working, reminding them of things she often did during her shifts to ensure there continued to be consistency in the care Gloria got. Vicki's personal circumstances would have been a very acceptable reason for her to miss Gloria's birthday party, but Vicki couldn't do that. She was there despite what was going on in her personal life.

Family is very important to Gloria. Recently, Gloria's sister passed away and Vicki was an incredible support system during that time in Gloria's life. Vicki went to the burial with Gloria and made sure Gloria could attend events with her family. Gloria's sister had been her guardian up until a few months before her death, and Gloria was very worried about how her sister's death would impact her guardianship. Vicki was right there, reassuring Gloria that nothing would change and she would be keeping her new guardian.

Gloria doesn't enjoy her team meetings so Vicki makes sure to prepare her for what will be happening at her meeting and advocates for her and supports her through them. Vicki's reassurances help alleviate her anxiety around these meetings.

Vicki is extremely person centered. Gloria has some interesting comfort foods such as cheese whiz on bread, mayo and banana sandwiches, cheese on pie and Vicki makes these when requested without blinking an eye when others may not be inclined to make such interesting combinations. Gloria had a dream of having a bake sale for a while. Vicki helped organize one for her at the main office and spent a week helping Gloria bake items for the sale. Gloria was ecstatic about her dream coming true and has been able to have two of these bake sales since! Gloria always has dreams to get away. She really wanted to do a long trip for her 70th birthday, but due to her complex needs, that wasn't a very safe option. Vicki took it upon herself to plan a birthday party Gloria would love. She booked a hotel in town where Gloria got to spend the night. She also rented out the party room to have a big birthday party. It was perfect and Gloria loved the staycation and watching her nieces and nephews swim!



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Greta Miller CCRI

Greta works with a young lady with very unique and challenging mental health and behavioral needs. When there are staffing shortages, Greta is quick to fill in to ensure well trained coverage for the specialized care we provide.

Greta is the go-to for training and does everything in her power to make new staff successful, even taking on supporting new staff in her free time. Greta is always available to answer questions and field a quick text message of how she would handle a difficult situation or unknown situation. She knows the unique needs means new situations are always arising. She helps with questions as well as completing required paperwork when it is new to a staff. Everything else takes a back seat to providing only top notch professional care to her client.

For the person Greta works with, it can be easy to feel like you are the only one who cares about facilitating positive change. Especially when she very obviously isn't caring herself. Greta's perseverance with her unique and difficult needs is second to none. She believes in her, even when she doesn't believe in herself. She remains positive and will remind her team better times are coming!

Greta's client has a boyfriend who lives independently in the community. She enjoys spending most of her free time with him. They often are compelled to make choices that do not aid in being more independent. Greta is always there to remind her of what the best choice would be, and how her choices don't align with her goals in life. She will ask what her dreams and goals are often, and helps her process what is and is not working in her life to help her get there. She is the accountability that is often lacking. Greta is the ever present advocate for her client.

Greta is trusted by the family of the person she works with. They do not live very close and when they come to visit, Greta is quick to help them, jumping in when they need her and staying back when they don't. She is trusted by the family and this helps makes family visits so much more successful!

Such unique needs make it difficult to maintain stable housing. She is always at risk of eviction with her incontinence issues and the barriers that she puts up to caring for it properly. It is difficult to make gains, when she falls behind. She has difficulty seeing the future when she is overwhelmed by her present. Greta has volunteered to go in and deep clean her apartment on numerous occasions, to help her get back on track. This gives the necessary motivation to pick up and try again. Ever patient, always dedicated, Greta continues to show compassion that her client doesn't always show herself. She remains positive in times that seem bleak, and helps staff stay at the site with her concrete guidance and inspiration. She coaches others to be successful and supportive, for no better reason than she knows it benefits their client. She is the caregiver we all wish we had and aspire to be.



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Phyllis Thompson CCRI

Each day Phyllis works is a new day. She works with some independent people with only a few staffing hours/week. Phyllis puts in 200% effort, accomplishing so much in a small amount of time. When she returns the next shift and progress had been lost (she spends a shift helping clean and organize to return a few days later to a messy, unorganized apartment), Phyllis doesn't show frustration or irritation. She just jumps in and starts again. She knows the right amount to push to be motivating rather than 'bossy'

Phyllis works with a gal who had many doctor visits and would come home with a new treatment or machine and not know how to do it. Phyllis helped her look up YouTube videos to learn the device and sent those videos onto her supervisor and coworkers to ensure everyone understood and supported the person they worked with.

Phyllis worked with a gal at risk of eviction for not cleaning up after her pet. This wasn't something Phyllis could help with during her shift, so she connected with a kid in the building wanting to make a few bucks cleaning up after the dog. This kept them from being evicted.

Phyllis recognized similar interests in people she works with. She set up times for them to play cards, go to sporting events, movies, out to eat, etc. during her shifts. This developed a friendship where they get together outside of staffing hours! When one was recovering in the nursing home, Phyllis brought the other there to ensure their relationship remained strong through changing circumstances.

Cathy's family doesn't all live close. Phyllis suggests Cathy call them to chat when she is missing them. She helps coordinate visits with her brother in town and brings her 3 hours away to visit her sister. Cathy's faith is very important to her but going to church can be anxiety producing. Phyllis arranged for a one-on-one visit with her brother, a priest. He gifted Cathy holy water and she is so proud to have that in her home. She has also had a priest come to the home to pray with Cathy and provide communion.

Phyllis works with a gal who doesn't have family she spends holidays with. Phyllis makes sure she is included in holidays by taking her to bake holiday treats and helping arrange time with friends to do holiday activities.

Phyllis always puts the person she is working with first. She makes sure she understands their motivations and goals. Nicole struggled with portion control and chose to keep some of her food out of her environment. Phyllis recognized her goal was to bring her food back successfully. They worked on meal prep and planning, ultimately helping her obtain a subscription to a meal service. Nicole now keeps more food in her environment and is able to independently follow the recipes and make her meals. One person Phyllis works with had many, many doctor appointments and was writing them on a very small planner, making it hard to know when the appointments were or which it was. Phyllis helped her purchase a bigger calendar and keep all of her appointments organized! Post surgery, CK dealt with several side effects. Phyllis spent her own time researching the best medications, home remedies, etc. to help reduce side effects. After trying several medications for nerve pain and being told there were no other options, Phyllis read magnesium could help with this and we were able to get CK started on it. She has prepared CK's power pudding weekly to help CK avoid BM protocol.



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Vicki Cusey CCRI

Vicki has been a reliable and consistent team member since the day she started. She has unbreakable bonds with all of the people she supports!

One of the gals she works with struggles with memory issues and extreme anxiety. Vicki is often her memory! She reminds her of things she knows she wanted to get done. During her shifts, Vicki will help her make grocery and shopping lists as she notices things are running low or as the person she works with says she should get something next time at the store. This running list has made a huge difference in her life, helping her remember the day to day things!

One of the things that triggers the anxiety is lack of consistency. She doesn't deal with change well, including with staffing "a staff running late or not being able to make it in. Vicki keeps great communication with the supervisor and makes sure the communication line with the person she supports is open to alleviate some of the anxiety. She also likes to joke around and laughter is the best medicine!

One of the people Vicki works with doesn't have a lot of income and worries about having enough money to pay for all the things she needs each week. In addition, her food stamps amount had recently been cut in half, adding to her financial burden. Vicki helped her research things her insurance may provide and found a program that will help pay for medical supplies and groceries. Vicki helped her set up the program and taught her how to access the resources. This has been a great help in alleviating stress each week and helping ensure she has the essential things she needs.

Vicki works with a gal who struggles with keeping her home organized. Since Vicki has started working with her, she has been doing so well and the individual feels so good about her organizing goals. Another gal Vicki works with doesn't have friends she can trust to give an honest opinion. She doesn't have anyone to go shopping with to step out of the dressing room and ask 'how does this look?'□. This is something she craves as she doesn't always feel the best in her body and feels like she has an odd body shape. When Vicki goes shopping with her, she is fully engaged, gives her honest opinion, will make suggestions, and celebrates the successful purchases with her! Rather than just grabbing something in her size without regard to how it fits, she is able to wear clothing that she feels good in, makes her happy, and that she has a fun memory of shopping for! It means so much to her that she can trust Vicki in those vulnerable moments.



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Delena Wrazidlo DRCC

Delena is a kind person who makes sure to greet everyone the minute they walk through the door with a huge smile and friendly tone. She has built relationships with the ladies, their families and her coworkers. Anyone who has ever met her would say that she is a caring soul and wishes nothing but the best for everyone and is determined to make sure their lives are lived to the fullest and see no obstacles in achieving that. Her commitment to professional integrity and high standards sets her apart. She understands that the individuals trust her to provide the best possible care and she takes that responsibility very seriously.

She has built a reputation for herself as someone who will consistently go above and beyond to meet the unique needs of each individual she supports. One of the ladies enjoys spa days and Delena is always there to pamper her with painting her finger nails and doing her hair. She has helped with finding fun activities out in the community such as multiple concerts, Cirque du Soleil, Choice Masquerade Ball. The Hairball concert was their favorite outing to date with Delena. She is always on the lookout for new and creative ways to support the individuals' health and well-being. She is constantly pushing the boundaries of what is possible.

What makes Delena such a valuable asset to DRCC and the healthcare field is her ability to personalize services. She recognizes that every individual is different and comes with their own set of unique needs and challenges. Some of the ladies have some challenging behaviors at times, Delena is quick to jump into action and utilize her skill set to help calm her down by taking her on walks, go for a car ride which is her favorite thing to do. She takes the time to get to know each individual on a personal level, tailoring her approach to meet their individual needs and goals. Her dedication to the individuals and her craft are an inspiration to us all, and we can learn a great deal from her example.



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Beatrice Ovadje DRCC

Beatrice 'Bea' Ovadje has been with DRCC for about four years as a Direct Support Professional. Bea is someone that you want on your team. She is detail oriented, focuses on the person, advocates for their needs, and adds the extra little touches. Bea is also substitute teacher in the local school district, and when she's not teaching students, she's picking up extra hours at DRCC.

Bea ensures this young man looks his best when he meets his family for worship; when they don't attend, she ensures that he connects with them either on video or phone calls to maintain that connection. She's detail oriented and keeps a close eye on his wardrobe, communicating his clothing needs and offering suggestions when family ask what to get him.

Bea supports everyone in the program, but has developed quite the rapport with one of our non-verbal individuals. When this individual sees Bea come into the home, he lights up with excitement and giggles, reaching out his arms to pull her in for a tight hug. While this young man primarily receives his food via enteral feeding, he does eat small oral snacks. Bea is constantly trying new things for him to eat for his snacks, that not only taste good, but almost meets his oral sensory needs for crunchy and savory flavors. If his body language indicates it's not something he enjoys, she tries something else. This young man loves to pull staff in for hugs, reaching and grabbing at staff and tries to be 'helpful' when staff are providing personal and enteral cares-turning things into a 'game,' similar to keep away. Due to their rapport, as well as being in tune to his wants and needs, he is more responsive to Bea than other staff. When he gets too silly and animated with his hands reaching and grabbing, Bea reminds him it's not playtime, he stops, looks at her and waits her to complete his cares, before being 'helpful' again. She's usually the one that is able to get him shaved too, as he doesn't make it easy for others, turning it into a game. Bea demonstrates what works for her to her coworkers.



2023 ARRM CARES AWARD NOMINEE

Victoria Tabolich DRCC

Victoria works with people that live independently. She has built solid relationships with the people DRCC supports; they know they can go to her with problems and concerns, and she will help them make informed decisions or offer other ways to find the best solution to their problems. Victoria has terrific patience; it shines through in challenging situations. The people also enjoy her sense of humor and kindness.

Victoria recognized that the two people in the program were lonely, and she could see they had much in common. She helped facilitate a new friendship between these two individuals. They made plans to get together, and before she knew it, they shared their likes, desires, and dreams. Hopefully, this is the start of a lifelong friendship.

Victoria is always thinking about how to provide the best person center care for our individuals. She has been working with a young man who is nonverbal and needs help learning independent living skills after graduation. Victoria has made flashcards to help him correctly recognize money; they play memory games to help build routines; they also work on safety with appliances. His goal is to live as independently as possible, and Victoria is helping him learn those skills creatively.



2023 ARRM CARES AWARD NOMINEE

Rick Lenning DRCC

Rick is dependable and reliable. Throughout the pandemic he worked between two programs, often covering for up and awake overnights for what seemed like an endless timeframe during an era when the struggle to find and maintain staff seemed to reach its peak. Despite the program struggles and ultimate closure, his attitude always remained kind and upbeat both with colleagues and clients.

Rick has a talent to recognize the unique needs of his clients and he assists them individually to reach their goals. Historically he has supported individuals with a variety of activities; attending Epilepsy group, attending medical appointments, obtaining technology devices which meet the client's ability for use, tinkering on snowmobiles and electronics to ensure they work, programming remote controls...these are a few of the things Rick helps his clients with so they can maintain their independence and maintain contact with support systems throughout the community.

As many of our clients age, Rick is helping them to manage the changes. He has assisted one particular client to use voice commands with his electronics and has provided huge print accounting ledgers to help him maintain his finances and communicate more easily through the telephone.



2023 ARRM CARES AWARD NOMINEE

Pam Hagenah DRCC

Pam puts forethought and planning into every shift to help our clients maximize their lives and pursue their goals and dreams. She typically does this without being asked and without increasing her coworkers' work-loads. She plans activities quietly and efficiently without seeking personal recognition, and ensures there is adequate coverage at the program in her physical absence.

Pam has arranged day trips to Ely to help a gentleman she supports stay connected with his family, and in attempt to help connect his long term girlfriend with his family. She helps clients with family out of town stay connected to them as much as possible.

Pam pays attention to what goals her clients have identified, as well as other events and activities in the local and extended communities that her clients may enjoy. She has accompanied individuals to the Mall of America, trips up the North Shore, and recently the Horse Expo in the twin cities. She makes sure she invests in each individual and does not show preference to anyone over anyone else.



2023 ARRM CARES AWARD NOMINEE

Nola Stenroos DRCC

Nola joined our program and instantly used her unique sense of humor, thoughtfulness, ability to actively listen, and self-recognition of her strengths and weaknesses to bond with her coworkers, parents and guardians, and most importantly those we support. She began working with a young man who struggled to make connections, and wanted to make friends. She sought out advice from her coworkers and supervisor when he initially stayed quiet and wanted to stay in certain patterns. She took the advice to heart, and really leaned into getting to know him and his interests.

She didn't hesitate to look silly trying new video games, listening to new music genres, learning about certain YouTubers, and finding out what he truly enjoys such as being outdoors and his dogs. She was able to use that knowledge along with the knowledge she gained from forming bonds with other individuals to get him connected with someone she realized had a lot in common with him, as well as helping him to connect with others he often sees. She has also been able to use the bond created to help him seek out and participate in community activities.

Without her patience and understanding of what is important to and for him, he would still be struggling to find meaningful connections both in the program and the community. Not only does Nola help forge connections, but she is not afraid to volunteer to help people be able to do the things they dream of such as getting to a Minnesota Twins game, going fishing, and learning to make healthy meals from ingredients that are on hand in most pantries. Of all the things one could say about Nola, I feel that the young man she supports, sums it all up the best when he says, 'Nola is a great staff to be around!' □



2023 ARRM CARES AWARD NOMINEE

Ben Urness DRCC

Ben demonstrates an authentic warm personality that sets a positive tone and provides a pleasant living environment for the individuals who reside at Glendale.

Ben shows his positive attitude by greeting the individuals every morning with kind words, and a gentle pat on the shoulder.

I remember one time when Ben returned to Glendale after being ill, one of the individuals was so happy to see Ben that when he approached her, her eyes lit up and the look on her face said a thousand positive words that I could not explain.

As an overnight/morning staff, Ben is not typically involved with taking the individuals out into the community or connecting with natural supports. However, his attitude and approach every morning sets the tone for the type of day each individual will have. This enables his co-workers to have more success as they work to connect the individuals with natural supports. If there is a planned event, Ben lets the individual know ahead of time what they have going on with their day and what to expect. He talks up whatever the situation may be and reassures the individuals all will be well if the individual shows any signs of unease. Ben always has each individual looking their best each day, ready to tackle whatever may be ahead.

Ben starts the morning with gentle music from "YouTube", he empowers an individual to make coffee, provides a newspaper for another to read and expresses interest as that individual points out things that excite them, and encourages individuals to be involved in a breakfast of their choice. Ben's consistent positive attitude reinforces the individuals' self-esteem, confidence, and a comfortable living environment; even Ben's co-workers feel very appreciated working with him. As Ben is one of the morning staff for five mornings each week, he sees every version of each individual: happy, sad, anxious, eager, etc. He is always sharing tips and tricks with his co-workers on what tactics may work best depending on what the individuals are showing through their words and actions.



2023 ARRM CARES AWARD NOMINEE

Ryan Orstad DRCC

One of the individuals Ryan works with has been having health issues. His communication is difficult to understand, so when he needed to go to the emergency room get admitted to the hospital, Ryan was always willing to take him, stay after his shift ended, and stay with him until the early morning hours to be sure he was settled into his hospital room and the medical team had all their questions answered. Ryan also passed along the most critical fact to ensure the hospitalizations would be a success. This fact is the individual only watches Channel 3. It was always written on the dry-erase board in his hospital room. After one more serious hospitalization, we were told the individual would pass away. Ryan stayed with him throughout the day and was there when life support was removed. At the time, none of us realized that medical teams could make mistakes, and this individual was not ready to go yet and surprised everyone by pulling through. When the individual woke up, the first call he wanted to make was to Ryan.

During COVID, one of the individuals at Birch could not continue with his monthly family dinner. When the family dinners started back up again, Ryan was eager to help transport the hour drive each way so the family could get together again. The first dinner had over 30 family members there, and Ryan didn't know a single one of them, yet he was able to ensure that the individual could reconnect with his family. The monthly suppers are now back on, and Ryan is learning more about the extended family members each month.

Ryan started working soon after he graduated from high school. He worked for a couple of weeks and became everyone's favorite staff. He always listens to the guys at Birch, and they know he cares about what they have to say. One of the individuals loves Elvis and purchased a pair of gold-rimmed glasses like Elvis wore. About a week later, Ryan came to work with the same pair of glasses. Instead of creating a hierarchy between staff and the individuals, he does all he can to make them feel like they have all of the decision-making power and focus on the similarities rather than differences between him and the guys at Birch. Ryan's rapport with the guys is natural and shows his caring personality.



2023 ARRM CARES AWARD NOMINEE

Beatrice Morehouse Dungarvin Minnesota LLC

Beatrice Morehouse is the gold standard when it comes to commitment and professional integrity. She has been working tirelessly with person served for almost 25 years. Her unwavering devotion to her work is nothing short of inspirational, and her passion for making a difference in the lives of those she serves is truly remarkable.

Over the years, we have witnessed firsthand the incredible impact she has had on the lives of the people she supports. She is the epitome of what it means to be truly dedicated to the welfare and happiness of others.

In 2020, a person she supports was given a devastating prognosis and only months left to live. Rather than letting despair take over, Bea rose to the challenge to ensure the person's quality of life. Bea learned everything she could about his illness; she educated his team about the type of treatment and services that would best support him. Most importantly, she listened to the person served. Her advocacy and efforts paid off - not only has this person served experience a marked improvement in his quality of life, but he also defied all odds and continues to live comfortably in his home with hospice services.

Bea's remarkable ability to connect those she supports with the care they need within their community is truly awe-inspiring. Despite the challenges that come with caring for those with complex medical conditions, including those on hospice, Bea remains determined to bring people together. She has a talent for coordinating the involvement of pastors, friends, and family members to provide a network of care that is both nurturing and uplifting.

For one young man on hospice, she tirelessly advocated for his needs and desires, ensuring he received the best possible care and comfort. She found providers who specialized in his disorder; she advocated that he shouldn't have to leave the house to get the care he needed; she created a care team dedicated to meeting his needs. Through her tireless efforts, even those who are most isolated or vulnerable can feel the warmth of human connection and support while having the right to age or even die at home. Bea's unwavering dedication to building caring communities is a shining example of the power of compassion and human kindness.

Bea embodies the true spirit of person-centered care, dedicating herself to understanding and embracing the unique preferences and interests of everyone under her care. For instance, she recognizes that CS's love for Twilight movies and her desire to express her femininity in a male-dominated environment are vital to her sense of self-worth. Bea spends time watching movies with CS and creating a safe space where she can freely explore her interests, such as doing hair and nails. This simple act of kindness has had a profound impact on CS, giving her a newfound sense of pride and confidence that empowers her to stand up for herself. For the young man in hospice care, she has made him feel safe about his journey. They speak openly about what it means to die thus giving him the opportunity to express his fears in a safe environment. In short, Bea is a true asset to her clients, her colleagues, and the entire community. Her tireless dedication, compassionate heart, and unwavering commitment to making a positive difference are truly commendable, and I am honored to have the opportunity to express my appreciation for all that she has done and continues to do.



