



DSP OF THE YEAR 2019

We recognize Direct Support Professionals who are exemplary models of their profession.

Process

28 DSPs were nominated by their peers, supervisors and executive directors for DSP of the Year. 12 of the nominees were chosen DSP of the year by a panel of three judges.

Criteria

Accomplishments

Relationships

Advocacy

Sacrifices

Creativity

Code of Ethics

Laurie Blackberg
Support Systems



Laurie has helped "R", who loves music, attend concerts and perform on stage, improving his self esteem and friendships. "M's" first Christmas without his dad was a struggle, so Laurie used her time off to talk with "M", sort through painful memories and show him the importance of making healthy choices. "M" made it through a stressful time without hospitalization, thanks to Laurie.

Wilson Fancieh
HAV-IT



Wilson gets full participation from all who attend “Music and Move.” Using instruments, some of which are his own, Wilson engages clients in physically and emotionally. Wilson takes pictures of clients participating in activities and edits them, on his own time, into videos to share with his clients. Smiles, self-confidence and positive attitudes are what Wilson and music do for the bodies and souls of clients.

Steve Schultz
CHI Friendship



Steve has helped a client put his art on display at art shows and the client has won awards. Steve assisted a client to play in an adaptive softball league and another to overcome nervousness to sing in a church choir. Steve also helps clients and their families plan holiday trips so they can spend time together.

Varney Barclay
Enable



Varney has changed his personal schedule to attend medical appointments with a client who has cancer. Varney has advocated for referrals to specialists and to get medical assistance for medical supply expenses, which has reduced the number of medical appointments necessary for this person. Varney also has a way of infusing fun, joy and positivity into the most challenging situations.

Anna Pederson
Easter Seals Goodwill



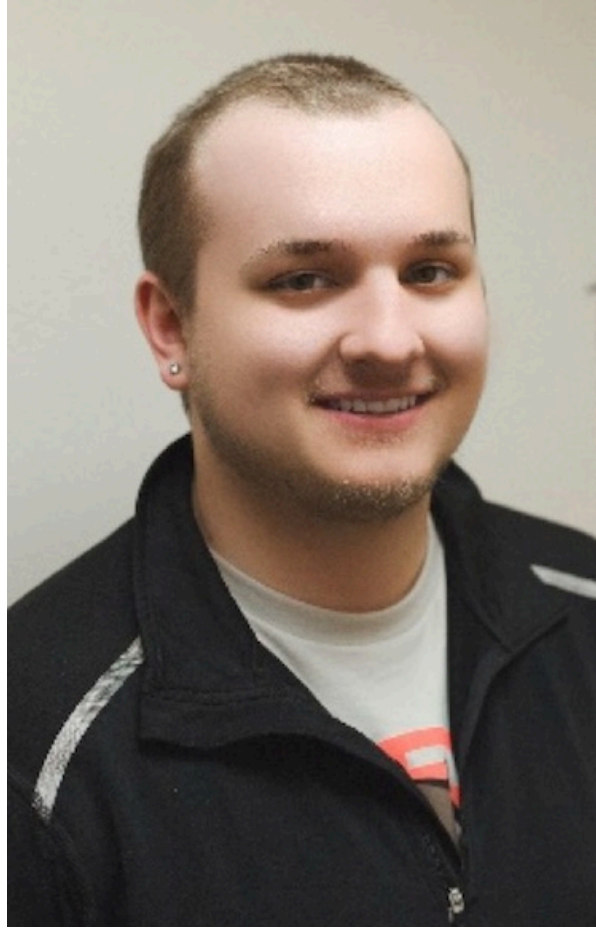
Anna has supported the same person since he moved into his own apartment 3 years ago. Anna has helped her client form meaningful relationships with his neighbors. She incorporates music into daily tasks, making them easier to complete. Anna was with her client during a major surgery, and provided 24 hour care for days during his recovery.

Tarshae Haas
HIT, Inc.



Tarri has been supporting HIT clients and staff. for 11 years. She helped a DSP and a client with transition issues by suggesting a timer, which has been successful. Tarri is working to find more sensory and communication tools for clients with autism. Tarri has advocated for clients to receive appropriate meals according to their programs.

Zachary Eckroth
Poppy's Promise



Zack has been instrumental in providing support to all the kids he helps, but with one child in particular, Zack's advocacy for inclusion in a school setting has prevented the mom from having to give up her parental rights and send the child out of state. Zack has helped the client move from isolation to community activities. Zack's support outside of routine hours has also given the mom the ability to return to college.

Sheree Wanner
Pride, Inc.



Sheree has supported individuals of Pride for 30 years. Sheree had been a supervisor, but loves working with clients so much she went back to being a DSP. Sheree has welcomed many clients into her home to spend time with her family during holidays. Sheree recently came up with an idea to help a client complete a task of folding statements which increased the client's self-esteem and led her to focus on her abilities rather than her limitations.

Annaleah Swenson
CHI Friendship



Annaleah helped a client purchase and decorate a new helmet to match her dress so she could attend A Night to Shine in style. A client Annaleah works with was falling often so she formed a focus group of the person's DSPs and discovered the timing of a medication was causing the problem. She also advocated to get a walk-in bathtub for several clients to be safer in an ICF/IID home.