2023 ARRM CARES AWARD NOMINEE

Marla Blair

Dungarvin Minnesota, LLC

In the brief time Marla has been with the company, she has been working with a high behavior Autistic 10-year-old as a mental health specialist. Prior to her supports, this child has never gone into the community or been transported safely without his parent. With Marla's help, the individual has successfully ridden in her car to the end of the driveway without the parent with. Although progress is slow, Marla is determined that she is not giving up on getting the child into the community.

She has also been able to start a toileting program that duplicates what the day program is doing. Her persistence is giving the person served a more fulfilling life has been inspiring. She has been a great mentor to not only the person served but his family too.

Marla has brought ideas of calming strategies and tried multiple ideas with the family to help with the person served sensory needs. Through her perseverance with prompting support and relationship-building, the person served has begun to communicate verbally with Marla "" opening up a world of possibility.

Marla saw the success the individual experienced with his day program and went there to train in with them so she can be consistent with how she speaks to the person served. She has created rewards that duplicate what the day program is doing to help the individual have more motivation and encouragement outside the day program. The many approaches Marla has utilized already allow the person served to have more choices and opportunity in his life.



2023 ARRM CARES AWARD NOMINEE

Pauline Kigotho Dungarvin Minnesota, LLC

On Pauline's daily duties, she has provided support to her co-workers and persons served. There were times the home had staffing shortages, she gladly offered to cover extra shifts. Not only that, but she serves as a mentor for her co-workers as they join the Wood Lake team. 'I am here to take pride in my work,'□ Pauline expressed on multiple occasions. She understands that her duties are important and genuinely enjoys what she does.

Pauline advocates for the persons served by being solution oriented and attentive. On one event, Pauline was involved in the re-organization of the home structure. A person served was assigned to be in a bathroom that would have not benefit them. Pauline was aware of the conditions and considered the difficulties that the person served will experience. She knew the person served would do better in a different restroom due to the bathroom arrangements. She supported this decision and followed through to make sure that the person served was accommodated for.

In one of Pauline's caseloads, there was a person served who was not able to walk and had a transport lift protocol. Pauline collaborated with the occupational and physical therapist to make sure the person served was exercising appropriately. She would help create an exercise plan, encourage the person served to stay on the routine, and communicated with the team about the progress. The person served is currently relying less on the lift and can pivot from the wheelchair to the bed or toilet with staff's assistance.



2023 ARRM CARES AWARD NOMINEE

Mayah Karto Boimah Dungarvin Minnesota, LLC

Mayah works the company mission every day. This past spring, Mayah was invited to work at a program that was having a staffing crisis. She did not hesitate to come and dig right in to coordinating the program. She also worked quickly to put in place new and improved processes, all while training staff and ensuring the program was staffed as consistently as possible.

Mayah changed the dynamic of the home. She brings joy and happiness to the persons served by ensuring they are getting out of the home and doing fun things. Even though one of the persons served are challenged to leave the home, she works with this person to ensure they feel safe and comfortable venturing out. She has worked tirelessly to ensure they attend weekly swimming sessions as well. Mayah has gone above and beyond with providing care and support for persons served, from keeping medical appointments to participating in community activities. When the program faced several COVID cases, Mayah flexed her schedule and personal time and worked around the clock to ensure the persons served continued to receive quality care.

While Mayah has done big things for the people she supports, it is also the little things she does that are very impactful. Mayah takes time to listen and to hear what people are saying. She advocates for the people she supports. Interfering behavior behaviors have decreased over this past year due to her supportive approach to concerns, and positive activities are numerous. A new person moved in last fall. In her previous placement she was quiet and withdrawn, spending most of her time alone in her room. She is now spending the majority of her time out of her room and enjoying conversations with her new family. Mayah was a large part of that, helping her acclimate quickly and encouraging her to have fun and go out with her new peers. Mayah supports people, both individuals served and her co-workers, in a respectful and encouraging nature. She is a great mentor and leader. She brings positivity to the home each and every day.



2023 ARRM CARES AWARD NOMINEE

Nena Johnson Dungarvin Minnesota, LLC

Despite her recently short tenure our company, Nena has become a valuable member of the team. Nena promotes the company mission by ensuring the needs of persons served are met with dignity and respect. Nena took it upon herself to understand the persons served by learning their hobbies, likes and dislikes, and created memos for co-workers to acquire new information. One person served told a new staff, 'If you don't remember, ask Nena or check out what she wrote about me.'□ Not only that, but Nena volunteered to train inexperienced staff when there was an absent lead staff. She would roll up her sleeves, provide guidance to new staff so that they are successful on the job, guarantees that the house is clean for the persons served to live in, and works hand in hand with the persons served to re-organize their closets when they are looking cluttered. She is accessible and prepared to assist her co-workers, all the while helping the persons served create the home that they want.

One of the people Nena supports expressed a desire to spend time with her family but was struggling to make that connection. Nena took the initiative by collaborating with them, finding times and interests that all were interested in. Nena did not hesitate to drive the person served an hour or more away to help build this natural connection. The same person served would experience pain but refused to go to the hospital due to past trauma. Nena accompanied this person served to the urgent care and ER and stayed with her so she would feel supported, safe, and comfortable during the appointment. Nena often reassures the person served by reminding her that they are not alone. Now, person served attends ER and urgent care with little to no help. The person served commented, 'I think of Nena sitting with me when I am at the ER or urgent care.'□

Monday is baking day, Wednesday is game day, and Friday is beauty day.'□ These are the words of one of the persons served who Nena supports. One person served loves the socialization aspect of these activities especially beauty day, because it is her dream to participate in a beauty contest. Nena continues to make this dream come true every Friday. Nena makes sure to pamper the person served with sumptuous hair products and then style it. As soon as Nena completes the hairstyle, she helps the person coordinate a fancy outfit. Lastly, Nena applied daring, neutral colored makeup to compliment the facial structure of the person served. The first time the person served saw her finished look in the mirror, she was grinning ear to ear. This is only one of many interactions that explain why Nena's co-workers describe her as 'a human kindness in action.'□



2023 ARRM CARES AWARD NOMINEE

Betsy Barnett Dungarvin Minnesota, LLC

Betsy has offered a great amount of support to the person served while upholding standards that have benefited them and her co-workers. Betsy has proven to be committed to the company's mission of, 'respecting and responding to the choices of people in need of supports' by consistently demonstrating the highest level of professionalism and dedication with every interaction. She has actively sought to understand the needs and preferences of the person served through difficult behaviors while also honoring their rights and respecting them as the unique person they are. She has worked to create a supportive environment to meet their goal of being healthy through weekly meal planning and exercise. Betsy has proven repeatedly to always show up for the individual when they need her the most. Betsy is a key role model for both the person served and her peers and has helped build a positive team dynamic that can collaborate and communicate effectively. This has enhanced the overall quality of the services we provide helping the person served achieve their goals, independence, and self-confidence when others would have given up on this individual.

Betsy has actively sought opportunities to build networking supports, including family members, friends, peers, and community members for the person served. Betsy has assisted the individual with mending broken relationships with biological family. For example, she has planned and driven the person served over an hour to have short visits with her biological mother and nephew. She has also been a strong advocate that allows these events to remain positive. The person served used to struggle going back to their hometown where they experienced childhood trauma, but with the help from staff like Betsy they have grown to look forward to these visits. By Betsy recognizing the value of these supports she has helped enrich the life of the individual and provides them with a feeling of belonging and allowed there to be personal growth with themselves and with the individuals that mean the most to them.

Betsy has used personalized supports to help develop and implement new person-served approaches throughout the services we provide. She has done this by taking the time to understand the person's unique needs, preferences, triggers, and goals. For example, Betsy has created plans to increase the person served independence, while reinforcing their independence with activities they enjoy most. Using positive reinforcements to enhance the person's confidence in themselves and thorough collaboration with the person's support team, Betsy has successfully promoted positive outcomes for the person to make safe decisions during outings that were once labelled as a trigger. As a result, through effective planning, Betsy has independently taken the person served to events such as concerts 1:1 where previously the person served would normally require a 2:1 ratio. Betsy's ability to be flexible and adapt to person served needs has proven to empower them to achieve their own personal goals, while enhancing their safe coping skills, and independence while out in the community.



2023 ARRM CARES AWARD NOMINEE

Diane Mailand Dungarvin Minnesota, LLC

Diane consistently and willingly goes the extra mile to support those in the home she works at. Recently, a family expressed concern about their family member's placement at another Dungarvin home. When asked at the last minute if she could host a tour for this family, Diane gladly agreed to do so, even offering to stay late if needed. They asked her questions about who was living there and how this person would fit in as they were searching to find a home with interests and housemates who more closely matched his needs and wants. Diane answered their questions honestly, wanting to ensure that this would be a good match for all. Within 30 minutes of the family visiting with Diane, they emailed the Director to say they loved her and the house and asked when the person could move in. Diane then set out to learn everything that was important to and important for this person served, ensuring that when he moved in, we would be ready to support him. A week after the move, the person served called the Director to thank her for letting him move to the home with Diane.

Diane is committed to open and frequent communication. She regularly emails the teams of individuals to share concerns and most importantly, to report the positives. Diane recognizes and celebrates that life is about spreading joy, not just reporting the bumps in the road. Diane ensures that the men she supports have regular access to the community for the activities they enjoy. Diane supports one individual who loves to garden. Because the house did not have much room for a garden, Diane encouraged this individual to think outside the box. Working hand in hand, the house secured a plot in the local community garden. The men at the house spent the summer growing many of their own vegetables and giant sunflowers. This was a source of pride for the men and encouraged their participation in their community. Diane and the gentlemen she supports work hard to be good neighbors and often bake treats to share as they love to visit and chat with their neighbors.

When you walk into house you don't think group home. You find a home that is warm and inviting. The house is decorated to reflect the interests of the gentlemen living there. You will find a lot of sports memorabilia and games. Diane does an amazing job of understanding the men she supports, knowing what they enjoy and then ensuring that these activities or interests happen. Diane is always encouraging the men to move forward. Even on the days when things don't go well, Diane's philosophy is we just move forward and leave the rough day behind. Diane is currently working with an individual to plan a vacation he has wanted to take to the Wisconsin Dells. This trip, while it might seem small to some, will be the trip of a lifetime for this gentleman. He is not a big traveler and has many concerns about going. To help prepare him for the trip, they have been doing practice 'overnights' at the local casino (another favorite spot!) to build confidence in his independent skills. This is just one creative way that she is paving the way for a successful and fun vacation.



2023 ARRM CARES AWARD NOMINEE

Kelsie Yang

Dungarvin Minnesota, LLC

Kelsie began her time as a live-in staff and eventually transitioned to a leadership role as a community support staff. Since becoming a CSS staff, Kelsie has shown that she is a true leader. She manages the on-site daily staff schedule, which allows individuals to have their staffing needs met. If there is a need for additional staffing or an adjustment, she is quick to notify her supervisor and communicate with her peers. Kelsie has trained in new staff and leads trainings at staff meetings. Kelsie's attention to detail, understanding of programming needs, and knowledge of the persons served benefits everyone.

Kelsie works with individuals on their person-centered ISP goals and understands how these are different for everyone. There have been situations where individuals may be facing a spend down, financial hardship, mental health problems, or issues at home. Kelsie has worked with her supervisor, the individuals, and their teams on navigating all these issues. She has helped persons served complete time-sensitive and important paperwork so their benefits are not affected. She takes action swiftly when there is an issue. Kelsie communicates regularly with her supervisor and team members " this allows for individuals to feel supported, connected to their teams, and, most importantly, safe.

Kelsie works with many different individuals on a daily basis. Recently, an individual was reporting that they had 'bugs' in their apartment. Kelsie notified the team members immediately and assisted the individual with trying to find resources for the issue. Kelsie remained in contact with the team throughout the whole situation. Eventually, it was determined that there were not bugs in the apartment but that the individual was experiencing a mental health crisis. Kelsie worked with them and the team on finding them resources so they could better manage their medications and attend appointments to help with their mental health issues. When the individual was experiencing severe mental health issues, Kelsie would meet with them and take them to the hospital as they requested. Kelsie's regular contact with the team allowed for the individual to receive the support they needed. The individual's mental health is stable now and they are thriving.



2023 ARRM CARES AWARD NOMINEE

Raquel Selin-Larson EGH, Inc

At this point Raquel is like family to their residents. Raquel has been working every other weekend at our Olive house for over 24 years. So Raquel knows exactly what each person prefers, and knows how to cater to what makes them the most happy. Furthermore, she is able to help maintain harmony and prevent conflict by knowing all the antecedents of how things can get difficult from time to time.

Because Raquel has been a part of her individuals' life for so long, her suggestions hold a lot of weight with the people she serves. None of them are particularly active anymore in their advanced age, and she has been able to convince them to do some of the things they historically liked.

She's also able to spot and identify subtle changes and evolutions in the people she serves more quickly than peers who don't know the individuals as well.

Over the years Raquel has had innumerable memorable experiences with their individuals, but the overarching thing that she has provided is consistency and reliability. The people she serves see people come and go all the time. Some staff are not around long enough to get to know the individuals in a fully person-centered way. This nominee is truly a part of her individuals' life, and they are a part of hers. One person Raquel serves does not outwardly display excitement except for under specific conditions. However, when she checks the schedule and sees the Raquel's name for the weekend, she often smiles and says "It's Raquel this weekend!"



2023 ARRM CARES AWARD NOMINEE

William Wood EGH, Inc

Will meets the people he supports where ever they are. Will gets to know their personalities, their likes and dislikes and is willing to ask them how they would like to be supported. Will is a fierce advocate for those he supports, willing to stand up and help when times are tough.

On at least two occasions, Will has defended a person he serves who was being subjected to racial profiling, including one incident coming between his individual and a police officer who had misidentified the person Will was serving. The person served does not have the tools to handle a situation like that, so we were exceedingly grateful Will was with him for those incidents.

Will works with a variety of people at EGH, has helped them through health challenges and changes, and is always trying to find the best way to work through a troubled time, make fun where he can, and simply be with someone during the quiet moments

Will is really good at honing in on what is of value to the individuals he serves and works diligently to help them achieve their personal goals. That could include accompanying someone to the YMCA for personal trainer sessions or making arrangements for his individuals served to attend the Auto Show. He faithfully fills one of his individual's mediset weekly, diligently tracking his frequent and significant changes in medications. He is attentive to the well-being of his individuals served, noticing physical changes and documenting as needed.

Will is flexible in who he works with and when he works, adjusting his schedule to what best suits the people he is serving. Will comes in with a can-do attitude, willing to do whatever it takes that day. Will is a great communicator, and coordinates easily with his coworkers and managers. Will comes to work with his own ideas on how he might be able to help or an activity to do that day, including consulting with his individuals' families, and accessing their community how they want to.

Will is punctual and reliable. He is often included in team annual meetings because of the good rapport he builds with the folks he serves and the helpful observations he is able to make on their behalf. He is open to suggestions from his supervisor and colleagues and incorporates them into his daily practices. He comes to work with a smile and is consistently in a good mood. He is flexible regarding his schedule and offers creative solutions to issues that arise. He is willing and able to cover medical appointments with an individual served as needed. He represents EGH well.

Will takes a genuine interest in the lives of each person served. He consistently offers opportunities to get out into the community to participate in activities each person served prefers. He is thoughtful and attentive to their needs and desires. Will has done it all - helping plan vacations; teaching how to cook a new recipe or schedule a Metro ride; going to the MOA or concerts; assisting during health changes; He advocates, listens and guides through trying times. One of the people he serves has been living in an apartment with a roommate, and the individual decided it was no longer a good fit for him. Will volunteered to continue serving the individual as he returned to his family home.



2023 ARRM CARES AWARD NOMINEE

Allysa Schlieff
EON INC

I would like to nominate Allysa Schlieff who has been a Direct Support Professional with EON, Inc. / Lighthouse Lodge in Bemidji, MN for over 6 years. Allysa has taken the initiative to re-do a house's menu book in conjunction with persons served to increase healthier options and more variety so it is truly THEIR menu that helps them be as healthy as possible to remain as independent as possible. She is often the first to volunteer to transport individuals to both the Regional and State Track Meets for Special Olympics. She will also stay overnight to support persons served during State Meets.

Alyssa's willingness to assist in many tasks has allowed her to build a great base of knowledge to become a great trainer at any site not only to help persons served increase their skill base but to also help new Direct Support Professionals become competent and effective supports in the wake of Alyssa's efforts. Alyssa stays abreast of changes in the industry and knows when they have meetings and updates to their goals. Alyssa isn't afraid to step out of her comfort zone and has assured that can attend the churches and cultural events of their choosing. Her calm and soothing demeanor assists with maintaining a positive and nurturing environment in their lives as she reminds them of their 'skills toolboxes' to self-soothe.

Allysa focuses on helping persons served by teaching them how to do for themselves to increase independence. Alyssa is always willing to be a listening ear for coworkers as well. She picks up shifts at each site and helps co-workers whenever possible. As a fixture in the homes, and the individuals and staff all agree she is very much worth celebrating.



2023 ARRM CARES AWARD NOMINEE

Matthew Zemple EON INC

Matthew is a natural leader who embraces change and challenge. With his soft skills, he not only applies gentle teaching approaches with the people he supports, but he is a role model for fellow DSPs. Over the last year and half, Matthew has exhibited excellent leadership skills and is a champion of teamwork. Each day, he patiently educates fellow DSPs on approaches, desires, and preferences for each individual served. Mathew independently takes the lead by ensuring special dinners for holidays, special occasions, covers for co-workers who need time off, and is trained at all of our homes to ensure the people served receive quality services. His leadership approach not only is designed for the individual to achieve their goals, but a plan that they are actively participating in, excited about, and has real meaning to the individual. Matthew is a man with numerous gifts and talents, which he humbly and gracefully shares with others.

Connecting people served to natural supports is one of Matt's natural gifts and talents. He has an innate understanding of what impassions a people and actively listens to the people he serves to recognize what is important to them. Matthew's insight has been completely invaluable. One example of how Matt connects people with natural supports is when Michael returned from his COVID recovery. Matt noticed Michael's mood was plummeting. However, when Matthew waked in the door, the sight of him alone was enough to raise Michael's spirits. In Matthews true fashion, he forged ahead to ensure he could also have natural supports in his life. Matt could see that Michael needed to be in the community, feeling and being productive, and a contributing member of society. Ultimately, through active listening and discovery, Matthew discovered Michael wanted to work in the community. With the unwavering support from Matt, all the necessary contacts were made, and Michael now works in the community! Michael's mood and his self-esteem have increased exponentially since then.

I am not what happened to me, I am what I choose to become " Carl Jung The above quote embraces the philosophy of person-centered planning and thinking, which is exactly what Matthew believes and demonstrates at his core. Mathew concentrates on the unique abilities, enthusiastic advocacy, developing relationships, and what is important to/for everyone he serves. He consistently demonstrates this through loyalty, ownership, teamwork, leadership, and a nurturing mindset. When Scott moved to his new home, his words were difficult to understand and easily misunderstood. Matt researched specialized physicians and received the correct medications for his health concerns. Scott has improved so much that he is now seeking employment. When presented with how to support a person achieve a personal dream, Matthew looks at the person as a whole, not just with the end goal in mind. The people he serves benefit from his caring and compassionate nature every day. Matthew's team describe him as innovative, motivating, knowledgeable, and creative. His compassion and dedication to the people we serve is immeasurable.



2023 ARRM CARES AWARD NOMINEE

Pauline Washburn EON INC

I would like to nominate Pauline Washburn who serves as both a Direct Support Professional and a Community Services Coordinator with EON, Inc. / Lighthouse Lodge in the Bemidji, MN area. With a hire date of 2/24/2022 at EON, Inc. but multiple years of experience in our field, she has made an amazing impact on our Persons Served leveraging her skills of patience, creativity, thoughtfulness, self-motivation, and caring. Pauline brings stability to not only the Community Residential Settings she supports but also to persons receiving In Home Supports with Training.

She always has a smile for the individuals served and has formed relationships with each of them increasing their confidence and skills in accessing the community more successfully to secure housing and seek employment opportunities. She's supportive of her co-workers as well and will do anything she can to support others in being successful.

Pauline holds herself to high standards, and when she sees a need, she can't help but fill it. Pauline encourages teammates to do the same, and there is no one in the organization that wouldn't help her if she asked. She leads by example and leads the individuals to their best lives.

Pauline's focus is on the persons she serves and assisting them to be independent. She looks forward to working herself out of a job in IHSTR with the persons she currently serves. So that she can continue to increase independence with others!

Knowledgeable: Pauline's broad knowledge base of disabilities permits an ability to approach each person in an individual manner. Pauline is nurturing with persons served while helping them forge ahead to become more independent " they look forward to the days they spend with Pauline. Her ready smile and easy laughter contribute to creating a culture and environment in the homes that everyone wants to be a part of.



2023 ARRM CARES AWARD NOMINEE

Katie Hensel EON INC

Katie leads with compassion, empowerment, high expectations, and vision. She knows how to listen beyond the words and most importantly she is responsive to what she hears. Katie then organizes, plans, ensures staff support, and always follows through. Constantly, she applies a person-centered approach to those she serves, her co-workers, and our organization. Katie is always listening and teaching. She does this by not only challenging herself, but her co-workers and supervisors to be solution based and to think creatively. Katie is a caring and loving person with remarkable integrity and grace. She embodies the definition of a Direct Support Professional and an inspirational leader. Katie is designated trainer at all 5 sites. All new hires hear that 'if anyone tells you something different from what Katie said, they are wrong. Including me.' Katie sees a need and fills it, whether it's for direct care, ordering groceries, celebrating birthdays, or just a hug when it's needed " by individuals or co-workers.

To illustrate Katie's innovative, creative, and person-centered approach, when Nicole and Tiffany were simultaneously diagnosed with COVID, without hesitation, she immediately packed her suitcase and quarantined with them, in order to protect their housemates, Joy and Mary Jane who have complex medical needs. You see, Katie, even during the most difficult times heeds the calling without hesitation. For 14 days, she ensured quality of care and life with Nikki and Tiffany by creating a recreation and craft area for the ladies, cooked meals with them, and connected the ladies with their families. Especially on those tough days, she was right there by their side with them expressing empathy and practicing patience to help Nikki and Tiffany through their discomfort and monoclonal antibody infusions. During this time, Katie, once again displayed leadership and focus by teaching and assisting her co-workers with maintaining infection control standards to prevent the further spread of COVID. Katie's unwavering, selfless, and love for Nicole, Tiffany, Joy, and Mary Jane is absolutely beautiful to witness.

What makes Katie a successful leader is her impassioned advocacy for person centered services - what is important to and for the person and her ability connect the people she serves with natural supports. Because of her advocacy, she has altered the trajectory of people's lives by offering detailed information or encouraging research, so the people she serves can make informed choices. When James wanted to live out his dream of going to Disneyworld, Katie was right by his side using her unique gifts and talents to support him. Katie created a budgeting plan, taught budgeting skills of saving, and researched his vacation with James. With Katie's support, James contacted a travel agency and they all worked together to plan his dream. Due to Katie's person centered supports and ability to connect with natural supports, James' dream was realized. This has also proved advantageous, as it in turn motivated other individuals to seek Katie's support with person centered outcomes. Carrie, of another site, is now utilizing Katie's support for budgeting and saving money for her own Disneyworld trip. Likewise, Katie supported Leo to engage in his community by enhancing his life by increasing independence and his autonomy. Through encouragement, practice, consistency, and establishing trust of others, Katie, supported Leo to overcome his anxiety of public transportation. Today, when the bus pulls up to his home, Leo proudly walks with his head high and utilizes the city bus with natural community supports for transportation to work and appointments. Katie is a consistent champion of the people she supports, which truly sets her apart in many ways.



2023 ARRM CARES AWARD NOMINEE

Terry Isdo EON INC

Terry embodies natural talent of excellence and consistently role models standards of professionalism. She contributes her best self while evoking others to do the same. During the past 7 years, she has induced professionalism in others by mentoring, supporting, and demonstrating excellence. Because of her inspirational words of wisdom and leading by example, she has earned the respect of those she serves and her peers by fostering a positive and unique relationship with each of them. Terry not only supports the people served with immense passion, but she is also an invaluable team member that supports the entire team. Her cheerful attitude and smiles are contagious to all who have the pleasure to be in her presence. Diligence is one of her top impeccable skills. If she sees an opportunity of enhancement, she fiercely advocates for the people served. Similarly, she is a mentor to staff and encourages them to foster new ideas and solutions to ensure the utmost dignity and respect to the people she serves.

Terry leads with creatively and innovative person centered thinking. This way of thinking requires boldness, and she is steadily open to promote creativity and innovation to be born out of uncertainty. David feels that Terry's forward thinking attitude and thought process helps him live a fuller more enjoyable life by offering him items he frequently uses close to him. This helps him feel like his home is clutter free and allows more freedom to maneuver safely in his home. David states that 'every day Terry is here she comes up with hundreds of ideas to make his life better and she does it with a smile.'□ We would be utterly lost without Terry as she is an integral part of our team. Mother Teresa said, 'The greatest good is what we can do for one another.'□ Terry represents this quote and when supporting others putting their needs first is always her highest priority! The people served have frequently said 'Terry is our angel sent from above,'□ 'Terry is a blessing in my life,'□ 'I don't know what I would do without her.'□

No matter how hectic Terry's schedule is, she always ensures the people she serves are connected and is consistently networking. When shopping, she is always willing to find that special item with the person served. When cleaning, Terry considers exactly what products a person served wants to use and exactly what tasks they like and what their preferences are. For the people we serve that are on a fixed income, David states that Terry always keeps in mind his budget and will search with him to locate different stores to find the best deal and he frequently indicates he appreciates each time she does this. Due to her positive reputation and person-centered approach, the people she serves consistently ask for her support. Terry is so well equipped to support the people she serves, and each person feels like they are her only focus. Terry embodies our core belief, 'Nothing About Me Without Me.'□



2023 ARRM CARES AWARD NOMINEE

Randy Sturm
EON INC

Randy develops a special bond with each of the individuals in the home that he works. From cooking to cleaning, to going to the library are just a few things that Randy supports this individual in. Randy does not forget about the rest of the individuals he supports. Randy supports all in ensuring things get completed daily. Appointments, hair cuts, pedicures, shopping, communication with family and guardians to spend time together. Randy is good at determining strengths and weaknesses of the individuals. He knows where assistance is needed, and when not, but he is always there to lend a helping hand. Randy enjoys getting the individuals out into the community to get them involved in activities. Whether it's going for a walk, volunteering, getting and attending church with the individuals. Upon leaving for activities and everyday activities, Randy ensures the individuals are well kept. Randy is definitely the definition of nothing about me without me.

Randy has been a dedicated employee to Eon since February 21st of 2018. Randy has worked at 1826, 1209, 511 consistently since he has joined the Eon Family and has also helped out in Non-Residential department at times as well. Randy is always the 1st to step up to the plate to ensure that there is coverage for staffing, appointments, outings and transporting individuals served to home visits and to the airport for vacations. Randy shows dedication to the company and to those individuals he serves. Randy is always willing to pick up extra shifts when needed, he will come in early or stay late. Randy never complains about his job even if he is the first to arrive and the last to leave.

There are a number of events and stories that I could share on how Randy enriches Person Served life but if I have to pick just one it would be how he interacts with the clients while cooking. One client in particular comes to mind Craig has become very bonded to Randy. They have formed this bond over cooking. Craig has always thoroughly enjoyed cooking and baking. Randy also enjoys cooking very much. On days that Randy is not at work we can see a change in Craigs demeanor as he loves spending the quality time preparing delectable meals with Randy for his house mates. Just recently Craig and Randy were making a fabulous Sauerkraut Hotdish and although Craig does not eat this the joy seen on his face was amazing at preparing this with Randy for the house. This winter they perfected a home made Chili recipe that was enjoyed by all! The joy that Randy brings to Craig by cooking with him is definitely apparent to all.



2023 ARRM CARES AWARD NOMINEE

Stepheny Howard Fraser

Stepheny joined the Gordon house team in October of last year. When she was reading through their care plans, she paid close attention to their written documents and brought forth a great question that led to creating more elaborate plans for the ladies. That question was 'What does "assistance as needed" mean?' This is a statement that we use a lot in this industry to indicate that a person does have some abilities but may need help. Stepheny wanted to dive deeper and really know what 'help' looks like for each of the ladies living at Gordon. Asking a simple question resulted in creating space for more thorough descriptions of the level of care each individual actually needs.

In her leadership role, Stepheny has naturally become a person that others feel comfortable talking to, listening to, and receiving information from. She is quick to retrain people in the moment if she feels they have not maintained a person-centered approach and she does so gently. Stepheny has created a great balance of advocating for the home environment while also maintaining that it is a work environment that can be a lot of fun!

Recently, Stepheny was able to support going in to the program to meet with the individual and their day program team. They were able to solve an issue at hand and plan for the future by helping her feel more comfortable about talking to them about concerns.

In her role, Stepheny spends some of her time floating to other sites. As she gets to know those sites, she is always thinking of other DSPs to help out at those sites based on personality and her relationships with them. She does a great job of matching up people for cross training opportunities.

When working at other sites, Stepheny would invite an individual from a different site to come hang out for the day, which has created new friendships for people, new opportunities for activities and ensure continuity of old friendships. This has been especially important between two individuals that used to go to a program together but no longer do. They had lost touch but now get to see each other often because of Stepheny took the initiative to provide opportunities that bring them together on a regular basis.

Gordon house is home to 4 women, 1 of whom is blind. Stepheny has been a big advocate for her and acknowledging that she should receive the same opportunities to do activities that everyone else does! Stepheny recently planned an outing for the house to go to Wisconsin Dells to go to waterparks and other attractions in the area. She planned out the meals, staffing, accommodations, budgeted the stay, and made the itinerary. Recently, she made arrangements for the person who is blind to experience iFly indoor skydiving! This isn't something we had ever thought of offering to her but Stepheny made it happen. She has activities on her list to complete now as well including UrbanAir Adventure Park. Stepheny is big on promoting everyone to get out of their comfort zone, using trusted formed relationships to let the ladies know they are safe. Stepheny was recently asked to help plan and support a five day cruise for the ladies at Gordon and she jumped at the chance to make this long time dream happen. Stepheny has been hard at work in planning, organizing, gathering needed items, making safety plans, etc and we depart in June!



2023 ARRM CARES AWARD NOMINEE

Stephen Mettille Genesis Group Homes, Inc.

Steve is often praised by guardians and case managers for the way he supports the individuals served. Steve works with individuals in crisis and willingly shares information and techniques he has learned from the individuals served. Steve expects high standards for himself and because of that, he feels that each individual served deserves respect. For individuals that require more personal cares and physical assistance, he ensures they are dressed, groomed, and bathed just as he would expect himself to be leaving his home for the day. He shares his routines with these individuals to other coworkers to ensure his high standards are maintained.

Steve often supports individuals served with phone calls to parents or in-person visits with family in the community. He will participate in the interaction, getting to know the natural supports of that individual. He facilitates conversation if the individual is having difficulty formulating a response. Steve will rephrase statements or questions so that the individual understands what is being asked of them. This supports the individual in maintaining therapeutic relationships with their natural supports.

As a DSP, Steve is trusted to assist in writing Behavior Support Plans for individuals served. He assisted the manager of the home in developing a 'Visual Communication Book' for a lower functioning individual so that staff can effectively communicate with that person. He also identified and shared with other staff that an individual recognizes the terms "tools" and "toolbox" to describe their coping skills. This allows staff to ensure they use terminology that the individual understands.



2023 ARRM CARES AWARD NOMINEE

Roberta "Bobbie" Kramer Hammer & NER

Roberta 'Bobbie' Kramer is a DSP at our Norway home and has worked with Hammer & NER for 5.5 years. Unfortunately, Norway has been without a Program Manager since mid-2022. Bobbie has shown exemplary integrity to the program by continuing to provide the BEST care to the individuals served despite having no onsite supervisory support. She is always communicative with her Program Director. Bobbie is not afraid to stand up for what is right when questions or frustrations arise internally in the program and has always been willing to provide support to shift coverage outside of her permanent schedule. She is a prime example of a DSP whose heart is in it.

Bobbie has helped 'E' at Norway use a tablet/computer so that she can have weekly Zoom calls with her mother while she is away in Florida. This was a new skill to be acquired by Bobbie and 'E' and Bobbie worked through technical frustrations to make it possible for 'E' to see and talk with her mother, which is important to 'E'.

As a singular a.m. staff at Norway, Bobbie has faced days and weeks that are challenging getting the four people supported at Norway off to their day programs. After ongoing discussions with the Program Director, Bobbie got creative and found ways to motivate everyone and inspire their independence and continual gaining of life skills that help Bobbie with getting them all ready but also helps our goal of inspiring the people we support to be as independent as they want to be and can be. Bobbie has persevered through periods of staffing issues and challenging behaviors, always maintaining a positive attitude and person-centered thinking. She truly loves the folks at Norway and her continual commitment to them shows just that.



2023 ARRM CARES AWARD NOMINEE

Cathy Pigg Hammer & NER

Cathy Pigg is a DSP at our Rollingview home and has worked with Hammer & NER for three years. Cathy is a team player and works hard to bring a positive energy to the home. She treats the people we support with respect, promotes their independence, ensures their needs are met, and maintains professional boundaries with co-workers. Cathy is dependable, respectful of her co-workers, and follows the organization's policies.

Cathy connects the people we support with their family members by giving them the supports they need to benefit their quality of life. For example, Cathy will place a call to a family member so the person we support can then talk with them. Cathy plans outings, takes the women she supports at the Rollingview home out in the community and makes sure those who want to attend church on Sunday can do so when she is working.

Cathy plans ahead for her weekend shifts by looking for places the group can go to out in the community. She helps connect the people we support to their community by organizing picnics at local parks and outings to fun and stimulating places like the Gove's Goat Farm in Lake Elmo, the Safari Zoo, and the Franconia Sculpture Garden. She also takes the Rollingview ladies to Hammer & NER activities and events they enjoy attending throughout the year.

Cathy is very person-centered and takes time to know what each person we support likes. She encourages them and engages them in a variety of projects and activities. Cathy has a knack for decorations and the four women we support at our Rollingview home enjoy decorating the house. Cathy always involves them in arts and crafts activities and decorating projects"she even brings decorations and supplies from her own home to share. Involving everyone supported at Rollingview in holiday decorating makes them feel valued. They also enjoy making cards for families, friends, and staff for various holidays throughout the year. One of the ladies we support was in the habit of wearing the same outfit every day. Cathy helped her set a goal to grow in her independence by picking out a different outfit to wear each day with fewer verbal prompts. Now, the individual chooses an outfit the night before and lays it out. She enjoys doing this and being more independent.



2023 ARRM CARES AWARD NOMINEE

Debra Harper Hammer & NER

Debra Harper is a DSP at our Sumac home and has worked with Hammer & NER for 26 years. Regardless of an individual's cognitive skillset/functioning, Debra's ability to stay person-centered and maintain a high standard of professionalism is unmatched. She is respected among her coworkers and the people we support at our Sumac home. Debra is emotionally intelligent and empathetic and tends to stay calm/in control no matter the situation.

Debra has worked with 'A' to develop some goals for her overall health and weight loss. The two women go on weekly grocery shopping trips together. Debra shows 'A' the grocery budget and the planned menus to help her understand the decisions that have to be made when shopping. Debra is teaching 'A' how to make a grocery list and define what is a want versus a need. This has helped 'A' with her health and weight loss goals while also helping the home in sticking to the grocery budget.

One of the people Debra supports swims and works out at the Jewish Community Center (JCC) in St. Louis Park. 'L' has had an interest in losing weight for some time now and Debra wanted to help her build routines and good habits. So now every Monday and Friday they swim at the JCC and on Wednesdays, 'L' works out with a personal trainer at the JCC. 'L' has been going to the Community Center for quite some time but was not aware of all it had to offer. Debra has helped her utilize that resource and now 'L' is down 10 pounds!

This is a further example of the work Debra has done with 'L'. Debra exhibited her creative and innovative approach to helping create an exercise program for 'L'. Debra and 'L' spent a few hours sitting with 'L' to identify some prizes/rewards that would motivate her to work out. Debra then created a program in which 'L' would earn a prize after a certain number of workouts. Debra discovered that 'L' is a visual learner and would need to see her progress. Debra created a system where 'L' would draw one part of a stickman figure after every workout and once the stickman was fully assembled, she would receive a prize! There are seven parts to a stickman figure and so she would need to do seven exercises before getting a prize. 'L' has now completed five stickman figures and they are hanging up around the house to remind her of her progress.



2023 ARRM CARES AWARD NOMINEE

Jim Beckman Hammer & NER

Jim is a lead DSP at our Plymouth Colony apartment program, which provides support to individuals who can and want to live more independently. Jim has worked with Hammer & NER for 11 years. He is dedicated and hardworking. He assists most of the people we support at Plymouth Colony with their finances, preparing meals, having talk time with them, and ensuring they meet their goals. Jim cares about the people we support as individuals and assists them greatly while ensuring they maintain their independence.

As the lead DSP for finance, Jim continues to display honesty and transparency in all his financial dealings with the people we support. He keeps an accurate record of their finances and regularly informs them of their balances. He shows commitment to the individuals we support and his job at Hammer & NER. Jim is reliable and dedicated, arriving on time for work to relieve other staff, and is always ready to assist and complete tasks. He is respectful to the people we support and other staff members and knows and follows Hammer & NER's policies and is professional in all that he does.

Jim encourages the people we support to sign up for community activities such as Special Olympics and bowling and helps with processing payments where applicable. He also takes individuals to church services. Spending 1:1 time with the individuals we support at Plymouth Colony is very important to Jim because he sees these meetings as opportunities to get to know and understand each individual's needs. This enables him to effectively help them meet their goals. He is always willing to serve as a liaison between the people we support and their family members when the need arises.

Jim is also good at mediating concerns that the individuals have with each other and with staff. He has used these skills to come to a respectful and peaceful solution. He was able to diffuse and mediate an issue between an individual and staff that involved the individual consistently complaining about the staff member. He had discussions with the individual and the staff member on separate occasions and after listening to them, had a joint meeting with them and resolved the issue. The individual later said the meeting was very helpful and there is a better relationship with the staff member.

Recently, Jim was able to help resolve a situation with one of the people we support who was extremely aggravated and upset. They had lost their paycheck. Jim was respectful and supportive and helped the individual understand how they could resolve the matter by getting a replacement check. He accompanied the individual to their employer and got the check replaced. When assisting the people we support in strengthening their independent living skills, Jim lets them decide what meal they would like to prepare and what is needed, how to organize things in their apartment, and how to keep it clean. Jim is a caring and valued support for everyone at our Plymouth Colony apartment program and helps ensure they are living life to the fullest.



2023 ARRM CARES AWARD NOMINEE

Martha Hartman Harry Meyering Center

We are beyond proud that we get to introduce you to Martha Hartman. To start, she is unaware she is being nominated because Martha is so humble and would expect no accolades for her work. For Martha, this is about the experience of the individuals she supports. She is exactly the type of person that deserves to be recognized for her service and the quality support she has provided at Harry Meyering Center for the past 16+ years! Like many of the other nominees we are sure, Martha is always willing to help cover additional shifts at multiple locations, is dedicated to a person-centered approach, and advocates genuinely for the individuals.

We all understand the dynamics of trying to get the details all figured out when supporting individuals with their goals and dreams and it can be challenging. Martha moves forward and doesn't allow those challenges to get in the way. The thing is - if the individuals she supports want to be involved in something, she makes it happen. Martha goes above and beyond to make sure the people she supports have the experiences they want to have in their life.

Martha's willingness to cover shifts, advocating for individuals, and her person centered focus alone deserves recognition, but where Martha truly stands out among her peers is her involvement with community integration on behalf of the people she supports.

An example of this is her steady, faithful presence in Aktion Club Theatre of Mankato. Aktion Club is an inclusive theatre group for people of all abilities and ages. Specifically, Martha supports four men which participate in this group. She does everything from helping ensure they arrive on time to rehearsals to being prepared for each performance. Martha knows how and when to have conversations about being reliable and keeping commitments. She goes out of her way to communicate with Wilbur, the director, if anyone in the theater group is experiencing any challenges and is an active participant in identifying solutions. She assists the actors with their lines and with staging during the play. Martha is always alert to what is happening on stage, thus making sure the people are having their best possible experience. She is even willing to get on stage and help anyone at any time if that is what is needed. Additionally, Martha fully understands the concept of knowing when to step up to assist and knowing when to step back so they can have their own rich experiences as actors. Wilbur stated, "She is a star DSP! Without her presence, the theatre experience for the men she directly supports, as well as others in the club, would not be as rich as it is."