Duane Hickel
Anne Carlsen Center



Duane loves to work with clients so much that he gave up being a Program Coordinator. Duane gets clients involved in community activities, like dances and ceramic classes. Each time Duane works with one client, they have a joke routine between them the client absolutely loves. Duane helps clients build relationships in the community.

Etelka White
Fraser. Ltd.



Etelka has been working with "J", who has autism, to participate in Special Olympics bowling, basketball and swimming. With Etelka's support, "J" has received ribbons in all three sports. Etelka works with "S" and "J", who wanted to go to Arizona. Etelka helped them plan the trip, advocated with their guardians to go, and supported them while in Arizona. Their trip was unforgettable!

Wyatt Sabinash
Open Door Center



Wyatt helps clients and fellow staff overcome communication barriers. He has helped one individual join a church, attend services, and bake cookies for the church Bazaar. For an agitated individual Wyatt has discovered and uses music to calm him down. Wyatt interacts with clients in the community, both on and off the clock.

NOMINEES

Kristen Lehfeldt
CHI Friendship

Krissy supports 10 people with a positive, solution-based attitude. Krissy is a personal advocate for a client with limited communication skills and has been critical to the success of the Fire Ants softball team.

Brittany Stenvik
Open Door Center

Brittany advocates for and encourages those with language and speech challenges. One individual does not like eating or taking his medication, but Brittany discovered he will do both when he listens to videos of vacuum cleaners on YouTube.

Haleigh Stenseth
Development Homes

Haleigh advocates for each person she serves to live their lives, be a big part of the community and pursue friendships. Haleigh creates meaningful activities for clients and motivates them to follow their plans.

Margot Rohrich
Pride, Inc.

Margot has found one client jobs as a DJ, which he is passionate about, and had him DJ at her birthday and wedding. Margot helped a client overcome his fears and participate in a water skiing event, which he loved.

Kassidy Hultgren
Anne Carlsen Center

Kassidy builds individual relationships with her clients and turns tasks into games to make learning fun for them. Kassidy is always finding ways to help improve her clients' lives.

Cynthia McFadgen
Open Door Center

Cynthia has provided workout ideas to one individual. Cynthia helps a nonverbal client keep his touch talker updated with conversational phrases so he can interact with his peers. Cynthia advocated for a client to have a radio on at night to help her fall asleep.

Kim Strum
Pride, Inc.

One of Kim's clients had to start using a walker and wanted to quit Special Olympics, but Kim encouraged him to ask for a different role instead. Kim researched accessible fishing areas for a client who had trouble navigating hard terrain.

Karen Wolf
Lake Region Corp.

Karen's strength is job coaching, and she has helped a client obtain independent employment. Karen has advocated for a client to have his work shift changed so he could get dishes done as they came in, instead of arriving to an overwhelming amount of work.

Jerianne Salveson
HIT, Inc.

Jerianne works with kids, and keeps in touch with those she no longer supports via FaceTime. Jerianne rearranges her schedule to attend dances, sporting events and Special Olympics with her clients. Jerianne helps the kids focus on their abilities, not their disabilities.

Tina Farthing
Easter Seals Goodwill

Tina has worked as a DSP 26 years. She has been requested to be a guardian for one individual and creatively helps another balance wants and needs of things in his home. Tina makes sure the people she serves have holiday meals and people to spend those holidays with.

Cody Bucholz
Development Homes

Cody has a strong, caring, respectful relationship with each person he supports. Cody advocates for clients and explores ways for them to clearly communicate their needs.

Roslyn Johnson
Open Door Center

Known as the "Email Enforcer," Roslyn helps individuals write weekly emails to keep their families updated. Roslyn works holidays to be with those who don't have close family. Roslyn has found creative techniques to communicate with nonverbal clients.

Demi Peltier
Open Door Center

Demi found a Thundercloud system to help one individual with high agitation. She also found an eight foot caterpillar with different textures to calm him as well. Demi is amazing at assisting nonverbal clients build relationships and participate in community activities.

Alicia Boettger
Fraser, Ltd.

Alicia helped "L" request a hamster for emotional support via letter, and upon approval, helped "L" choose the one she wanted. By example, Alicia showed "L" how to care for it. Alicia comes to the aid of "K" when she is struggling, even outside her scheduled hours.

Amber Tollefson
Anne Carlsen Center

Amber works with almost 50 clients and has set up events with the Police and Fire Departments, local TV stations and created a living game of "Clue" and a regular "Karaoke Day." Amber encourages her clients to mentor their peers.

Josh Silbernagel
Enable

Josh went to "K's" school to learn more about him and advocated for (and obtained) 1:1 staffing. Josh takes several clients to the Capitol and Heritage Center and facilitated "C" having his picture taken with the Governor.

CONGRATULATIONS AND THANK YOU!

Over five thousand Direct Service Professionals serving North Dakotans with disabilities were eligible for nomination for DSP of the Year.

We applaud our DSPs of the Year and our nominees for demonstrating excellence in their profession. We appreciate all the hard work that is done each day by every DSP in the state of North Dakota. Your dedication, compassion, skill and work ethic facilitate the independence of the individuals we serve.



Creating inclusive communities!