Aktion Club Theatre is just one of the many examples of how she shines. It is clear to see by anyone she encounters that Martha places others at the very center of every decision she makes. She moves forward and doesn't allow challenges to get in the way. If the people she supports want to be involved, Martha goes above and beyond to make sure it happens. She wants them to have the experiences they want to have in their lives. And not just within the four walls in which they live, but out in the community as well; living their best lives, the way any of us would want to do. Wilbur, the Aktion Club Theater Director, shared "Martha is also person-centered understanding that supports are not generic rather they are tailored to the individual. This writer loves watching Martha in action as she carries out her work."



2023 ARRM CARES AWARD NOMINEE

Michelle Schultz
Hiawatha Homes

Yes, Michelle demonstrates high levels of support of fellow staff and individuals across many programs within Hiawatha.

Michelle continues to communicate professionally with families and fellow staff about persons served in her care.

Michelle provides person centered approaches in persons in her care, providing engaging activities within her care and community.



2023 ARRM CARES AWARD NOMINEE

Denise Lundein
Hiawatha Homes

Denise goes above her job duties to make sure that the individuals that she supports is very well taken care of. Denise is also a team player and works a variety of shifts if she is needed to fill in, or come in early.

Denise listens to the individuals and what they are needing or wanting.

Denise finds things for the individuals to do based on their likes and dislikes.



2023 ARRM CARES AWARD NOMINEE

Sheila Rae Edwards Hiawatha Homes, Inc.

Recently, a new individual moved into the home where Sheila is a Team Lead. This individual had many behavioral challenges and mental health struggles. Sheila used a person-centered approach to improve the individual's natural supports system and connect them with an important community. Sheila knew that in order to help this individual, she would need to gain her trust. First, Sheila spent time with the individual to gain a deeper understanding of who she was and what was important to her. Sheila also spoke with her family members to further get to know her. Sheila learned that faith was very important to this individual and something that had been recently lacking from her life. Next, Sheila took the individual to several churches to find the right fit. Finally, together, they found a church that would help the individual make connections with community members and regain their faith. Not only did Sheila help this individual reconnect with an important aspect of their life, Sheila also made sure that they were fully integrated into the church community.

Sheila believes that trust is paramount when working with individuals with disabilities. Throughout her extensive career as a DSP, Sheila has created trusting relationships with all of the individuals she has supported.

Sheila started in direct care work in 1978 at the State Hospital. In 1998 she began working at Hiawatha Homes. Throughout her over 40 years in the field, Sheila has built relationships with individuals that have spanned decades “ she has supported one individual since the 1980s when they were just six years old. Yet, she maintains her passion for her work and continues to provide creative and person-centered care.

Sheila used the trust she had developed with this individual to help them develop natural supports at their new church. On one occasion, Sheila took this individual to a church picnic; at first, the individual started shaking and did not feel comfortable in the new environment. Sheila was able to help this individual enjoy the picnic through her deep understanding of the individual's needs and desires. At first, Sheila sat the individual at a picnic table away from the large group but close to a small group of children. In this way, the individual could still be a part of the picnic, but stay at a distance that was more comfortable for her. Sheila also knew that the children would make her feel more relaxed. Sheila brought food to the individual and was supportive throughout the day. By the time dessert was served, the individual had gained enough confidence to join the others. She was happy and comfortable “ as the individual smiled, Sheila knew that her person-centered approach had worked.



2023 ARRM CARES AWARD NOMINEE

Kathy Ann Nauman Hiawatha Homes, Inc.

Kathy is passionate about creating innovative new opportunities for individuals with disabilities and connecting them with natural supports. Since 1990 Kathy has worked in direct care. She is fully dedicated to the field " in the past, Kathy has worked multiple jobs at once so that she could continue to work in direct care. Her other jobs helped fund her passion for supporting individuals with disabilities to live full and independent lives. There are countless additional examples of how Kathy has positively impacted the lives of the individuals she supports. Her creative and person-centered approach to care proves that she is the embodiment of an ARRM Cares Award Winner.

Not only does Kathy excel at connecting individuals with new experiences, she also believes in the importance of natural supports. One individual she supported had moved to Hiawatha Homes from a state facility. The individual was a ward of the courts and did not communicate with their family members. Through Kathy's initiative and hard work, this individual was able to reconnect with their family. The individual's half-sister reached out and Kathy initiated a family meeting in St. Paul. Kathy continued to take the individual up to the cities and was a conduit for the bond that formed between the family members and the individual. The individual met their grandmother and grandfather and they built a loving relationship. Kathy believes family connection and community supports are essential, and she is committed to providing these ties for all the individuals she supports.

Kathy creates rewarding experiences for the individuals she supports that compliment their goals and desires. Recently, she set up a new volunteer opportunity at an animal shelter for two individuals she supports as a Team Lead. One of the individuals had a goal to volunteer out in the community. Knowing this, Kathy went above and beyond to ensure the individual met this goal. Kathy began researching different volunteer opportunities. She knew that this individual loved animals, so when she found a local animal shelter, she thought it would be a perfect fit. She also knew that another individual at the home enjoyed being active and loved seeing all the neighborhood animals. Kathy decided to invite this individual to volunteer as well. The volunteer process was demanding; Kathy had to register the individuals and attend multiple education classes. However, the results were worth it. The two individuals now regularly volunteer walking dogs and playing fetch, cuddling with puppies, and transporting the animals to adoption events. Kathy loves to take photos of the individuals with their new puppy friends; these photos adorn the individuals' rooms and are sent out to their loved ones and case managers. Kathy takes a person-centered approach to meeting the goals of the individuals she supports and pairs their passions with a meaningful and valuable community experiences.



2023 ARRM CARES AWARD NOMINEE

Angela Friberg Life By Design, Inc.

Angela demonstrates outstanding person centered characteristics and skills in supporting the persons she works with through mentoring, advocating and problem solving. Specifically, Angela works with a person who this year has had several issues arise; dealing with bed bugs, downsizing things in preparation for an upcoming move and most recently serious health issues. Angela arrived to work one day to take the person to look at an apartment and found the person having difficulty walking and breathing. Angela took action and called 911. The person was transported to the ER. Angela quickly noted that while the person was "independent" they had become increasingly overwhelmed with everything happening and needed more support with managing their medical care. Angela met the person at the ER and stayed with them while medical staff was attending to not only the person's medical situation but that of an ER filled with other patients. During the time in the ER, the person's medical condition worsened and Angela attempted to let the medical staff know by calling for help. When no one responded, Angela called out again, loudly that they needed help; the person had stopped breathing. Staff came in to revive and intubate the person. Had Angela not been there, it is extremely likely that the person would have not been found in time to revive and would have died. From that point, Angela took the lead in being the point of contact for the person, the medical team and the person's family. Angela checked on the person daily and communicated updates to person's team. She even arranged for care for the person's cats while the person was hospitalized. After the person was released from the hospital, Angela was right there again supporting the person with post-hospital medical appointments and arranging for home supports including nursing, PT and OT. Angela's attention to detail, communication and documentation is second to none.

Another person Angela supports had been in the hospital. When they returned home she noticed that their symptoms had not been alleviated. She made them as comfortable as possible before clocking out. She didn't feel right about leaving the person so she clocked back in and took them to the ER to make sure the person got the right medical care.

Angela supports all of the persons she works with, with professionalism, heartfelt compassion and dignity.

Angela supported person with assuring home nursing care was scheduled to support person when staff not with them.



2023 ARRM CARES AWARD NOMINEE

Christina Garcia Life By Design, Inc.

Christina brings a peaceful and respectful approach to everyone she supports. Christina provides supports to a variety of people that experience varying levels of anxiety. The people she supports express immense gratitude for her ability to listen to their worries and provide person centered solutions. On many occasions, Christina has adjusted her schedule to support the person implement the plans they brainstormed together. One of the women Christina supports (Caryn) wrote a poem to present Christina, and in it she writes, "Because of your essence, I can feel assured. No matter what my needs are, you always give me more! No matter what I am going through, you help my positivity endure." From others, they have said that her optimism helps them reach their goals when they are anxious.

Christina's communication and team work is above and beyond. When she runs into roadblocks with the people she supports, she reaches out to troubleshoot. She brings fantastic solutions to the table, and is always open to receiving someone else's ideas. She embodies and promotes self-determination for the people she supports and for others at the agency. We are proud to have Christina on our team.

Christina is a strong advocate for people to build a network, as well as connections in their community. As part of her optimistic, solution based approach, Christina is always looking for ways to encourage people to face difficult or uncomfortable situations (i.e. trying new things), with bravery and an open mind. When the person she supports feels stuck or unable to try the new adventure, Christina scales back the idea / activity into smaller steps or re-frames the idea / activity in a way that allows the person to feel confident and capable.

Christina supported Jerrid in taking small steps back into the gym. For a time, as the pandemic ebbed and flowed, Jerrid felt his agoraphobia coming back. He expressed that he was feeling defeated that he was unable to work through his anxieties. He spent a few months discussing strategies with Christina for getting back in the gym. Jerrid has consistently maintained his workout routine and is incredibly proud of the progress he's making both physically and mentally.



2023 ARRM CARES AWARD NOMINEE

Christine Reeve Lifetime Resources

Christine consistently supports the person she serves by assisting them with engagement in activities that are satisfying and meaningful to her

Christine is very supportive of this individual's relationship building with friends and assists with planning parties and events to host others in the home for celebratory events

Excellent engaged listening skills to be sure that the individual is driving her choices



2023 ARRM CARES AWARD NOMINEE

Alexis Santana Living Well Disability Services

Alexis is the epitome of a wonderful Direct Support Professional. She works at our Carmen house and is a bright light in the home. Alexis is kind, sincere, and giving, and when she comes to work, she is ALL in. People at the home adore her because she is authentically present with every encounter, and it is obvious she loves what she does. She interacts professionally at doctor's appointments and with families. She always maintains a professional attitude with the words she uses when supporting people. She advocates for people she supports and looks at their change in behavior and tries to figure out what they are communicating. She notices discomfort and acts on it immediately, and words things in a person-centered way when reporting to families and doctors. Alexis asks for input from family members so that they stay connected to the people and maintains a team approach.

The sister of one of the people she supports thinks Alexis is the epitome of a selfless human. She is kind, caring, fun, humorous, loving, hard-working and the list goes on. Her Program Manager, who has been with Living Well for a whopping 37 years, says Alexis is the kind of person who is always happy. That her essence is laughter, and she is never crabby. She shows up and gets the work done physically and emotionally and is fully present. Alexis has a very high emotional intelligence, which makes her an incredible role model for the people we support, as well as her colleagues. She always shows up in a positive and professional manner, be that in a doctor's office, with family, or in community.

When the road to Carmen was torn up, the people had to walk a long distance to get to their buses. It was hard on staff and the people that live at the house. Alexis would sing, and dance, and joke around with one person served on the long walk so that it was a positive and upbeat experience she made it less of a chore, and more of a fun walk. Alexis bounces back because that is what the people need at the house need. She has had to work alone when someone no-call no-shows, and although it is tough work, she continues to be positive and upbeat because she knows it directly impacts people. On nice days, Alexis makes it a point to do therapies (standers) outside with people so that they enjoy the weather and often turns routines and necessary things to do into something fun. She incorporates music into things so that is more fun. She has a way of looking at things from the perspective of 'if this were me, what would I want. What would make it better for me?' and then incorporates that into the routines for the people supported and engages her co-workers along the way. She leads by example.



2023 ARRM CARES AWARD NOMINEE

Jebbeh Seimavula Living Well Disability Services

Mayah is a wonderful staff that works with many individuals in a unique ICF setting with 4 apartments across the way from another one of our homes with 4 apartments as well. It is a true community. Over the years, she has developed meaningful and connected relationships with the individuals that she supports. Often times, she is directly sought out by individuals who enjoy working with her. According to her direct supervisor, Teewon Dolopei, 'She demonstrates passion and dedication to make sure that the needs of the individuals are met.'□

Mayah is always on the lookout for new activities and makes it a point to get people as engaged with their community as often as possible. She can often be found helping plan vacations for individuals as well as finding new and fun activities to participate in the community. She takes her knowledge and experience and creates meaningful and engaging activities for each individual. When Covid took away options and outings, she started taking the house to the park for picnics, and to this day they enjoy outings to the park to enjoy lunch. They enjoy making food together and getting into community.

Not only does Mayah work brilliantly with the individuals she supports, but she is also a solid staff member and very good at making sure her day-to-day tasks are completed. She is a reliable, hard-working, and dedicated staff member that can be counted on. Mayah takes the initiative when she sees something that needs improvement. Mayah is always a strong advocate and is respected by her colleagues.



2023 ARRM CARES AWARD NOMINEE

Brace Gotshalk Living Well Disability Services

One of Brace's outstanding qualities is his immense level of patience with the people we support. He listens to them, puts them first and always does what is best for them. He is also patient with staff and helps them learn their jobs both by being a great role model and by taking the time to make sure they have learned what they need to know before moving on to the next subject.

Brace involves the people we support in meal planning, empowering them to say what they like and helping them to make the meal they want. He helps them to voice what they want to do and is aware of their surroundings and helps make a comfortable environment for them. Recently, everyone in the house moved to a new location. During the process, Brace listened to the people's concerns, talking with them, reassuring them and bringing them to visit the new home, assisted them to pick out their rooms, pick out colors for their room and making the move the least traumatic as possible. He also made things run smoothly at their home and kept their routines as much the same as possible. In addition, he was a huge support to get the home ready for the people to move in. He worked tirelessly to bring the people's belongings to the home and set up their rooms just like they had been at the other house so the first time the people came to their new home, they had their own spaces, and they didn't have to come in to piles of boxes and chaos.

Brace has taken the time to develop strong relationships with the families of the people we support. He again uses his patience to listen to them and provide clear explanations to their questions. Brace works hard to make sure that the people are able to keep the relationships they have made. Two of the people have boyfriends that live outside of the company, and Brace helps them set up times to get together and makes sure that they are aware of special days like birthdays and holidays.

Brace is welcoming to family members and visitors who come in person to the house, and he helps set up Zoom meetings for one of the people to talk with his brother who lives out of state. Brace is welcoming to family members and visitors who come in person to the house, and he helps set up Zoom meetings for one of the people to talk with his brother who lives out of state.

One of the people we support is very interested in knitting. She has a plastic knitting circle to use as she only has full use of one arm. Brace has a strong background with computers, and he used this knowledge to help her research knitting machines which can help automate some of the processes that are difficult for her. She purchased the machine, and then Brace helped her look up YouTube videos to show her how to make different things using her knitting machine. She has since knitted several Pokemon characters and is just delighted with the things she can make. Brace is collaborative and open to new ideas. Two of the people he works with have Dementia, and he is patient and listens to the same stories over and over without correcting the people or getting annoyed. He works with someone with Oppositional Defiant Disorder, and when she is having a bad day, he listens to her, helps her to remember to breathe and to get centered. He can help her turn a breakdown into the realization that things aren't so bad after all. Brace brings such a kind heart and makes such a difference in the lives of the people he supports.



2023 ARRM CARES AWARD NOMINEE

Freya Gayken Living Well Disability Services

Freya was hired as a DSP in Spring of 2022, prior to our Selkirk opening. She worked tirelessly at Thompson supporting the people that lived there (including 2 ladies that would eventually move to Selkirk) until Selkirk opened in October of 2022. She has been an integral part of building the BRAND NEW team at Selkirk, working alongside staff training them and advocating with grace for the four people that live at Selkirk. 'Freya is an absolute light that shines bright at Selkirk. We are so incredibly lucky to have her as a part of the team. She tackles every challenge with patience and grace and always with a large smile on her face. She has built an incredible bond with everyone who lives and works at Selkirk, and this is apparent in the incredible smiles and positive interactions we see daily.

Freya has worked hard to get a gentleman at Selkirk connected with many medical providers to meet complex medical needs. She has happily advocated for a person served at the house to maintain and strengthen her relationship with her boyfriend that lives 30 minutes away. While not always easy, Freya knows it is important to keep social connections strong and ongoing and finds ways to make it work. And recently she brought a woman served to the State Capitol (for the first time!) to advocate for rate increases for supports she receives. She is always willing to get out into the community and support people in the way they prefer to be supported. She is an incredible advocate, through and through.

Creative, Innovative, Person-Centered Approaches to Services: Freya has designed working schedules to best support and accommodate schedules and interests of persons served. She has worked together with team members to gain input and insight into which approaches work best and continually tweaks and retools the system to improve the teamwork within the home with both staff and individuals. She is in the process of coming up with new ways daily on how to best support the artistic and adventurous dreams of those we support. She continuously blows us away with her creative abilities and how much she strives to get to know the hopes and dreams of those who live in the home to find new and innovative ways to make these dreams happen.



2023 ARRM CARES AWARD NOMINEE

Magha Penn Living Well Disability Services

Penn is a hardworking, compassionate staff that always comes to work with a positive attitude. She is kindhearted, person centered and reliable. Her Program Manager jokes that Penn is the house nurse, and frequently calls her Nurse Penn. She seems to always know what to do and when, especially in medical situations. She stays calm and collected, even during high stress moments. After working at Schletty for 3 months, one of the people we support had a pretty significant medical issue and Penn stayed calm and handled everything excellently. Penn has demonstrated that she can remain focused and has proven to be reliable and calm during medical emergencies as well as demonstrated excellent communication.

Penn is motivated by helping the people she supports stay happy and healthy. She always tries to find creative ways to help them engage in meaningful activities. She always wants to learn and tries to learn as much as possible and they apply that knowledge. She is patient and kind. When working with new staff she observes how the interaction is going and then offers kind and gentle direction if needed. Penn is confident and competent and will take the lead when needed. Penn is always willing to pick up shifts and help out. She has a wonderful positive attitude and brings good energy to the home. It is a blessing to have her on the team.

Penn showcases these admirable qualities in the way that she works with the individuals in their homes. Penn can often be found with a smile on her face and is genuinely happy. Not only does Penn have a great attitude, but she also has strong skills and experience that she brings to the table. She is genuinely motivated to always think about the people she supports. They can't do certain things by themselves, and she helps them to do things they wouldn't otherwise be able to do. Penn helps them stay healthy and happy. When she thinks about the people's laughs and smiles, it makes her want to come to work and be of service.



2023 ARRM CARES AWARD NOMINEE

Ruth Bingham **Living Well Disability Services**

Ruth has worked as a 1:1 Individual Home Support DSP with Living Well for almost 10 years, and she is fantastic! She is patient, creative and kind. Ruth is a teacher at heart. Encouraging the people she supports to master skills and become as independent as possible is her top priority. Ruth has worked with many people in the Living Well's Customized Service department, and she is one of a kind. She has a true passion for the people she works with. They look forward to spending time with Ruth. Families adore her and Living Well is definitely lucky to have her as a DSP.

She amazes us and parents with her abilities to get people involved with community clubs, projects and volunteer opportunities. From Feed My Starving Children, to The Wildlife Reserve, to storytelling with Toastmasters, making craft Monarch Butterflies to hang at the Mall of America, to shelving books at the local library, Ruth's ideas for fun and involvement never cease to amaze! Ruth loves to find engaging activities for people. She's creative, mindful, and positive in all her experiences with people. She brings joy to everyone she works with!

Recently, Ruth has been patiently working with an individual who deals with anxiety to help her become comfortable with camping. Often, they practice putting up a tent, and just spending time inside the tent in order for her to become more comfortable with closed in spaces! They also enjoy volunteering, tracking miles of walking and bowling. Ruth ensures regular visits with the person's grandpa to play some serious card games. Ruth supports another person with Autism while he volunteers at the local library. Together they alphabetize and shelve returned books. Ruth encourages him to be as independent as possible in placing books in their correct locations. She also takes him to his weekly piano lessons. Ruth is also helping him find a place to volunteer to play the piano. While this might not seem especially exceptional, the patience and time it takes for him to become comfortable just to enter, then sit at the piano comfortably, then place his fingers on the keys takes time, patience, and weeks before he may even start playing. Ruth is with him every step of the way.



2023 ARRM CARES AWARD NOMINEE

Annette Ripley Living Well Disability Services

How can I help? This is Annette's motto. Annette recently assisted one of the people we serve with cataract surgery. Each eye required six appointments, so 12 appointments in total. Many of these fell outside of her regular work time, but that didn't matter to Annette. She accompanied her on all but one of those appointments, coordinated her medication, and took her out for coffee or lunch after many of them. One of the surgeries was scheduled for the morning we were expecting a huge snow storm. We contacted the surgery center and were told that the surgery would still take place, "unless the roof was covered with snow." Annette offered to stay at the house overnight in order to make sure she was able to get to the appointment on time. She was prepared to drive her 4-wheel drive truck in case there was too much snow. She made it to the appointment and finished out her eye surgeries. She also followed up with her new glasses appointments afterwards. This person has never been much of a TV watcher, and preferred to isolate in her room. Annette found out that she likes to watch lifetime movies, and now that she is better able to see, she has had more of an interest in spending time in the living room watching these movies. Annette put together a zip drive of hundreds of Lifetime movies for the house (In addition to other zip drives containing other kinds of movies).

Annette has taken several people on the annual snow sledding trip to Camp Menogyn. This trip is lovely, but rustic for the best of us. She coordinates it all from making sure that people have all the snow gear they need, that their medication is packed, and any adaptive equipment is ready. She loads people into the van with confidence, and heads for the great North. This trip often requires several bathroom breaks, often assisting someone in a wheelchair to use a public restroom, which we all know can be a huge challenge. Once they arrive, the gear and often the person served, will be transferred via sled to the cabin. It is a lot of work and Annette has made this trip several times. It is exhausting, but she recognizes what a huge benefit it has for the person she supports.

Annette is creative and always tries to make people feel seen and heard. She makes breakfast wraps with different ingredients and keeps them available in the freezer for the people served to heat up for breakfast. She also recently purchased a waffle maker for the house and keeps the freezer stocked with a variety of homemade waffles for the people served so that they always have the option of a homemade meal for breakfast. When preparing the weekly menu, everyone has input, and the opportunity to choose meals they like. She does this to give options and choices, and to ease the work for other staff. She also helps in a larger way than breakfast. We all know that we are in a staffing crisis and that our industry is hanging on by a thread. Without people like Annette, it would almost be impossible to do the essential work we do. She has covered shifts in dozens of our homes. Annette is always the first person to step in and save the day, sometimes working at houses an hour away. When asked why she is willing to do this, her answer is simple, 'because they need me.' □ Leave no room for doubt, we need her just as much.



2023 ARRM CARES AWARD NOMINEE

Rachel Otten Living Well Disability Services

For 10 years, Rachel has been a constant, steady support and advocate for the people living at Living Well's Powell home. Rachel is an exceptional advocate for the people we serve. Her medical knowledge and experience continue to change the lives of the individuals at Powell and she works diligently to ensure all their medical needs are met. She prepares for appointments, addresses in detail the outcomes of each appointment, and completes follow up. She takes the time to check the medications and alert staff of side effects they should watch for. She is extremely organized and always willing to go the extra mile.

Rachel has an inherent understanding of internal networking and how it affects the flow of the home and the ability to reach the mission. She is always willing to help, no matter how boring or tedious, as she knows paperwork is equally important to the care. Rachel quickly embraced the thought of helping another house get organized because she knew it would help the staff keep on track --she updated forms, basically restructuring the paperwork for better flow and ease, she tidied up files, wrote up notes, and did what she could to help the staff better manage the home so they could concentrate on one-on-one care.

She also understands the importance of our tech driven world, and meaningful online connections, and acts as a the in-house tech crew. She is always fixing the internet and getting people established on their devices.

Rachel supports the mission and values of Living Well Disability Services. She assists in the development of our program and focuses on an individual's personal preferences, needs and their dreams. Recently, she enthusiastically stepped up to support another house, while maintaining her current duties. Rachel works quietly behind the scenes to keep things on track, rarely acknowledging or taking credit for her significant contributions but leave no room for doubt, her impact on the homes she works in and supports is beyond essential. Our industry is better for having her in it.



2023 ARRM CARES AWARD NOMINEE

Colton Matteson Lutheran Social Service of MN

I understand that Colton has only been here since February but since then his growth has blossomed and his strive and desire to succeed and grow even more is very sincere and clear. Colton has taught me things and I have been in this field since 2006! How he communicates and interacts with the clients is so amazing; he is there for them at all times. He's patient, kind, compassionate and willing to always go above and beyond for those he serves. He's always there for the clients to his best ability. Colton communicates in a patient, kind and compassionate manner by using his creativity and his skills when goals need to be met. For example, he kindly explains how to put on acne cream the correct way in a way the self-advocate will understand. He treats these individuals with dignity and respect at all times.

Colton is always there to listen; he likes to do things with the individuals he serves. He is patient, compassionate and always laughs with the individuals. He treats the individuals like the adults they are. He pays attention to their needs and wants while continually putting those he serves first.

Colton works with individuals he serves on the tasks they want. He helps them to succeed their goals by being creative and making the tasks fun. He calmly explains step-by-step how to help to achieve something



2023 ARRM CARES AWARD NOMINEE

John Harris

Lutheran Social Service of MN

John always shows up on time. He also picks up shift whenever needed, even last-minute pickups. He also comes in with a positive attitude.

John and the person he serves has a great connection. They laugh and joke daily. John understands the person he serves - he knows how to calm them down. John plays video games and watches movies with the person he serves.

John is always letting staff know the success stories the work better for the person he serves. He always jokes and entertains the person he serves. He shows great interest in the things that the person he serves says or wants to do. John always shows great compassion for the people he serves.



2023 ARRM CARES AWARD NOMINEE

Kiara Swenson

Lutheran Social Service of MN

Kiara has been working as a DSP for 2 years with Community Residential Services at Lutheran Social Service of MN. Kiara is fantastic at serving the people we support by listening to the people she supports and identifying what is important for and to them. Kiara takes her job to heart by being dependable, resourceful, and caring. She trains new DSPs with all of her knowledge and experiences all while being the best at her job, allowing newer staff to feel comfortable in the workspace.

Kiara will help to build and encourage the people we support with a natural support system. Kiara keeps the connection between the individuals supported and their close family and friends. Kiara assists with letter writing, phone calls, emails, and setting up visits. When necessary, Kiara will ensure there is transportation for the people we support to important events whether it be a family visit, appointment, volunteering, or a walk in the park.

Kiara always uses a person-centered approach with the individuals she supports. Creatively planning and suggesting new ideas for them to stay engaged with their community. Kiara sets individual goals with each person supported, encouraging them in achieving them thus allowing them to focus more on their strengths. Kiara has also developed a chart of progress, allowing the person supported to visually see and track their progress.



2023 ARRM CARES AWARD NOMINEE

Jerikovsky D. Ronald Lutheran Social Service of MN

Ron has been with LSS for the past 9 years. Over those years, he has displays and promotes conduct and behaviors consistent with LSS standard. Ron is good role model. He treats everyone the same and encourage his team members.

Ron always taking the individual he serves out in the community to connect with people. Ron supports the choices of the individual he serves and provides a safety net when things go bad.

Ron always ensures that the individual he serve is at the center of all that happen. Ron provides support that is respectful of and responsive to the needs of the individual he supports.



2023 ARRM CARES AWARD NOMINEE

Rotimi Kawonise

Lutheran Social Service of MN

Rotimi has been a DSP for 12.5 years in the Community Residential Services with Lutheran Social Services of MN. Rotimi is the epitome of integrity. He is deeply dedicated to the LSS mission. As a licensed CNA he could easily work elsewhere for much higher wages. He chooses to stay with LSS as he has a strong sense of loyalty not only to LSS, but the people served and his team. He has never failed to follow through on his promises. He consistently helps out his coworkers if they are in need. I cannot recall an instance that he has let anyone down.

Rotimi has volunteered to come in on his day off on more than one occasion to ensure a person served would have an opportunity to spend time with a friend. This entailed driving almost three hours round trip to do so. He did this as the person was new to our home and he felt it was important that the person stay in touch with friends as this was a big transition for him.

Rotimi treats every person served with the utmost dignity and respect. He takes the time to explain to ask each person what they want and need and explains everything he is going to do before he starts. He readily changes his support to meet each person where they're at to make them feel comfortable. He is up to try anything if he believes it will be of benefit to the people served and his team. Rotimi is one of the first to speak up at staff meetings to share what is working not working and to propose new ideas. Rotimi has taken the time to share his CNA skills with his coworkers to make their jobs easier and provide quality consistent support to the people served at the group home.



2023 ARRM CARES AWARD NOMINEE

Emilyn Haugen

Lutheran Social Service of MN

Emilyn has provided high quality support and goes above and beyond the call of duty.

Emilyn works with the person supports to assist them in maintaining their connection to their natural support network and creating bonds in the community.

Emilyn has continued to look for new and creative processes while sharing her knowledge and experiences with her team.



2023 ARRM CARES AWARD NOMINEE

Amber Kleinschmidt Lutheran Social Service of MN

Amber is a rockstar! Amber has been a DSP for 2 years with Community Residential Services (CRS) at Lutheran Social Services of MN. She has built a trusting relationship with all people throughout the home where she provides direct care. She mentors new employees, becoming the go-to person to ensure they are comfortable, and answering any questions. Amber guides her colleagues in the right direction to additional support and resources. She always has a positive, can-do attitude, and approaches conflict with the utmost respect. Her co-workers look to her as a shining example of what a DSP looks like.

Building positive relationships within the group home is one of Amber's priorities. Amber consistently encourages individuals to plan events that they would like to attend. One event, in particular, is the Royal Celebration. She notices how excited the people supported were about the upcoming event and volunteered to assist all people supported in finding the "right" gown/formal wear for this event. Amber searched out organizations that donate formal wear and involved guardians to assist with preparation. Amber even volunteered to chaperone. Amber is an all-around great employee, and I am grateful to have her on my team!

Amber is a wonderful role model to new and current employees. Amber is willing to try new things and offers constructive criticism when asked. Amber takes the time to find what each person likes, and what makes them tick. She goes the extra mile and supports each person where they are at.



2023 ARRM CARES AWARD NOMINEE

John Harris

Lutheran Social Service of MN

John comes to work happy and in a good mood. The clients pick up on that, which causes the people we serve to have good days. John is also able to help his client and staff if there is an issue. He can take a negative situation and turn it positive experience. One day our client refused to work with another staff John was able to talk with our client. Half hour later our client and the staff he didn't want to work with were playing basketball. John is there to help wherever he is needed. John is very welcoming to everyone: staff, new staff and new person served.

Just the other day our client was extremely upset about one of our staff members. John spoke with him and listened to his client. He showed compassion by sitting outside and letting the client vent. John shows his clients how much he cares. By him showing he care he can redirect and calm down the people he serves. Every person John has ever worked with like John so much. He has become some of their favorite staff. Another time John encouraged his client to stand up to his friends that were being mean to him. The client thanked John and told him how much he appreciated John taking the time listening and giving advice.

John encouraged his client to stand up to his friends that were being mean to him. The client thanked John and told him how much he appreciated John taking the time listening and giving advice. John also does activities that his clients want to do. He plays video games, play games, and watch movies. Whenever the person he serves is upset he is there to comfort, listen and encourages him.



2023 ARRM CARES AWARD NOMINEE

Michele Dunlap

Lutheran Social Service of MN

Michele knows that having conversations about health and weight is a sensitive topic. Throughout all conversations, Michele maintains dignity and integrity by having respectful conversations with L.G. She ensures that L.G. understands the topics, by keeping them simple, having L.G. reiterate what was said, and keeping things consistent; doing this makes understanding simpler and sets L.G. up for success.

Michele knows that L.G. enjoys her time with friends, especially the times when they go out for supper. L.G. and several of her girlfriends have a standing supper date every other Thursday. It is also important for L.G. to follow her weight loss plan as best as possible. Prior to L.G. going out for supper, if she knows where she is going, she and Michele will review the menu, looking over what some healthier options would be, and writing them down her reference. If it's unknown where they will be going, Michele will give her some examples of healthier options that would likely be on the menu.

Michele has given so much to LSS over her many years of dedicated service, and she continues to be a phenomenal support for each of the lives she gets to be a part of. LSS as an organization, the team she is a part of, and all the people supported, are incredibly blessed to have her. Most recently, she has committed herself to helping a person supported to lose weight. L.G. expressed that she would like to lose weight during a team meeting in February, but needed help, a lot of help, as she really didn't know how to do it or where to even start. Without hesitation, Michele jumped in and was ready to devise a plan to best support L.G. She knew that it would be a difficult task, that would hold just as much frustration as it would success, for both her and L.G. Michele quickly jumped into action, she had weekly meal planning sheets printed and worked with the Designated Coordinator to come up with a list of healthy alternatives for some foods. She and L.G. utilized some information online to follow a 'points' program for guidance, which gave clear boundaries, which was what she wanted. Each week, Michele and L.G. take the time to discuss what meals/snacks she would like for the week, calculate the 'points', write this info on the meal planning sheet, make a grocery list, shop, and then together prepare the meals and portion them out. Preparation for all of this is usually done over a couple of visits, due to the amount of time it takes. L.G. refers to this menu daily as a reminder of what is planned for the day for both meals and snacks. Each week, L.G. 'weighs in' on Wednesday; as of 4-26-2023, she is proud to share that she has lost 19.4 pounds!! L.G. is very excited to continue to work hard to lose more weight for her upcoming Disney cruise to the Bahamas in July. Without the consistent dedication and encouragement, which goes above and beyond, and the trust that L.G. has in Michele, this would not be successful.



2023 ARRM CARES AWARD NOMINEE

Diana Pederson Lutheran Social Service of MN

Diana has worked for LSS for 20 years and provided many benefits to people supported and her fellow co-workers. When she worked in the group homes, she was in charge of menu planning, grocery shopping, and ordering food from the food bank. She would find out what meals people supported wanted, then tailor the order to get foods from the food bank, that way she was saving money for LSS and also making sure people were getting nutritious meals they wanted. She supported individuals' grocery shopping so they could choose products they wanted. She also has served on the Safety and Wellness committee for 15 years. She helped plan, set up, get vendors, donations, and food for the wellness fair for several years. Diana also planned decor, set up the venue, menu, grocery shopping, and preparation of food for several Director's Awards. She is a consistent worker who completes her trainings on time, attends required meetings, and holds herself to a high standard, making sure she completes all things required of her during her shifts.

Diana supports people to meet with friends and family in the community. She has supported an individual to Pine River to meet up for lunch with an old housemate of hers, so they could catch up. Diana encourages the person she supports now, to make phone calls to her friends and family. Diana is a real estate agent and found the property that KV lives in now as an In Home supported individual. She cares about the individuals she supports and that doesn't end when she clocks out.

She has been a Special Olympic coach and partner for Track and Field, Bocce Ball, and bowling. She has supported individuals to state and regional tournaments. One individual was interested in learning to play guitar and Diana happened to find a good deal on one at Good Will. She let the person know about it and she went downtown and looked at it and purchased it. She then started playing guitar around the house. Even though she did not want to take lessons, she was able to enjoy playing the guitar at home. Diana has supported individuals to community education classes, and supported an individual who was taking classes towards her GED.



2023 ARRM CARES AWARD NOMINEE

Corey Borden Lutheran Social Services of Minnesota

Corey has been a DSP in Specialized Community Services (SCS) with Lutheran Social Services of MN for 4.5 years. Corey was very excited to join the team but hesitant due to the extra support the individuals supported needed. Individuals in SCS require 2:1 support. This can be due to their behavior, physical, and/or developmental progress. Corey constantly seeks training and advice from her colleagues and manager on new techniques to help build a relationship with the individuals she supports and de-escalate behavior issues. One of the individuals she supports can be very aggressive and has had physical contact with Corey. Corey's moral principles and continued training have helped her not only being able to build a sense of trust between her and the individual, but Corey was also able to find a solution to ensure it does not happen again. Corey has helped the individual learn boundaries, redirecting de-escalating techniques, and how to use their voice to better explain their frustrations. Corey has exemplified patience and a commitment that is contagious to the rest of the team.

Corey has been a strong advocate for the individuals she supports in Specialized Community Service (SCS). Corey is very observant of the individual she supports and had some concerns with their health status. Corey immediately contacted her supervisor and the person-supported physician. Due to her quick instincts, the person was admitted to the hospital and properly cared for. Corey contacted the person's family expressing that she wanted to build a natural support system around the individual. By doing this, she helps the person supported feel cared for, important, and most importantly loved. Seeing the trust that has been built between the two has been mostly admiring.

Corey always has fantastic ideas and when she comes across things that don't necessarily work for the people she supports, Corey finds a new approach. There was a new individual moving into the home and Corey took time to read and learn more about them before they arrived. Corey quickly identified that the person supported needs more of a routine in everyday care and daily schedule. Corey works together with the person in creating a routine clock. This clock was something the person supported became proud of and committing to the routine was a breeze for the individual due to their involvement. Corey has been a huge contributor to making the home more homely and welcoming by assisting in creating artwork for hanging on the walls, staining, and refurbishing furniture, as well as hanging and setting up a projector and screen for the individual to use when spending time in the living room. Corey always approaches the people she supports with a positive and reassuring demeanor, asking the individuals to complete tasks or participate in tasks or events, never demanding. Corey also interacts with her co-workers encouraging new approaches with the people she supports as well as informing them of things that she has tried whether they were successful or not.



2023 ARRM CARES AWARD NOMINEE

Kristen Villagomez Mains'I Services

Kristen was promoted into a lead direct support professional in the home and has done an excellent job transitioning into this role. She is a leader! Kristen took it upon herself to ask great questions and request additional trainings pertaining to her new responsibilities in order to exceed expectations for herself and the company. When faced with a challenge, Kristen utilizes her own resources to problem solve, and also knows when to ask for help. One example was with Special Olympics. There weren't enough staff to bring the people she supports, so Kristen chose to modify her schedule so they could make it to every practice.

She encourages co-workers to be involved and connected to the people they serve. She shows them effective ways to communicate and get to know each of the individuals. When staff struggle to make connections with the people they support, Kristen involves other staff into those conversations to help break the ice with staff and the individual. Kristen has personally trained in each staff in the home and leads by example. It is humbling and inspiring to see the pride she has in her role and the genuine desire to care for the people that live and work at the home.

Kristen takes the time to get to know everyone in the home whether they live there or work there. Kristen often asks for additional training and learning opportunities to stay up to date in the realm of person-centered thinking and practice. When she does take classes, she responds with demonstrating what she has learned in these courses with each of the individuals in the home. Kristen has been willing to be scheduled more often in order to accommodate the activities going on in the home. Countless times she has been there to get someone to an event that they would have missed had she not been willing to step up and work longer hours. She made sure they were there for every Special Olympics practice and competition, and YMCA training to support the athletes she works with to succeed in what matters to them.

Kristen has been a big part of the functionality in the home by sharing what she has learned and experienced with everyone living there. Kristen makes sure to spend time with each person doing things that they particularly enjoy doing and has helped explore different ways to learn about what these events or activities may entail by taking the time to truly get to know the people we serve. Kristen is able to communicate with her co-workers what has and has not worked for her and does her best to set others up for success to encourage the best support possible for them.



2023 ARRM CARES AWARD NOMINEE

Anna Watson Mains'I Services

Anna's work ethic, passion and job performance are undeniable but it's the intangibles that she brings that very few can duplicate. Anna's overall support comes in many wonderful layers. She can be as mild mannered through a storm as she is upbeat; her attitude is contagious. She has a deep connection with the people we support and has gained their trust. This has been especially valuable in supporting people who have struggled with their mental health. Anna uses effective coping strategies, has a strong rapport and has provided comfort during very difficult times. Anna did a wonderful job of supporting people to overcome the obstacles of the pandemic and continue to be involved in the things that mattered to them. Anna has installed confidence and courage throughout a time of fear and uncertainty.

As a co-worker, Anna is a great teacher in helping understand the people we support. Her overall goal is to enhance their quality of life and because she has such a strong rapport it makes the transition as a new employee appreciated

Anna has worked diligently to advocate for and ensure the therapeutic support recommendations from professionals are understood and implemented within the home environment. Anna has also gained trust from the families who have shown their appreciation for how much of a positive impact she's made. When you get a Christmas gift from a family that states, 'care giver of the year' it speaks volumes.

Anna has a unique way of making words paint pictures so people can see what is possible and feel like they are not alone. Anna is a DSP for a young lady with autism that is dealing with trauma and losing a parent. Some of the obstacles she was dealing with are not accepting who you are, getting back out into the community and not wanting to work anymore. Anna used technology as a creative way to interact and did research on the tablet to find celebrities that are on the autism spectrum. This activity and interaction made smiles for miles! You could see the feeling of hopelessness melting away and making room for feelings of purpose. Anna instilled confidence and courage to go out into the world and live. Making someone feel like they matter and are loved despite their struggles is when Anna shines bright.

Anytime that Anna is involved she uses a person-centered approach and does so at a high level. She understands mental health challenges and brings confidence to overcome obstacles. Anna's team-first mentality and passion has carried over to helping the people we support. Anna supports a person that does not do well when their routine is interrupted and this has been a challenge for most of the staff. Anna doesn't skip a beat, smiles, and continues to do her job effectively, understanding that her response has an impact on what happens next for everyone in the room. One of the people Anna supports has a family dog that sometimes comes to the house for this person to dog sit. Anna supports this person to be involvement with all aspects of feeding, watching him, and taking him for walks. Anna uses this experience as a creative way for skill building and learning new skills, all while having fun. It brings joy and comfort knowing you have someone on the team that is very skilled and really cares. Anna has gone above and beyond because she loves her job. Anna is one of the hardest workers, puts others first, is passionate and a fearless leader with a big heart.



2023 ARRM CARES AWARD NOMINEE

Sue Stone

Mary T Family of Companies

Sue's 40 year career as a Direct Support Professional has been supporting people in their own homes with SILS and IHS services. She listens carefully to dreams and desires and she puts an action plan in place. A person she serves with SILS services wanted to visit a dear friend in AZ and Sue planned flights, hotels and logistics while consulting with her supervisor to discuss how to use the limited hours of funding and avoid overtime by volunteering her time. Without the sacrifice of her time and understanding the difficulty of paying her for all the unfunded hours of work, this trip may not have been possible. What mattered to Sue was creating the trip of a lifetime for the person served and she was able to deliver through flexibility and putting the outcome as the primary focus.

Sue has done creative work to develop group activities for persons served with unit based services that supports them in their own home. She has organized regular basketball games in the summer and bowling in the winter as well as card and board games to connect people who receive services to one another and other tenants in the building. She has taken the time to get to know others in the apartment buildings that the persons she serves live in so that there is an extra safety net and a community of support. She is a natural people person and her outgoing and persistent personality has taught the people she serves, through example and coaching, to make these connections without her support.

Sue is known as someone who never lets an opportunity pass to teach a skill. Any time spent with a person served is a chance for growth and learning. From making good food choices to pedestrian safety she uses her time to teach and strive for the best life. When a person served was digging through the recycling dumpsters in their apartment building to "help" by washing out the cans she deemed unsatisfactorily rinsed, it was determined to be a potential safety concern by her team. Rather than trying to stop or control the "behavior" Sue developed plans to make it safe by providing gloves to avoid the risk of cuts and a smaller container to reduce the risk of falling in the dumpster. Sue realized that trying to curb or eliminate an activity that this person enjoyed was going to be met with resistance and attempts to hide the activity from others so she came up with innovative plans to make it safe. Another person that Sue served for 30 plus years was having difficulty getting into her regular tub to shower. Sue developed a unique system of multiple shower curtains on the floor and walls that allowed her to sit outside the tub to shower and the water was able to be directed back into the tub. This made the difference to allow several more years of independence in the home this person cherished. Being a direct care staff for 40 years has meant that Sue has had opportunities to make an incredible difference in the lives of many and truly become family. She started with a few folks in their 20's and 30's who were moving out of an ICF home and transitioning to an apartment training program. Sue was with them all the way and through years of teaching and support they were able to reach their goal of living in their own apartment. There have been several people served that she assisted all the way through the stages of life. For two women who were best friends, Sue supported them from an ICF to their own apartment where they lived happily for many years. She advocated and supported them as long as possible but when it came time to get more support and move to an Assisted Living she was there to make the transition smooth. For these people served, Sue was much more than a paid staff. The bonds made over so many years means that Sue became family and a rock of support through incredible bonds of trust and love. From the people she serves, to guardians and families, everyone has the same thing to say about Sue.....she has a heart of gold and always puts the person first.



2023 ARRM CARES AWARD NOMINEE

Neal Bond Mount Olivet Rolling Acres

Neal has been in his role for 21 years. He's a 'seasoned' staff and acts as a mentor for new staff when they start. Neal helps with training new staff. He's worked in the same home the whole time he's been with MORA and the guys who live there are like family. Neal takes time to make sure that the new staff have a good understanding of each guy, what's important to him, and what a meaningful life looks like for him.

Neal is always professional in his interactions with people supported, fellow coworkers, and families/any visitors who come to the house.

Since the guys he supports love music so much, Neal helped get them connected with the karaoke community. There is a strong community of people that travel to many of the different karaoke shows throughout the area. The guys now have a whole network of people who know and enjoy spending time with them.

The supervisor of the home is also a fan of karaoke and had the opportunity to bring one of the guys to her weekly karaoke spot. As soon as they walked in the door multiple people came over to greet the person who accompanied the supervisor and express how excited they were to see him. Early in the night he knew more people there than the supervisor did, even with it being a new place for him to sing karaoke.

It's been a pleasure to see the joy Neal has brought into these individuals' lives and the community he has built with them.

Neal has worked with the same gentlemen for 20 years. He always strives to help them find and participate in activities that they enjoy. Neal has a passion for music, and so do some of the guys in the house he works at. Neal has helped the guys to embrace their love of music and has been a key piece in the guys getting involved in music events in the community. Neal has accompanied the guys to concerts, helped them meet local musicians, attended music events with them, and has spent lots of time in thrift and music stores helping them expand their collections.



2023 ARRM CARES AWARD NOMINEE

Nikki Raze Mount Olivet Rolling Acres

Nikki is new to us, having joined MORA when we purchased the AFC she's worked at for a number of years. You wouldn't know she's new if you met her, however. Nikki has immersed herself in MORA's culture. She has a great attitude and has been proactive about learning MORA's policies, procedures, and protocols.

Nikki has worked with the people she supports for some time and has built a good rapport with families, case managers, day programs, and her coworkers. She keeps the Sierra house in tip top shape by ensuring physical plant needs are addressed immediately. Recently, the home lost power due to issues with Xcel. Nikki jumped into action, using her problem-solving skills and contacting MORA's service rep. She planned a last-minute activity to get the people in the house out and occupied until the power was restored.

Since joining MORA, Nikki has worked hard to get the people she supports back to their day programs. She knows how important it is for them to have work to do but also how much the relationships they formed at work are. Nikki encourages the people she supports to spend time with their parents and other family members. She also works to ensure people are fully integrated into their community. She regularly takes people to local events, where they can enjoy an activity and connect with others.

Nikki helped to reconnect a person with their parents, whom they hadn't had a relationship with for some time. This individual now has weekly FaceTime sessions with their family.

Nikki is person-centered in all ways with the people she supports and her coworkers. When MORA took over the house in February, Nikki took it upon herself to lead the charge with redecorating. She helped people pick out paint colors for their bedrooms. She helped people decorate their rooms with photos of their choice and any personal items they enjoyed and wanted to display. Nikki also helped to decorate the main areas of the house with artwork created by the people who live there. Before MORA took over the home, there were no decorations, in people's rooms or in the common areas. Nikki has made the house feel like a home, which family members have noticed when they visit. Nikki fosters individuality for each person. She's great at offering choices and works with each person to ensure they have 1:1 time with staff. Whether it's going shopping, out to eat at a favorite restaurant, or just enjoying the neighborhood, Nikki always asks people what they want to do and what would be most meaningful to them.



2023 ARRM CARES AWARD NOMINEE

Carol Smith Mount Olivet Rolling Acres

Carol is a lead Day Services DSP for people that do not attend a day program or work. Carol worked hard to set this program up. Her goal was to make the program important and meaningful to each person involved, and that's precisely what she did. When developing this program, Carol focused on the preferences, strength areas, dreams, and needs of each person. Carol puts MORA's mission in action with this program.

Carol is a natural leader in the house. She helps with onboarding new staff, works to instill the value of person-centeredness into everything that happens in the home, and helps the house coordinator keep the home itself in good shape. Staff and people supported know they can count on Carol to be there for anything they need.

Carol knows the importance of relationships and what they mean to the people she supports. She assists people with writing letters, sending cards, calling, emailing, and using technology to stay close with their loved ones. Carol helps people use Skype, FaceTime, and Zoom to make calls so they can truly connect with others. During COVID, Carol made a special effort to ensure the people she supports stayed involved with activities and people. She knew it was important for people to see the faces of their loved ones, even though they couldn't visit in-person.

Carol makes connections with local community members that interest the people we support. She's connected with a pumpkin patch, local community festivals, and carnivals.

Carol goes above and beyond when it comes to providing person-centered services. One person Carol works with loves the Minnesota Vikings, and especially the cheerleaders. Carol reached out to the Vikings communications and events coordinator and arranged for the Vikings cheerleaders to come out to MORA's Pearson Center gym and have a meet and greet. People from across MORA were invited to attend and when the cheerleaders arrived, the Pearson Center was filled with fans. Carol made this gentleman's dreams come true. It was an event that he said he will never forget. Carol supports each person in their spirituality and makes sure that they are always connected to their own faith. She creates trivia games based on each person's faith and listens to people talk about their own beliefs. Carol always has music playing in the house. When you walk in you feel like you're walking into a fun and inviting home. People are always busy, as Carol regularly comes up with creative art projects like string art, pottery, spin art, stepping stones, and gardens. Carol makes each project adaptable, so it meets the physical needs of each person. She's there to assist, with a smile on her face.



2023 ARRM CARES AWARD NOMINEE

Elm Matthews Mount Olivet Rolling Acres

Elm has worked at the Plymouth Road house for four years. He started working as a medical specialist and then moved into a program coordinator position, taking on responsibility for running the house. During his time with MORA, Elm has seen lots of changeovers in leadership and house staff. Throughout this he's maintained a positive attitude and kept person-centered care at the forefront of all he does.

Elm's supervisor describes him as 'reliable, relentless, and consistent' in the care that he provides to the people who live at the house. Elm routinely goes above and beyond in many ways "picking up extra shifts, covering different positions (Elm acted as both the PC and med specialist for a long time while the med position was open), and providing quality care to the gentlemen in the house.

Elm knows the ins and outs of the guys at the house and how the house itself runs. He's great about training new staff and staff who are subbing and picking up shifts in the home. He's developed positive relationships with the guardians and family members of the people he supports and with the staff in the house.

Elm has built strong relationships with the support teams for the guys, including their day programs, families, and other providers. Elm encourages the guys to participate in activities through MORA's rec department. He makes sure that the guys stay active in their communities as well. The guys have opportunities to participate in events that are important to them, such as church services, going to the movies, and going out for coffee. Elm encourages the guys to spend time with their families too, and they are routinely gone for a few days or a weekend at a time.

Elm is creative in his approach with each guy that he works with. Since he knows them so well, Elm can tailor his communication to each guy. He works with staff to ensure that the people supported live lives that are meaningful to them and that their days consist of different activities that are important. Elm uses the relationship he has with care teams to provide creative support to problems solving different issues that arise. Because Elm knows the guys so well, he's a great advocate for them and the different needs that arise in the house.



2023 ARRM CARES AWARD NOMINEE

Julie Peterson My Brothers Keeper

Julie also helps to ensure that day-to-day support is not only provided to the people served but also implemented. This includes documenting observation at the end of each shift, daily progress details on goals of our individuals we support, ensuring that we maintain a clean and organized home environment. Julie ensures that the; Daily, weekly, and monthly cleaning tasks, are not only documented, but are really done.

Julie has demonstrated exceptional performance in her role as DSP lead. Among Key being coordinating tasks between the people served and staff providing services, discussing shift coverage concerns with staff. Julie will offer herself the opportunity to work if there is no coverage. Julie is able to network between our organization (brother's keeper management), staff and her supervisor to ensure clients receive much needed service. Having worked for the organization for 20 years gives Julie an upper hand on how to deal with clients, staff, and management.

Julie has demonstrated remarkable success in creativity, collaboration dedicated to her work. Both clients and staff know Julie as a handy lady, who will fix most of the maintenance issues and call maintenance when only out of her reach to fix. Julie is so creative. For example, the wall schedule has the summary or all weekly hours updated against the name of each staff member. This makes the work easy for any staff who wants to pick a shift as he/she will automatically know how many weekly hours are available or when an employee will be overtime. What Julie does is to promote transparency to all staff for the benefit of the



2023 ARRM CARES AWARD NOMINEE

Lisa Morgan Opportunity Partners

In her time at Opportunity Partners, Lisa has supported people in at least six group homes "" that's a lot of people! Lisa has a special way of making sure everyone receives her attention. She cheers people on when she takes them to Special Olympics activities or bowling at Adaptive Recreation and Learning Exchange (AR&LE), bakes treats on her own time for birthdays or special holidays, and she is always open to trying new activities. Lisa will take people to the Dollar Store or on a special trip to get pizza just because it's a weekend and everyone's home.

Lisa is also a loyal, thoughtful and respectful co-worker who offers to cover shifts on holidays "" and at multiple house "" so her co-workers can take time off. When she is at group homes with people served who do not have families to go home to, Lisa will cook a special dinner or make a delicious dessert for them to have something special for the day as housemates are gone.

William said, 'Lisa is so nice to me and the guys. She will surprise us with bringing in food for dinner. Lisa is so nice, she even feeds the squirrels here at Circle. She named one Cujo.'

Lisa helps connect individuals to natural support systems by taking them places that are important to and for them, and where they can build bonds with others, such as to church or recreational opportunities. She also recognizes when people want to have a little fun, and she supports their appropriate choices. Cameron said, 'Lisa took me to Mystic Lake for lunch and to do slot machines. It was a great time and I even won money,' □ he said with a smile.

Lisa is an amazing person who uses her heart as a guide as she works with the people she serves. Lisa has a great 'go with the flow' □ attitude and a wonderful sense of humor, which is vital to the position. She also knows how to keep people grounded with her calming demeanor. She listens to people and is sensitive to individual needs. She motivates people so they keep focused on the task at hand. For example, if a resident is cleaning his room but feeling overwhelmed, she will offer to assist like saying that she will hang up some clothing if they take their garbage out or cheering them on in a fun or silly way. Lisa is very creative and will think outside the box to help people stay focused on their tasks. Her 1:1 attention and kind nature is important in motivating people to do a good job and work toward their goals. All in all, Lisa is a model employee and we are lucky to have her at Opportunity Partners!



2023 ARRM CARES AWARD NOMINEE

Guy Johnson Opportunity Partners

As Opportunity Partners' long-time Leisure Coordinator, Guy Johnson helps build memories and increase inclusion for people with disabilities. Over the years he's organized thousands of fun outings, expanding people's horizons and creating space for individuals to be themselves.

One favorite activity is a day trip to the Norske Nook, a restaurant in Wisconsin that is famous for pie. Guy has been taking OP participants on this fun trip for 35 years. He said his favorite part about his job is 'getting to take people out and helping them have fun.' □

Other adventures with Guy include going to baseball games, malls, movies and road trips. Organizing such adventures is no easy feat, requiring precision in schedules, transportation, spending money, medications and diets, and more. Guy handles these details with great care and open communication, building up an amazing rapport with persons served and staff in the process.

Certain expectations may be difficult for persons served. One resident tries to be charming on outings to the movie theater, but is sometimes inappropriate in talking with young women he sees. Guy gently guides him in a different direction, explaining why approaching strangers in this way can be uncomfortable or even scary for others. Guy is calm and professional with all involved. He strives for the community to accept the people we serve, while providing support and advocacy for everyone to be able to enjoy the activity.

Because of his longevity at OP, Guy has gotten to know the persons he serves very well and looks for activities he knows they will enjoy. They have become familiar faces at restaurants like the Norske Nook, where they know long-time servers like Marlene on a first-name basis.

Guy facilitates activities that bring people together who have known one another for decades. A number of the individuals lived at a large OP residence that eventually closed and everyone was dispersed to small group homes. Guy facilitated regular meet-ups at the mall so the people who used to live together at the larger facility could remain in contact and preserve friendships.

The benefits of leisure activities with Guy are apparent from the persons he serves. 'I enjoy being out and the people,' □ said Bethany. Janet remarked that Guy is like a second father to her.



2023 ARRM CARES AWARD NOMINEE

Dorothy Carver Paradigm Residential Services, Inc

Mrs. Dorothy is a very youthful 82-year-old lady that has shown vast commitment and dedication to serving her clients. Mrs. Dorothy is what we call the 'Grandma' of Paradigm. She exceeds all expectations when it comes to caring for the guys of the home and making sure they are living their best lives. She enjoys taking them out into the community, shopping, and attending church services. She encourages them to socialize and not isolate. Some of the guys served at the home do not have a family or contact with their family. Mrs. Dorothy ensures birthdays and holidays are celebrated in a family-style atmosphere. In 2021 Mrs. Dorothy had to take a medical leave due to breaking her ankle. The passion and empathy she shares with the guys also extend to her Supervisor and co-workers. She was on her way to drop off a care package and gifts for her Supervisor's grandkids that had just lost their mom when she fell. While away in rehab the guys' well-being was still at the top of her mind, as she made frequent calls to check in on their well-being while she was away. As soon as she was cleared, she reached out and was eager to return to work.

Mrs. Dorothy pays attention to details and the client's health. When she notices a decline or something out of the norm she notifies the supervisor immediately and suggests alternatives. She works alongside them to monitor their progress with completing tasks and assist them as needed. She takes the motherly approach and motivates them to attempt each task first and complete as much as they can before she physically assists them. Mrs. Dorothy continues to be a permanent fixture at Paradigm, showing up faithfully to her shifts and assisting with coverage as needed. This gives the guys a sense of belonging and consistency. She has a heart of gold and her selflessness is unmatched. Mrs. Dorothy's infectious smile and soft-spoken approach are beyond welcoming and genuine. She is the pillar of the home and the glue of the "family atmosphere" that is felt when you enter the home. Her presence puts the guys at ease as they have expressed feeling safe when she's around and love having her on shift because she's their family.

Mrs. Dorothy makes plans with the clients' interests in mind. She is aware of what they like and takes that into consideration when making plans for activities. She monitors their mental and physical state while planning and implement alternatives. She always try things their way and then hers when she notices that they are struggling. For example, we have an individual experiencing an early onset of dementia. He was eager to go shopping and asked to walk alone to gather the items on his list. She noticed that he was standing and staring blankly and it took him longer than normal to gather the items. The next time they went out, the individual made his list but she planned that she would give him time to shop alone as desired and once that time was up would step in and they would gather the remaining items together.



2023 ARRM CARES AWARD NOMINEE

Reya Gathings Pathways To Community

Reya is always flexible, caring, and supportive with any of her peers, supervisors, and co workers. She always wants to help when she can and puts others before herself.

Reya understand that each individual has different needs and different abilities. She is always reaching out to external resources to help support the individual with items that they have specifically required.

Reya always asks the individuals what outcome they would like to see. How to get to that goal, and what needs to be done thats a reasonable expectation for that individual.



2023 ARRM CARES AWARD NOMINEE

Sheikhnoor Abdo Pathways to Community

Sheik has great judgement when it comes to how a client is feeling and has an innate calm demeanor to him that clients gravitate to. He is extremely patient, kind and thoughtful while working with clients. In addition, he communicates well and effectively to his peers and is always very respectful to everyone around him. Sheik is also very dependable and hardworking - we can always count on him to help out when needed.

Sheik is great at communicating with people outside PTC, including clients' team members (e.g., therapists) and has been recognized as someone who the clients love and admire.

Sheik takes the time to get to know each client and understanding their needs and emotions seems to come naturally to Sheik.



2023 ARRM CARES AWARD NOMINEE

Andrew Jopling Pathways to Community

Everyone that is lucky enough to meet and work with Andy, always feels respected and appreciated. He strives to look opportunities that offer community involvement, person centered, and can help build someone's emotional and physical wellness.

Andy works in the individual's homes, and also with the individual's families and caregivers, to offer the supports his individuals are comfortable with. He always reaches out to his supervisors, and other team members, for ideas if something doesn't seem to be working. One of his individuals recently lost their father, after a long battle of illness, and Andy made sure that he was there for him. He went in to work with this individual on the weekend (which he normally doesn't work) to give the individual's mom time to grieve, but also spend time with the individual and offer some outside supports and take his mind of things.

The families and individuals that Andy serves has reached out to share how much they appreciate him. Andy frequently reaches out to see what opportunities are in the realm of his profession, and look for ways to make things happen that are centered around the person and their wants and needs. He always seems to find fun, supportive and interesting ways to encourage community involvement--whether it be looking for activities within their vicinity, but also giving opportunities for them to go beyond and participate in activities that may have been out of reach to them with their current supports. One of his individuals wanted to learn to fish, but didn't like the "waiting" part of catching a fish. This same individual also loves helping take out the garbage and cleaning, so Andy thought of a fun idea that involved "fishing for garbage." Him and the individual would throw out a line to catch litter, and clean the lake together. The individual LOVED it!



2023 ARRM CARES AWARD NOMINEE

Jade Cook Pathways to Community

Jade holds her coworkers to a person centered communication approach. Always finding ways to show her coworkers the most person centered high dignity way to communicate and also support individuals at her site express themselves clearly and easily for them.

Jade finds places in the community the individuals may find others with similar interests. This includes parks, museums, theaters, events, etc. She also helped one of the individuals connect with new neighbors on halloween by passing out candy to them and introducing himself. Being a person who has autism this was a great opportunity for him that he expressed he enjoyed even though it was hard.

Jade ensures the visual schedule for the individuals is of the best quality. Including making pictures, words, looking at other examples, and continually changing it to allow the individuals more opportunity to communicate and be person centered.



2023 ARRM CARES AWARD NOMINEE

Benjamin Krick Pathways To Community

Through tough times and staff shortage Ben goes above and beyond to take the necessary steps to accommodate the client's needs, so he provide them with the best possible care.

Ben continues to advocate and finds resources for all his clients whenever he feels that they need it or if it's ever requested by the clients. Ben has been in the field for 5 plus years and he is very knowledgeable of what the best solution each problem that arises.

Ben has been in the field providing direct care services for many different clients throughout his career with Pathways. He has the ability to communicate and advocate for his clients needs. With his experience, operation at the site has been running effeciently with all clients.



2023 ARRM CARES AWARD NOMINEE

Samuel "Sammie" Lurie Pathways to Community

Sammie demonstrates his dedication to person centered choices, while also being very supportive to his everyone he interacts with--whether it be a family, staff, individual, co-worker, etc. He is such a positive influence, and uses his positivity when working out outcomes with his individuals. One of his individuals can be very socially withdrawn at times, but also wants to make friends. He is one of the only staff that I have seen work with this individual that gets the individual excited about going out into the community and trying new things. It isn't magic, but shows how Sammie's relationship building skills and supporting the individual's choices can do wonders.

Sammie does amazing things with his person-centered mindset. He strives to find out what or who is important to and for the individual. Sammie was working with an individual that was struggling with some verbally aggressive neighbors. He took the time to listen to the individual with their concerns and ideas, but also did a great job in encouraging them to reach out to those who could help with the situation instead of taking care of it on their own. Over time, the situation resolved itself peacefully, and the individual was happy to be able to stay in his current home.

Sammie works the Weekend Respite Program and takes on many Lead Roles to facilitate a weekend activity that may involve large groups--for example, five or six staff with 20 or 24 individuals. Some activities he helps to facilitate include Twin's Games, State Fair, Renaissance Fair, Rodeos, etc. Sammie did a great job on learning what worked best for the group to support everyone's wants and needs, but also making them fun for everyone. The individuals and their families have called to share how much they enjoy Sammie being there, but also looking forward to seeing him again. He always shares his feedback with other staff or teammates to continue to support the individuals in the best way possible.



2023 ARRM CARES AWARD NOMINEE

Helene Mogosanu Pathways To Community

She has built great relationships with the persons served. She understands their strengths and helps them build on those strengths. She is always willing to help when she can. She is respected by her coworkers. She takes pride in her work.

She communicates well with persons served. She looks for ways to help the persons served get out and get connected with community activities and resources.

She regularly communicates with coworkers and supervisors work approaches well and which do not. Helene always puts the needs of the individuals first. She will encourage their active participation with things north within the home as well as outside the home.



2023 ARRM CARES AWARD NOMINEE

Nahum Menasi Pathways to Community

Nahum exemplifies quality leadership as a Site Supervisor. There is no job he's too good for and no policy he is above. He sets a high standard of integrity and role models what it means to be a quality caregiver and teammate with each shift he works. Nahum has excellent follow through -if a concern or task is communicated to him, it is with the secure knowledge that it'll be handled quickly and completely. When it comes to serving his clients, Nahum always places the individual at the center of consideration. He practices excellent emotional intelligence whether interacting with an employee, individual, teammate, care team collaborator or community member.

Nahum regularly works to get the individual he serves out into the community. This is not often an easy task as the individual is quite reluctant -and not afraid to make that known. So even when his efforts are shot down 9 times, Nahum will always still go for that 10th because just maybe, #10 will be a yes. Because of this perseverance, Nahum has helped this individual to attend events where the individual had, in Nahum's own words, "the biggest smile on their face the whole time." Nahum's relentless positivity in the face of rejection makes him the ideal advocate for those that he serves.

Nahum's steadfast involvement has allowed him to build a repertoire of skills, responses and tactics when it comes to serving clients. However, his patience and creativity have made it so that when that arsenal fails, he can still produce new ways in which to tackle obstacles. Whether it's to do with staff scheduling or client care, problems don't stay that way for long when Nahum is helping with the problem solving. And if plan A doesn't work, there's never any shame in moving onto Plan B. Or C or D.



2023 ARRM CARES AWARD NOMINEE

Alex Varner Reach for Resources

Alex has worked with a gentleman for the entirety of his time at Reach, the past ten years. Through his time with this person, one of the biggest challenges has been working with his team to be able to provide the best supports possible to him. Alex has maintained a sense of professionalism while constantly advocating for an increase in independence. Others will oftentimes fight against this, stating that this person isn't capable, however, Alex knows better. Through the rapport and relationship that these two have, the humor that Alex brings into the conversations, Alex knows that he wants to be more independent, and to be seen as capable. Alex has helped him to do this. Alex has helped him to see what he is truly capable of, at the same time processing through all of the days/weeks troubles.

Navigating this has been hard, especially when there isn't always solid family support. Alex knows though that if he can impart some hope, some self-confidence, and some humor, that he will begin to see what he is capable of. This has been proven through the work that they do together. Where we used to see what his parents call behaviors, is really just him trying to be able to communicate, and Alex continuously is there to give him those skills, ask clarifying questions and develop the tools that he needs to communicate effectively.

Alex knows that he can not be the only person in the lives of those that he is working with. This is a team effort and those teams are so different for each of those that he works with. One person that Alex has worked with is homeless. He will go out to this person's 'corner' and meet with him there to help him get connected to the resources that he needs at that time. This changes day to day. Sometimes it is a new pair of socks, sometimes it is the nurse that he needs to connect with to help inform about information related to his diabetes, sometimes it is the housing provider. Alex has advocated for this individual to have many other supports get added into this person's team, but it needs to be done on his terms. If they are not willing to meet with him on his corner, then those services and supports will go nowhere. Alex makes this happen. He advocates for this person, so that services will be able to be delivered where, how and when are going to work for him. He will meet those other entities with him on his corner, because that is what works for him.

It is easy to meet someone where they live, but when someone is homeless, it is imperative to meet the person literally where they are at. Alex has done this and advocates for other services and people involved with this person to do the same. He has made these other organizations and service providers challenge their policies and views on person-centeredness, as he knows that meeting with this person on 'his' corner is the only way that services are going to be able to be delivered. Alex truly does 'meet people where they are at', literally. Alex not only talks the talk, but he is actually walking the walk.



2023 ARRM CARES AWARD NOMINEE

Jenna Weineke

REM

Jenna is always soft spoken and always a good listener.

Jenna is always looking for educational things for the individuals we serve to learn about

Jenna is just a great, perfect employee all around. Never complains, always looking for a solution to any problem, very thorough with everything she does. Wish I could clone her for every house and 4 more of her for Westwinds. I thank her every chance I get for being a part of our team



2023 ARRM CARES AWARD NOMINEE

Jessica Gates

REM - Community Behavior Supports

This person is a perfect balance of all of the characteristics for team leadership and serving residents empathetically.

Jessica goes above and beyond for every aspect of her job, including advocating for the persons she serves.

Jessica comes up with creative and effective ideas to improve the lives of the persons she serves.



2023 ARRM CARES AWARD NOMINEE

Carri Hanson
REM Arrowhead, Inc

Carri consistently handles high behaviors in a manner that not only decreases the behavior, but also preserves the emotional integrity and well being of the individual.

There is one individual that Carri supports that has occasional suicidal ideation. In his support plan, it is noted to encourage him to reach out to a local crisis center, 911, or his behavioral health doctor, and Carri is very good at advocating with him to reaching out to those places.

Carri tries different approaches to behavioral intervention when it's needed. If one intervention doesn't work, she tries another. If that doesn't work, she keeps trying, even tries something new until something works, or the individual starts showing signs of agitation, before stopping.



2023 ARRM CARES AWARD NOMINEE

Ivan Ostlund Latour REM Central Lakes

A client that Ivan works with is having problems going to appointment. Ivan has uses incentives such as, going out to eat after the appointment, going to the mall, or going for a walk. Nothing is currently working. Ivan than set up a meeting with that residents entire team including some top people from REM Central Lakes regional office. He was the lead at the meeting and expressed his concerns and asked everyone how and what they thought the best way was to go about getting the resident the proper care. Everyone pitched in and within a day or two Ivan had all the staff up to date and the new approaches were in place. Even though the change in the resident has not been notice yet I have no doubt Ivan will continue to try to find a solution.

Ivan sets a great example for all DSP because of how much he cares for the clients and how he only wants the best for them. Ivan will not stop until the best care possible is found for that specific client. He also always reaches out to people to help him find that care and to get it set up. He holds the staff that he works with to the same standards. Every client deserves the best care possible and Ivan finds a way to make that happen every time.

Ivan is also great with find support that fits the resident's needs. He is currently working with the house nurse to find an in-home psychiatrist for one of the residents that does not like to go to their appointments. He is working to not only find one that is open but one that is covered by the residents insurance. Ivan is able to think on all sides of a problem and find the best solution for that specific resident.

Every client is different and how to work with every client is different. Ivan is very good at always communicating with staff what he has found works for a specific client. He also gathers data form other staff members and relays it to everyone so that staff has options on how to work with that client. Making sure the client is being help in ways that work for he/she is something that Ivan is great at advocating, retraining and coming up with ideas for. One example that Ivan did was start a care binder for a client that was not getting enough water and that we were concerned for their mental health status. Ivan made this binder were the staff track every hour weather they offered water to this resident and how the residents was doing over all. This binder is helpful because is the resident has a bad day we can go back to that binder and see if find a trigger. With that same client Ivan had set up a training by a specialist on the resident's mental health disorder for all staff to attend. He makes sure that staff are always trained on the up-to-date information and that if they ever have questions that he finds the answers for them.



2023 ARRM CARES AWARD NOMINEE

Jessica Gates
Rem Ramsey Inc

Jessica works really hard and makes sure that she is professional with co-workers and the case managers etc. Jessica has made an effort to come in almost every weekend and take one or two individual's on an outing. She has taken them snow shoeing cross country skiing, she has taken them bowling and to the movies. Jessica finds the things the individuals are interested in and they want to do or try.

Jessica continues to connect with the teams to give the best care possible, She actually works the program.

When Jessica started 5 months ago one individual was missing school almost every day. he was about to be kicked off the work program and probably would not graduate only going one or two days a week. Jessica said everyone deserves an education. Jessicas schedule is 11am to 7pm Jessica started coming in at 630am and she has drove this individual to school for the past three months he is now on the B honor roll and in line to graduate. Her dedication to the individual and the difference she has made with him by driving him to school he has only missed 2 days of school in the last three months. Jessica also does rewards program and even though she knows there is a possibility it could be broken she brings in her oculus for one of the individuals to play when he has done really well for the week. Jessica is now working with one of our other individuals and getting him to get a dose flip so he can administer his own medication and she has him on track to eventually move out on his own. this individual with jessicas help is now cooking all of his own meals and looking forward to when he can move out. He's excited about the goals he is achieving.



2023 ARRM CARES AWARD NOMINEE

Abass Abdalla

REM River Bluffs Rochester MN

Yes Abass goes above and beyond with his job.

Yes Abass supports his individuals by going on outings in the community.

Abass comes up with ideas for individuals to complete their skills while he is on shift and individuals stick with his ideas that he brings to the table for them.



2023 ARRM CARES AWARD NOMINEE

Khalid Abdullahi

REM River Bluffs Rochester MN

Khalid supports his individuals by encouraging them to go out in the community getting fresh air does best for them. Khalid also joins his individuals by gaming with them and having the individual set a goal for themselves to win the game.

Khalid involves himself with individuals. He asks how their day was and asks if individual can help with dinner.

Khalid brings good ideas for the individuals to do their daily living skills and explains to them how important it is to keep up with for example taking showers, making beds, and brushing teeth does go a long way to make individuals feel great.



2023 ARRM CARES AWARD NOMINEE

Jamie Lovaasen-Miller REM South Central Services - Sevita

Jamie works at one of our more challenging programs, with an individual that needs staff who are hands-on and engaged. Jamie has been the individual's champion and devotes her time finding ways to stabilize his behavior. In the past, this individual's behavior was very severe and aggressive. Now the individual is much calmer and seems happier. Jamie has come up with a routine that calms the individual and provides structure. She is meticulous when training staff, teaching them the approaches and terms to use when working with this individual. A staff that used to work with this individual when he lived at another organization could not believe the positive change in him! She said "he is so happy now and she cannot believe that his aggression has diminished so much." Jamie has created a stable home for the individual and his housemates by mentoring to staff and ensuring staff are informed of any changes to the individual's needs.

We recently received an email from the individual's mom: "Jamie is one of the best people we have ever had working with my son. She has so much patience with him, which keeps his anxiety in check, which helps minimize behaviors. When taking him to places where he is around others, she knows how to keep his anxiety in check. A couple of years ago we were trying to get a seizure alarm for his bed we were having trouble getting it and Jamie was very instrumental in getting this for him. I can always tell when Jamie has been with him because he is always clean shaven, his hair has been washed and he is always dressed so nice. She is the first person we have had that is not afraid to take him to doctor appointments alone. She takes him to get haircuts. She actually searched for a hairdresser who was comfortable taking on a client with his diagnosis and behaviors. At one time in his life we had to have someone come into the home to cut his hair because everyone was afraid to take him out. She has found the secret of giving him his meds without causing anxiety which triggers behaviors. If my son misses his medications his behaviors increase and limit his ability to get out. She attends all of his doctor appointments with us. She is very interactive with him.

Jamie has memorized words of songs on his playlists and videos he watches. She saw how much he loves music and uses that to develop a relationship and calm him. She has taught staff the same. To successfully administer his medication, she reads the individual's body language to know if he is ready or not. She has taught her staff to read the body language also. She wants the staff to be on the same page to provide consistency.



2023 ARRM CARES AWARD NOMINEE

Marie Olson SMB Disability Solutions

Although she has never worked in this industry before coming to SMB, Marie Olson has shown incredible professional integrity, resilience and commitment to the people she serves by fighting through adversity and finding the exact position where she could maximize her gifts and abilities. Marie did not excel in the initial position she was hired to fill at SMB. When faced with similar circumstances, far too many people in Marie's position abandon the caregiving industry. Marie, however, took on several roles in nearly every department at the company, never giving up on her commitment to provide quality care to the people she served, like a young man named Cole. Cole is nonverbal and can exhibit challenging behavior that is intimidating for even the most seasoned DSP. A theme in her professional life, Marie once again exhibited resilience with Cole. Sticking with him and teaching him to utilize an iPad for communication and learn daily tasks that other staff had thought out of reach considering Cole's impaired dexterity. In fact, a DSP from another company in the area who had worked with Cole months earlier went out of her way to compliment Marie and Cole on their progress, stating that the things Cole was capable of with Marie's help were previously thought impossible.

Ultimately, Marie fell in love with a role in SMB's Day Program. Here, her story came full circle from a brand new to the industry, struggling DSP to a confident and ambitious professional who would shortly be recognized as SMB's 2022 Employee of the Year and has subsequently taken on more leadership responsibilities, assisting with the Day Program's day-to-day operations. In this role, Marie's ability to advocate for and connect individuals to natural resources was allowed to shine brightly. Marie has pushed several ideas to fruition including connecting people with others in their community via growth groups, local gardening resources via gardening groups and countless other opportunities. Her efforts in these areas have helped foster independence and socialization for dozens of people.

Marie demonstrated incredible ability to develop and implement creative, new and person-centered approaches to providing services while working with someone who was brand new to SMB's Day Program. She created a specific social skills program designed around this person's social anxiety to provide opportunities to socialize and connect with specific people in the program that were a good "match" with the person's interests and hobbies. The new person admitted to the program struggled with debilitating anxiety. Marie used her compassion and skills to develop several strategies catered specifically for this person to come out of their shell and connect. She worked one on one with them and helped them forge relationships with other participants and staff by utilizing focused reassurance and encouraging self-talk. Under Marie's care this person went from hiding in the corner of the room to sitting at a group table and eagerly engaging with their peers. They even added extra days at the program.



2023 ARRM CARES AWARD NOMINEE

Tiffany Christensen **TBI Residential and Community Services**

Tiffany spends her time making the lives of the individuals we serve lives better as well as making her co-workers days easier as well as enabling them to be better at their jobs. Tiffany has worked around the clock to provide services to our individuals on hospice care while providing emotional support to the staff and family of those individuals.

Tiffany works hard every day to take individuals to doctors appointments and community events that they would to be able to otherwise attend due to the staffing shortage.

Tiffany also works hard to recognize and support her co-workers on a daily basis.

Tiffany's level of expertise has allowed her train many DSPs, PSs and PDs. She has worked tirelessly to assist our nursing program when illness left them short staffed. When ADs, PDs and PSs are overwhelmed with work, Tiffany graciously assists in doing their tasks to makes their loads lighter.

Tiffany assists in making sure our individuals are able to get to work, see their families and enjoy all the community activities they want to. Individuals that have wanted to attend church for years have been connected and often transported personally by Tiffany.

We serve an individual at TBI that had to leave several previous providers because of many issues. We struggled to provide services for 14 months. When Tiffany became involved, the individual very quickly had a transformation that the individual, her family and her team have raved about..



2023 ARRM CARES AWARD NOMINEE

Nick LeBrun The Phoenix Residence, Inc.

Nick is the ultimate team member! He problem solves situations to make sure everyone's needs are met. If he has a conflicting appointment, he reaches out to others to find the coverage needed so appointments are not missed or cancelled, or he suggests alternative solutions.

He sees things through to completion! His written and verbal communication is professional, and he responds to emails in a timely matter.

Recently, Nick took it upon himself to help the individuals in one of our homes coordinate medical transportation and receive Metro Mobility certification. They were thrilled with their newly acquired independence!

Nick started at Phoenix just over a year ago as an Appointment Coordinator, but we have found he is much more than that! Nick is phenomenal at what he does" despite being new to the industry!

Not only is he facilitating appointments at his designated homes, but he also willingly offers his assistance to other homes needing planned or last-minute appointment coverage. One example that comes to mind is last Easter. He was only 2 months into the position, but he so graciously brought one of our individuals home for Easter when he wasn't scheduled to work. He then continued to work at the house for the remainder of the evening. It was very evident that this was so important to the individual and her brother, and they were so appreciative!

Nick helps stressed family members feel calm, and his communication with guardians, parents, and other family members is always courteous and respectful. So many people have commented on how impressed they are with Nick and all the tasks he takes on. He is an absolute joy to be around!

Nick is the ultimate Activities Coordinator! From the very beginning, he jumped right in and is always willing to help the individuals attend community events " even if it is on a holiday or his day off! He has done an exceptional job facilitating community outings to the Mall of America, Minnesota State Fair, family visits, and he even offered to bring someone to a Vikings game on Thanksgiving Day! Recently, one of our managers was trying to find transportation for an individual to attend three family outings. There was resounding 'Ask Nick' when the manager asked for input from upper management. He is the first person we go to when we need an extra pair of hands!



2023 ARRM CARES AWARD NOMINEE

Shelley Peltier The Phoenix Residence, Inc.

Shelley doesn't do this for just this woman. This is her approach when working with all six people in the home. From making sure the local church clergy faithfully visits every week to bring communion and pray with one woman, to coordinating Girl Scout troop visits for the craft lovers in the house, to organizing WWF wrestling matches for the guys who love these events" Shelley does it all! Over the years, Shelley has recruited her family and friends to help with events, and to this day, those relationships continue! Now, they routinely visit and ask Shelley what they can help with, instead of Shelley asking them.

During this unprecedented staffing crisis, Shelley has worked endless hours to make sure every shift is covered, every family member is welcomed, and most importantly, making sure the people we support are living their best lives doing the things they LOVE! Shelley is one of our 'Gold Star' managers! Even though our dear friend lost her battle with cancer, I am sure she felt the love of everyone she touched, but especially the LOVE from Shelley.

This woman LOVED vacationing in Branson, Missouri! Her favorite performer was Irish singer Daniel O'Donnell. Shelley ordered playing cards with Daniel O'Donnell's picture and placed them in a box that this woman could keep close to her when she was in hospice care. This woman held on tight to the box of her treasured Daniel O'Donnell cards. Shelley knew this would bring her comfort. (Even more so than the lavender-soaked cotton balls that Shelley thought might relax her " she didn't love those and threw them on the floor!). Shelley even made sure Daniel O'Donnell's music was playing as her life's journey came to an end.

This woman LOVED her brother and sister-in-law. When they were out of state for a month, Shelley assured her that she would be able to FaceTime with them every day. This helped her family stay updated on their loved one's care, but more importantly, this woman never felt disconnected from her family while they were thousands of miles away. This meant the world to her!

This is a LOVE story! But while most love stories have a happy ending, this one is bittersweet. Last week, we lost a beloved friend who had lived with us for 29 years and whom Shelley worked with closely. Her passing left a hole in her heart! Throughout this individual's cancer journey, Shelley helped her connect to the things she loved. This woman LOVED everything Christmas! She never wanted to take the Christmas tree down. And so, Shelley made sure it never was! She transformed it into a Valentine tree, adorning it with hearts and all things pink and red. By Easter, the tree was covered in carrots, bunnies, and colorful eggs. And for Cinco De Mayo, red-hot chili pepper lights and small sombreros adorn the tree. This woman also LOVED Pepsi! Every day, Shelley would remind our Environmental Services Coordinator, Shawn, to bring her a Pepsi. On the rare occasion he forgot, he would run to the store for one. Finally, Shelley decided hiding a case in her office was more convenient for Shawn than going to the store. And to carry on that tradition, Shelley is even coordinating a Pepsi tablecloth to be used at her memorial service!



2023 ARRM CARES AWARD NOMINEE

Nakia Hammond The Phoenix Residence, Inc.

The home Nakia works at had a manager turnover recently. The former Program Manager stated that Nakia was her right hand in the home. When the home was without a manager for a period of time, Nakia assured that medications, supplies, and groceries were all ordered, that employee schedules flowed, and that family members received routine updates.

Our organization provides support to individuals with very fragile medical needs, but Nakia is extremely reliable when working side-by-side with our Nursing team. She accompanies individuals to their medical appointments and relays detailed information back to the nursing team, family members, guardians, and coworkers. Family members are always looking to Nakia for recommendations, updates, and feedback.

Throughout COVID, Nakia was a champion of infection control, assuring all COVID protocols were implemented, and most of all, helping the individuals at the home feel some sense of normalcy when they needed to stay home from work, isolate, or limit interactions in the community.

Nakia has also been willing to share her talents with other homes. She recently initiated additional training to work at another home within our organization. Nakia has been and continues to be one of our brightest shining stars! Nakia supports everyone's relationships, but several recent examples illustrate her compassion in this area. W's mother passed away years ago, but Nakia continues helping W purchase flowers to bring to the cemetery where her mother is buried. Given that W lived with her mother for years, maintaining this memory of her mother is extremely important to W.

Nakia also helps another individual maintain his relationship with his mother who lives out of state. "A" loves McDonalds and would share this treat with his mother when she lived in Minnesota. Now, they continue meeting on FaceTime with Nakia's help. These moments help A see his mom's face, hear her voice, and "share" his McDonalds with her. He can't verbally express his happiness, but it's noticeable how important these times are—not only to A, but to Mom as well! Finally, "T" has been through some challenging health issues related to swallowing and potential aspiration—prompting a change in her feeding method. This is life changing for T and has been a difficult decision for her and her mother. Nakia has been in frequent contact with T's mother, our Nursing team, and our dietician. She has provided emotional support throughout this process.

Encouraging. Advocate. Supportive. Friend. Calming. Welcoming. These are just a few of the words to describe the incredible gift Nakia Hammond is to us and the people we support. When "W" moved into her home 5.5 years ago, she weighed over 300lbs, was using continuous oxygen, and got tired easily walking from her bedroom to the living room. She wanted to lose weight but struggled with how to achieve that goal. Nakia slowly worked with W to make lifestyle changes. Snacks became healthy, exercise started with walks to the mailbox that eventually turned into neighborhood walks, and restaurant trips became trips to Subway. For W, it was about the experience, and Nakia always made it fun! Several years ago, W was experiencing a mental health crisis that required hospitalization. Her ability to return to her home was in question. Nakia worked with W to manage her mental health with the things she loves, such as her crossword puzzles, art, and her favorite TV show. Today, W credits Nakia for helping her manage her mental health. W states, "When I get hyper,



2023 ARRM CARES AWARD NOMINEE

George Winston The Phoenix Residence, Inc.

George has weathered many things, including the ever-changing transitions this industry has endured since the Pandemic. He first started as a Direct Support Professional working long hours at multiple sites to keep our homes and individuals safe and running smoothly during the leanest of times. He then moved into the House Supervisor position at our Autism-specific home.

But most recently, he was promoted to our Program Manager at that home. 'George has been instrumental in bridging the gap after the last manager left,' □ said his supervisor, Alan Berner. 'He is there for the individuals when they need him the most' making sure they have everything they need.'

With the management transition, George has really shown excitement about learning the corrective action process, purchasing systems, household management pieces, including state survey visits and fire drills, along with strengthening his relationships with guardians, being on-call, and hosting several holiday events this past winter. George is also a highly effective trainer when new staff join the team.

George said he has many fond memories of holiday group gatherings that have enriched his life over the years. However, we know that he has left equally lasting impressions on all with whom he's worked!

All of the individuals living in the home have very supportive and involved family members. George has facilitated activities, such as tie dying, fall decorating, and cooking and baking events " inviting family members to join in on the fun! He always makes the family members feel welcome and connected to their sons and daughters anytime they come for a visit. He takes great pride in making sure that every visitor gets a "Grand Opening" experience when they visit the home. Family members have commented repeatedly about George and his outward passion for the work he does.

He is integral in helping individuals reach their goals and potential! "C" graduated from High School last June, and George has supported C as he takes his next steps into the workforce. He helped C prepare for professional and personal relationships with supervisors, coworkers, mentors, job coaches, drivers, etc. C looks to George for advice and recommendations as he prepares for the next step in his independence "ultimately, helping him land a job!

George is a rap artist whose song titles illustrate his approach to supporting individuals with disabilities: Passion, Limitless, Day Dream, Survive, All Love... Immediately after meeting George, you see beyond his stoic exterior to find a person who is so compassionate, creative, and accepting of others. George supports individuals with Autism. Consistency and familiarity are keys to their success. George is like that favorite sweater - that comfort and contentment that keeps things familiar and happy. George is not one to pass judgment. All he sees are opportunities for everyone he supports! On many occasions, George sat with "L" for extended periods of time encouraging her to feed herself, even when she was ready to quit. Additionally, George has helped an individual display more adaptive behaviors. "A" tends to greet individuals by pushing the boundaries of personal space, potentially putting himself at risk. George consistently teaches him more socially acceptable greetings. George loves to dream. If there's a new craft idea or menu item, he's going to DIY it! Last fall, he orchestrated an amazing display of Halloween pumpkins that were original works of art for each individual in the home. He captured their unique interests in every pumpkin.



2023 ARRM CARES AWARD NOMINEE

Kayla Pearson TLC of Duluth, Inc.

Kayla Pearson works as a DSP who provides Individualized Home Supports with Training. In that role, she works with a diverse population of adults and children with Mental Illness, Developmental Disabilities, and chronic medical conditions. Though Kayla shines in each of her pairings, her work with some of her clients stands out more than others. TLC serves an individual with extreme hoarding tendencies exacerbated by compromised physical health. Of the many individuals that TLC assigned to support this individual, Kayla was, by far, the most successful as a result of her high standards for professional integrity. Kayla provided compassionate support to help this individual keep their apartment to a safe level that passed fire code and building inspections. But in doing so, she maintained firm boundaries for expectations of services. Their time together elicited not only the most improvement TLC saw in the client's apartment, but also the client being more willing to work with Kayla than any previous staff. It may not seem like much to have success measured by a client being willing to meet with and work with their staff consistently, but the client's willingness to do so with Kayla revealed how successful Kayla was.

Part of providing successful direct care with Home and Community-Based Services is to help the person served connect with their community. Kayla currently serves an individual who lives and works independently that receives supports for areas related to social integration and financial management. Kayla's resourceful nature is apparent in every shift with this client. Recently, this client fell victim to a financial scam. Without requiring direction from administration or county agencies, Kayla connected the individual with community resources to report the scam and protect the individual's assets. That is a more extreme example of connecting to community resources and supports, but Kayla assists this individual in other ways each time she sees him. This individual enjoys making purchases online to save money. With Kayla's help, the individual was able to make a purchase on Facebook Marketplace and safely make the transaction for the purchase. During these (and many other) instances, Kayla maintains consistent encouragement for budgeting and smart fiscal decisions with regard to the individual's high level of vulnerability related to money.

Creative delivery of person-centered services is key to the role of a direct care staff. Kayla's versatility in this area is apparent in her client assignments. In any given week, Kayla is supporting an individual in the community with safe financial transactions, providing homemaking for someone who is physically unable to clean, seeking volunteer opportunities with a young individual who is building skills to work, and facilitating appointments and the improvement of another individual's physical and mental health. Though this type of variety is inherent to the field, Kayla delivers these services at a higher level than her peers. Kayla's days with her current and former clients are unique. Her time with each client is so individualized that one might not even realize she is providing the same services to each of them. Kayla's services inform and guide the client's care plans and inspire others for work they can do with the individuals they serve. In this area, Kayla is a model to her peers. A rising star is someone who is up and coming in their field, but it's a rare occurrence when that individual shines brighter than many who are well-established.



2023 ARRM CARES AWARD NOMINEE

Linda Ripley TLC of Duluth, Inc.

Certain staff members form the framework of an organization; the types of individuals whom it is hard to imagine working without, both because of their tenure and because of what they bring to their team. Linda Ripley is one of those individuals. Linda's professional integrity is apparent in all areas of her performance as a staff member. She provides services as a DSP at a high quality, but she is committed to the well-being of everyone she serves in more than one dimension of care. While working on a client's goals and supports, Linda frequently checks in with administration to ensure the way that she serves her clients meets the needs of clients and falls within the expectations of the company and service provided. She's an actively engaged participant in meetings with her peers, and she establishes firm, healthy boundaries with co-workers with whom she is related. Linda is also aware of how her own life can affect the way she serves others, and she has the insight to make changes as needed. In these ways, Linda shows that she is dedicated to serving people wholly, and she has a nuanced sense of how many areas go into supporting people.

Linda is talented in connecting people with their community. A person that Linda currently serves is driven to spend more time in the community, but they face barriers related to social anxiety and physical health. Linda has shown great success in helping this individual spend time out of the house. As a starting point for experiencing new parts of life, Linda suggested a coffee shop that the individual had not yet tried. The client is now known by name and has a 'regular order' of the establishment's potato salad. In a short period of time, the client has become connected to the owners and staff due to Linda's involvement. This relationship is the first step in connecting the client with their community beyond grocery stores and medical providers; furthermore, this individual has changed their outlook. The person Linda serves is contemplating end of life care, and her regular conversations with Linda have helped her to value the natural supports that she has, and the individual is taking steps to mend broken relationships with family members or old friends. TLC has served this individual for years with several staff, but Linda is the first to be able to foster these relationships.

Linda has had many memorable pairings that have led to unique services. A young man with Autism whom Linda supported for years through his love of the Grinch and the Scene It board game comes to mind; however, one of Linda's most exceptional presentations of creative, person-centered care was with a child she served earlier in her tenure. Services for this individual with a developmental disability centered around helping them learn safety skills, both in the home and in the community. One of those identified skills was to be able to learn basic community orientation in addition to being able to find their way home. After building skills in this area through play—an age-appropriate strategy for this individual—Linda was able to show that the individual had learned to navigate home by driving around the community on less familiar routes and then asking the individual to provide the directions needed to drive back home. By the end of their time together, the individual was able to do so even if Linda had taken steps to be intentionally disorienting about where they were driving. They fostered other community safety skills as well, but none as memorable as this.



2023 ARRM CARES AWARD NOMINEE

Lori Lande
Trillium Services, Inc

Lori has helped Shannon with a lot of her coping this year. When Lori can tell when Shannon is getting overwhelmed she will encourage Shannon to take deep breaths. Lori started just by role modeling this to Shannon and now Shannon will sense herself getting frustrated and overwhelmed and will start to take deep breaths without any cues or prompts.

Lori does a great job making sure that Shannon utilizes bank clerks, checkout cashiers as well as those that work at the DMV when she is at each of those places.

Lori this past year has been working with Shannon to help her utilize a computer device that lets her communicate when staff is not around. This device Shannon can utilize when no one is around and she need to let them know that she needs something like the restroom, TV remote, or is hungry.



2023 ARRM CARES AWARD NOMINEE

Tina Yeazle Trillium Services, Inc

Tina was hired as a Program Coordinator at one of the Trillium CRS homes, and it was at that time we immediately realized we had a gem of a staff. Tina learned her role, as a house coordinator, and took it to the next level. A few short weeks in, we found that she was thoughtfully coordinating activities for all the gentlemen in the home, and was even organizing and attending activities on her days off. Tina has brought a consistent quality home cooked meal and budding house projects to a home that had three (now four) eager bodied individuals just nipping at the opportunity to explore the area they live and the opportunities Duluth has to offer.

Tina stands out in networking supports, to me, by the way she took in the new admission to the home, and provide planned out trips to visit his family, but also finding ways to connect him with some of the folks living in the home. He is now board game buddies with one fellow, and cooking partners with another, neither person having been as motivated to perform these activities until Tina brought the common interest out of them and linked them to this new fellow.

This doesn't seem as ground breaking as the other reasons for nominating Tina, but she picked up a few asleep overnights at the home and had some really good ideas immediately. She used her critical thinking skills and was able to reassess the overnight routine to align certain aspects of one fellows midnight and morning routines making them more intuitive and person centered afterwards. We've also seen Tina bring a newfound love for gardening into the home, and now that we're on year 2 of having this Mary Poppins'esque figure in the home, the hand picked by service recipient seedlings, have since taken over areas of the home just waiting to be planted. All 4 of the individuals have picked out what they are interested in growing and have all since been maintaining the plants till they reach maturity to plant in the new gardening areas of the yard.



2023 ARRM CARES AWARD NOMINEE

Hana Nelson Trillium Services, Inc.

Kind, compassionate, and caring are just a few of the things that come to mind when I think of Hana. Hana joined the Trillium Services team in 2021. Since her first day, Hana has given her all to the people that she supports. Hana thinks outside the box when supporting people living in their own apartments. She is a leader in promoting independence and is a cheerleader when it comes to people making big changes in their lives. Hana also is a mentor for new employees, teaching them the ins and outs of things and sharing her knowledge of what works and what doesn't work.

One of Hana's many strengths is helping others connect with people in their communities. She focuses on finding natural supports that allows others to be as independent as possible. One story that comes to mind is when she was working with someone that recently moved into her own apartment for the first time. Hana took the time to help her with building relationships with her neighbors and finding common interests to help her feel at home and more comfortable in her new environment. She is now spending time with new friends, sharing meals together, and volunteering with groups at her apartment building. She continues to work endlessly to foster natural supports for the people that she supports.

Hana works with a variety of people and does an amazing job wearing different hats and adapting to each person's needs. She has the ability to bring people together and is creative in finding ways to help others be successful and live a meaningful life. When it comes to providing person-centered services, Hana is a role model for others, teaching and training and always looking for new and innovative ways to help people on their path to success.



2023 ARRM CARES AWARD NOMINEE

Mark Anderson Trillium Works!

Mark came to Trillium Works! from a background in the local school district as a paraprofessional. He has a knack for reading people and adapting to meet their needs. He has a can-do attitude with a determination to stay positive no matter what the day brings. Mark's most recent Trillium story revolves around a gentleman we support named Dylan.

Dylan began with Trillium Works! in 2019. His world changed vastly almost overnight when he moved into a new home in 2020 during the beginning of the pandemic. Dylan went from being outdoors and active to staying inside and playing video games to pass the time. When restrictions were lifted, he had a challenging time getting back into his old routine. This is where Mark comes in.

Mark began working with Dylan only a few short months ago, but has already helped Dylan grow leap and bounds. Mark is typically shy and takes a few months to warm up to new staff but he and Mark hit it off right from the start. Mark provides exactly the right kind of support needed for Dylan to stay motivated and engaged. Where Dylan previously needed continued time and encouragement to get out of the house, now as soon as Mark arrives, Dylan is ready to head out the door and take on the day.

Mark exhibits the drive, passion, and caring heart that Dylan needs. His dedication to Dylan's success never waivers. He has begun attending Dylan's team meetings, met his parents and other team members, and taken an active role in Dylan's programming. Dylan's family greatly appreciates the support that Mark has provided. His mom has said that Mark is 'incredibly kind, patient, and caring,' and has even said that 'Dylan finally found his wing man.'

Without Mark, Dylan would not be showing the progress he is today. Mark and Dylan have created a very special relationship; they just click. Mark has gotten Dylan to step out of his comfort zone, leave the house every day, and explore his community. Dylan has been talking more, joking more, and even made it to the Trillium company picnic. Mark has been instrumental to Dylan's growth and success.

Whether hiking at Hartley Nature Center, walking in Canal Park, taking photos of the ships, or exploring the wide variety of parks that Duluth has to offer, Dylan and Mark are always on the move. Mark encourages Dylan to try new things, go to new places, and celebrate the victories that Dylan achieves along the way. Mark has also been helping Dylan develop his work skills by going shopping at Super One for his house. Mark encourages Dylan to plan his shopping days, stick to a budget, and make healthier food choices. Mark has been wonderful in being creative with different ways of working with Dylan.



2023 ARRM CARES AWARD NOMINEE

Catina Mell Volunteers of America

Catina goes out of above and beyond to support the people she serves as well as her coworkers. She frequently comes in on her days off to fill shifts when needed and is always flexible with the team. She takes the ladies out for haircuts and other outings to get them out of the house. She makes sure all their needs are met and more and is just a hard working all around compassionate human being.

Catina reaches out and encourages as much involvement as possible outside of the group home. She reaches out and communicates with their family members as well getting them involved in outings and events in the small community they live in.

Catinna is creative in her approach with the ladies that live in the group home she works in. She has gotten to know their individual needs and things that bring joy and happiness to their lives. She sets up fun game nights and outings that each of them have an interest in. She shares her successes with her co-workers. She has gone out of her way to find adaptive equipment on Marketplace that will benefit the ladies quality of life.



2023 ARRM CARES AWARD NOMINEE

Lucinda Battle

Volunteers of America of MN & WI

Lucinda represents all of Volunteer's of America's core values and is an essential member of the Ashland House team.

Her greatest joy is interacting with the clients and to me that means more than anything. She has a true passion for our mission and is very thoughtful and dedicated. The clients love being around Lucinda and respond positively to her loving nature.

Lucinda has worked many different shifts during her employment with Volunteer's of America. She always works diligently with compassion, competence, dedication, integrity and most of all love and commitment. Lucinda always envisions the bigger picture when giving care to each of the people she serves and supports. She makes sure that they are given everything they need to thrive.

She follows the plans that are developed by the individual care teams. She works with guardians for support in maintaining those plans. She advocates for maintaining their independence. She respects them and their choices. She gives the clients choices in different activities they would like to do she doesn't just pick something she likes.

When one of the people supported is having a bad day, she encourages them to facetime their family to talk through their day and cheer them up.

She trains staff to engage with non verbal people served, including knowing their favorite music and movies. She trains staff to listen to what they are showing you, because it is very important to pay attention since they are non verbal. Ask them questions about did they sleep well how are they feeling today did they enjoy their food. An example of a personal approach was when she advocated for starting her morning shifts earlier in the day. She wanted to ensure that there was enough time to assist one of the residents more during the morning routine. So that individual could have be more presentable and have her hair done before work in the mornings.



2023 ARRM CARES AWARD NOMINEE

Natt Jaleiba Wingspan

Natt began working at the Wingspan Crisis home for the past 2 years. Prior to working at the crisis home Natt worked direct care at another Wingspan group home. Natt has shown how he is beneficial to the work that can be challenging at times with the individuals served at the crisis home. Natt is always working on programs to benefit the individuals served. One example, is that Natt connected with an individual that needed structured exercise groups. Natt took it upon himself to organize an exercise routine for this individual. This particular individual would wait patiently every morning for her favorite exercise buddy as she referred to Natt. Natt also plays a crucial role in maintaining integrity and consistency of his co-workers. Natt is often promoting team work and consistency with his co-workers. Another individual served at the crisis home who had very challenging, interfering/highly aggressive behaviors referred to Natt as PA. Natt worked with this individual on managing their mental illness symptoms by providing this individual with a variety of tools to add to her tool box to get her through difficult times. When this individual was able to be safely placed outside of the crisis home she left a note for PA, saying his care and concern for her was life changing and she would not be where she is now without the support, concern, care from Natt, her PA.

Within the Wingspan organization Natt was instrumental in starting a company wide support system called The Spoken Word. Individuals of the group led by Natt were encouraged to share their journaling, poems, short stories to the group. This group has been a huge success. The group has created lasting friendships amongst the individuals that have chosen to participate. Many of the groups short stories and poems have been published in the Wingspan newsletter. People who receive the monthly newsletter often comment on how much they love reading the journal entries, poems and short stories.

Natt with his artistic ability always takes upon himself to do the one page person centered plan forms for all the new admits at Harmony house. Natt often sees programming not being successful and encourages changes to programming which better serves the individuals being served. With one individual who was a huge batman fan Natt created person centered planning with an entire batman theme.